

Becoming a Man, then Woman, then Warrior

The show: *Becoming a Woman in Zanskar*

The producers: Zed (France) in coproduction with France 5 and SWR (Germany)

The distributor: Zed

Concept: Blue chip documentary, shot in HD, which focuses on two teenage girls and their transition to adulthood in a remote Tibetan village.

Airing: France 5, SWR (Germany), Equator TV (US), RTBF (Belgium), TSR (Switzerland), RTSI (Italian-speaking Switzerland), YLE (Finland) from September 2006.

French documentary producer, Zed, scored a resounding hit with its \$1.3 million miniseries *Becoming a Man* so it was only a matter of time before its follow up.

The original rites-of-passage series was picked up by over 30 broadcasters around the world, many of whom asked when Zed would produce a similar series around women.

But Manuel Catteau, Zed's general director and head of production, explains that it wasn't easy to show the flip side of the coin.



"These men went through initiations to become men in the eyes of their communities, something that women do not partake in," says Catteau. "But eventually we found a story to tell."

The story is of two teenage girls, Tenzin and Palkit, who are best friends and live in a remote Buddhist enclave in the heart of the Himalayas.

But it is unlikely that they will ever see each other again, as Tenzin is married off to a man in another village while Palkit enters a monastery. The film, shot in HD and coproduced by France 5 and SWR (Germany), explores not only the rituals associated with these traditions but the effect on the two friends and their family.

Delivery of a 52-minute international version is due in September 2006, while France 5 will broadcast a 90-minute version.

Presales have been made to Voom's HD channel Equator TV (US), RTBF (Belgium), TSR (Switzerland), RTSI (Italian-speaking Switzerland) and YLE (Finland).

Zed is now working on a major six-part documentary that would complement *Becoming a Woman* and its forbear and is titled *Becoming a Warrior*. Production has commenced on the first hour-long episode, focussing on Ethiopia, and the second could be shot in the

favelas of Rio. Zed is currently talking to potential coproduction partners about funding the series. Catteau explains: "It will be about how youngsters grow to defend their communities."