

## The School in Lhihi: Shree Junga Primary School a report by Pema Choden B280



Pema Choden B280 (in the red) with Tashi Choden B322 at the Lhihi school, summer 2011. Tashi Choden has just returned to Kathmandu to continue her education.

Though Lhi School was opened more than 20 years ago, this is the first time ever it has run so well. Two students from SMD School (in Kathmandu) go back to Lhi School every year to teach. After a year, they will come down to Kathmandu to do their further studies. Lhihi school has 5 classrooms. One room is for the government teacher to live in. The area of the school is very small. There are around 55 students. Not all the students attend the classes daily because some kids have to help their parents work. There are 22 little monks from Thrangu Rinpoche's monastery in Hinang that attend classes daily, walking one and half hours down and a bit longer climbing back up.



The school is in the process of improving, but there are many things that still are needed. I saw from photos that friends showed me that Lhihi students were sitting on the wooden floor, some had books and some without books. There was nothing on the floor for them to sit on.

Those photos touched my heart and I was yearning to do anything to help those poor kids. I could understand what they are going through because I am from from the same part of Nepal. It's very cold in the winter. Therefore, I decided to do something small for the school either with the help of SAFUGE, a group that does humanitarian work at my school in Norway Red Cross Nordic United World College where I'm studying on scholarship. I thought, if that doesn't work, I'd use my own pocket money that I got from RCNUWC

Luckily, the SAFUGE members voted to accept my proposal. That day was one of the happiest in my life. I felt so happy because finally I got a chance to do something for the future generations of my village and in a way I got a chance to fulfill the aim of of SMD's founder, Ven. Thrangu Rinpoche.

When I went back to my village this summer, the changes astonished me and although I only got a couple of days to teach in the school, I enjoyed it a lot. The biggest challenge was getting the supplies to the school, since my village several days' trek from the city. Fortunately through the help of my loving brother, 20 mattresses were sent to the school much earlier and I only had to pay for the porters. If I hadn't done that, it would have been very difficult work for me since it's monsoon season and trails are terrible, narrow and slippery. I bought some stationery items but couldn't take them since I couldn't carry it all. I decided to send the stationery with the monastery things later on so I couldn't give the things directly to the school. Instead I have given all the instructions to my friend who will be teaching there. I am glad that I got an opportunity to see the school myself because it makes it clear what to do next if I have any left over money.

I want to thank SAFUGE members, the SMD family and everyone who believed in me and my dream. Though I initiated this, without encouragement I wouldn't have been able to do this. I pray and hope for the betterment of villages like mine. There are many things yet to be done, mine was just a drop of water on a dry land...it can vanish very soon. If you think you can help the future pillars of my village, you are always welcome to do so. Your great deeds will not be wasted!

By Pema Choden B280, now on scholarship at the Red Cross Nordic United World College in Norway. Pema returned to her village on her summer holidays. The photos were taken in June and July 2011.



Wooden bench-style desk with mattresses for kids to sit on. Winters are cold in the Himalayas.