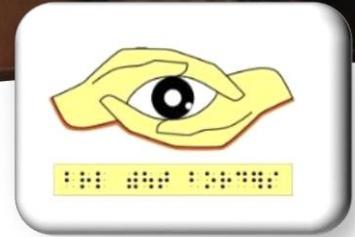


# Braille Without Borders

## Quarterly newsletter 4 -2015



Dear friends,

2015 is over and it is time for us to share the highlights of the past three months in Tibet. The following information was sent to us by Nyima, Gyensden and by Mike and Adrun.

### EVER HEARD OF "WHITE CANE DAY"?

The white cane is not only a useful aid for the blind. It is also a symbol for independence, freedom and for a fulfilled life. Those blind persons who know how to use the white cane are able to travel on their own and thus they have the confidence to say: "Yes, I am blind but this will never keep me from participating in our society!" This symbol is celebrated all around the world on the 15th of October. Also at our BWB projects in Tibet it has become a tradition.

This year it was used as a great opportunity to intensify the relationship with local agencies and friends and all supporters of the BWB school.

Most important, however, was to create further public awareness of what blind people are capable of doing. Visitors from all around Tibet were impressed because the entire event was organized completely by the blind.

### AN IMPORTANT VISIT

On the 26th of November, many officials from the Tibet autonomous region, delegates from foreign affairs and from our counterpart the Tibet Disabled Persons Federation visited the BWB school along with Mr. Christoph Strässer, the German Federal Commissioner for Human Rights Policy and Humanitarian Aid. Nyima and Gyensden welcomed the visitors and introduced the entire project. Mr Strässer was impressed by the project and said that the work of BWB is very important for the integration of blind people in Tibet. Also the chief executive of the Lhasa government, Mr Chitala, was impressed and promised that this school will continue.

### A SUNRAIN TREAT

In November, a delegation of the company "Sunrain" visited the school and donated warm clothing for the entire team and toys for the students. They also promised to construct a winter garden on the current roof terrace. Once this is done all students can play upstairs without wind and dust during the winter.

### EXAMS

In the end of December, the students took the final exams. All students performed well.



### TIBETAN NEW YEAR, TV-SPECIAL

The BWB Vocational School's blind musicians passed the auditions and Shigatse TV will feature them in their annual TIBETAN NEW YEAR SPECIAL to be televised along with 20+ other professional acts. The BWB performance will include, along with our musicians, eight specially chosen boys and girls from our students studying in government > schools, as folk dancers and chorus. Sonam Wangdu, our new blind music teacher, gets special credit for this and also for the recording studio he is creating a work in progress -- here at the Vocational Training centre.

### PLAN FOR A GRADUATE BASED BUSINESS, GETS AN "O.K."

The government has agreed to the creation of a purely business undertaking, here on the Farm, owned and managed for and by our blind and disabled.

The model is somewhat familiar to BWB as it is similar to the model used to set up independent blind massage clinics and independent blind musicians for supporting themselves.

The difference between this and previous attempts is the level of government interest and involvement. An obstacle from the beginning has been a local legal issue requiring the separation of school and business. This model plan separates the two. The legal business owner and operator will be a local person: Sung Droma, a visually impaired Tibetan village woman. She is educated, speaks Tibetan and Chinese and she was trained in the production of handicraft products. Their company space will include residential quarters, production area and office, all separate from BWB. Sung Droma would be the legal owner and operator with license to produce and/or retail handicrafts and/or government inspected food items.

### THE FARM GETS AN OFFICE AT H.Q.

Our local government counterpart, the Shigatse branch of the Tibet Disabled Persons Federation, has completed renovations and extension of their headquarters in Shigatse, the prefecture capital. They have set an office aside for the exclusive use of the BWB Farm, Belshung. This will provide a convenient meeting place for those officials and well-wishers who more and more are becoming involved in our work. It will also provide easier access to our government counterpart, one door down the corridor for the ever necessary consultations, request for permissions and above all, the Rubber Stamp!

### STILL ON A WARM NOTE, LITERALLY..

the fourth quarter ends, in the depths of winter and up here on the Tibetan Plateau, with STEAMING HOT WATER FOR EVERYONE, 24/7!! No, unfortunately, not in the rooms but in the central courtyard tap stand. It's our solar heated version of your favorite spa with hot springs. The good people who gave us an auditorium with solar heated hot water pipes running under the floor have re-engineered the system. That water now runs to our outdoor tap stand through insulated pipes below the frost line. One result: more fragrant dormitories, e.g., 'washing of the feet' has become a universal pre-bedtime ritual.

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*Beste vrienden en supporters ,  
Namens alle leerlingen en medewerkers van BWB in Tibet zeggen wij hartelijk dank voor alle  
voortdurende ondersteuning en wensen wij iedereen een gezond en gelukkig nieuw jaar!  
Met vele vriendelijke groeten,  
sabriye en paul*

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[www.braillewithoutborders.org](http://www.braillewithoutborders.org)

