



# DAS TADRA PROJEKT

ORPHAN CHILDREN'S VILLAGES IN TIBET

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NEWSLETTER 2017



These 42 children  
got a new home  
in 2017



### DEAR SPONSORS, GODPARENTS AND FRIENDS OF THE TADRA PROJECT,

please allow me to introduce myself as the new president of the "Tadra-Projekt e.V.". My name is Youlha Tawo. I am the daughter of our previous president and founder of the project, Lobsang Palden Tawo und Chöni Tawo, and since my young days I have been associated with the Association and a long term member.

I live with my family in Bonn and work as a physician. I am taking up the presidency of the Association together with Dr Klaus Vedder, who has been active ever since its founding and has become familiar with the Children's Villages during his visits there. Other members of the board are: Helga Fuhrmann as treasurer and my mother Chöni Tawo, as a further member authorised to represent the Association. A current event that has moved us greatly and also made us very proud is the huge involvement of the former Tadra students in the illness of Sernya Dorjee, a former student of the school, who had to be operated last year in Dartsedo. Sadly complications arose during the operation and as a result of unsatisfactory healing of the operation wound he now has a large open hole in his chest. A new operation is under consideration at a cost of 30,000 yuan (3,800 euros), clearly too large a sum for Sernya Dorjee to find.

The former students of the Tadra orphanage came together to collect the 30,000 yuan. The Association remained ready during this time to make up any shortfall if necessary. But there was no need for this, given the enormous commitment of these young people. The whole sum of 30,000 yuan came together in as little as three days. My father was consulted in respect of the further medical procedures and he recommended that the operation should not be carried out in Dartsedo, but in the capital of Sichuan Province, Chengdu. Sernya Dorjee was brought to a good hospital in Chengdu on 21 September. We are all crossing our fingers that this time everything should go well. This example is a testimony to the great sense of belonging of the Tadra children, their solidarity and willingness to help. More than sixty of them responded to the appeal. We are enormously proud of their willingness to help and their sense of social commitment.

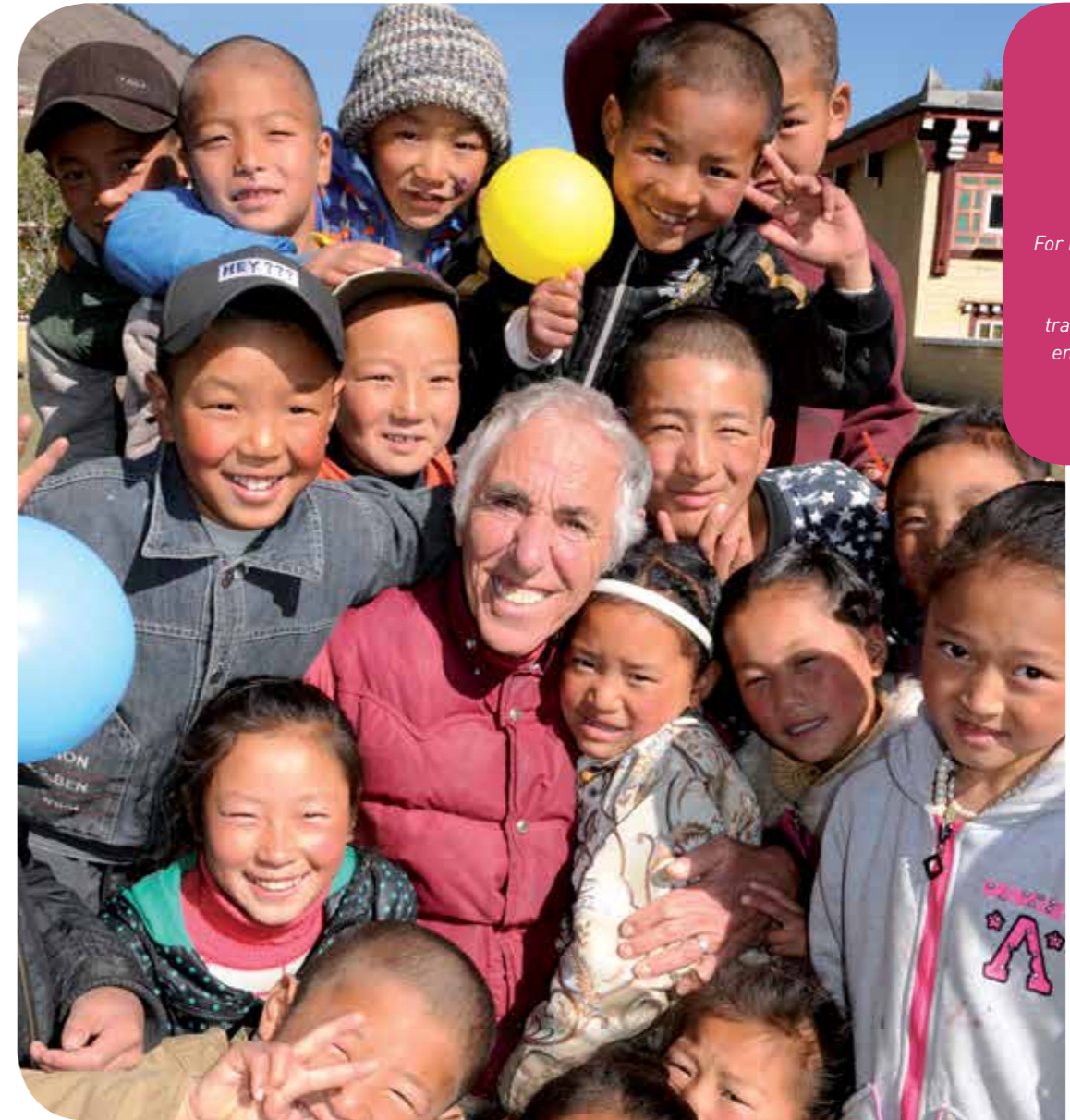
This year we took in a total of seventy children. The demand was particularly high in Dawu. Our Children's Villages are of immense importance as an asylum for orphan children. Like everyone in the Tadra Association we work on a 100% volunteer basis. But this would not be possible without your help. Your contributions in the past have permitted these children to have not only a home, but also a solid education.

In the name of the Tadra children I thank you for remaining loyal to us in the future. Every euro, every cent, every penny helps! Many, many thanks!

With our sincere best wishes,  
Your Tadra team

Dr. Youlha Tawo  
First chairperson

Dr. Klaus Vedder  
Second chairperson



For many years  
now, Brian  
Levin has  
translated the  
entire annual  
report into  
English

### MAGIC MOMENTS

Here I am, surrounded by a swarm of small children, all of them repeating at the top of their voices my words, as I point to the colour of someone's coat: "Red," "RED!", "Blue," "BLUE!", "Green," "GREEN!", "Blue sky," "BLUE SKY!" "Hand," "HAND!" "Nose," "NOSE!". It could go on for ever, they have so much energy.

We had all sorts of weather while we were in Tibet, but however cold it got I was never able to put my gloves on in either of the Villages, because there were always so many little hands to hold!

This was my second visit to Tadra, and this time Beat and I were able to go to Dawu, which had been forbidden to us in 2015, when the Dawu Village was celebrating its twentieth anniversary (although the celebrations were apparently forbidden by the authorities), and Golok its tenth. It was a joy to go to both of the Villages, each with its own special style, and I was able to meet twice as many children.

Our welcome at Golok in the middle of the day was extraordinary. Dozens of children ran after the car, shouting "Father, Father!", for that is what they call Beat. And he knows all their names, hundreds of them, whereas I hardly manage to distinguish their faces! Yes, he is indeed their father, and they share him with no jealousy, just radiance and love.

Whenever a new child comes to one of the Villages, Beat tells me, he or she is completely destitute and lost. The children surround them, talk to them, tell them that it is good here, and the new child will sleep together with one who already lives in the Village.



In fine weather  
the children  
study under  
the warm sun  
in front of the  
schoolhouse



→ They always arrive there fearful and without a smile, but often within three weeks or so, although sometimes much longer, they have become normal, happy, Tibetan children, slowly forgetting their hurt.

They have learnt to smile again, and the "before and after pictures" tell all! Like children everywhere, they love to make drawings and give them to people they love, and I continually felt a paper being slipped into my hand as we walked. Some of the girls even rolled their picture up into a little scroll and tied it together with a piece of wool to make a worthy present of it.

I find myself in the schoolhouse one day, and the children are rushing all over the place, playing with the balloons Beat had given them the day before. I have no idea when they have a class. And then suddenly they drag me into a classroom, where I sit down, thinking a teacher would come and I would be invited to watch the lesson. But no, they wanted me to be their teacher, and I realised they were demanding an English lesson. So I gave them one, and they gave me their total attention and interest for a full hour. These children know what it means to get an education, and they simply want to learn. After the class, I said, "I love you!" and they all responded, "I LOVE YOU TOO!"

Each time I came into the dining room, all the children called out for me to sit down at their table. Beat suggested I sit at a different table (i.e. with children of a different house) each day. It is very difficult for the children to learn English, so our exchanges were usually limited to smiles, but what smiles! Again I was impressed how happy these children were without electronic toys (and certainly no mobile phones!) or indeed hardly any toys at all. A piece of wire with a little wheel attached at the bottom would serve as a toy car for a little boy, and the girls could spend hours playing hand games and singing together, or the boys rocking on a primitive seesaw of a simple plank of wood. Groups of girls spontaneously practise their folk dances (which the whole Village dances almost every evening), and the boys play a lot of basketball. They know all the famous American players' names (all completely new to me, of course!) and indeed they play extremely well and show great promise for the future.

While I was in Dawu, I had the honour to meet the Village head, Jampa, who over a period of more than twenty years has himself brought in hundreds of children in distress to the Village. It was a beautiful experience for me and I was extremely moved to meet him. He radiates a calm and a wisdom I have rarely seen.

Many of the children go on to higher studies, in medicine, administration, and so on, often in Chinese cities, for their scholastic achievements are exemplary. How could they not be, when you see them at six o'clock in the morning already, walking around the grounds with a textbook in their hands, reciting the lesson of the day? And not only on the warm days...

A dream come true! If only all the other nomad orphans wandering on the plateau could find such happiness...

by Brian Levin

Anastasia: This experience will for ever remain engraved in my memory



## MY UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS WITH THE TADRA CHILDREN

I find it difficult to find the right words to describe this adventure, because this journey was truly an adventure for me. It began not at the airport, but in the village of Dawu situated at 3,200 meters altitude surrounded by majestic mountains.

At our arrival, Beat and I were welcomed most warmly by the organisers of the village and the children, who formed a guard of honour to welcome us: and such a welcome! There are so many children I don't know where to look, but already I have the feeling that this place has a special atmosphere and that I am about to experience something exceptional. From the very first day, we play together and I am impressed to find the children so open, smiling and confident, I am really moved.

Each day, as soon as I set foot outside, little hands come to slide into mine, and soon I am surrounded by a little swarm of children clinging on to me. I am impressed by the way they make contact with me, I, who am a complete stranger for them. And yet many of them behave as though we have known one another for ever, it all seems

so simple and natural for them. We spend most of the day playing, laughing and singing: they taught me their games and I showed them the games of my childhood. How impressive it is to see that they even enjoy simply playing with stones that they find on the ground, or improvising a doll's tea set with bits of wood as tables and bottle caps as cups. And they are so happy to "take me home" and show me their dormitory: I see that they share their room with several other children, and that they have virtually no possessions of their own, but that does nothing to change their happy, communicative way of relating!

I see that they love to be together, and that is why they have so many activities in common, especially dance. I am also surprised to see that the smallest and the tallest, boys as well as girls, all enjoy performing the traditional Tibetan dances. I have a wonderful memory of them: the children all form a very large circle and dance with great joy and energy to the Tibetan music that resounds against the mountains all around. They all love this moment, and I remember how, all excited before starting, they cried "Dance, dance"!

I was particularly struck by the children's attitude towards others and animals. They are grateful, respectful, and compassionate, and are capable of discussing the situation calmly in the event of a disagreement, rather than enter in conflict as would so many children. The older ones take care of the little ones, carrying them, playing with them, or helping them to eat, for example. And as regards animals, if they see a caterpillar that might be stepped on, for example, one of them will immediately tell the other children to pay attention and gently take the insect and put it safely to one side.

I was personally touched by the many gestures and attentions towards me personally throughout my stay, especially when I fell ill. The children came to nurse me and bring me food when I had to stay in bed in my room, they put a wet handkerchief on my forehead to bring down my fever and held my hand with much tenderness in their eyes. I felt so much compassion on their part and I was deeply moved. I still have trouble understanding how such young children who have had such difficult lives can behave in this way.

The Tadra children are indeed very special and are gifted with enormous relational skills and an unconditional, infinite love. A thousand thanks, Beat, for this extraordinary experience and thank you, the children, for having taken me into your magical world and opened your hearts to me, so that I could see the treasures they contain. This experience will always remain engraved in my memory, but especially, and much more importantly, in my heart.

by Anastasia Forestieri

Sonam Lhatso in 2017



### SONAM LHATSO – GROWING UP IN UNIMAGINABLE SQUALOR

The maximum intake in each of the Tadra Children's Villages is limited to 30 places. As such the Tadra project is able to take in sixty of the worst cases each year, and that over a huge area the size of Germany! Making such a selection is often extremely difficult for the Village head and the board members, for the number of orphans living under extreme difficult conditions in eastern Tibet is enormous. Full orphans who are completely dependent on their own resources have priority. Some of the children, however, do in fact have one parent, and the following example illustrates why some of them are still able to satisfy Tadra's very strict conditions for admission.

When I visited the Village in Dawu last May for the first time that year, I was struck by a new face among the children. A pretty girl with large, soft brown fawnlike eyes, who always kept a certain distance and watched me with a fearful expression. At one goodnight session in Unna House I suddenly found her standing next to me. When I asked her name and where she came from, she answered shyly, "My name is Sonam Lhatso and I come from the mountains in Yukon". What I did not realize at that moment was that I had already heard the story of her life seven years earlier, and that without knowing her personally, I had often thought of her over all these years.



Lft.: Sonam Lhatso in 2016, before she was taken into the Village

Ri.: Sonam Lhatso as a baby in 2010. Her ailing grandmother is in the background

In 2010 the Village head Jampa had told me tearfully of a very poor family in the distant mountains of Yukon living in terrible conditions in a deserted woodcutter's hut 4000 metres above sea level. Jampa showed me photos of the three small children who were living together in this hovel with their mother and grandmother. Their father had died shortly after the birth of the third child. Their mother was mentally deficient, and the grandmother took care of the helpless infants as best she could. When the old lady became seriously ill, a neighbouring family contacted the Tadra Children's Village and asked for help.

What Jampa found there, moved him to the very core. The very primitive wooden shed offered the family little protection from the raw and in winter unimaginably cold climate at that altitude. Large portions of the roof had been replaced by an old threadbare cloth cover. The children slept directly on the ice cold floor, with nothing but their coats to protect them against the cold. The only food they had was a little oatmeal, stored in a wooden box. When Jampa opened it, he found in it not only oatmeal, but a hive of beetles and other vermin. The children's hair too was full of vermin and their clothes were stiff with grime.

Heavy hearted, Jampa came back from this place. A few weeks later he learnt that the grandmother had since died. He set off once again on the long journey to the family. On his arrival there was a biting smell of putrefaction in the air. Completely overwhelmed by the situation, the mentally handicapped mother had simply put the lifeless body of the grandmother into one corner of the hut.

The decision was taken to take the two older boys into the Village straight away. The baby, a little girl, would for the time being stay with the mother. When Jampa told me this story, I immediately thought of that poor baby. What would become of her? Although Jampa assured me that people living in the area would take in the mother and her daughter, this was of little comfort to me. I often thought of that helpless creature obliged to grow up in these awful conditions. So when I learned that this new addition to the Tadra Village was the little girl from that family I was more than happy.

Over all these years Jampa regularly visited the mother and her daughter and brought them food, clothes and money. The people in the neighbourhood kept their promise and took good care of the helpless family, and they were even able to move into a new much better insulated wooden house.

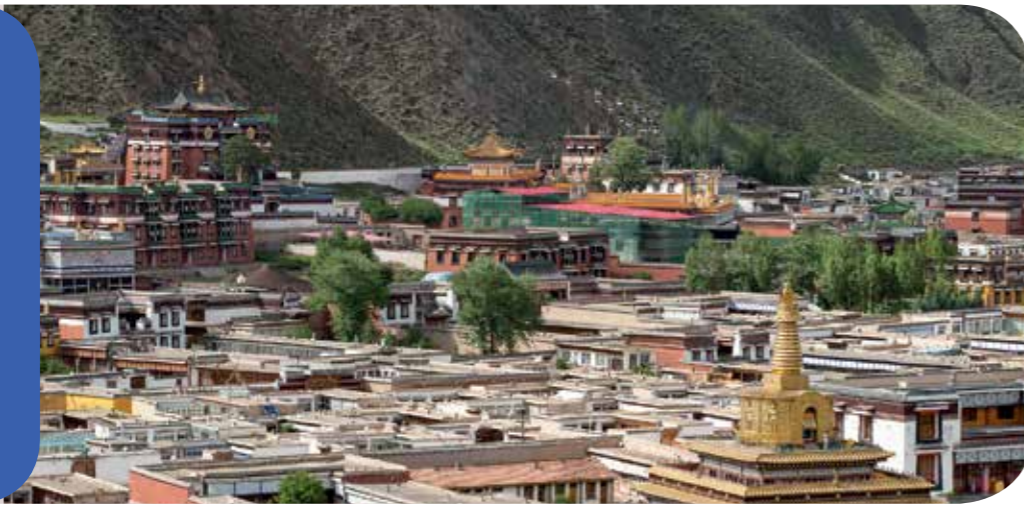
Sonam Lhatso came to us in Dawu only last autumn, when she was already seven years old, having had no possibility of going to a school in Yukon .

Once the ice was broken and her fear had diminished, Sonam Lhatso told me that she had settled well into the Village and that she was very happy there. She wants to be a teacher one day. She has no difficulty following the lessons in the first class, and actually is only one or two years older than most of the children there. Just one more child whom we were able to save from unimaginable squalor and who, thanks to a real school education, can look forward to a promising future with full confidence.

by Beat Renz

The monastery at Labrang

Right: Pilgrims on the chora



### LABRANG MONASTERY – A MAGNET FOR TOURISTS

On the way from Lanzhou to our Children’s Village in Golok we, the families Vedder and Zahnow, made a stop at Xiahe in the Autonomous Region of Tibet Gannan (Gansu Province of the People’s Republic of China) to visit the Labrang monastery, the second largest in China. It is located at some 3000 metres, an altitude that already made demands on our energy.

Labrang was founded in 1709 and rapidly became a commercial center between Central China, Tibet and the silk route. We later learned that some two thousand monks live there now, while the many novices are not recorded statistically. Our visit came at a fortunate time, for a few days later most of the monks left for a well-deserved summer holiday. As we travelled on we frequently saw the white summer tents of the camping monks on the green high plateau..

The most impressive building of the compound is the six-storied Hall of Maitreya Buddha, whose top floor resembles a palatial pavilion sheathed with golden copper tiles. It has a fantastic view over the whole site and the mountains around the town. The Hall houses a statue of Maitreya, the future Buddha, that is more than seven metres high.

The fact that the monastery has figured on the monuments list of the People’s Republic of China since 1982 is very much in evidence. The work of restoration, gilding and cleaning is visible everywhere. What most astonished us was that the magnificent entrance hall gave onto a huge souvenir shop, such as could be found in any theme park, where incense, butter lamps, statues, jewellery, prayer flags and Tibetan herbs were all available for purchase. And this plus the fact that an entrance ticket was necessary to get in, a lucrative business in view of the hordes of Chinese tourists arriving in their buses at one-minute intervals, then to be shepherded through the monastery in double-quick time by a monk who pointed out the main features. No question of contemplation and mindfulness here... Our little group was assigned a monk who even spoke English and who instructed us in the six subjects of study in which buddhist theory, logic, astronomy, mathematics, medicine, calligraphy, phonology, dance, painting and sculpture are taught.

In hope of experiencing at least a touch of a true monastic atmosphere, we rose before dawn the next day and entered the precinct by way of a little used side door. Wisps of mist, rain, the sound of the conch shells and the characteristic odour of incense reconciled us somewhat with the unseemly hectic of the day before. The monks have only left the early morning hours to perform their prayers and rituals before being pressed once again into the merciless tourist machine.

The afternoon gave us a different picture; on the some 3-kilometre-long pilgrimage path (Chora) around the grounds of the monastery, we saw hardly any tourists, but rather Tibetan pilgrims in traditional costumes, carrying a mala (rosary with 108 beads) in one hand and turning the prayer wheels with the other. Most of them greeted us in a friendly way and indicated that we should join them and turn the prayer wheels as we went.

As so often during our trip, this visit left us with mixed feelings. Modernisation is going forward at a rapid rate and anyone who wants to find the original atmosphere and spirituality needs to discover it elsewhere than on the tourist circuit!

by Annette Zahnow





Yetsün in her tent

### **EASTERN TIBET, SO GREEN - A JOURNEY THROUGH AMDO AND KHAM**

**That is the translated title of the public audiovisual talk I gave on March 10, 2017 in Bonn, telling of the journey that the two families Zahnow and Vedder made in 2015 for the anniversary celebrations at the two Tadra Children's Villages.**

With the visit to the Labrang monastery at the very northeastern corner of the Tibetan plateau we had the opportunity to visit the historical sites of this region of Tibet close to the silk road. Located at the crossroads of four peoples (Tibetans, Mongols, Hui [Moslems] and Han Chinese), the monastery had learnt to assert itself in both economic and political terms, to finally become the most important religious institution in eastern Tibet, retaining its independence and preserving the Tibetan character of the region.

Just as our journey permitted us to experience the country and culture, in my talk I told the audience about special monasteries such as the Milarepa Tower in Kanlho Dzong or the Larung Gar educational institute in Kham. The variety of vistas in Taktsang Lhamo, at the border of Qinghai und Szechuan, offered us an opportunity for walks and treks. We were repeatedly regaled by breathtaking views across the high Tibetan plateau, whether in the valley of the Yellow River or at the Nyenpo Yurtse mountain range, one of the holy mountains of Amdo.

Some of the "chance" meetings we had are the ones that have left the most lasting memories: the charming laughter of Jetsün, who invited us into her tent, where she lived as a nomad with her two children. And even the Chinese police, who turned on the flashing blue light and drove us personally a considerable distance along the road to Xining airport, making our return flight home possible when our bus was no longer able to continue the journey at a road block.

The main aim of the trip and the high point of the talk was to participate in the festivities at our Children's Village in Golok. The commitment of the teachers, the loving attention of the house mothers and the highly motivated work of our Village head Thupten Nyima, together with the extraordinary atmosphere of the happy and well-housed children and adolescents made for a perfect description of the Tadra Children's Village that I was reporting on.

Entrance to the talk was free, but as a long-standing member I made a fundraising appeal for the Tadra project. The very impressive sum of the donations that resulted is testimony to the pleasure that the evening afforded the visitors and how their hearts were moved by our project for the children.

Many thanks to everyone for your donations!

*by Klaus Vedder*



Kunga with Tadra members at a Tibetan meal in Bonn



### KUNGA'S VISIT

**We have already presented Kunga, our second head of the Dawu Children's Village, in last year's report. Originally, he came to us as an emaciated 11-year-old half orphan, heavily marked by fate.**

After finishing his teacher training he came back to the Village for a year as a volunteer teacher as a way of expressing his gratitude. This fine gesture and his leadership qualities incited us to entrust him with the job of assisting Jampa in the management of the Dawu Village. He has now been active in this function for two years and the result is excellent.

Since not everyone working with Tadra is able to travel to Tibet, but we all wanted to meet Kunga personally, we invited him this year for a visit to Germany and organised a meeting with him in Bonn on 19 September. For some of us, Palden, Chöni, Rüdiger and Klaus, who had already come to know him when he was still a little boy in the Children's Village, this was a big reunion. Kunga had many questions to ask and there was much to discuss, and for our part we were able to ask him questions directly and learn a lot about developments in the Village.

Following a short word of welcome from our president, Kunga took the floor and showed very clearly that in fact he had grown into his function as head of the Village in every respect. He also provided us with first-hand news about the current situation in Tibet.

The meeting was a source of much information and of great value to all the participants.

by Palden Tawo



Manfred Bergermann and his wife Martina Guske

### MANFRED BERGERMANN

As a time when Tadra was completely unknown, and indeed there were rumours that behind the name was a swinger club practising the Tantric arts, a teacher from Unna in northern Germany who was carrying out research on the Internet took a fancy to our project for orphans in Tibet. Without further ado he began to make the project known around him and to commit himself to it. By dint of a variety of activities in the school he and his students gradually collected enough money to the point that in 1998 they were able to finance "Unna House" in the first children's Village in Dawu. With this the contacts between the children in the two countries became even stronger.

Very soon Manfred Bergermann undertook two visits to the Village in Dawu with 22 of his students. This was an unforgettable experience for the young people of both Dawu and Unna. Manfred told me at the time how some of his pupils fell in love with our nomad children, who as he put it corresponded perfectly to the European ideal of beauty with their finely sculptured features and dark skin, like Winnetou. At the same time I am sure that the blue eyes and blond hair of the young Germans will not have failed to make their mark on the nomad children.

Although Manfred has been in retirement since 2013, the connection between Unna and Tadra has never been interrupted. Martina, his wife, and Inge, a former pupil of his, are continuing on with the work.

But what Manfred is still unaware of is the enormous impact that this contact has had in Tibet. Some years ago he invited us and Thupten Nyima, the head of the second village in Golok who was visiting Germany at that time, to pay a visit to the Unna-Unesco School. Thupten Nyima was even allowed to participate in teaching sessions there. He was extremely impressed by the easy-going teaching style at the school and the self-assurance of the students. This led to a lively discussion on the best way to educate young people given that Asia in general and especially Tibet were extremely attached to traditional methods. Thupten Nyima took some of the ideas with him to Tibet and with that brought a new element into child education there.

The results were extraordinary. In competitions with other schools our children brought attention to themselves by way of their eloquence and self-assurance. This resulted in numerous awards for the Tadra school as the best throughout the region, with top performance on the part of the pupils in all respects. Since then the motto for State schools has become "the Tadra way"!

For this, and much more, dear Manfred, we have to thank you and your school. Thank you too for the trust you showed in us way back then. Without your support we would surely not have been able to progress as we have. After twenty-two years we have all grown a little older, but the effects of the seeds that were sown at that time are more important and more apparent than ever in the Children's Village. So Tug-je-che in the name of the Tadra children too!!!

by Palden Tawo

The Tadra children say thank you for your precious support



### THE TADRA PROJECT IN FIGURES

In 2016 we experienced a welcome fall in the overall expenses of the project, due mainly to lower renovation and energy costs. Admissions to the Village corresponded approximately to that of 2015. Our administration costs for 2016 were 2.1% (Germany and Switzerland taken together on the basis of the euro).

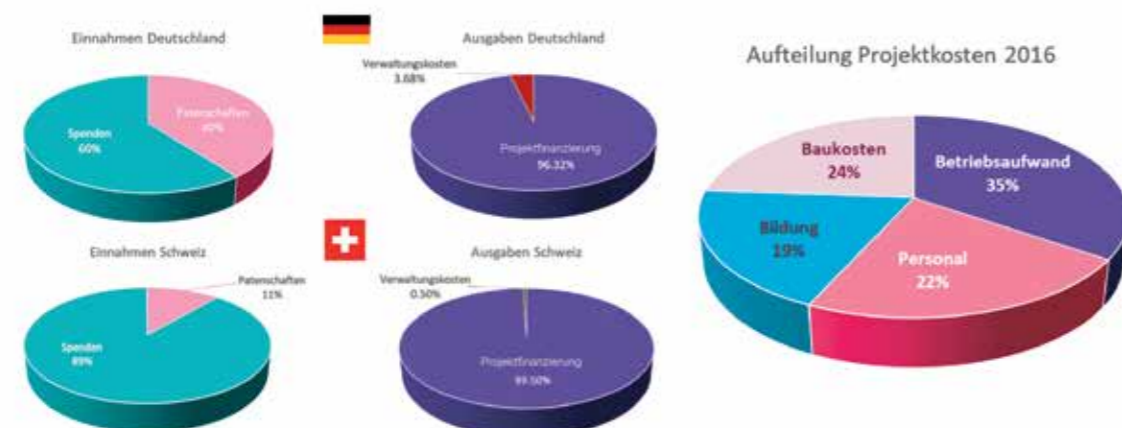
Now that the construction work in both Villages has been completed we can concentrate our attentions on their ongoing management and the education and training of our children.

At the present time we have some 649 children and adolescents in our charge, including those attending higher schools outside, students and trainees. In addition maintenance and renovation is continually required as a result of wear and tear and not least the extreme altitudes. To keep the project going year after year is a constant challenge for us.

by Chöni Tawo und Helga Fuhrmann

| EINNAHMEN 2016         | TADRA-Projekt E.V. (EURO) | TADRA-DEMIGH-STIFTUNG (CHF) |
|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Patenschaften          | 74.963                    | 40.490                      |
| Spenden                | 114.277                   | 316.045                     |
| Zinsen                 |                           | 203                         |
| CD-Verkauf             | 70                        |                             |
| <b>Gesamteinnahmen</b> | <b>189.310</b>            | <b>356.738</b>              |

| AUSGABEN 2016         | TADRA-Projekt E.V. (EURO) | TADRA-DEMIGH-STIFTUNG (CHF) |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Projektfinanzierung   | 180.068                   | 250.000                     |
| Verwaltungskosten     | 7.225                     | 1.801                       |
| <b>Gesamtausgaben</b> | <b>187.293</b>            | <b>251.801</b>              |



The children are thrilled with the new cupboards and the new road network

### NEWS FROM THE CHILDREN'S VILLAGES

#### Financing of three major improvement projects in Dawu by the Norzang Foundation

After a life of more than twenty years almost all of the buildings in Dawu required major renovation. The Norzang Foundation of Switzerland reached out to us and undertook a number of these long delayed jobs, installing inbuilt closets into each of the 56 children's and house mothers' bedrooms that offer sufficient room for the children's clothes and also provide insulation against drafts and the cold. Other work that we were at last able to get done was the repair of leaking roofs in all seven orphan houses. With the years they have deteriorated to the point that melting snow was dripping into the houses in several places. The Norzang Foundation further undertook a considerable number of other restoration jobs that needed to be done throughout the Village. All sorts of tradesmen came to repair large and small defects, painting walls, windows, floors, replacing floor tiles and sanitary facilities, repairing electrical equipment, and much more. Our sincerest thanks to the Norzang Foundation for this fantastic support!

#### The street plan and the new sports grounds by the Vontobel Foundation

This year again the Vontobel Foundation has also offered us its most generous support. Thus we have been able to create a road network between all the buildings in the large Children's Village in Golok. The new asphalt paths now allow all the children to cross the campus in rainy weather and through melting snow with clean shoes. This has been a great step forward in the life of the Village and all the children and staff benefit greatly by it.

After some 20 years the only asphalted surface in Dawu, which has always served as a place for assembly, sports, dance, teaching and games, began to show large crevices and holes as a result of the huge variations in temperature. With the help of the Vontobel Foundation we have been able this year to construct new sports grounds next to the old one. Large areas have also been planted with trees and vegetation, providing many places for the children to sit. Our heartfelt thanks to the Vontobel Foundation for this extremely generous support. All the children in Dawu benefit from it and are extremely grateful.

#### 300 Tadra children now stand on their own feet!

Travelling back from Tibet, during a stopover in Xining, I had a great surprise. As I came out of the plane a beautiful radiant stewardess came towards me with obvious pleasure. I have known Lhakar Dolma, "Lisa," since she was a little girl in our Tadra orphanage in Golok with her sister Gankar Dolma. It is always a wonderfully proud moment for me to see what has become of the former Tadra children. At the present time as many as three hundred of them have jobs and are earning their own living, demonstrating that we of the Tadra team have achieved the best possible result with these young people. All our thanks to everyone who supports us in this endeavour!





The exchange of drawings and photos was moving for the children of both countries



## NEWS FROM SWITZERLAND

### A wonderful fundraising drive by the primary school in Grolley

Following a film presentation to all the classes of the Grolley primary school, each of the children made a drawing. The drawings were sent to Tibet with a photograph of its author. In Tibet, the Tadra children for their part drew a picture, and so was created a very special personal exchange across the world between the children.

Next, the Swiss children organised a sponsored run to benefit Tadra. 150 of them completed an amazing total of some 1200 km, which brought in more than 8,000 Swiss francs. We are very impressed by their commitment and we thank all the children and the teachers of the school for this fantastic effort to benefit the Tadra children.

### Fundraising for Tadra by employees of a Swiss bank in 2017

Julius Baer Cares: Under this designation employees of the Julius Baer Bank come together every year to carry out a variety of activities on behalf of a humanitarian project. This year to our great joy their choice fell on Tadra. The support activities the bank's care team undertake are extremely varied. Money is collected at a great gala, at sporting events, blood donation sessions and more. As an example, Nicholas Vu Huu swam 26.7 km in eight hours and 51 minutes in the lake of Zürich, with which he collected more than 4,500 Swiss francs for the Tadra children! The total sum collected for Tadra will only be known at the end of the year, but I take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks for such a fantastic commitment and wish the cares team much success in carrying out these events.

## Another very generous donation from the Madeleine Foundation

The Madeleine Foundation of Fribourg supports suffering and disadvantaged children in Switzerland and abroad. Already last year the foundation made the extraordinarily large donation of 20,000 Swiss francs to be used in any way we desired. Such unlabelled donations are always very valuable to us given that the ongoing costs for maintenance of the children's villages (food, clothing, personal needs) are continually rising. We are extremely happy to learn that we will be granted the same sum again this year and thank the Madeleine foundation with all our hearts!

## A variety of original support activities

We are frequently impressed by the large number of creative ideas with which people support the Tadra children. Lack of space unfortunately prevents us from listing all these great activities here, but we report many of them regularly in the News column of our website or in Facebook.

Here are just a few of the particularly original events taking place this year:

- Every year Ruth Häring of Aesch sets up a stall in front of her house from which she sells the plums she herself has picked. All the proceeds of these sales (generally well over a thousand Swiss francs) have gone to the Tadra project for many years.
- Our supporter of many years' standing, Alexandra Savoy of Villars-sur-Glâne, organised this year a recital with the well-known Daphné duet. The artists took no fee and the evening resulted in a total intake of 1,500 Swiss francs, all of which was donated to Tadra.
- After participating at a talk about Tadra the four children of the Felder family of Belfaux: Cinthia (14), Céline (12), Thierry (10) und Jimmy (8), absolutely wanted to help the Tadra project. They got together to bake some cakes, bringing in a total of 400 Swiss francs for our project with their great initiative.
- Marlene Venetz of Jongny/Chardonne, together with a number of industrious helpers have been making different objects together with children of the local school. At Easter and Christmas these objects are sold and all the proceeds go to a charitable project. Over the past few years this has often been the Tadra project, for which we are enormously grateful.

Here, we should like to thank with all our hearts everybody who supports the Tadra project in whatever form it takes! We are so very grateful.

## NEWS FROM GERMANY

### The great commitment of the pupils of the Fritz Leonhardt middle school in Stuttgart-Degerloch, Germany

For almost eight years now the pupils of the Fritz Leonhardt middle school in Stuttgart-Degerloch, Germany, have put a lot of their energy and joy into raising funds for the Tadra project. This has generally resulted in the collection of at least 2000 to 3000 euros, or once even more than 4000 euros.

Each class gets a collection box with which they collect donations on the street, in their families and at parties.

In addition, they sell biscuits at the Christmas markets and every two years organise a run in which each participant is sponsored against a specific sum of money.

As a special activity the pupils help customers to pack their purchases in the supermarket for a donation. Five or six hours of this work brought together 500 to 700 euros for Tadra.

Each year before Christmas I receive a symbolic cheque which is then taken to Tibet by Beat Renz and photographed together with the children there as a small message of thanks for the children in Germany.

With great pleasure I learn that the school's student body has resolved to continue to support the project. Part of the reason for this is the personal relationship to myself as the daughter of the name giver of the school.

by Christine Leonhardt





## NEWS FROM GERMANY

### The first international Tadra meeting

**The enormous increase in responsibility and financial commitments in recent times has resulted in a need for new helping hands. Fortunately, support for Tadra is spreading to other countries, providing new resources and widening the circle of active people.**

In addition to the established team working for Tadra in Switzerland we also now have a group in the United States. With view to getting to know one another better and to harmonize our activities and usual business, the first international Tadra meeting was held in Bonn on November 12, 2016. In addition to the members from Germany, Beat Renz, Tenzin Wangmo Frapolli and her brother Jigme Drongschar from Switzerland were present at the meeting. Unfortunately, on account of time constraints, the Americans could not be present, but they were able to participate by means of video conferencing.

Following a word of welcome from the new president Youlha Tawo, Palden Tawo spoke of the founding of the Tadra Association and the beginnings of the Childrens' Villages. This was followed by a very dedicated report on the part of Beat Renz on his experience with the employees and children of our Villages. Beat is the most qualified person to provide such information, since he travels there several times a year, paying expenses out of his own pocket. The children love and respect him and call him Apa (Father) Beat. His commitment in Switzerland has resulted in enormous financial support and has been highly instrumental in making it possible to achieve our objectives in Tibet.

Tenzin Wangmo Frapolli and Jigme Drongschar then told us of their personal motivation that brought them to support the Tadra project and how several years ago they passed on the original Tibetan Training Foundation (Ausbildungsstiftung für Tibeter, now the Tadra-DEMIGH-Stiftung), which they were then managing, onto the Tadra association.

The ensuing discussion was very lively and constructive. The main concern of all the participants is and remains to ensure the continuity of the Tadra project in the future. In a word, this first meeting was a complete success in all respects!

### The Tadra annual report in its new design

Our annual report has now been given a new look.

As our information brochure needed to be brought up to date, it was high time that we harmonise the design of the two publications through which we provide information and seek new sponsors. We are extremely happy that by way of personal friendships we have been able to find two new professional layouters: Susanne Heimes, a graphic designer (Visuelle Kommunikation, design@heimes.net), who took care of the design, has already worked with us in the past, while the journalist Ursula Katthöfer (textwiese.com) has recast the look of the flyers. This "professionalisation" of course did not incur any expense on the part of our Association, for our first rule is that we should keep management costs as low as possible. As such, these two services were offered to us as gifts, for which we are very grateful.

We hope you will enjoy reading our annual report and will continue to support us in the future.





**649**

ORPHANS AND

**100 %**

VOLUNTEER WORK

**SPECIAL**

**THANKS**

**TO**

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