

Ekerö in February 2012

Newsletter No 1, 2012

Hello, Tashi Delek, Namaste

(This newsletter was written and sent to the Swedish subscribers in February. I am sorry that it has taken me so long time to translate it to English.)

Information about KMCH

Regarding information about KMCH we have had a flying start this year. On February 3, we had the opportunity to visit Rotary Stockholm Strand, one of our earliest and most faithful contributors.

Saturday, February 11, we informed about KMCH and about our trip to Humla this summer at Ekebyhovs Castle on Ekerö. We had the pleasure to inform in a crowded hall. The audience consisted not only of our faithful friends and contributors from Ekerö so our message was distributed to persons outside that circle too. We sold jewelry made in Kathmandu and handicraft from the Humla and Ekerö. We are grateful to everyone who let us come and inform about KMCH and of the life in Humla.

LOSAR

Now they celebrate the Tibetan New Year in Humla. On February 22, we left the Iron Hare year 2138 and entered the Water Dragon year 2139. New year — LOSAR — is a great festival in the Tibetan culture. They do not celebrate individual birthdays as we. All celebrate their birthday during LOSAR. It is like a combination of birthday and Christmas for us.

Those who live in Stockholm could celebrate LOSAR in Stockholm on Saturday 25 February at the Ethnographic Museum of Stockholm together with the Swedish-Tibetan School and Cultural Association.

Due to the bad situation in Tibet there was a very modest celebration of LOSAR around the world this year.

It is winter in Humla now (= February) and the children are in their home villages with their parents or relatives for a couple of months. The length of the holiday is dependent on how long time it will be cold and snowy. It is normally quite cold in Humla and it's often a lot of snow so they have to shovel the snow from the flat ceilings. Due to the snow it is also difficult or



impossible to walk between the villages. During the winter, some of the women in the village of Yangar will weave fabrics which will be sewn to suitcases that we hope to be able to sell here in Sweden. The yarn for the fabrics, medicine and additional winter clothes for the children were sent up to Humla in December.

Some new blocks to be used for the construction of our children home

Our dream of building a children home, on the land that the Town Council of Yangar has put at



our disposal, has still not been fulfilled. But your Christmas gifts have brought us closer to the goal. We have decided that – around \$ 3 500 – all the Christmas gifts and a little bit more shall be earmarked for the construction. Many stones have been collected and a large part of the wood for the building is available on site. This has been done both voluntarily and paid for by our friends in

Switzerland. It requires much more money before we will be able to complete the building, but this is always a beginning.

Cooperation between KMCH and the Education Office of Humla

At the time of writing, we have not much to tell from Humla. Chembal has just returned from Orissa in India on an assignment for the monastery in Kathmandu so we will have to wait a while to hear how the contacts with different organizations evolve.

In winter when the people cannot work in the fields and do not spend so much time on outdoor activities it is time for education. In the villages of Yangar and Tumkot the adult education is going on almost every evening. New for this year is that the Education Office of Humla has promised to pay our costs for this activity during 2012. It is a success for Chembal's brother Lakpa, who has negotiated this agreement. It is natural that the education is funded by the State, but in poor countries like Nepal the budget is often not designed to satisfy all the needs, so NGOs as KMCH have to help. This agreement is a confirmation that the authorities appreciate KMCH's activities and it is hopefully only a first step towards a wider cooperation.

Forum Syd (an organization that distributes some governmental funds to NGOs)

In November, we were denied on our request to Forum Syd on assistance to our projects regarding adult education, education of the KMCH's Board of Directors in Nepal, the construction

of and education in how to cultivate in greenhouses and reforestation in Humla. The main reason for the rejection was their uncertainty about the democratic structure of KMCHs in Nepal. Of course we were not glad to hear that, but we are planning to do some changes in KMCH Nepal and will submit a new application this spring.

Life as a Senior Citizen in Humla

During our trip to Humla this summer, we had planned to visit Chembal's parents, who both are around 65 years. They were up in the mountains on summer grazing with animals and with their grandchildren who do not attend school. This they do so the children's parents can put all their efforts on the agriculture, which will provide them with food for the whole year. In the mountings they produce yak cheese, butter and yoghurt. We were in Humla too few days to be able to do a visit in the mountains. However, we received a shipment of fresh yak cheese from them that tasted excellent. The cheese is normally dried by the sun to stiff little bits which during other times of the year are mixed in the mandatory butter tea.



In the winter Chembal's parents spend some months in retreat in the mountains above the village. They meditate, rest and are retaining strength for next season. During the retreat they get food deliveries approximately once per week.

There are very few in upper Humla who will experience their 75 birthday. If they should, they will probably have been working until their last day unless a disease had put obstacles in the way. Very few if any in Humla may be able to live as a retired person in the same way as we in Sweden. All of them must every day contribute to their living to the best of their ability.

Stupa, a Buddhist symbol

(In the Swedish version of the newsletter there was a text about the Stupa. This text is not translated to English yet so it will be included in a coming newsletter. Caroline who is the author of the text is in Daramsala in India and has not had the time to do the translation.)

With greetings from the Board of KMCH Support Group

by
Hans Alm

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