



# Rinchen Zangpo Society For Spiti Development

Educational Newsletter No. 28

Issue: Winter 2021/22

## Keeping Cosy with New Rocket Stoves



To make a sharp mind you need a warm body: Our new Rocket stoves at Rewa Public School

At all three of our schools in Spiti a new level of winter comfort has been reached with the arrival of more than eighty Rocket stoves, enough for heating classrooms, hostel dormitories, offices and staff quarters at Munsel-ling, Rewa and Kaza schools. They are bigger and sturdier than what went before, though basically similar to the traditional Spiti family stove. In many villages dried yak and cattle dung are the main fuel for heating and for cooking with such stoves. In the schools we mainly use wood. The Indian government supplies this from outside Spiti at a subsidised rate. Gas cylinder stoves are also used for cooking, both in the school and in family homes.

The Trans Himalayan Aid Society (TRAS, Canada) financed the Rocket stoves at Munsel-ling, the

Khyentse Foundation the ones at our Kaza school and Tibethilfe Niederosterreich the ones at Rewa School, Rongtong. Very grateful, thanks. 🌀



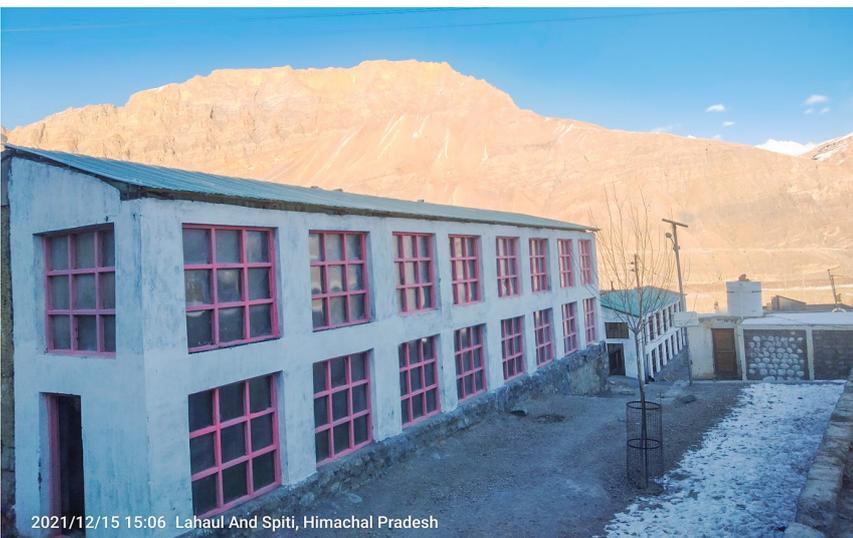
Don't be fooled by their size as these little stoves can easily warm up even the largest of spaces

## Capturing Solar Warmth



The Solar Passive Senior Girls' Hostel Project has finally been completed after a year's delay. Last year migrant workers were excluded from Spiti as an anti-COVID-19 precaution. Without the help of outside construction workers, skilled and unskilled, our building programme could not go forward. This year entry restrictions were lifted and the generous contributions given earlier by Pat Woodhouse and Penny Halnan of Aid for Himalayan Education, UK, have enabled us to provide solar warmth to the eighty plus senior girls at Munsel-ling School. The combination of high altitude (3,500 metres plus at Munsel-ling), dry desert atmosphere and southerly latitude means that during the Spiti winter in the shade and in the wind you freeze, but in the sun and out of the wind you can be lovely and warm.

**Workers glaze windows and put the finishing touches on this sunny multipurpose room**



2021/12/15 15:06 Lahaul And Spiti, Himachal Pradesh

**The south facing solarium of the Munsel-ling Senior Girls' Hostel is now complete and ready to take the heat**

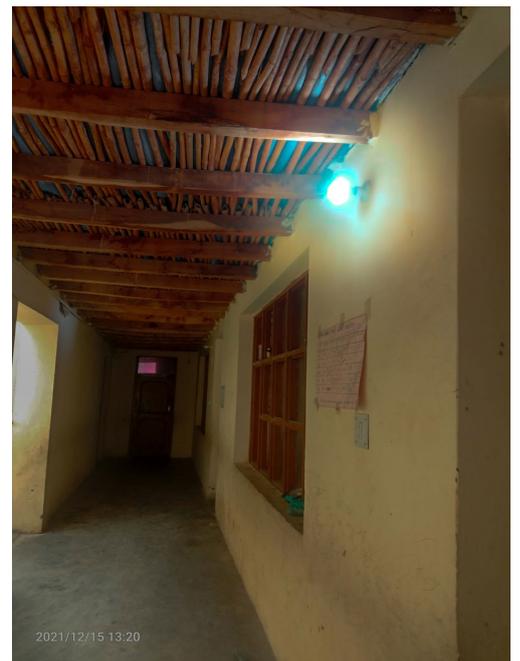
All along the long southern frontage of the senior girls hostel building we have constructed a glassed-in space two stories high and approx two metres wide. Here the girls can find a warm place to sit, to dry clothes, to eat, to leave their shoes or even to have classes in winter. We can achieve a similar effect using slanting plastic sheeting stretched over a wooden frame but the present new construction is obviously more durable. The doors to the interior are left open in the daytime to allow the warmth inside and they are closed when the sun has passed on so that any warmth is retained. ☺

## Supplying Solar Light



Upper Spiti's mains electricity (hydro) is unreliable, especially in the winter freeze. To overcome the hindrance to studies of power cuts, Tibethilfe Niederosterreich have installed a solar lighting system at Rewa Model School.

These are the ways in which we have been trying to further students' education despite the pandemic. We will keep on trying other ways to do the best for the young people in our care. ༄ཾ



Let there be light: From sunlight to electricity, these rooftop panels make dark hallways brighter

## Staff Housing at Kaza Public School

Staff accommodation has long been needed at Kaza Public School. A Swiss charity, Tibetfreunde Schweiz stepped in to help. We extended our usual building season by a month until the end of November in

an effort to finish the building as much as possible and now the basic structure of the staff residence is complete and ready for electrics, glazing, painting and so on in the new year. །



With the main structure in place, our staff residence in Kaza is nearly complete

## Sanitation Improvements at our Spiti Schools

Also in the building line, we have completed three sets of school toilets on three different sites. Some of these toilets were funded and structurally complete before last year's COVID-19 restrictions but only this year could we do the final finishing touches such as tiling. All three sets are now in use. At our Kaza school there are four flush toilets each for girls and boys plus a hand washing station. We are grateful for a generous donation towards the cost of these facilities from Pat Woodhouse of Aid for Himalayan Education. A larger block of toilets has been built at Munsel-ling School incorporating flush toilets for use in milder weather and dry latrine toilets for use in the freeze of winter. These were made possible with another kind grant from TRAS. At Rewa Model School Tibethilfe Niederosterreich, Austria, provided the funding for four flush toilets each for boys and girls together with a hand washing facility. །



Maintaining cleanliness and good hygiene is a little easier now with our new washing stations at Munsel-ling School

## Bundles of Bedding



Every winter senior students from Munsel-ling School come to our Sidhbari Hostel to receive several months of intensive tutoring and to get acquainted with the world outside of their community. Here they live in dormitories on our campus and this year the time had come to have their numerous beds refreshed. This needy project was made possible by Benti Banach from the Netherlands who prepared a crowdfunding campaign and provided the means to purchase mattresses, blankets, pillows and bedsheets. Thank you, Benti, for your hard work. However, due to COVID-19 and out of an abundance of caution, this year the students remained in the relative safety of remote Spiti valley where they stayed to receive their tutoring. The bedding has now been stored until next time they take up residence here, hopefully next winter. ✕

Stacked, ready and waiting for the arrival of senior students: New bedding in storage at Sidhbari Hostel

## Renovation and Construction at Sidhbari

Also at Sidhbari Hostel we recently completed much needed renovations to our toilet facilities and the areas around them. This project was generously sponsored by Jerome Ardissonne from France who has assisted with many projects in the past. Many thanks for your continued

support! Other building projects include the open study hall above the existing Library which recently had its iron railing work completed. The space is now ready for final cladding with a tin roof. A garland of *thank-yous* go to our wonderful sponsors GAT from Germany. ☺



After some preparation and handiwork our new toilets and floors are ready for use



The top floor for our Sidhbari Library is ready for roofing and will become the space for a new study hall

## Activities at Munsel-ling

### SCIENCE EXHIBITION

Sub-divisional Magistrate Shri Mahendar Singh Pratap inaugurates the Science Fair put on by students at Munsel-ling School.



### V.I.P. VISIT

Shmt. Anagha Arlekar, wife of Sh. Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, Honourable Governor of Himachal Pradesh, paid a kind visit to our Munsel-ling School. After touring the grounds she took the opportunity to interact with staff and students.

### SWATCH BHARAT MISSION

On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti (Gandhi's birthday commemoration) the students at Munsel-ling cleaned the whole school campus under the slogan, Mission Clean India. Their banner, *Demo Munsel-ling, Tsangma Munsel-ling*, means "Beautiful Munsel-ling, Clean Munsel-ling".



## Activities at Sidhbari

The Spiti College Students Association, Dharamsala, celebrated Spitian New Year at our hostel in Sidhbari, near Dharamsala. Distinguished chief guest on this occasion was Dr. Ram Lal Markanda, Honourable Cabinet Minister in the Himachal Pradesh State Government and Member of the Legislative Assembly for Lahaul-Spiti District.

For the first time at Sidhbari, we hosted a career counselling and medical and engineering university

entrance examination seminar for the students. The seminar was presented by a team from Kota, Rajasthan. Kota is a town that has become a centre specializing in educational services such as entrance examination coaching. We look forward to receiving further guidance from the same team in the near future.



Students performing at our Losar (New Year) celebration

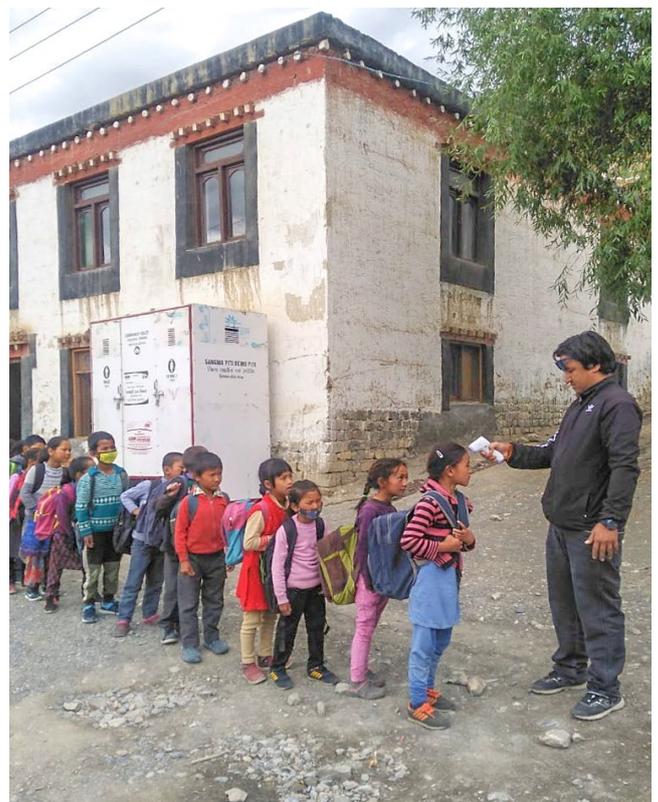


Dr. Ram Lal Markanda (centre) visiting with students

## COVID-19

Classes were back to running normally for all ages before the long winter holiday began. There has been no serious outbreak of COVID-19 in Spiti either in the villages or at the school, though with so many children boarding in dormitories all possible precautions have to be taken. We distributed masks and hand sanitiser and checked the children's temperature regularly. Tashi Namgyal (general secretary and main mover) went down with the disease however, when he was on the way into Spiti on the road from Manali in August. He spent a couple of weeks in Tanda Hospital near Dharamsala. He has made a slow but steady recovery since then and has resumed duties.

With the persistent threat of COVID-19 our students are being checked regularly for any sickness or symptoms



## Academic

We have consistently had very good results in the external examinations set by the Himachal Pradesh Board of School Education for 10th and 12th graders (approx. pupil ages 16 and 18) but next academic year, after the coming board examinations in March 2022, there will be a great change. Munsel-ling has been accepted by the Central Board for Secondary Education as an affiliated school. This is the most prestigious school examining board in India. Their qualifications are recognized India-wide. They

do not just accept any school, however. Accreditation criteria include the level of teachers' qualifications, school infrastructure requirements and more. Munsel-ling is one of the first private schools in Lahaul-Spiti District to be recognized by the CBSE. It will be a step up for the school to be allowed to enter students for their examinations and it will mean better qualifications and better syllabi for the students than at present. The examinations are likely to be stiffer of course! །།

## School Student Statistics, 2021

Munsel-ling School, Rangrik	465	mixed boarders and day students
Kaza Public School, Kaza	278	day students
Rewa Buddhist Model School, Rongtong	103	boarders
Sidhbari Hostel, Sidhbari	48	boarders
<b>Total</b>	<b>894</b>	<b>very fortunate students!</b>

Thanks to everyone who contributed to our education programme this year. Great apologies to anyone we have forgotten. Apart from those already mentioned above we extend special thanks to:

Dr. Klauss, Germany  
 Michel & friends, France  
 Jacqueline & friends, France  
 Diya & Shaun, UK  
 Jackie Bushe, Ireland

Nantwich Buddhist Group, UK  
 Joe Amos & friends, UK  
 Zoe Maogany, France  
 Upper Chapel, Sheffield, UK  
 Fulwood Old Chapel, Sheffield, UK

This newsletter was prepared on behalf of the Rinchen Zangpo Society for Spiti Development by Aid for Himalayan Education with the help of Earl Stefanysheh.

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