

Tashi and Sakteng

Tashi and Sakteng (Bhutan Broadcasting Service, Bhutan) is a documentary film about a 12-year-old boy called Tashi Norbu (cf. screenshot 1). He talks about his people, the “Brokpas”, a semi-nomadic people who live in the high mountains of Bhutan in the village called Sakteng (cf. screenshot 2). For generations the Brokpa people have survived on yaks for living, but education is now bringing a new dynamic to the Brokpas (cf. screenshot 3). The core of the documentary focuses on a formal debate Tashi has with the village elders on the importance of education (cf. screenshot 4-8). One of the most discussed programs of this year, *Tashi and Sakteng* initiated a debate on the importance of education. Cited from the jury’s motivation to award the program the Prize in the name of UNICEF: “This year’s recipient is a program that not only highlights the important children’s rights to education but also presents young people themselves trying to affect change for the youth around them. It is a program that addresses the complex issues that arise when traditional culture is faced with modern development and how it affects young people and their future.”

Tashi and Sakteng was one of the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2012 finalists in the 7-11 Non-Fiction category. It received the UNICEF SPECIAL PRIZE.

International experts’ opinions

International experts shared their opinions about *Tashi and Sakteng* during the discussion sessions at the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONAL 2012. Many international experts appreciated the program. The validity of the story and the expression of Tashi were found to be relevant by the international experts.

“I love the expressions and the way they convey the children’s expressions. Like, they feel very sad. You could see their eyes are very sad. When they were happy, when they were in love, they were amazing, like how they acted naturally or the way they expressed themselves.” (male expert, Afghanistan)

“I thought the kid from Bhutan expressed himself really well. I think he was definitely a kid. But, the fact is that he had a lot more responsibilities. He had no dad and therefore he had to earn, but I still thought he was a kid. And I did not think he was particularly scripted. I thought that it came from his heart.” (male expert, UK)

A few experts appreciated the fact that the program was a type of documentary showing the life of children in Bhutan, something which is rarely featured on TV. They thought however, the story went beyond that, e.g. for its vision to empower children by breaking cultural barriers.

“I felt that the program is showing a group of people who are not often in the limelight. And yet, here we are at PRIX JEUNESSE, and there they are. So my comment is that I wish we could see a lot more of these and then there is even this spirit.” (female expert, Africa)

“Oh, it’s a documentary about how life is in Bhutan, okay, but at the end when they had the discussion, it was so touching and it was so amazing how the entire community is engaged, not just adult to children but to educate the



Ill. 1: Tashi at his home in his traditional costume



Ill. 2: Tashi and his village life in Sakteng



Ill. 3: Tashi with friends at school



Ill. 4: Tashi debates on the importance of education

adults in return as well. I thought that was really amazing and I personally really liked the part where the child, ready to debate with the adults, said, ‘they are not Yetis, they are not scary’.” (female expert, Japan)

“I thought when the debate started I was trying to find a way if it was for children. At that point, this program empowers children. Probably in their society, it broke cultural taboos with children dominating the adults. I felt that it was from the child’s point of view. I think its conclusion is that kids have power and influence.” (male expert, UK)



Ill. 5: Happy parents see their children give speeches on the importance of education

A few experts commented on the storytelling which was praised for being of high quality despite its rather traditional style and presentation.

“I think it was good example that the most important thing is a story and the presenter, because it was very traditional and classic, no fancy stuff around, just cut by cut and very traditional filming. But they managed to create a very touching story.” (female expert, Germany)



Ill. 6: Children perform at school

The moderator of one of the discussion groups said, “I also think that because they have this discussion at the end, they bring in some new topics for adults and it made it more interesting than if they had cut the story and had only shown the presenter telling about his village. So here they have a new element, which was very good, I think.” (male expert, Norway)

Khem Guragain (Centennial College, Toronto, Canada)



Ill. 7: Children are excited to see their friends on the debate



Ill. 8: Tashi is happy to be home

Screenshots from *Tashi and Sakteng* © Bhutan Broadcasting Service, Bhutan

Target Audience 6.31

Idea 6.35

Script 6.24

Realization 6.29

Average Score per Category by experts’ voters at PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONALE 2012

Winner of PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONALE 2012 UNICEF Prize