

Newsletter 1 2004

Sikkim, 27th of March 2004

I am travelling by jeep back into Sikkim. I have covered this stretch already many times but today after a 5 month absence my excitement of returning to the school grows with every minute I am getting closer. Sikkim consists for 95% of mountains and jungle. Everything looks greener than green. The orchids in several colors are smiling at me....and so is the sun. It seems like everyone is happy.....but that's most likely just my perception for I am so pleased to go back to the children.

I do not exaggerate when I say that Sikkim is like a little paradise on this globe.

Finally we arrive at the school in its gorgeous and peaceful surroundings at the end of the quiet valley. Nothing but songs of birds, the waterfall in the distance, the sound of the river, the silence and.... cheerfull calls of children....." Look, Miss is back!" They come up running towards the jeep to help carry the bags. The teachers are there too and give me a warm welcome. It is lovely to come back home!

This first evening unfolds like a little party. After the daily evening ritual of prayers and devotional songs in the hostel one by one a child gets up to sing a traditional local song or to show a dance. It is so touching to see that they know no hesitation to express themselves in front of the others. Then we play some popular tapes and everyone, young and old, big and small including teachers who are with the children almost day and night are dancing. The frankness, purity and contentment of those kids touches me deeply, over and over again. This small community is something unique and functions like a real family where people look after each other.

The warmth, the attention and the love the teachers give is worth millions. With so much dedication from their side the children know themselves safe and cared for.

There are 5 new children from 5 and 6 years old living with us in the hostel listening to beautiful names like Hissey, Yangzom, (2 girls) and Tsering Dorjee, Saurav and Topden (3 boys). With them came a few new skindiseases too which spread rapidly amongst the other children.....this needs some attention.

The new school year has been running for more than a month and a half already and the daily routine under the great guidance of Jamyang (who is at the same time principal, teacher, "father" and friend of the children) runs very smoothly.

The new classrooms that are being built over the winter break are beyond my expectations....."real" classrooms from bricks with a door, windows and a roof of iron sheets....all together definitely "monsoon proof"! One normal classroom, one nursery classroom with extra playroom and a sort of open air outside multifunctional playroom.

And finally one year after we ordered the school pullovers with our own school logo they are delivered.....so we gave them out and this in itself was again a

little celebration for the children. All those happy faces above the bright blue pullovers is a beautiful sight.

And like this there are so many moments every day on which I feel a wave of deep contentment, realising how fantastic it is to be able to contribute to the well being of the children, teachers, helpers and friends of Sikkim Himalayan Academy.

And last but not least.....you can find us on the web.....thanks to the beautiful work of some dedicated friends!

There are 2 English websites: www.sikkimacademy.com en www.sikkimhimalayanacademy.org which are definitely worth visiting!!

Then there is also some information in German on the school: www.wohlfahrtladen.de

And the Dutch website is under construction. You might not understand a thing...but nice to see the pictures....you can have a look already at: www.diskinfo.nl under the button 'under construction'.