

Hello to all of you!!

The days are beautiful here in Sikkim but the nights can still be very chilly!! On the fields the farmers are busy with their ploughs and oxen to open the hard earth to plant the maize. Many orchids and other beautiful flowers are blooming....and everything is so green!! It is a real paradise!!

Recently our school was asked to give a small performance of some local dances by the children. Every now and then we have a small cultural program in our school itself with drama and traditional songs and dances. And in the meantime more people got to know that our kids perform and dance nicely and that's why we sometimes get an invitation to perform elsewhere. This time the occasion was the celebration of Losar (Tibetan New Year at the 1st of March) by the Sherpa community in Bhuriakhop. The Sikkimese minister of tourism and development was invited and some other 'important people' would come.

The children had practiced several days with our male teachers: Guman Singh and Stephen and they would perform 3 Nepali dances: one with our 7-8 year old girls, one with our boys and one with boys and girls dancing together.

It was a beautiful day and after breakfast we started to walk uphill to the place where the festival would happen: an open place in the forest which was decorated with colorful flags and some simple tents around an open space. The children that would perform were dressed by our female teachers in beautiful traditional Nepali dresses including some fake ornaments made of gold and silver paper, red cheeks for the girls and moustaches for the boys. They all looked gorgeous!

There were a few other groups of children to perform some Sherpa and Nepali dances. There were some talks by the invited dignitaries and some talks by people from the Sherpa community, there was music and cups of tea and biscuits for all people present.

The sound system was not the best of all....several times it made a lot of noise or gave buzzing sounds and some of the other dance groups were not lucky because their music tape gave problems and they had to stop their dances halfway through before even finishing.

But our kids were luckyno problems with the music and all were dancing full of devotion and with a big smile on their faces...it was a joyful performance!

After a delicious lunch, prepared on woodfires in the forest and a few more dances we went back to school, all children and teachers were joyful and satisfied!

Here is a letter one of our students wrote for her sponsor:

" Dear Sponsor, how are you?

I miss you very much. You know, yesterday we went to Mani Dara to perform our beautiful dances. I danced in one song called Dumpo. Sikkim people loved us and our school. When they have any program they call us to participate. People say that we are good in studying, playing, dancing and manners. Do you enjoy your winter holiday?

Well, I enjoyed my winterholiday very much. I went to the hot spring with my family. My mum said that I am very lucky to be in this school, getting love from friends, teachers and from you. In our school there is lovely things to see that you all sent us.

May Guru Rinpoche bless you all that you work hard for our school. I am glad to have you my sponsor. From your blessing I am doing well. Tell your granddaughter that I am missing her too>

Bye Bye,

From Kursongkit Lepcha, your loving daughter."

Sunday 19th March we will all go on an outing by bus to "Samduptse", this is a place where on top of a mountain is a huge 135 ft statue of Guru Rinpoche, a being 'born from a lotus'. He was a very renowned person in the 8th century who brought Buddhism from India to Tibet. On his way to Tibet he visited Sikkim and consecrated many places and hid many Buddhist scriptures. In Sikkim, Guru Rinpoche is still being highly venerated and respected.

The children (and me) are already very excited to go on such a nice outing and to have a picnic somewhere!

Lots of love and greetings from:

Dawkit, Padam, Babita, Son Kumar, Sangay, Hissel, Prithika, Neesha, Albat, Hissey, Aita Raj, Chung Chung, Karina, Mingma, Dup Tsering, Bei Chung, Reckchen, Benita, Bawana, Regina, Jeewan, Sapna, Praticka, Sagar, Tulshika, Bintika, Dil Maya, Karisma, Saurav, Topden, Gyatso, Lakpa, Dawa Namgyal, Tsering Dorjee, Dawa Lhamu, Manisha, Anousha, Sangita, Binod, Badal, Asbin, Nitesh, Dawa, Dechen, Sonam, Samten, Bibek, Dicky Lhamu, Yangzom, Hissey, Aman, Yogina, Sajana, Kunzankit, Rha Tsering, Nedup, Chezang, Nim Phuti, Pemkit, Kursongkit, Samyor en Phurkit.

The teachers: Jamyang, Guman Singh, Stephen, Kunzang, Maree en Anamika.

And in the kitchen: Palla and uncle!!

All the best to you!!

Hedwig