

My experience at Shree Jung Primary School in my own village, a place called Lhi, has been rewarding. Within these 5 months' service I got to know many new things about monks' and lay people's life styles.

There are 4 Tibetan language teachers, (3 monks, 1 ex monk) 2 Nepali language teachers (government) and 2 English language teachers (Mikmar Bhuti and myself). The two government teachers don't speak Tibetan. About our students, 22 are monks who come from Thrangu Rinpoche's monastery at Hinang. There are 32 village kids. All the monks have to walk for hour and a half to reach the school. We have classes from Nursery to Class 3.

The school day starts at 10 AM and finishes at 3 PM. The students study 6 subjects: English, Tibetan, Math, Social Studies, Science and Nepali. Every morning we hold assembly to chant morning prayers, then we sing the Nepali national anthem, and we begin the rest of the day with physical exercise to warm the kids up. The students lead the assembly by themselves.

The lunch break is at 11:30 AM. Before, the village kids had to go to home to have lunch. Lots of villagers kept their kids at home to make them work but now, lunch is sponsored for everyone, thanks to Jodi and Phil Tweed and their not-for-profit stylealliance.org

After the classes finish, the monks and I have to climb back up to Hinang as i don't have a house to stay at in Lhi.

I am the class teacher of Class 3. In my class there 4 students. I teach English and Science subjects to all the kids from Class 1 to Class 3. In 1 week we conduct classes for 5 and a half days. On Fridays we have half holiday. We teachers and the students cleans the surroundings of the school, the health post and camping areas which are nearby the school.

I have to walk down from Hingang Monastery to the school in Lhi every day. At first it took me about an hour to get down and at first, walking such a long distance was a bit difficult. Well now i am used to it. It takes about an hour to climb back up because the trails are difficult. I found the shortage of toilets a problem that I faced when I first went back to Nubri. I got used to having toilets at SMD. During monsoon season, a whole day of heavy rain really saddens me as it destroys the trails and makes it so difficult to walk and a raincoat makes me uncomfortable...so hot...when I'm walking on the slopes and trails. We have to take walking sticks in order to protect ourselves from slipping and falling.

Most of the villagers are herders and they have to go after the animals even when it rains heavily. There is no option to leave domestic animals in the forest as we fear that the bears would take their lives. It's also risky for both people and animals to walk at night time and sometimes, dangerous to work in the fields. During the field work and cutting grass, we have to wake up at 5 AM and after having breakfast all of us get ready for field work and some leave for cutting grass. It takes 10 days to finish the overall work for the animals. I found it was hard to adjust with the environment and food when I first went back.

On Saturday, the monks take a shower and do their laundry. They have other jobs too: The cleaning the Hinang Monastery shrine room, making tormas (ritual cake offerings) and making butter lamps. They chant prayers twice a day. During holidays they go out to collect fire wood

and the elder monks cut grass for donkeys.

Once a month we hold group meeting of the school, the health post and Lhi village. In this gathering I've led the meeting and wrote all the information about what is discussed, focused on solving problems. I also have to submit minutes to CAN (Community Action Nepal).

Thrangu Monastery, SMD School, CANepal, Himalayan Teachers' Project and The Style Alliance have made SJP School run better than it ever had before, with the great generosity of Very Venerable Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche.

By "Senior" Tsewang Sangmo B228