

Editorial

By Marianne Frei, President

On July 4th, in less than one month, the Exhibition «**Bhutan – Heilige Kunst aus dem Himalaya**» will open its doors at the Museum Rietberg in Zurich. We will regularly inform you through E-mail and on our website about the upcoming events around the exhibition in various places.

The **VI European Meeting of the Bhutan Friendship Societies** will take place in Mantova, Italy, from September 24 – 26, 2010.

This year's **General Assembly** took place at the Musée d'Ethnographie in Neuchâtel on March 27th. We were very honored to have HE Ambassador Yeshey Dorji as chief guest at our meeting. The official meeting was followed by a cultural program. We enjoyed the inspiring presentations of Ms. Marceline de Montmollin, Ms. Olimpia Caligiuri Cullity and Dr. Marc-Olivier Gonseth. On our website you can find the minutes and further documents regarding the event (www.bhutan-switzerland.org)

New SSB Board Members

Rosmarie Frey

SSB Board: Treasurer



My motivation for joining the Board is to follow up the development of Bhutan on its way to democracy and its care for National Gross Happiness.

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+41 44 930 56 78 r.r.frey@bluewin.ch

Profession: Medical secretary, Administration of parents education, City-councillor in Wetzikon 1994 - 2006, now retired

My work experiences in Bhutan: Working at the Bumthang Hospital 1974/75.

Friendship with several Bhutanese families since then.

E. Werner Külling

SSB Board: Communication / Public Relations;
Special Missions for SSB

My motivation for joining the Board is the continuation of the longstanding cooperation and friendship with the country and the people of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

Address: Baldernstr. 12a, CH 8134 Adliswil

Profession: Dipl. Manager NPO/VMI (retired). Now working as Advisor for international development cooperation and humanitarian aid projects. Consultant in Non-Profit-Organisations.



My work experiences in Bhutan: In my former capacity as Secretary General of Helvetas in contact with Bhutan since July 1975 when development activities were taken over

by Helvetas from the Swiss Foundation pro Bhutan.

First visit in Bhutan in January 1979. Since then many professional missions in Bhutan.

Resident Coordinator of Helvetas / SDC in Thimphu from 2006 – 2008 (three years)

Ernst Reinhardt and **Dieter Bratschi** resigned from the board. We would like to express our thanks once more for their contribution to the development of the society.

Road movie «SMS from Shangri-La» out now

By Patrick Vogel

It is with great pleasure to announce that the movie «SMS from Shangri-La» is now available on DVD. Follow the Swiss music group «BigSenn» along their concert tour in 2008 and have a fascinating and touching view on the daily life in Bhutan. A true jewel of Buddhist films.

The DVD can be purchased for CHF 30 from our website:

www.bhutan-switzerland.org/pages/dvd.php



New SSB Members

By Julia Menk

This year the Society Switzerland–Bhutan could welcome the following new members:

Anna Maria Riedi, Zürich
Armin Kuratle, Kreuzlingen
Gert & Michelle Christen Chang, Zürich
Christoph & Ilse Ditzler, Effretikon
Gérald & Marceline de Montmollin, Auvernier
Karin & Rudolf Meichtry Fischer, Horgen
Leo Caminada, Greppen
Monika Kramer, Zürich
Patrick Hagmann, Zürich
Urs Wirth, Jegenstorf

It is an honor to count on their support and of course on the one of all the other members, too. The SSB would like to thank all members for their confidence and encouragement to continue the projects in and around Bhutan, tashi delek.

SSB moves ahead but we need your help

By Erwin König

On June 4th, a workshop was organized by and for the SSB board members. The objective of the workshop was to operationalize the SSB Bhutan Programme presented last March at the General Assembly¹. Out of the 14 projects of the programme, 7 were retained for implementation in 2010 and 2011. For each project, the members defined the measures to be taken, the various responsibilities of SSB and SBS, costs and timing. In addition, a participation of the beneficiaries and SSB is expected for most projects. This cost sharing shall strengthen the sense of ownership.

Coming to the projects in Zhemgang, we decided that the “Internet access” project and the “school to school exchange programme”, being naturally linked, will be implemented in the same schools and launched in July. The “village stay” project is on track. The feedback from the peer tourist-group will be crucial in defining future activities. The more complex “orchard diversification” project looks out for more information, best gathered during the coming winter vegetable cropping season.

In Bumthang, the hands-on “chef training” project should offer a better and wider palette of

Concert tour of BigSenn in Switzerland

By Patrick Vogel

The music group *BigSenn* is going to play the songs performed in Bhutan on the following dates in Switzerland:

- September 4: Museum Rietberg Zürich (Lange Nacht der Museen)
- September 19: Grosse Halle der Reitschule, Bern
- October 15: Theater(uri), Altdorf
- October 17: Kultur im Uferbau, Solothurn
- November 15: Chrämerhuus, Langenthal

Together with the live performance of the musicians, the movie SMS from Shangri-La will be displayed. Please mark the dates for your personal concert visit.

desserts to the lodge-tourists, and will hopefully terminate the reign of endless tinned fruit salad!

By now you must be asking yourself why&when do we need your help? Basically, it is about the sponsorship of the “school children scheme”. During our tour in Kheng, we encountered startling poverty in some of the remotest villages. The housing conditions and the tattered clothing of the people actually unveiled poignant poverty. Parent’s prime demand focused on school materials, including fees, uniforms, shoes and stationeries. As a first step, SSB and SBS will jointly define the selection and distribution modalities, as well as a minimal contribution (ownership) from the beneficiaries. As the school year starts in early February, your swift and generous sponsoring is critical. Indicative costs per child lay between 10 to 40 CHF. By August, please regularly consult our web page for further information and donations with a “simple click”. We already thank you for helping a pupil to redeem his or her education and fragile dignity.

¹ Details on the programme will be available on our web site www.bhutan-switzerland.org



Gratitude, appreciation and good wishes to our founder president Ernst Reinhardt

By E. Werner Külling

Ernst Reinhardt - the first Resident Coordinator of Helvetas / SDC in Thimphu from April 1983 to August 1987 – was one of the main promoters and creators of the Society Switzerland-Bhutan.



He was elected as the first President of the SSB-Board in the year 2000. For the dynamic engineer, planner and manager M.B.A. and his wife Annegret the

time in Bhutan was very crucial and determine for their professional life and career. They always kept close contacts with Druk Yul and the people in the land of the peaceful thunder dragon and made regularly visits to maintain and intensify the excellent relations with the Bhutanese friends. Ernst – a man full of ideas and political and technical knowledge, with clear concepts about sustainable development and with a strong belief in entrepreneurship

and privatisation, as well as the will and power to accomplish with high speed many projects in different fields – also participated in consulting missions for the Government of Bhutan.

The peak of his activities and engagements within the Board of the Society was the publishing of the book “Far apart and close together” looking back on 50 years of cooperation and partnership Switzerland-Bhutan as well as the realisation of the famous Swiss Cultural Tour with the music band “BigSenn” in the auspicious Bhutanese year 2008, combined with the production of the film “SMS from Shangri La”.

He also participated in the organisation of the Swiss-Bhutanese Festival on the Rigi together with Helvetas in June 2004.

We would like to express our sincerest gratitude and appreciation to Ernst Reinhardt and wish him, as well as his wife Annegret who always supported him strongly, all the best in a peaceful future.

Bumthang-Hospital: a visit after 35 years and a new engagement of SHMSC (Swiss Health Management Support Committee)

By Rosmarie Frey

It was a great opportunity for me to visit Bhutan and specially Bumthang again after 35 years. Of course, we had been visiting Bumthang three times in between as guests and tourists, but this time it was different, as we were involved in a new project again, and could see how development took and takes place concerning public health care, and specially concerning “our” hospital in Wangdichoeling.

In 1974 the former Bumthang guesthouse in Wangdichoeling was handed over to the Swiss doctors sent by «Foundation Pro Bhutan». At the beginning there were only three rooms available, one as consulting room and two rooms for maximum 10 inpatients. There were no nurses, the patients had to be nursed and fed by their relatives. There were three trainees speaking English, who translated for us,

and to whom we gave lessons in practical medical knowledge and in English.

Today there is a nearly 20 years old hospital-building – built by Helvetas – with 20 beds, nurses attending the patients, one or two doctors, two ambulances, Lab- and X-Ray-technicians. Compared to 35 years ago a big leap. But compared to the development around the hospital, its development concerning medical technology and maintenance seems to have stopped in the nineties: all the upcoming hotels, the very well equipped shops – in 1975 you were happy to find some eggs or eventually a battery for your torch, today you find everything from mobiles to pizza – the traffic-jam, when parents drive their children to school – it seems that some families own two cars already, whereas in 1975 there were about five cars in whole Bumthang.



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Therefore, this new project of the small group of the Swiss Hospital Management Support Committee (SHMSC) which aims at a better hospital management, including the participation of the local population, seems to be well needed. We hope that Benedict Holzer, the Swiss general practitioner with great experience in developing countries in Africa and South America, who will stay in Bumthang for one year, will have the chance to introduce several necessary innovations. But without the hospital administration officer Dorjee Dukpa, who was working with the Swiss doctors for many years at the Bumthang hospital since the first days, the ambitious aim to install Bumthang hospital as a model for other district hospitals could never be reached.

I was very happy of course to meet several members of our sister organisation, the Society Bhutan-Switzerland (SBS) in Thimphu as well as in Bumthang.

In Bumthang we were invited to an excellent dinner including a wonderfully relaxing "herbal-hot-stone-bath" at Jampel Ngedup's Guesthouse, Jampel being the chairman of the Bumthang-branch of the SBS.



In connection with the hospital project we could experience the engagement of several members of the SBS, concerning public participation and responsibility towards the hospital.

In Thimphu it seems to be far more difficult to recruit members for the SBS, which should be founded in the nearest future. Namgyel Tshering is doing his best in promoting SBS and I was very glad to meet also my fellow treasurers, Tshewang Chhenzom in Thimphu and Gembo Tenzin in Bumthang.



Meeting point

Under this headline the SSB Newsletter plans to regularly feature 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, and the circle of readers of the Newsletter are most welcome!

A Bhutanese in Switzerland

by Otto Stern

The following interview presents a young Bhutanese, **Jamyang** (26) from Bumthang, who did a one year professional training at *Wyssen Cableways Ltd*,



in Reichenbach, Switzerland. The interviewer (**OST**) met him for the first time in the train to Zurich Airport, on his way home to Bhutan.

OST: This was the second time you were in Switzerland. Was it the same, coming back, or was it different?

Jamyang: The second time was much easier for me, because the first time I came here for six months, and the first three months were a bit difficult to manage, because there were all new people around, I didn't find friends and felt a bit lonely, a little home sick. But after three months I met Namgyel Maurer, we were together in primary school in Bumthang, and so every weekend I visited him, and from that time I was quite comfortable. Now this year, most of the weekends I met him in Gstaad and we used to hang out together (Namgyel Maurer is working in carpentry at Gstaad).

OST: Was it difficult to go there?

Jamyang: No, from my place (Reichenbach) it takes about two hours with the Goldenpass Express train, it's very close, and sometimes he came with his car, so it was like 45 minutes.

OST: You said, in the beginning in Switzerland it was quite difficult for you to communicate, is it easier now?

Jamyang: Yeah, when I go to buy something in a store or in train stations I am able to speak

some basic German for what I need, so communication is quite easy now.

OST: Do people speak English to you?

Jamyang: Yeah, a lot! Reichenbach is a tourist place, so most people speak some English.

OST: You went to Paro Junior High School up to class 12, and then you went to India for a Bachelor's degree in commerce. But where did you get the technical skills you need now?

Jamyang: I got it from my father. I went to commerce school for three years in summer time, but we had a long winter break, and then I used to help my father. (His father, Nola Dorji (cf. Newsletter January 2010), runs a mechanical workshop for cable cranes in Bumthang; he represents Wyssen Ltd in Bhutan, and was himself trained by Wyssen in Reichenbach, Switzerland). The first basic knowledge I got when my father installed the skyline in Tiger's Nest (Taksang monastery).



I was completely engaged to help him in that time. And from there I got this whole idea about skylines, so I got encouraged; it is also a



hard work, but somehow it's really interesting to build something like that.

OST: There are many different types of work in building skyline cranes; what type of work is your speciality?

Jamyang: In building a skyline we have to be interested in all the parts, otherwise the output is not quite sure. Then, when I see the carriage



running on the cable very fast, and it makes this sound of the pulleys, and it is going in the air, far up, we can't even see the cable because it is very thin, so it's only the red carriage you see, it looks like some kind of flying machine, like a helicopter. So, once the installation is complete, I'm fascinated to watch all these things.

OST: Do you also participate in the planning process, like recognizing the terrain, studying where the masts are to be placed and so on?

Jamyang: Yeah, first of all we have to recognize the place, we have to make a survey, and my father even told me how to survey with the compass. Then we have to make a corridor, and then to draw a plan, a profile on the paper, then follow studies about the cable, where to put the supports, calculating everything, and it is a little bit confusing all that.

OST: So, you do also all the calculations?

Jamyang: Before, I did many calculations back home, but when I reached here at Wyssen, everything was computerized, so I have been learning for two weeks about drawing the profiles on the computer. So now it's easier, I just need the data from the survey, then I put the data in the computer profile, and then just click, and the complete drawing is finished!

OST: Do you also do the commercial part, cost proposals and so on?

Jamyang: So far I didn't work on this one; now I'm about to finish to study the technical part, and I already studied the management part in my college, so now, it will be time to use also my commercial knowledge.

OST: At Wyssen in Richebach, did you do very specific types of work, or did you go through the whole production chain?

Jamyang: I was not actually engaged in the fabrication part; I was mainly focusing on the mechanical part; a skyline consists of many different machines, and we have different accessories to be put together, so I was mainly engaged in assembling all these machines. And sometimes a customer brings an old machine to be repaired. So, my work consisted mainly in assembling and repairing, and this is directly related to what we have in Bhutan.

Wyssen also sent me for two weeks to a practical course at a forestry school in Maienfeld (*Bildungszentrum Wald*). There I was learning practically how to erect skylines, which somehow I already knew from Bhutan. So there, it was quite easy. People were asking some questions, and I could just answer easily. So they were much impressed: „How do you know all these things?“ And I said: „Oh, I just learned from my father who has been studying here, in the same school, before!“

OST: Was there anything you found really difficult in this job?

Jamyang: Yeah, sometimes you find a difficult terrain, and a very long distance; in that case you need five, six supports in the middle. And sometimes the calculation is not so right, and sometimes in the middle some support is broken, and it may take two weeks to fix it, because we have to completely dismantle the whole cable down from the masts, then we have to repair the broken one.

OST: Now, on the private side, you said you were in contact with your friend in Gstaad; did you have other contacts with people here?

Jamyang: Yeah, most of the weekends I was hanging out with him; and sometimes, we went to Basel to see his sister, Tashi Maurer; normally I was just around only in the Bhutanese society, so I felt very homely.

OST: But you had contact with the Swiss family you lived with.

Jamyang: Yes, even some other Swiss families I used to visit. One couple lives in Interlaken, a cousin of Mr. Walter Roder, so sometimes they invited me for some hiking. And there is a friend of my father, Martin Bühler, who used to be a forester in Bhutan, long time back, in 1989 or so. He also invited me sometimes and we went hiking together.



OSt: So you've seen many places in Switzerland!

Jamyang: Yeah, in summer, in the place where I stayed (Reichenbach), I have climbed all the horns – Stockhorn, Niederhorn, Gehrihorn, Rothorn, and Schilthorn, and I've been twice to the Jungfrauoch. So in summer it was very nice hiking all around. And even in winter I had a very good time, because I learnt something new: skiing! I learnt it in December, I was very lucky because my boss, a chef at Wyssen firm, used to be a ski racer when he was young. And so I got such a good teacher and I learned in five days how to ski; then within five more days I learned how to do carving; then after that I started even jumping; and even I was surprised, how I could do all that in such a short time!



Skiing with a view on the Eiger (3970m.), Mönch (4099m.) and the Jungfrau (4158m.) (© Switzerland Tourism)

Also, sometimes when the weather was good I used to ride my mountain bike from Richebach to Gstaad; and in winter I sometimes didn't take the train to go to Gstaad, instead I went there on my skis: from Adelboden down to Lenk and Zweisimmen, from there to Saanenmöser and then to Gstaad.

OSt: So, maybe you will introduce skiing in Bhutan!?

Jamyang: Unfortunately, in Bhutan we are too much south, so the snow is melting away very fast in the sun!

OSt: But maybe you could construct a cable car for hiking?

Jamyang: Yeah, that is one of my dreams; I think in future it will be possible, but building a cable car is not so easy.

OSt: Would there be a good place in Bumthang to do so?

Jamyang: Yeah, maybe Kikiphu, in between Jakar and Chumey valley; there is a height of about 4000m; so, that could be the one place where I could build a small restaurant up in the mountain, and then build a cable car. From there it is a very nice view. – The only thing is, you need someone who is going to invest all that money! The idea is there, because here I have seen so many such things, when I went hiking in summer. I think it would make a very good business: a restaurant on the mountain top, and a cable car taking all the people up there; I think that would be very nice!

OSt: Now, back home, what is the first thing you would like to do?

Jamyang: Since my father is already working in the same business, so at first I'll just work with him. And also I have brought some new machines from here, for myself, which I have to assemble back home. Maybe it will be difficult to find a job for myself, but I will work with my father, and in future I'm looking to diversify, and have a small firm on my own. For now, my father works only in the forestry, but my dream is to find work in different sectors. Like here in Switzerland I saw many different uses of skylines in construction. For example in hydro-electricity construction, there are so many difficulties in Bhutan, where there is no road, you can work with skylines very easily; and it's also environmental friendly. In Bhutan the government is so environment conscious, and there are so many hydro-electricity projects coming up. This will encourage me to put some new ideas to work!

OSt: Thank you for the interview and good luck!

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