

Editorial

By Marianne Frei, President

Once more, we are happy to look back to some special events during the second part of 2011.

- On July 7, 2011, Kunzang Choden gave a lecture about «Women writing in Bhutan» and read from her book «Tales in Colour» (2009) at the Rietberg Museum. It was a special event for our donors, and all those who have especially contributed to the different activities of SSB during the last year. «Tales in Colour» is a collection of short stories about women and about the challenges in rural settings.



Kunzang Choden, signing books in Thimphu

Kunzang Choden's books are an eye-opener to her culture. She touches her readers emotionally and creates links between tradition and modern times, rural and urban settings, Bhutanese and western (Swiss) culture. Besides many other responsibilities and functions, Kunzang Choden is a board member of the Bhutan-Switzerland Society (BSS), our sister organization.

- The 2nd Annual General Assembly of our sister organization Bhutan-Switzerland Society was held on 1 August 2011 at the premises of



Helvetas Bhutan in Thimphu. Lyonpo Kinzang Dorji, the president of BSS, gave an account of the activities and mentioned, how fruitful and successful the last year had been. One of

the main tasks ahead for BSS will be to register the society in Bhutan. A draft of the articles of the Association exists already. A new logo has been designed.



General Assembly of BSS at Helvetas Thimphu

(Report of Lyonpo Kinzang Dorji:

www.bhutan-switzerland.org/pages/druk.htm)

- Dr. Saamdu Chetri, political appointee to the Prime minister's office and former Deputy Head of Helvetas Bhutan, presented the concept of *Gross National Happiness* and its application on September 27, at the University of Applied Sciences (HWZ) in Zürich.



Dr. Chetri, who has been appointed as director for the development of a GNH Centre, informed the audience about the planned centre in Bumthang. According to Dr. Chetri, GNH is a development approach that seeks to «achieve a harmonious balance between material well-being and the spiritual, emotional and cultural needs

of an individual and a society». Dr. Chetri stresses that GNH is best described in the words of His Majesty the King: «Today, GNH has come to mean so many things to so many people but to me it signifies simply – Development with Values».

In the second part of the evening, Mr. Christoph Ditzler presented the topic: «*Bhutan – Some Economic Considerations*».

(Link to Dr. Chetri: «Welcome to the Vision of GNH: www.bhutan-switzerland.org/pages/downloads.htm)



- The Annual Dinner to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the Bhutan Society of the United Kingdom was held on November 25th 2011 in London. Their Majesties the King and Queen of Bhutan, who were on a private visit in the UK, joined to celebrate and turned the event into a very auspicious occasion. The dinner was arranged in the distinguished surroundings of the Hall of the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple in the City of London. The chairpersons of all the Bhutan Friendship Societies in Europe were invited.



His Majesty the King



Their Majesties the King and Queen of Bhutan, Sir Simon Bowes Lyon (President) and Michael Rutland (Chairman)



His Majesty the King greets Marianne Frei

Photos by Steve Jones

Marceline de Montmollin obituary



We are very sorry to inform you that on September 10th 2011, Marceline de Montmollin passed away very quietly at the hospital. She had been suffering from skin cancer. She did not want to inform people about her state of health because she didn't want friends to worry about

her. Gérald de Montmollin writes: «She was the first to care about her friends but was not used to it being the other way around». We would like to offer our sincere condolence to Gérald de Montmollin and the family.

Marceline de Montmollin was the curator of the Bhutan collection at the Museum of Ethnography MEN in Neuchatel. The collection was donated to the museum by HM the 3rd King.

Marceline de Montmollin especially travelled to Bhutan to have a Trashi-gomang made. This is a tridimensional portable shrine, which she took to the museum in Neuchâtel.



Ms. de Montmollin wrote **the first guidebook of Bhutan** at Editions Olizane. Both she and her husband loved to sail and as a friend of her expresses it «she was a solar personality».



Coming Events 2012

- We feel very privileged that **Dr. Françoise Pommaret** will give a lecture on January 11th 2012, 19.30, at Museum Rietberg Zürich on the topic: «**One Century in Bhutan. From theocracy to constitutional democratic monarchy.**»

- **SSB General Assembly 2012**

Our next General Assembly will take place in the new building of the University of Luzern / PHZ Luzern, on **Saturday, March 31, 2012**. A special invitation will follow, and we hope that many of you will attend.

- A photo exhibition on «**Bhutan's Cultural Diversity**» will take place at Songtsen House Zürich, from February 11 to April 21 2012. Markus Wild will exhibit photos taken by

Bhutanese within the *Participatory Photo Project* in the framework of the "Leveraging and Preserving Bhutan's Cultural Diversity" project of Helvetas Bhutan. **Markus Wild** will speak about his experiences and give us insights about four remote ethnical groups and communities on February 11th and March 23, 2012.



- **7. Volkskulturfest Obwald, 5. - 8. Juli 2012 in Giswil (Obwalden)**
Bhutan – Appenzell – Obwalden

Martin Hess, the director of the festival writes: "Bhutan, one of the most unique countries in the world, will be our guest at the Obwald Folk Culture Festival 2012. This is indeed a great honour for the festival. A group of monks from the Tashichoedzong will be leaving the country for the first time, and present their sacred music which was never heard in the West before. Instruments like shawms, horns, bone flutes and drums and vocals are combined to create a sound that defies the modern concept

of melody-based music. It's not about aesthetic pleasure or entertainment, the sacred music evokes the deepest spiritual experiences. It is an «Urmusik» which can sound as well intoxicating as disturbing. Visually, the presentation will once more set a new standard at the *Obwald Folk Culture Festival*: Each instrument is a richly decorated piece of art. We are confident that the performance of the monks in the dark of the summer nights will be an unforgettable experience for the audience."



SSB – BSS Programmes: latest stand

By Werner Külling, Member of the Board

Donations to the *Tradijong Community Primary School (TCPS)* project

A generous and very useful donation of CHF 9'400 made by SSB to the remote primary school situated in Phangkhar Gewog, Zhemgang District.

In 2010 the SSB Board decided – in the following of a study tour of the board members Erwin König and Patrick Vogel, and after a serious examination – to support a project proposal submitted via its Bhutanese sister organisation (BSS): an education project under Phangkhar Gewog in the Zhemgang Dzongkhag, the *Tradijong Community Primary School (TCPS)*.



Tradijong was chosen as beneficiary school after thorough consultation with the concerned authorities. It is one of the most remote schools in Bhutan, at 10 hours walking distance from Gomphu-Panbang road. It has 59 students, comprising of 33 boys and 26 girls, studying from classes PP to V. These children have to walk between half an hour and two hours every day to reach the school.



Under the project, the Tradijong CPS has been provided with school materials like uni-

forms, shoes, mattresses, blankets, CGI sheets for roofing their hostels, four laptop



computers, one printer / scanner / copier and a digital camera. A sum of CHF 9'400 was allotted by the SSB via Helvetas Bhutan, which is equivalent to Nu. 450'000 for the equipment of this school project.



In addition to the above, the Helvetas Programme Office Thimphu has very generously contributed Nu. 245'000 for the procurement and installation of solar power systems for the school, so that the children and students can enjoy not only electric lighting but also operate the computers, printers, copier, etc. without any difficulty.

On behalf of Tradijong CPS and BBS, the SSB Board would like to express the sincerest gratitude to the members of SSB, to Swisscom, as well as Helvetas Bhutan, for this special gift which is highly appreciated by the youth of Tradijong, and which will make a huge impact. The School Committee in managing the project, as well as the Principal of the Tradijong CPS, have submitted a detailed report to the SSB, which can be found on our website www.bhutan-switzerland.org/pages/projects.htm

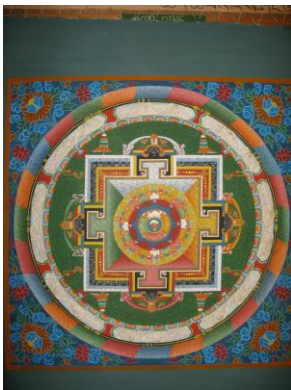


News from Society Switzerland – Bhutan (SSB)

By Werner Külling, Member of the Board

Contribution of CHF 2'000 from SSB for the Thangka Painting Project at the Dochula Cultural Festival in December 2011 in Bhutan

Upon a request submitted by Dasho Karma Ura, President of the CBS, Centre for Bhutan Studies, the Board of the SSB decided to support the Thangka Painting Project for the Dochula Cultural Festival in December 2011 with a special contribution of CHF 2'000. Helvetas Bhutan is also participating in this cultural project, which is realised under the Patronage of H.M. Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck, under the leadership of Dasho Karma Ura.



The contribution of the SSB will be used to cover the costs of the frames for the 35 Thangkas, so that they become complete and ready for presentation and exhibition. The costs of the frames for Thangkas are indeed

relatively high, and an amount of US\$ 15'000 is needed. Other friends of Bhutan were approached during the fundraising campaign of the CBS, but unfortunately the success was rather small and disappointing.



The reconstruction of the Basar Area after the third fire in Bumthang is progressing fast

In the SSB Newsletter of June 2011 we informed the members of the SSB and Swiss friends of Bhutan about the three fire catastrophes which happened in the Bumthang basar area on October 26th, 2010, February 18th, 2011 and May 27th, 2011. In the meantime it has become clear to everybody – but not officially and finally confirmed by the concerned authorities of RGB – that the reasons of the three calamities might well be arson. We don't know whether investigations are still going on, or have been given up.

The contributions from Switzerland (SSB, private donations of Swiss friends of Bhutan, Helvetas Bhutan) for the victims of the three catastrophes amount to around 100'000 Swiss

francs. Most of the money has been channelled through the Dzongkhag Administration of Bumthang and His Majesty's Kidu Fund,



and is used for the construction and installation of a new sewerage and drinking water network for Chamkhar Town. This is also the



case with the final donation of CHF 8000 of a group of Swiss Medical Doctors from the Toggenburg. Town planners for Bumthang may not be happy that the chance for the realisation of a general new town planning concept, already prepared and decided, was not

seized. But it looks like the political pressures and interests of the hit shopkeepers were too strong, so that their shops and living quarters were reconstructed as before.

New SSB Members

By Julia Menk

Four new members joined the Society Switzerland Bhutan:

Hans-Rudolf Grunauer, Wädenswil

Daniela Garaventa, Vitznau

Johann & Jeannette Cantieni, Sagogn

To them, and to all the other members of the Society, we would like to express our gratitude for their support of our Bhutan related projects. Tashi delek!

Excursion to the Bhutanese suspension bridge 10.09.2011

By Otto Stern

28 SSB members gathered on Saturday, September 10, at the small picnic place next to the suspension bridge, where the tables had been set for an exquisite apéritif offered by Erwin König, Rosmarie and Richard Frey, Christoph and Marie-Noelle Frei. They came from all parts of Switzerland, by train and by car, and had been carried up the steep slope by a small bus.



The Canton of Valais welcomed us with a splendid sunny day, and a wonderful view over the famous pine tree forest of Pfywald, up and down the broad valley of the Rhone River, and on the opposite mountain chain of the Bernese Alps.

Then, the story of the construction of the bridge



was told by Christoph Frei, in a nicely illustrated open air presentation: During the international year of the mountain in 2002, the Canton of Wallis and the Association Mountains 2002 decided to realize together with Helvetas and the support of Bhutanese know-how a "bridge between two mountainous countries and between the two languages of the Wallis" as a symbol. The bridge was built in 2005 and is very well frequented. The information was completed by Leo Caminada and Erik Allgöwer with memories of the origins of the Helvetas suspension bridge program.





After the refreshing apéritif the party got ready to cross over the bridge, nicely decorated by prayer flags, admiring the skillful construction, and taking cores of pictures.



Then, a half an hour walk took us down through the fragrant pine forest to the bus again, carrying us over the Rhone River and up on the other side of the valley to the beautiful little town of Leuk, where lunch expected us in the nicely decorated old Restaurant Casa Villa.



And off we went again for the interesting afternoon program, led by a local guide, very knowledgeable in all the local historic details of Leuk, with its beautiful old churches, houses, and the castle – restored by Mario Botta – everything presented with a good sense of humor, making the day pass too fast.



And before we could think about our lucky day, we were again gathered in the bus that brought us back to the train station of Leuk, in the slowly fading sunlight of the Valais.



Special thanks go to Rosmarie Frey and Christoph Frei who organized this memorable excursion.

Photos by H.J. Keller and O.Stern

(Find more pictures of the excursion on our website under "memories": http://www.bhutan-switzerland.org/pages/m_excursion-11.htm)



«Welcome to Bhutan!»

An innovative Approach to Training of Bhutanese Hotel Managers

By Urs Dürsteler, Prorector HWZ University of Applied Sciences for Business Administration Zürich

Tourism is and will remain a very important foreign currency provider for Bhutan's economy. The number of tourists visiting Bhutan is relatively small, but is – with some recent setbacks – increasing over the last few years. In spite of the different annual growth path in the sector, the hotels and tourism provide interesting long term career opportunities for young Bhutanese, such as heads of food and beverage, front desk, accommodation, operational management, finance, recreational activities, etc. To cope with the present and future needs in the four and five star hotels, as well as to upgrade the management of family operated hotels, Bhutan needs a new generation of highly skilled local hotel managers.

In early 2008, a Swiss team consisting of Marianne Frei, Hans Keller (hotelier) and Urs Dürsteler conducted a feasibility study on how such a middle management hotel training program for Bhutanese students could match with the present and future needs of the hotel industry, and how a dual model in in-service

training, namely working cum studying, could be designed. Hence, a public private partnership approach was conceptualized, including Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB), RGoB, HWZ University of Applied Sciences for Business Administration Zurich, and the various hoteliers in Bhutan. Thoughts were given on a variety of issues, such as the relevant and practical oriented curricula, an attractive time schedule during off-seasons, the calculation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) points for the international recognition of the diploma, the design of admission criteria, the establishment of exam and study rules, and the role of hoteliers as employers of the students as well as partners of the project. As a novum: The hoteliers are paying the salaries to the students during the training periods. And last but not least, RGoB provides the managerial staff and facilities for the training. Based on this feasibility study Jacobs Foundation and Elysium Foundation (both Switzerland) were convinced to support the project substantially.



Certification Ceremony in the "Bhutanese Kitchen" on October 16, 2011 in Thimphu
© by bim



In February 2010 a first batch of 25 young Bhutanese women and men – after 8 months of training over a period of two years – graduated with a “*Diploma of advanced Studies (DAS) in Hotel Management*” issued by HWZ and endorsed by the Royal Institute of Management (RIM).

In most of the courses international professionals from the hotel industry all over the world together with local counterparts were sharing their expertise with the students. In the meantime, 18 male and 11 female students already completed the first part of the training of the second batch. These students were graduated with a “*Certificate of advanced Studies (CAS) in Hotel Management I*” (see picture above). The next course for them with many new topics on department skills will be conducted at RITH in Motithang during January and February 2012. And finally, this batch is planned to graduate by the end of August 2012, after the students have the experiences of one week training in Bumthang instead of Thimphu. Late 2012, for the very best three students of this batch an extended internship will be arranged with Kurt Baumgartner, owner of the hotel Belvedere in Scuol (Switzerland).

A challenge for all the persons involved is the institutionalization of the program within the Royal Institute for Tourism and Hospitality

(RITH). This impressive project located in Motithang is implemented by the Fachhochschule in Salzburg and financed by Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB) and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). Additionally, the present Swiss Board consisting of Marianne Frei, Werner Külling and Urs Dürsteler is devoting thoughts on the planning for batch number three, or the next phase. Let us hope that future visitors of Bhutan might have an enjoyable encounter with one or the other graduate of the Bhutan Middle Management Hotel Program.



Sither Tenzin, Program Director Bhutan Middle Management Hotel Program © by bim

Meeting Point

The following interview presents

Dr. Saamdu Chetri, Director of Beyul Dewaling, the future Gross National Happiness (GNH) Centre, Bumthang

By Otto Stern

Saamdu Chetri (54) grew up in a small farmhouse in Dagana; he is married and has four children; he graduated from University of Srinagar, Punjab, in commerce and human resource management, and has a PhD in micro-finance. He worked for over 18 years as Secretary of Helvetas in Thimphu; in 2006 he took an early retirement and moved back to his hometown in the South. Since 2008, he is serving the first democratically elected PM of Bhutan, Lyonchhen Jigmi Y. Thinley, as a political appointee. Now he is looking after all the special projects of the PM in Bhutan – one of them is the *GNH Centre* in Bumthang.



On my question of how he got to deal with GNH, Saamdu started to tell me the exciting story of his life, after his retirement from Helvetas. It was almost a chapter of the book of his biography – he is actually writing it – and I decided, it was too long to be prin-



ted here. Instead, I try to give a short insight by resuming the main events, and putting in only a few original citations from my recording of the interview that took place during his visit end of September in Zurich. (see above, Editorial, p.1)

After retirement Saamdu planned to return home to the South for about two years, to build a new house in the place where he grew up, and where his family is still living. Since his childhood his dream was being a farmer and a teacher, and this time he was sure to do it. «*But then politics came into play (the first democratic elections), and I felt I had to inform the people of our new role and responsibilities in a democracy.*» He started information-touring in the South, and the new house was left unfinished. He soon realized that he could get about 70% of the votes. This led to the foundation of the Bhutan People United Party, which later merged into the Bhutan Peace and Prosperity Party, in Dzongkha 'Druk Phuensum Tshogpa', DPT. The actual Prime Minister Lyonchhen Jigmi Y. Thinley was elected president of the party; Saamdu became a member of the strategy committee, and he was elected as the campaign manager. In 2008, the party won the first general elections held in Bhutan. The party secured 45 of the 47 seats at the National Assembly.

And here enters GNH, one of the important issues of DPT, convincingly and eloquently promoted by the Prime Minister, Lyonchhen Jigmi Y. Thinley. Actually, after the elections, Saamdu wanted to resign, and return to his dream of farming and teaching, but they didn't let him go and the PM made him a political appointee with the duty of leading one of biggest units under the prime ministers office: monitoring, coordination and programme development. But then Saamdu realized that the same unit existed already under the GNH commission; so he felt it would be duplication. Then, the PM opened a different unit which would be socioeconomic oriented, and Saamdu made it into a Sector with the domains of economy, infrastructure, social and agriculture; and, again, he handed it over to Economic Affairs, altogether with his five senior staff. And then he said to the PM: «*Sir, now I have no more job, let me go!*» And the PM answered: «*You take up the unit Good Governance under PM's office.*» So, under Saamdu's leading three Divisions of Good Governance were developed, and he set up the tasks.

But, as a political appointee he had no right to lead any administration. Therefore, again, he handed it all over to different Sectors of the Government, and he asked: «*So, next, what do I do?*» Then the PM told him: «*Now you take the GNH-Centre!*»

«*And that is how I got there, and since about 8 months I have been fully engaged in this Centre. The idea of developing a centre has always been in the mind of the PM, who is the teacher of Gross National Happiness; it was the idea of the 4th King, but taking it forward has been the PM's work. He wanted to build a centre where all sorts of people could meet and contemplate to live life the GNH way. The Centre will be built on very sustainable principles, and people from all over the world will come to work there.*»

Saamdu feels that it is a big challenge for Bhutan, because all people around the world keep asking, how does Bhutan practice GNH. «*They want to see it, and we have nothing to show them; that's where we are trapped now.*» It is urgent to start this establishment. We have volunteers and promises from Australia, Canada, Denmark, etc., who are ready to help us with sustainable architecture, designs, planning, programme development. «*But my main problem is, I cannot ask, please start helping me, when I have no money to start with. It is a huge task, and I'm alone with it, I cannot recruit anybody because I have no money. So I'm really quite in a fix, and that is the reason why I'm traveling to Denmark and Switzerland for fund raising.*»

For the establishment of the Centre Saamdu will move to Bumthang, at least for a few years. «*Once the Centre has been brought up, the PM has asked me to run it for at least two years, before I finally can go back home. It seems that for the next five to six years Bumthang will be my destiny. But I really want to go back to my house in the village, that is my ingrained childhood dream: to be a farmer, to be a teacher, that is what I really wanted to be!*»

For more information on the Centre:
<http://www.grossnationalhappiness.com>
<http://gnhbhutan.blogspot.com/2010/12/summary-of-concept-on-gnh-centre.html>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gross_national_happiness



The following interview presents *A Bhutanese in Switzerland*

Dragyel T. Dorjee, Director of the Bhutan Institute of Media *bim*

By Otto Stern

Dragyel T. Dorjee (26) from Thimphu, is married and has a six months old daughter; he is Director of the Bhutan Institute of Media *bim*, now studying at *Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts* (Hochschule Luzern) in the Bachelor Programme of *Science in International Management & Economics*. The interviewer met him in November in a quiet corner of a restaurant at the train station of Lucerne.



Ost: How would you present yourself?

Dragyel: I am... ich heisse Dragyel Dorjee, here and now a student, back to student life! I live in the city of Bern with Erik and Annemarie Huber Hotz. I did my studies in Bhutan, up to higher secondary, then I did advanced distance studies in applied science of *Photography and New Media*, combined with an apprenticeship with Mr. Eric Huber in Thimphu, where I got my diploma. Then there was the option to go further in Media, or look around for something new – and this is how I came here, in International Management and Economics. This is what I'm really interested in, and I hope it will also benefit Bhutan; the study of International Management is something that is important for Bhutan, developing in a globalized world, and trying to reach international standards.

Ost: And how long do you intend to stay here?

Dragyel: It depends, I should rather say, how long I'm *allowed* to stay here (laughs). By now, I've been here for almost three months. I was here already last spring for the photo exhibitions in Ziegelbrücke and in Baar (see Newsletter 1, 2011). I found Switzerland very attractive, not only geographically, which gets me back in Bhutan, but also developmentally,

economically; in every respect Switzerland is like the successful elder brother of Bhutan. There is something I want to learn: what are the similarities between Switzerland and Bhutan? How does Switzerland do it? Why can Switzerland stand up against the big EU countries, being a small country like Bhutan?

Ost: Why did you choose Lucerne for your studies?

Dragyel: I looked into quite a lot of programmes of different universities; the main point is, I have to get something in English. I chose Lucerne, because, firstly, I got the admission, and secondly because the subjects are very related to my personal interests, like for example *Strategy Management*, just a direct application of real world situations. But the benchmarks are quite high, I have to fulfil the expectations.

Ost: Are you going for a master?

Dragyel: I am back in a Bachelor's programme. I have only a Diploma in Photography and New Media, as I said before, and here I want to do the full study line of a three years Bachelors course.

Ost: And what is your main interest? What are you aiming at?

Dragyel: My capability is more in networking, bringing things together. It was a great experience for me last spring, working on the two exhibitions in Ziegelbrücke and in Baar, hanging the pictures and so on. In a way, I truly not only want to do just managing, and say o.k., I am the director; I like to walk on the people, seeing the papers or looking at the atmosphere, I want to see, how the art work is really done. That is why I took the opportunity to come here for two months, starting from framing a picture, cleaning the glass, and finally to get them on the wall. So I had a full run of experience and training in this line. I also did quite a lot of self assessment in a way, and I had others assessing me, like Harry Eriksson (Eriksson Associates, Zurich), who did a consultancy at *bim*, and there I was quite positively marked in the management skills. So, this was one key element, besides my own interests in human resources, administration and general management.



Ost: Regarding media and photography, are you doing anything in that field?

Dragyel: Yes and no, to be honest, I am not in the subject orientation of like reporting or so, but now, at *bim*, I've been involved more in the general management of the media.

Ost: Did you also do art photography?

Dragyel: Yes, I did, in a way, I had to, because

my diploma was about examples of advertisement photography. For my matura I did commerce; thereafter I went into the "art line", as I said, for my diploma. Now again, I'm into the general aspects human resources.

Ost: Do you have a picture of your photography work?



© by DTD/bimc

Dragyel: Here it is: it's a big contrast to what I am doing now (laughs). You know, as CEO of *bim* I still work for my office in Thimphu from here, the office is still going on. When I am looking into my time management, it is one to two hours a day besides my studies here. I do my meetings with my staff through Skype, they are working, and the school (of photography) is going on.

Ost: You didn't tell us yet, but you are still director of the institute!

Dragyel: Yeah, I cannot just walk away for studying (laughs)

Ost: So, two hours a day that's quite a bit?

Dragyel: Yes, and it's especially challenging because of the time difference. I have agreed that every Saturday I sit online with my staff for a weekly meeting, so then I have to get up at around four o'clock Swiss time, to sit for the meeting with them at nine o'clock in Bhutan; so every week I do this; and since I live in Bern, the neighbours keep asking who is visiting and talking at that time of the night?!

Ost: How do you get along in Switzerland in every day life, is it easy?

Dragyel: That's a question my friends ask me when I meet them online, and my answer is, I'm becoming a Swiss, for example concerning



time management. In the beginning, to meet at an exact hour was quite challenging to me, you know how it is in Bhutan (laughs)! But now that I'm adjusted, I can see how much sense it makes for example in the school system that is so well organized. This is one thing I really want to learn as a core habit.

Ost: And what do you find difficult?

Dragyel: Difficult is for the moment the language. Besides of that I don't really see any difficulties. Of course, the studies are challenging, and if I want to improve I have to do better. But in normal everyday life I am quite relaxed and I get along easily. There are only two classes in German, but they are carrying credit, so I have to work on these.

Ost: Do you get any help in this?

Dragyel: At home, Erik and Annemarie made it a rule "no English in private life!" Only if there is something official to be discussed, English is allowed. So all the family members stick together to help me speak.

Ost: So, you feel that you are making progress in German?

Dragyel: Well, looking at these first two months that passed so fast, from zero to now, at least understanding of words and phrases works; I'm trying now to use *der*, *die*, *das* a little more appropriately

Ost: And what are you missing most?

Dragyel: I'm missing my wife and my six months old daughter; it is really very hard not to see them for such a long time. But I had to make a choice.

Besides that, I don't really miss anything. Even with food I'm comfortable, anyway I'm not so fuzzy with food. But, of course, I will go back during every semester break.

Ost: Where does your family live, and where do you come from in Bhutan?

Dragyel: We live in Thimphu and I grew up in Thimphu, but my ancestors come from Talo in Punakha valley, and I often go there.

Ost: Did you travel in Switzerland?

Dragyel: Yes, often I am in Zurich, meeting friends, and I went to Geneva, where our Mission is, and often we go to Baar, and I visited Thun, and, of course, I'm all the time commuting by train between Bern to Luzern. It is so easy here, you are in a moving room, you can sleep, read, work on the computer. I very much like the old town of Bern; in my free time I often take a walk. I feel, I'm much more healthier here!

Ost: How come?

Dragyel: Firstly, the diet is not Jhomolhary here, the portions are much smaller, and it's not just rice and rice like in Bhutan. Here you have a change of meals, and especially the salad; and secondly, exercising, every day I do my jogging; earlier I did it till Belp, it's about 20 km, every day in the evening

Ost: But now it's getting dark earlier

Dragyel: Yeah, now, in winter, I'm jogging in the old town of Bern, towards the Bärengraben...

And don't forget!

Under the heading "Meeting Point" the SSB Newsletter regularly features interviews with Bhutanese and Swiss people working, studying and visiting in the respective host country. It will give insight in the experiences and activities of Bhutanese and Swiss people in contact.

Contributions to this rubric from members of SSB and SBS, as well as the circle of readers of the Newsletter are most welcome!

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