

## Agreement on Co-operation between Society Switzerland - Bhutan (SSB) and Bhutan - Switzerland (SBS)

By Marianne Frei, President

In Thimphu on December 2, 2009, Lyonpo Dr. Pema Gyamtsho (Chairman SBS), Marianne Frei (President SSB) and Ernst Reinhardt (Vice-President SSB) signed an Agreement to further strengthen their cooperation. The document is meant to specify the common understanding of co-operation and is based on the Memorandum of Understanding which was signed on November 12, 2001. The Agreement is referring to the organization, the financing and the range of activities of the two sister organizations (see under "strategy" on [www.bhutan-switzerland.org](http://www.bhutan-switzerland.org)).



Lyonpo Dr. Pema Gyamtsho is now developing the structure of the central organization of SBS in Thimphu. A first meeting with 20 members has taken place in January 2010.

## SBS Bumthang Chapter

By Gembo Tenzin, Treasurer/Secretary, Bumthang

In view of the already existing friendship and co-operation between Bhutan and Switzerland, thus keeping in mind of further strengthening its very objective, a meeting was called on to discussing a formation of a committee in Bumthang on 23rd November 2009 respectively amongst the former co-workers under the Helvetas in the past. As a result, around twelve persons have registered as its members so far and will recruit more members in future who are interested to do so. The committee then

also has nominated Mr. Gembo Tenzin, a visually handicapped person who has greater link with Switzerland to be as their Secretary cum Treasurer.

On 27th November 2009, DASHO JANGPHEL NGEDUP, an active member of the committee hosted a dinner at his resident in honour of the visiting president, Madam Marianne Frei and the vice president, Mr. Ernst Reinhardt of Society Switzerland-Bhutan in Switzerland in presence of all the new members from Bumthang.



Together we shared views and information relating to the issues of interests beneficial for both the societies and for the mutual supports in time to follow. A quarterly newsletter should also be available in future from Switzerland for distribution in Bhutan as discussed upon.

## Book Donation

By Kinley Wangmo & Karuna Chetteri



### A book on a special relationship

This article comes from Kuensel Newspaper [www.kuenselonline.com](http://www.kuenselonline.com)

**4 December 2009** - The close cooperation between Switzerland and Bhutan for the cause of socio-economic development in this country has been documented in a book titled "Far



Apart and Close Together”, which will be distributed to the secondary schools.

Yesterday, on the occasion of strengthening cooperation between the sister organizations, the society Switzerland-Bhutan (SSB) and Bhutan-Swiss friendship association, the SSB, through the support of private Swiss donors, donated 500 copies of the book to the education ministry.



The book describes the ties between Switzerland and Bhutan, covering many joint endeavours in projects like bridge building, health, education, entrepreneurship and renewal natural resource management, and provides a clear insight into the start and growth of joint engagement in Bhutan.

SSB president, Ms Marianne Frei and former president, Mr. Ernst Reinhardt handed over the books.



“This book is valuable record that will be beneficial for the next generation to understand the unfolding of more than five decades of hard work, mutual respect and close partnership that defines the Swiss-Bhutan relationship,” stated a press release from SSB.

Each secondary school in the country will receive two copies of the book, one for each

primary school, according to education officials. Switzerland and Bhutan shares a close relationship since the time of the Third Druk Gyalpo. It was initiated by a personal relationship with Fritz von Schulthess, a Swiss businessman.

SSB aims to further strengthen and deepen the traditional friendship, exchange of knowledge and experience through its function as a communication and information forum. SSB, in co-operation with SBS, is planning to support people’s initiatives and strengthen enterprising groups and communities to further make their relation strong.

## Exhibition Museum Rietberg Zurich 4 July – 17 October 2010

### Sacred art from the Himalayas

By Ernst Reinhardt, Vice-President SSB

In the many temples and monasteries of Bhutan paintings and sculptures are venerated as sacred objects. They are only taken out for particular rituals so that they can spread their spiritual aura and help to lead the believers along the path to enlightenment. This travelling exhibition presents more than 100 of these impressive Buddhist artworks to the public for the first time. After Honolulu, San Francisco and Paris and Köln, it now comes to Zurich.

[www.rietberg.ch](http://www.rietberg.ch)

The exhibition is organized by the Honolulu Academy of Arts and the Department of Culture, Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs of the Royal Government of Bhutan.

The Society has approached the Director of the Rietberg Museum, Dr. Albert Lutz, some months ago and suggested to contribute a few items from modern Bhutan, thus embedding the exhibition in contemporary life. So far, the parties have agreed on the following items:

- Presentation of Bhutan Films, focusing on GNH. "SMS from Shangri La" by Dieter Fahrner, a movie accompanying our Culture Tour 2008, will also be presented
- Concert of BigSenn, with participation of Bhutanese musicians, as part of the opening ceremony



- Our book, the DVD "SMS from Shangri La" and Bhutan handicrafts on sale in the Rietberg shop
- Selected Bhutanese / Himalayan food items will be available at the Rietberg Restaurant

In parallel, the Rietberg Museum and the **Volkshochschule des Kantons Zurich** will organize a series of lectures accompanying the exhibition.

**Helvetas** and **SSB** together are planning to organize for the members a special event at the exhibition.

## The Songtsen-House Zurich

[www.songtsenhouse.ch](http://www.songtsenhouse.ch) will include special events focusing on Bhutan in its program, after August 2010.

## SMS from Shangri La

By Patrick Vogel

In October 2008, the Swiss musicians of BIG SENN toured Bhutan, playing eight concerts, together with different local musicians. The concert tour was organized jointly by SSB and SBS. Beforehand, it had been decided to record the tour in film. Dieter Fahrner (Fahrner & Balzli GmbH, Bern), a renowned Swiss film director/producer (*Que Sera*, 2004, *Jour de Nuit*, 2000), got wind of this venture, and proposed to produce a movie in a project of his own.

Together with Lisa Rösli as co-director/producer, Balthasar Jucker as sound director, and the support of the award winning Bhutanese director Ugyen Wangdy (*Price of Knowledge*, 2000), they pictured a vivid account of the tour. It shows not only the exciting moments of the concerts, but also lifelike images and stories of Bhutanese people, which was a major claim of SBS for the film. The movie is rounded out by an interview with Prime Minister Lyonchen Jigme Y. Thinley.

Directed by Dieter Fahrner, Lisa Rösli  
Written by Dieter Fahrner, Lisa Rösli  
Cinematography Dieter Fahrner, Lisa Rösli, Ugyen Wangdi  
Editing Maya Schmid  
Sound Balthasar Jucker  
Music Wege Wüthrich, Gilbert Paeffgen, Mark Oberholzer, Patrick Vogel, Susanna Dill, Regula Gerber, Säm Zumbrunn  
Original Version English/Swiss-German/Dzongkha (German subtitles), colour, video, 75 min.  
Release January 2010  
Production Balzli & Fahrner GmbH,



"Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross National Product," says the King of Bhutan. But can happiness be ordered by decree? We accompany seven Swiss musicians to this mountainous country in the Himalayas. Between concerts we meet the populace living their everyday lives and along the way we learn what really makes them happy. And what about us? Can we find happiness somewhere else?

The film is launched at the Swiss film festival Solothurn ([www.solothurnerfilmstage.ch](http://www.solothurnerfilmstage.ch)) on January 26, and will soon be broadcasted by Swiss TV and ARTE. The DVD will be available starting from mid July, with special price for SSB/SBS members, (see details on [www.bhutan-switzerland.org](http://www.bhutan-switzerland.org), after mid May 2010).

## New SSB Members

By Julia Menk

The Society Switzerland–Bhutan enjoys increasing popularity: in 2009, more than 30 persons have expressed their interest in membership!

In the name of SSB we would like to extend a warm welcome to the following registered new members:

**Robert F. Aeberli**, Niederglatt  
**Donat Bräm**, Zürich  
**Patrizia & Maurizio Canonica Tettamanti**, Cadro  
**Doris Edelmann**, Zürich  
**Brigit & Harri Eriksson-Hotz**, Stammheim  
**Meret Fankhauser**, Uster  
**Eberhard Fischer**, Zürich  
**Walter Furrer**, Herriberg  
**Rainer & Nadine Gilg**, Bern  
**Fabienne Grossenbacher**, La Neuveville  
**Marlene Hégelé**, Bischofszell  
**Caspar & Claudia Hürlimann**, Stäfa  
**Ruedi & Andrea Isler**, Zürich  
**Pius & Andrea Kobler-Tarnutzer**, Zürich  
**Christa Koestler**, Winterthur  
**Christoph Rauh**, Bern  
**Markus Rettich**, Horgen  
**Theres Roder**, Muri b. Bern  
**Christian Rohrbach**, Winterthur  
**Claudia Scartazzini**, Stettlen  
**Cecilia Serra Stern**, Neuchâtel  
**Ilham Trad**, Crans-Montana  
**Werner Wüthrich**, Bern



## Members of Society Bhutan - Switzerland, SBS, Bumthang Chapter

By Gembo Tenzin

As of 23.11.2009 we are 13 Members and agreed to appoint Mr. Gembo Tenzin, as the Secretary cum treasurer of the BSS of Bumthang Chapter. However, Jampel Ngedup is assigned as Coordinator for any matter.



**Jampel Ngedup** (Coordinator),  
Rinchenling Lodge

**Gembo Tenzin** (Secretary/Treasurer),  
Auto Spare parts shop

**Ugyen Dorji**, Udee Enterprise

**Nola Dorji**, Logging Contractor, Bumt.

**Tandi Dorjee**

**Sonam Dorji**, T.Deer Workshop

**Karma Wangdi**, Food Processing Unit, Dekiling

**Karma Tobden**, Agro Mechanical Workshop

**Phuntsho**, Wangdicholing Resort

**Tshering Wangchuk**, Swiss Guest House

**Kaila Tamang**, Kaila Guest House

**Jambay Johny**, Jambay Enterprise

**Pema Dawa**, River Lodge

Anybody interested to join BSS will be most welcome. Besides membership fee and annual fee, a minimum contribution is set at Nu. 500 annually.

## SBS Thimphu

### Bronze National Award of Merit for Nola Dorji

By Gembo Tenzin

His Majesty the King awarded gold, silver and bronze National Orders of Merit to 17 people including three schoolteachers and blue-collar workers. Nola Dorji, a member of SBS, is one of the recipients of bronze medal for his outstanding contribution towards nation building in the operation of cable cranes in Bhutan.

He was involved in the reconstruction works of Taktsang Monastery and Punakha Dzong renovation, transporting heavy timber with cable cranes. He is recognized as a trained mechanic, sticking to his profession throughout, and excelled in this particular field.



It is the Swiss who molded him to excel in his profession, thus achieving to be the recipient of Bronze National Award of Merit from His Majesty the King on the 102nd National Day Celebrations at Changlingmithang, Thimphu, on 17th December 2009.

## General Assembly, March 27, 2010 in Neuchâtel

By Marianne Frei, President SSB

The General Assembly of the Society Switzerland-Bhutan will take place on Saturday, March 27th, 2010, from 10 to 12 at the **Musée d'ethnographie in Neuchâtel**. It will be followed by a lunch at the museum and a visit of the Bhutan Collection in the early afternoon. The program and the agenda of the annual meeting 2010 will be sent to the members around February 15.

We are honoured to have H.E. Ambassador Yeshey Dorji, Permanent Mission of Bhutan to the United Nations and Switzerland, as chief guest at our meeting.

Editor: Otto Stern, E-Mail: ostern@sunrise.ch

Contact: Marianne Frei, President SSB,  
Wildfriedstr. 7, CH-8032 Zürich, Switzerland

Mobile: +41 79 629 63 16,

E-Mail: marianne.frei@phzh.ch

