

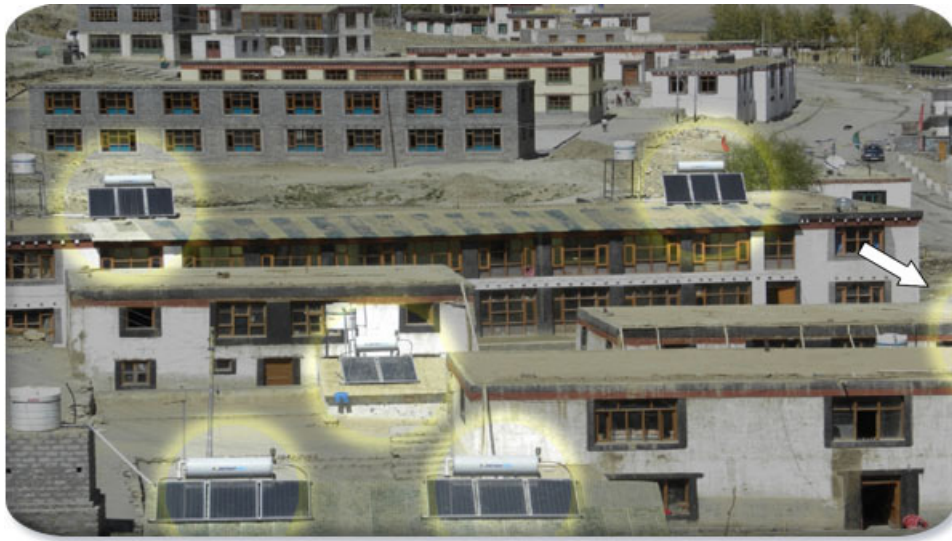


# Rinchen Zangpo Society For Spiti Development

Educational Newsletter No. 19

December 2012

## Here comes the sun...



Soaking up the Himalayan sun, our new solar water heaters at Munsel-ling.

## Solar Water Heating

Our seven boarding homes at Munsel-ling School now have their own solar hot water heating systems, each unit consisting of cold water tank, solar panels and insulated hot water tank. There are main feeder tanks above the school and a lot of underground pipes have been laid. Spiti's cold climate is merely due to the high altitude; sunshine is in fact plentiful. Spiti is on the same latitude as Jerusalem so even in winter the sun climbs somewhat in the sky. It is therefore a very suitable location for making use of solar energy and this installation makes bathing and clothes washing much easier, with all the benefits of better hygiene for large groups of people living in close proximity. Other parts of the school such as the kitchen would greatly benefit from an extension of the scheme! What we have in place now is all thanks to the marvellous generosity of the Trans-Himalayan Aid Society, with the collaboration of the University of British Columbia (both Canadian organizations).

UBC have continued their great support to us in other ways. Student teams visited us in June and July again, doing ongoing health screening, monitoring haemoglobin levels, providing lice and scabies treatments, promoting dental hygiene, and working on water supply, water purification and sanitation issues, as well as being heavily involved in our greenhouse project. They are really helping us to foster the health of the children in our care in a holistic manner and instilling in them the principles of basic healthy living.



These low tech wonders really take the chill out.

## Julie Clemence Memorial Junior Girls Home



New girls' hostel, almost finished.

Ms Julie Clemence of England, formerly from South Africa, was a great supporter of our education project. Her untimely passing away earlier this year was a sad loss. In her memory we are constructing a hostel at Munsel-ling to accommodate up to 40 girl students aged 7-12 in two large dormitories. Each of two floors will have its own sun-warmed study space and bathroom. Julie's former friends and acquaintances from Aid for Himalayan Education, UK, are so kindly funding

the entire cost of this building. It is now ready to be roofed as soon as warmer weather returns and building work can start again.

## Dining Room

For many years the dining facilities at Munsel-ling were cramped and substandard. This year we finished a large, new, properly built dining room. Many of our students are boarders who therefore eat three meals per day on site so the dining room needs a minimum standard of comfort. Wooden flooring would make the floor less cold and a lot less dusty for those sitting on it to eat.



Fine dining facilities ... in Spiti-style.



Science in action, our new laboratories at Munsel-ling.

## Science Laboratories

The physics, chemistry and biology laboratories that were under construction last year have been fitted out and are now in use, in three separate rooms. The Trans-Himalayan Aid Society has very kindly paid for all the extensive equipment needed to stock them. Once again they have been extremely generous to us.



## Educational Success



Pema Dolker

Outstanding former student Pema Dolker has been accepted to study for an MA in sociology at Jawaharl Nehru University in New Delhi. Definitely the best university in India, its reputation for academic excellence is Asia-wide and it is very difficult to gain entrance there. Our first entrant to medical college was Tenzin Angmo. She has now graduated and is doing her internship. Tsewang Tobgyal of Rangrig follows her by gaining admission to

Tandar Medical College near Dharamsala. From our Siddhahari hostel Sherap Dolma from Marling in Kinnaur has been attending Kangra Valley Senior Secondary School in Dharamsala, one of the district's top-tier educational establishments. She came first in the school in the 10+2 (grade 12/ A level) examinations in the non-medical science stream. Five Spiti girls studying nursing in Delhi have recently qualified and are now completing their practical training. Five more are still studying, all financially supported through the amazing philanthropy of our friend Dr Raina. Congratulations to them. This is really the first generation of Spiti youth to be taking these steps forward, so obviously these achievements feel like a tremendous advance for our community.



Sherab Dolma

## Prize Day



Togden Rinpoche presenting awards to students.

Chief guest at our Munsel-ling school anniversary function on 27th October 2012 was Togden Rinpoche, abbot of Drepung Loseling Monastery, a Tibetan Buddhist master who had been teaching in Spiti for the last two months. At a very well attended function Togden Rinpoche distributed all the prizes for academic and co-curricular (extra-curricular) activities. The students' songs, dances and sketches were a lively part of the festivities.

## Penpals

Pierre and Jaqueline Meleard, and Jean Paul and Nicole Ledorze are supporters of our work from Alliance Turquoise, France. They have introduced our school to the pupils of one French school. Students from that school have sent letters to us and some of our students have sent letters in return. We hope friendship, cross-cultural understanding and language learning will result from these happy exchanges!



Tenzin Delek and his penpal, Ruthie, from Canada.

## Other News

Among new staff we welcomed six new Tibetan junior school teachers, graduates of the Dalai Lama Institute for Higher Education, in Bangalore, South India.

An experiment we have put effort into this year is for special extra classes for slow learners. Students who are slower in their studies need extra support and this is a move also designed to alleviate teacher frustration, in keeping with the guidance of the SPARKE organization (Support Positive Alternative and Raising Kindness in Education), dedicated to eliminating all forms of violence and disharmony in schools. Wangchuk Gyalpo of Soir IM accompanied a team from SPARKE on a visit to our school again this year as they spread their message.

Teachers Day we celebrated on 5th September. On this day in India students entertain their teachers with songs and dances and offer gifts and give thanks for the education they have received. Its counterpart, Children's Day we also celebrated.



... here the manufacture of fine, hand-knotted woolen carpets.



RZ Society supports vocational training ...

Our grateful thanks to Joanne Richardson and her team from Australia for visiting us again this year and so generously giving free high quality dental treatment to all of our children and others who needed it. Also a team of doctors from the government hospital in Kaza visited the school in July to check on the health of the students. Thanks also to Thomas from Germany and Shelly from USA who gave their time as volunteer teachers this year.

## Co-curricular Activities

To develop the mind, body and speech of students we held many quizzes, inter house competitions and sports events. We organized a social fair, an exhibition where children prepared models, charts and graphic displays covering all aspects of society, ancient and modern. The Performing Group of Arts, a theatre group from Simla, the Himachal Pradesh State capital, conducted a month long theatre workshop at Munsel-ling. The students' acting talents advanced very much during that time. They made a play from the story of a famous local Buddhist meditator and teacher of old, Rangrik Repa. They first performed it in the presence of Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche in Pin Valley. He was highly impressed and paid the expenses for the troupe to put on a much appreciated performance at the Gaiety Theatre, Simla, the oldest and best known of all theatres in Himachal Pradesh.



High drama at the Gaiety Theatre in Shimla.

## Special Teaching

His Holiness the Dalai Lama gave a three day introductory Buddhist teaching in Dharamsala especially for Himalayan Buddhists, i.e., aimed at Buddhists from regions of the Himalayas that are not part of Tibet, such as Spiti. Our students had a special opportunity to receive these teachings.



HH the Dalai Lama and the Himalayan Buddhist community.

## Visit

The very eminent Samdhong Rinpoche again gave a teaching this year on Buddhism at our hostel on the invitation of the Sherab Sangpo Society.

Mr Karma Chungta la, the Director of Sambota (Tibetan education department) and Mr Tsering Dorjee la, the Principal of the Lower Tibetan Childrens Village School, Dharamsala, visited at our hostel in Sidbhari this

summer. They came to provide counselling and careers advice to our senior students. Our students benefitted greatly from their input and asked many questions. It would be very beneficial to organise this kind of careers guidance in the future and we are very grateful to the above two gentlemen for their patient answers to our students' questions.

Mr Sonam Dorjee la the Welfare Officer for Tibetans in Dharamsala led a workshop on the Holiness the Dalai Lama's Middle Way Approach at our hostel in April. This is the Tibetan Government's approach to solving the question of the future status of Tibet through compromise and dialogue with the Chinese authorities. Our students and others gained a better understanding of the Tibetan cause and how to support it.

## Spiti New Year

On 17th November we celebrated Spiti New Year with traditional singing and dancing and there were football and volleyball matches between three different Spiti hostels around Dharamsala. Our Sidbhari teams claimed victory. There was lots of fun and good food.



Team Rinchen Zangpo brings the cup home.



## Wish List

A list of a few of the improvements needed on the Munselling School campus. Your help welcome!

1. Boundary wall round the whole site for security and to enable planting of greenery
2. Teachers' residences
3. Winter water system
4. Garbage management system
5. Wooden flooring for dining room
6. Sitting mats for dining hall and study places
7. Additional winter bedding: blankets, pillows &c.
8. Solar lights around the campus



No shortage of soap at Munsel-ling.

RINCEN ZANGPO SOCIETY  
FOR SPITI DEVELOPMENT

**HEAD OFFICE:**

Spiti Complex, Rakkar Rd, Sidbhari - 176057, Distt Kangra,  
H.P., India

**MUNSEL-LING SCHOOL:**

VPO Rangrik - 172114, Distt. Lahaul-Spiti,  
H.P., India

**WEBSITE:**

www.rinchenzangpo.org

EMAIL:

rinchenhp@hotmail.com

