

# FRIENDS OF MANJUSHREE VIDYAPITH SCHOOL & ORPHANAGE

## Newsletter No 9. November 2013



### Dear Friends of Manjushree

It is late November and for the last 3 weeks I have been at Manjushree, this time with FMVSO Chairman, Dr David Brown. For the first week the clouds hung low over the mountains; it was damp and very cold. Huge puddles covered the playground and the children's washing dripped for days on the roof and railings. At last the longed for better weather arrived; the sky deep blue and the sun hot enough to burn but by mid-afternoon temperatures plummeting to below zero as the sun dipped behind the western peaks.

At 0530 the sun tips the mountains to the east with gold and soon we can feel its warmth on our backs. Around us the high peaks of the Himalayas are capped with snow. The murmur and lilt of morning prayers wafts up from the auditorium on the floor below. Soon the children will go to the dining hall for tea before an hour of study. They breakfast at 0730; the school day starts with assembly at 0830.

This brief period of good weather is essential for the health and welfare of children and staff – they need the warmth, light and vitamin D before the intense cold, the snow, and darkness of winter set in.



The temporary classrooms were rebuilt last autumn after the old ones were destroyed by a landslide. There are now classrooms for all the children from Nursery to class VII – their ages ranging from 4 -14. The whole of Manjushree is built on a steep hillside so all the buildings are on terraces. There are steps – lots of them, but the children take short cuts scrambling down muddy banks like mountain goats.



There are goats here too – and 22 cows – and a fine cockerel and his 2 wives. The animals are very much a part of the home: Sheru is the chief; a huge hairy mountain dog. He has fathered many pups – his senior wife, Tenzin has 8 puppies. The dogs guard the site at night but are gentle and friendly with the children.

The routine and rituals of the day provide the structure and security that the children need. Morning prayers, a short meditation, and thought for the day from Lama Thupten, help to calm and focus minds for the day ahead.



The children are educated in the

Manjushree school up to Class VII. For school the children wear bright red jumpers and grey skirts or trousers – in winter they need warm leggings, hats and gloves. There is no heating in the classrooms – or in the dormitories. For 6 days a week classes run from 0900 until 1400 with a short break at 1130. The subjects taught are Maths, Science, English, Hindi, General Knowledge, Bhoti (Tibetan language) and Social Studies which includes Geography.



At aged 14/15, they go on to the government secondary school in Bomba village, a 30 minute walk across the fields. For their final two years in secondary education the students walk up to Tawang High School. The senior girls look beautiful in their salwar kameez and the boys very smart in dark trousers, white shirts and ties.



The Manjushree students generally do very well at secondary school. The classes are large but our students sit at the front of

the class, take an active part in lessons and have better English than their peers. Nima Tsering in class XII came 4<sup>th</sup> out of 106 students in the last exams. Their early academic education in Manjushree school and the moral values instilled by Lama Thupten and the teachers equip them well for the next phase of their lives. There are now 10 Manjushree students at university in Delhi and Mangalore plus 2 continuing further studies. Next summer 3 more girls and 7 boys will complete their 12<sup>th</sup> standard – equivalent to 'A' level. **FMVSO are committed to funding all students who wish to go on to further education.**

As well as teaching Science and English, Dr David and Mama Di have helped the senior students to prepare CV's and understand the process of job or college application. All the 12<sup>th</sup> grade students have been given training in interview technique and each experienced a formal interview.

15 years ago, on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1998, the Manjushree Vidyapith School and Orphanage began with just 17 children. Now there are over 200. We were so happy to be present for the Foundation Day celebrations

The grandparents, aunts and uncles and brothers



and sisters of all the children were invited. Local civic dignitaries, Army chiefs and foreign visitors made speeches, and prizes were presented.

Everyone dressed in their best and the children put on a magnificent performance of cultural dance and song.



The celebrations continued on the 31<sup>st</sup> with much less formality and much more hilarity.



FMVSO are proud to be a part of the Manjushree family and look forward to sharing the successes and celebrations for many years to come.

The needs will increase with growing numbers and inflation and we will strive to continue to seek ways to find the funds to support the family. FMVSO have recently joined a scheme called **Easyfundraising**

**Easyfundraising.org.uk** is the easiest way to raise money for Friends of Manjushree Vidyapith School and Orphanage (FMVSO).

Shop with any of over 2,700 retailers and a percentage of what you spend is donated to Friends of Manjushree Vidyapith School and Orphanage (FMVSO) at no additional cost to you. Retailers include Amazon, John Lewis, eBay, Tesco and many more.

Please register to support us today

<http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/fmvso>



A message from Lama Thupten Phuntsok  
Founder and Principal of Manjushree

**Dear Sponsors and Well-wishers in UK and Ireland**  
**Tashi Delek!** And warm greetings

Today, I would like to thank our most respected Dr David Brown, Chairman FMVSO, and our Mama, Diana Gallagher for their most valuable time and caring to us all of the Manjushree family. At the same time I would like to thank, and show my appreciation to all of our loyal and respected sponsors and supporters. All your generous contributions are being used in the development of the children for their health, education and wellbeing. Therefore I will sincerely request your continued generosity and support of my work with the children.



I would like to assure you that your kind contribution through FMVSO will be used wisely, carefully and specifically for the purpose for which you intended it. I entirely trust, and depend on FMVSO to be the 'bridge' between our supporters and well-wishers in UK and Ireland and the Manjushree family. Without the support you give through FMVSO we would struggle to feed the children and provide them with the education they deserve.

I feel that the support you give through FMVSO provides the badly needed backbone for our organisation

Lastly, from my heart, thank you so much for your kindness and compassion towards the children of Manjushree and the staff. We wish you a very merry Christmas and happy New Year 2014 and hope this new year will bring you many surprises and lots of prosperity and longevity.

I will pray to Lord Buddha to give you strength and energy and peace

**FMVSO is committed to providing the necessary funds to feed the children and to pay for their further education – for the foreseeable future.**

All donations to FMVSO go direct to Manjushree. No expenses are deducted and our trips are entirely self-funded

**My sincere thanks to all our friends who continue to give their loyal and generous support.**

*Di Gallagher*

FMVSO Trustee  
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