



HIMALAYA HILFE e.V.

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Dear sponsors and friends,

25 years of Himalaya Hilfe e.V. – a million thanks to all of you from Gyalwa Karmapa Thaye Dorje and us!

After Shamar Rinpoche's passing in 2014, Gyalwa Karmapa Thaye Dorje took the reins. On our homepage (www.himalayahilfe.org/about-us/letters-of-the-year) you will find a letter for Himalaya Hilfe's 25th anniversary from Gyalwa Karmapa.

But now to the story: Since August 1993, you have been supporting Himalaya Hilfe by taking on sponsorships, making project and general-purpose donations, and with your energy, organisational and technical expertise. We use the general-purpose donations to cover the operational costs, which enables us to distribute 100% of all sponsorship funds and the appropriated donations.

In 1992, Shamar Rinpoche asked us, Sabine and Ulli, if we would like to start the association with him. We presented Himalaya Hilfe for the first time at the 1993 summer course in Kassel. Since then, we have accomplished a great deal together with you. In the first year, there were 20 sponsorships for 3 projects, and we were able to transfer a total of 5,870 German Marks to Asia.

Today, 25 years later, there are 934 project-related or personal sponsorships that help people in the Himalayas. Including the one-time and general donations for a specific purpose and for particular projects or emergency aid, you donated a total of 265.264,45 euros for 24 projects the last year.

In this letter, we would like to introduce you especially to the **four new projects** that have been added over the past year:

In Nepal, we have the **Sharminub Institute for Buddhist Studies (SIB)** that is located in the **Sharminub Center in Raniban/Nepal**. In our previous annual newsletter, we briefly mentioned that the Sharminub Center had become home to a group of very young monastic students. The children are mostly from the earthquake areas. Either they have lost their parents or the situation is so difficult that the relatives or parents were very happy that their children could get accommodation and lessons at the **SIB**. There are 97 boys living and learning there now. Khenpo Gyaltsen and 12 graduates of the Shedra (monastic university) in Kalimpong take care of the children. As of our last visit in October, we had found 21 new sponsors for this location. The boys were very happy about the sponsorship funds, which are always divided equally among all. With all the monastic projects we support, the money for the young monks is managed on site by the elder monks in charge, and the boys receive part of it as pocket money, e.g. on the weekend. So, the small SIB shop was 'besieged' by the boys while we were there, and we saw many of them happily walking away with chips, chocolates and also new flip flops in their hands.

In March and October, we visited the **three other new projects in India**:

First, we travelled to the **Mindu Tempen Monastery in Rey/Sikkim**, which we also presented in the last year's newsletter. It was founded in 1897 and massively damaged by an earthquake in 1981. Rey Lama has been the abbot there since 1994. He was asked by Shamar Rinpoche and Karmapa to rebuild the monastery, which – aside from the murals in the meditation room (Gompa) and a few minor repairs – is almost done. Since April, we have been able to find sponsors for five of the 45 monks there. Rey Lama was also very happy about the appropriated donations (485 euros) for the monastery. This money is used for food and everyday items for the monks.

We received a very warm welcome, and everyone greeted us with the classic welcome scarf.

It was similar at the **Ka-Ten Namgyalling elementary school in Rey/Sikkim**. The kids and teachers even came to the school on a Sunday so that they could meet with us in person. Rey Lama is also responsible for this school, which he founded in 2012 at the request of Shamar Rinpoche so that the children could be educated in the village. Most of the children belong to the Lepcha ethnic group, the original inhabitants of Sikkim, and their parents are usually farmers with no fixed income or formal education. Most of them can only afford to pay very little or no fees at all. Thus, for this location, half of the sponsorship money is allocated to the operation of the school. The Indian state has officially recognised the school since 2014, but this certification must be renewed every year. Annual certification costs are approximately 130 euros, and the four teachers and the director also receive a small salary. It would be possible to teach a maximum of 50 children there – from kindergarten to 6th grade – and there are new requests to attend, but unfortunately, the school cannot accept any new students at this time due to financial constraints. Of the current 27 students, so far eight have received sponsorships.



We visited the **Tilopa Buddhist Institute in Tilokpur/Himachal Pradesh** for the first time in March 2017. It is, so to speak, the Diwakar Buddhist School 'branch' in Takdah/Darjeeling, where it is no longer possible to accommodate and teach all the children. The Tilokpur building was empty for a while, and it was decided that 40 of the boys should move from Takdah to Tilokpur in December 2015. This meant a move across India, 1,700 km from the Eastern Himalayas to the Western Himalayas.

Today, with the new monastic students from the earthquake regions in Nepal, 50 children live, study and are cared for at the institute in Tilokpur. In total, now 14 of these children have sponsorships, which were either transferred from Takdah or newly acquired. As in Takdah, after five years of basic education, the boys may go to the Shedra in Kalimpong to continue their studies there.

And now to the existing projects:

There is good news from the **Raja Maha Vihar Monastery in Kathmandu/Nepal** – the permits for reconstruction of the collapsed monastery on Swayambunath hill have been granted, and they can now begin with the construction works.

We will let you know as soon as we get the details.

At the end of June, Darjeeling went on strike for almost 4 months, paralyzing all public life. Schools, banks and all public agencies were closed. There was no public transport, even private cars and taxis were not allowed to drive, and the shops were closed. The heads of the **Diwakar Buddhist Academy in Kalimpong/Darjeeling** and the **Diwakar Buddhist School in Takdah/Darjeeling** told us that they secretly went to shops at night, whose owners they knew, to buy food at the back door. The kids could not go to school, which is why many of you did not receive any attendance credentials or report cards for the sponsored children from the area. However, everything is back to normal now, and the documents will be available again in March.

We had a nice experience at the **Karma Duggyud Choeling Monastery in Ladakh** – it was so cold that the gas container for the oven was frozen. The boys found a solution immediately – they poured boiling water over the container, the gas thawed, and we quickly got warm again. Everything is going well in the monastery, a new guesthouse was built, and you'll be able to rent very nice rooms there this summer. All of you are welcome!

We acted as couriers for the **Rigjung School in Ladakh** in March. In Ladakh, everything is much more expensive and so Lama Chonet, the principal, bought some things for the children very cheaply in Delhi, which we then took from there to Ladakh.

From the **Chokar Dechen Nunnery in Rumtek/Sikkim**, we received the unfortunate news that the abbess Ani Mingyur-la had passed away at the end of April. We had already reported several times that she was ill. The nuns told us that she died very peacefully and during the cremation ceremony, special signs, such as rainbows, appeared.

All is well with the monks of the **Dharma Chakra Center** and the students in **Nedo Rinpoche's Kayathang Monastic School in Zimchung/Sikkim**. There are also new monks at the Dharma Chakra Center. The road is finished, and a new, large meditation room is under construction.

As always, we met **the children and the elderly** everywhere, received the required papers and letters to you and distributed the sponsorship money. Everyone is very happy about that.

Please contact us if you have not received any mail from Asia, and please remember to send your **mail to your sponsored children** by September 15th, so that we can take it with us. We only take post (preferably with photos of you), but absolutely NO gifts, not even small ones. If you want to send extra gifts with us, please do so in the form of money, which we will give to the people and/or schools you sponsor during our next trip. The other option is contacting one of our many friends who also travel to India who can deliver your gifts locally.

And as always, please inform us of any changes to your address, name, etc. in a timely manner, so that you don't miss any mail.

We wish you all a healthy, happy and successful year and look forward to meeting many of you again at one of our booths this summer.

Your Himalaya Hilfe Team