



Ekerö in

December 2015

Hello, Tashi Delek and Namaste

In this newsletter you can among other things read fresh news from the school home and from our health clinic, NCC. Anton continues the KMCH-school with a text about Nepal's present history and we finish with pictures of one of Eddy's nest boxes and a short poem by one of the children at the school home.

Visit to the school home in autumn 2015 *(by Anders and Susanne)*

The journey to the school home

At the end of September we, two members of the KMCH SG, visited the school home in Yangar. We stayed first a few days in Kathmandu; for it is only there you can seek permission to go to Humla and to buy tickets for the domestic flights. When this was arranged, we flew to Simikot via Nepalgunj.

We came to Simikot early one morning and started our hike directly the same morning. The walk to the school home in the village of Yangar took three days. The walk was easier this time compared to last year because the road between Simikot and the Tibetan border had been completed on some parts. During the trek we stayed the first night in a guest house and the second night in the home of one of our teacher's parents. Chembal came along for the ride as a guide and we rented a horse who wore most of our packaging.



The trails begin more and more to resemble a road..



The landscape is breathtaking beautiful as always.

The School home

When we got to the school home we met all our, for the day, 45 children and our teachers. We got festoons and kathas.



The meeting committee



Anders with festoons and kathas



Susanne and the kids playing on the new playground

When we visited the school home in July 2014 we decided to allocate money for completing the new building and to build a new water system. These investments are now basically ready and we could during our days there see how they worked. The new water system has currently three water taps, two adjacent to the large cement slab that is used for the washing of clothes and one adjacent to the new toilets. The entire system is powered by a 18 000 liters water tank. When the new kitchen is built another water tap will be placed there.



The new water taps at the washing place..



The new place for washing.

Since last year the new House has got a metal roof, this is however still provisionally fixed. A road, that connects the School home with the road between the tibetan border and Simikot which is under construction, has been built as well as a larger plane surface for football and other activities. The assembly halls in the new House are provisionally decorated. One room is for the young and one for the older kids.



The new class and dining rooms. There is still some



work to be done. At least by our standards.

The week we visited the school home the children studied intensively for a midterm examination. We had, however, time for a picnic with momos and a played with the children. *(More photos from the visit can soon be seen on the website under the tab Images and Building of a new hostel.)*

Dr. Meena Maharjan has visited our health clinic, NCC.

A week at the beginning of November the doctor, who after the winter will be responsible for the hospital in the capital of Humla, Simikot, worked at KMCH's health clinic NCC. The visit was timed to coincide with a festival at the monastery when many people gather there. Meena and our regular nurse treated under this week over a thousand people for various ailments.

It was the first time we had a doctor at our clinic. The visit was appreciated not only by all residents in the surrounding area and of the more distant visitors; also the Rinpoche on the monastery expressed his thanks. We are hoping for more visits by Meena to NCC during the year she will be in Humla.

For those who do not remember what was written about Meena in the previous newsletter, I reiterate below a small bit from this. "To our great delight Meena has had her studies paid for by the Swedish organization, www.nepaleducation.se, which supports some Nepali girl's education. Meena visited Sweden in June 2014." It is gratifying when chance is working in this way.

Nepalese politics and history – part 3 *(by Anton)*

For this newsletter, I had planned to write a text about the modern Nepali democracy movement and its revolution in the 1950s. This text will come in a later newsletter. This is because of something that is much more relevant today.

To break through the flow of information and the "noise of news" has become more and more difficult the more news that are spread. A hackneyed phrase is that we are able to interest ourselves for only one crisis at a time. This has made that news about Nepal has not been specifically noted, when there are a lot of other crisis in the world. It's simply hard to cut through the noise.

In Nepal, it has for the past 70 years made a number of attempts to rewrite the country's Constitution, i.e. the policy equivalent of an IKEA instruction: how the get different pieces on a bookcase (or State) fit together into a working device. Just like an IKEA bookcase it can result in good and stable piece of furniture, provided that the pieces end up in the right place. If the pieces end up in wrong places, the result may still be a bookcase, but a bookcase that collapse when it receives books. If the pieces end up in a mess and the result in no way looks like a bookshelf and this is obvious to the constructor, it is just to start from scratch. A result where the bookcase appears to work but does not do it in practice, is in my opinion the worst result. Then it will collapse and people can get wounded by the books.

Nepal has just got a new Constitution supported by a large majority of the country's parties. The majority consensus was damaged, by the absence of politicians representing the population living on the plains in southern Nepal. It had barely gone a day after the Constitution's introduction before violent protests occurred at the border with India and some roads from India were blocked. From Kathmandu came order to deploy military and riot police against demonstrators. Soon afterwards the first casualties came.

This crisis continues today and has implications for the entire country. If the reader throws an eye on Nepal's map they will note that the country does not have an own coast and just are bordering India and China. In the North are the Himalayan huge mountain ranges where the possibility to the transport of goods is small. In the South is the carriage of goods considerably easier. The result is that Nepal is extremely dependent on India for its ability to trade with the outside world. If the flow of goods from the South would be throttled, Nepal would soon suffer a shortage of things it cannot produce produces, as petroleum products and pharmaceuticals.

The blockades have led to a reduced import of oil, medical equipment and pharmaceuticals. The lack of oil products has resulted in great problems for the economy. Hospitals lack essential medicines and equipment. As a result of the earthquake, the political unrest and riots in the South and the tourism, which is one of the country's main sources of income, have suffered. And soon there will be winter. The reconstruction after the earthquake will be delayed if the blockade in the south will continue, which will make the situation unnecessarily more difficult. In the Swedish media we do not read so much of this. The noise from other crises stands in the way.

Why protests and blockades? Who is upset and why? To explain this we need to understand something about how state of Nepal has changed in this fall. According to the new Constitution, Nepal is now a federation consisting of 7 different provinces. A federation is briefly a State consisting of a number of areas of self-government in which laws can be passed. The power in the federation is divided between different levels in which the State has authority over foreign and security policy, and while much of the rest of the civil service is controlled at the regional level. The Central State's ability to introduce laws covering the country's federal areas is limited by the Constitution, in which the division of the power is regulated.

The introduction of federalism has not been as controversial as how the various district boundaries should be drawn. In Nepal there are lots of different variables such as religion, class, caste and language that affect the citizen's identity. Geographical origin is also of importance; whether you live in the mountainous areas in the North, on the hills south of the mountains or on the plains towards the Indian border are of great significance. It's most in the plains bordering India that there is dissatisfaction with the new Constitution, mainly among the ethnic groups Madeshi and Tharu. Despite the fact that more than half of the population live in this area discrimination from the central Government in Kathmandu has long been prevalent. The underrepresentation of these ethnic groups in the military forces, in the police and in the central political administration is example of marginalization.

The texts, that I have read, by representatives of the protest movement in southern Nepal describes a prolonged marginalization which have led to that the introduction of federalism was seen as an opportunity for greater participation in the decision-making at the central level. It is here that the lines of demarcation of Nepal's seven provinces are of interest. The boundaries were drawn in such a way that the ethnic groups were split up into different provinces. People from the regions in the south came to be in the same province as ethnic groups from the mountainous areas, such as Humla, and ethnic groups from Nepal's hills in the middle of the country. The question is whether this should be seen as an attempt to create unity in a country where distances as the crow flies are short but the distance in travel time are tremendous, or a case of "gerrymandering" i.e. to tactically draw boundaries within a country to achieve certain political objectives. As an example: the ethnic group Tharu is split up in different provinces where the old elite's political position is strong. This can reduce the possibility of influence for the Tharus. Gerrymandering is a very cynic way to use in a democratic process to ensure continued power for some groups. If the Tharu people have had their own province their representation in the national Parliament should have been secured in a complete different way.

This is however not the case, hence the protests and blockades. Official Nepalese have very strong criticized India, which is accused of supporting the blockade to push through their own agenda in Nepal's constitutional process. These accusations India sharply denies. According to India the transport is stopped at the border due to that the security on Nepal's roads cannot be guaranteed. Why trade is standing still even at border crossings where no protests have occurred, is however, a fact that the Indian Government does not have been able to give a straight answer on.

There are an overwhelming number of different angles you will have to pay attention to when you analyses the situation. I am not sure of what is up and what is down in this situation. That many ethnic groups are suffering from discrimination in Nepal, our friend Chembal has testified. The creation of a Constitution that in a convincing way will include these different communities and prevent institutionalized discrimination should be viewed as an absolute key to unite this divided country, and for the first time create political calm. That is something that apparently not seems to have not been achieved. And at the same time as this man-made crisis is rolling on, factories are closing due to shortage of fuel, hospitals lack vital equipment and that in a country where all energy should be spent on reconstruction after the earthquake and that now faces the cold season.

Eddy ´s KMCH nesting boxes are popular homes for birds

This summer Bengt Hall took photos when some young birds left a KMCH-nesting box for their first flight. Some of the photos can be seen below as well as Bengt's comments. (The images have been published in the newspaper DN [Dagens Nyheter].) Perhaps you have some photos of birds around a KMCH-box, which we can show in coming newsletters?



They were five

they were in a hurry -

and they could fly.

We end this, as the previous newsletter, with a poem by Pema Yangzom Lama.



Shopkeeper stays near by the road

to earn little money.

I stay in KMCH hostel

to learn and gain knowledge.

We in the Board of KMCH Support Group

THANK you for this year

and wish you all

a Joyful Christmas and a Happy new year

by

Hans

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