

December 2014

## Newsletter no. 5 2014 from KMCH Support Group

Hello, Tashi Delek and Namaste

I will start this newsletter with further details of our trip to the children's home and Humla region earlier this year.

### Visit to the school

The school is located in the neighboring village of Yalwang. Since our last visit in 2011, enrollment has increased from 150 to 322 students today. Most students (247) live in a children's home run by an organization called Humla Children Society (HCS). This organization is funded by The ISIS Group, an Australian consulting firm which sponsors a foundation supporting children's education and health in Nepal and Uganda. 47 of the children in the school come from our KMCH home. The remaining students live with relatives in the villages of Yalwang and Yangar. All other villages are located so far from the school so that it is impossible to go back and forth in one day.



Formation and singing of the national hymn



before the work starts in the classrooms.

The school is called "Shree Mahabhuda Secondary Shool" and is considered among the best in the Humla region. It even provides teaching through 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Students who

want and are able to continue to study after 10<sup>th</sup> grade must move to the capital city of Simikot or locations outside of Humla. The majority of children in the school are native Tibetan speakers. Tibetan language classes are offered in grades 1-5. The teaching is otherwise entirely in Nepali.

The authorities are responsible for costs through 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Thereafter, education costs are paid for by ISIS/HCS and KMCH. ISIS/HCS and the government pay for seven teachers' salaries and KMCH pays for two. There is no practical or specific training that applies to the work the students are likely to undertake following school. Since most students return home and take over their parents' farms, some form of agricultural and forestry education would be appropriate and useful. The development of agriculture is very important to increase access to food in the area. Starvation is still a reality. Along with the ISIS/HCS, perhaps we can influence the authorities to invest in these educational areas.

The school has a completely new Information Technology room with more than ten computers. In a few years we hope to have internet access in the villages. This would mean that we could have e-mail contact with at least the older kids who have learned a little English

### **Inauguration of the hostel**

Chembal took the opportunity to plan a formal inauguration of the hostel during the Board's visit in July. Attendees included representatives from the monastery, HCS/ISIS, the school principal, and some of the parents who were able to take time off from the harvest.



Boarding home where they all live now



The nearly finished new house

In the days prior to the inauguration, Lapka, Chembal, and the kids built a stage for the dances and speeches. It went like clockwork. Everyone helped as best they could and no sad faces were to be found. The cooperation between the kids seemed to work very well in all contexts. Indeed, we saw no quarrels or issues throughout our time with the kids.

Once the big day arrived, we Swedish guests dressed in traditional costumes from Humla. These were heavy and hot outfits more suitable for a wintry climate than a sunny and warm summer day. We and the other guests were greeted with “kathas.” Speeches were given by Chembal, Lapka, representatives from other organizations, and the school principal. The speeches were intermixed with dance by some parents and the children. The children’s dances were amazing. The training and dance practice was mainly conducted by our teacher Naki. She has been with us ever since the time in Kathmandu and is a very important person in the children’s lives; not only for the girls.



The benefit of the day for us from KMCH SG was the children’s joy, commitment, and dancing. I almost forgot we were asked to perform a folk dance from Sweden. We chose “Vi äro musikanter....” and finished with our signature tune “Här dansar herr gurka” by Lennart Helsing.



“Our rendition of "Här dansar herr gurka"

### **Autumn news from Humla**

Many have probably read in the newspapers or heard on the radio about the early and violent snowstorms in the Himalayas. Many hikers in the Anapurna and Mustang in Nepal were surprised by the snow and cold, and several died. Even in Humla, there have been problems. Lapka was in Tibet in October to buy food and materials for our buildings. He was stuck there for two weeks. Once he was able to return, he had to leave the purchases with friends at the border in the Tibetan city of Purang. The Nara La pass is located a short distance from the border. At an altitude of just under 5000 meters, the pass can only be crossed by humans. We don't yet know if it will be possible to transport the goods to Yangar before spring. It depends on how the weather develops. It was an unusually early taste of the harsh winter that the population in Humla normally endure.

It is a time of transition for the road being built from Tibet, and it seems mostly navigable to the village Tumkot, which is about two thirds of the way between Tibet and Yangar. This time Lapka would ship the goods on any type of cargo vehicles to Tumkot, and the last bit with horses. According to Chembal, the Chinese charge exorbitantly high prices for fuel for the vehicles. Recently, the Chinese currency has strengthened against the Nepalese, making fuel that much more expensive. As a result, it might be necessary to use horses all the way as before. We'll see.

We normally buy our flour in Tibet and rice in Simikot. In October, there are restrictions on how much flour a person may carry over the border from Tibet to Nepal. Ration per person is too small for it to be enough for the children's needs even if Lapka were to go several times on the same day. In October, some of Lapka's friends from Humla who live in Tibet gave their rations to him. How this will be resolved in the future is as yet unknown.

If the school hasn't already closed for winter break, it will probably happen pretty soon.

### **Membership in the association**

Anyone who paid 100 SEK for the year can become a member. You only need to state this on the donation form. We would love for many more people to become members.

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year**

Before we wish you a Merry Christmas and thank you for this year, I want to quote a poem by a 4<sup>th</sup> grade student at the school. The poem reflects not only a child's wonder at being and its expression, but applies to many people regardless of their age and wherever they live on this planet. The poem is written exactly as it is printed in a booklet with texts by children from the HCS, which we got last summer. The poem's title is "**I Wonder Why**".

**I wonder why the grass is green  
And why the wind is never seen  
Who told the birds to build the nest  
And told the trees to take a rest**

**Oh! When the moon is not quit round  
Where is the missing piece to be found  
Who light the stars when they glow out  
And hangs the fly fly clouds so high**

Thanks for all your support this year and...

**MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR**

Sincerely,

The Board of KMCH Support Group and all associated with KMCH Nepal

*Through Hans*



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