

Newsletter no 3, 2010

Stockholm May 7, 2010

Tashi Delek and Namaste!

I do believe that KMCH today have more members/sponsors than ever before and I wish all newcomers a heartfelt welcome! "Tashi Delek" and "Namaste" are the way to greet one another in Humla and Nepal, Tashi Delek is Tibetan and Namaste is Nepali. In upper Humla both languages are spoken.



KMCH's 3rd anniversary!

In April 2007 KMCH Support Group and our sister organisation in Nepal, KMCH, jointly launched our first project for the benefit of the population of Humla.

Humla is a region of Nepal, in its northwestern corner. It is situated on the steep slopes of the Himalaya Range south of the border to Tibetan Autonomous Region and the sacred pilgrim sites Mt Kailash and Lake Manasarovar. The name and spirit of the pilgrim sites were the most auspicious we could think of, so they became a part of our organisations' names (KMCH means Kaliash Manasarovar Children of Humla).

In April 2007 we started our first children home with the goal of enabling children from Humla to go to school. At that time 12 brave young children from Humla endured the long journey from the small mountain villages, the adventurous flight and then a long bus-ride to the capitol Kathmandu. They stayed in the home together with Chembal Lama and four other young men and women on the rented first floor in a house in Simaltar. They all began in a private school nearby. Gradually our efforts have increased. Slowly the number of children grew till 17. In the summer of 2008 we bought one box of medicine as a gift to the Namkha Khyong Dzong Monastery in Humla. That was the beginning of what today has become a small health clinic, Namkhyong Charity Clinic, now open seven days per week. In the spring of 2009 we started our second children home, this time in Humla. At that time the political situation had become more stable and the nearby school has improved. It soon became known that not only young children participated in the private tuition we provided in the children home in Humla, also teenagers, especially young women, started to attend the teachings as well. In August 2009 we therefore started adult teachings, six evenings per week. In the winter 2009/10 we proudly launched our "winter handicraft project" in Humla. Four women have woven traditional textiles. KMCH pays their salaries and the goods produced were sold in Sweden, in a few weeks they were all sold. The profit goes without deductions to our projects in Humla, just as all our donations. AND, in April 2010, almost on the 3rd anniversary, we at last succeeded in bringing the Humla-children in the children home in Kathmandu, back home to Humla.

All "our" children are back in Humla

All 24 children, 12 girls and 12 boys, supported by KCMH, are since one month back, living in one single house in the village of Yangar. We are so happy that the 17 children that for three years have lived in Kathmandu, been able to come back home and now will be able to stay with their families during school breaks etc. Previously the long distance from Kathmandu to Humla, and the cost and time for transportation, has prevented us from sending them home during holidays. From now on they will stay in an environment that is known to them, in a culture that is their own and where the people speak their own minority language. However, we are aware that the quality of the school in the village in Humla is not as good as the private schools in Boudhanath, but we will try to compensate that. Since April 2010 KMCH pays the salary of one more teacher in the school and the children in the village will also be able to attend the morning and afternoon classes in the children home in English, Tibetan, Nepali and mathematics.



KMCH's children home in Humla

Chukhel Lama will stay with the children. Chukhel is a member of the KMCH board since 2007 and has stayed with the children in Kathmandu since the beginning. When he stayed in Kathmandu he also finished his degree and he is now a qualified teacher up till class 7. He will also teach at the children home in Humla as well as in the village school. In the government schools' curriculum the minority languages is not included. But Chukhel is himself from Humla and will teach the children their own alphabet.

In the children home also Naki and Lari, two young women, will stay. They are responsible for the caretaking and for food preparation. Lhakpa Norbu is in charge of administration and will be responsible for buying clothes, food, equipment and furniture, medicine and health care. He will have to arrange caravan-trips to Tibet for purchasing the necessities. In Humla there are no shops, no banks or other facilities that we take for granted in a modern society. We cannot depend on any surplus produced by the local farmers but will have to buy food on markets within two or more days journey away, in Tibet or Simikot in south Humla. We might have to purchase our own mules or horses for

that purpose. Chembal Lama, KMCH's chairman and founder, will be part time in Humla, part time in Kathmandu where he will arrange purchases, delivery of medicine and equipment to the health clinic as well as the children home, he will also deliver news and correspond with us in the Support Group.

Chembal's visit in Europe

KMCH's chairman and founder is, as mentioned before, Chembal Lama. He is now approximately 30 years old, born in Yangar and a monk since the age of 10. Chembal Lama visited Sweden and Switzerland for six busy weeks in March-April 2010. It was an intense, hard-working and very happy time. It was Chembal's first visit to Europe and we in the Swedish board tried to make as much of his visit as possible. Chembal lama spoke to organizations, in schools, at private events, for sponsors and anyone interested, all with the goal of spreading information about the life situation in Humla and about KMCH's work and dreams for the people in one of the world's poorest regions. Chembal also had a little sightseeing, he visited a debate in the parliament, the Wasa-Museum, he tried skiing and axe-throwing, he tried typical Swedish dishes like pea-soup and pancakes, meatballs and lingonberries. The highlight was perhaps the day at the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm. At that time more than a hundred visitors came to listen to Chembal's speech and to see his photos of his friends and family in Humla. At the event we had arranged a table full of goods from Humla as well as our own KMCH-silver pendants and other goods from Nepal.



Chembal at Drottningholm Castle



Chembal "throws the axe" like a Viking

At the Museum Chembal mentioned that there are both differences and similarities between Humla and Sweden, both were very cold in wintertime, however in Humla the temperature is the same outside as indoor while in Sweden it is possible to be dressed in t-shirt even in wintertime inside a house. In both Humla and Sweden there are horses, but in Humla they are the only means of transportation while in Sweden he understood that riding was for entertainment. Another difference was Chembal noted that western people seemed to have little time and could be seen running to a bus. He also noted that in Humla people lived in large families and most people would be interested and curious about a stranger visiting the area. - Chembal managed to get on board on one of the last planes that were allowed to leave Stockholm before the clouds of ash stopped all flights for some time. He has now returned safely arrived, in good health, back in Kathmandu.

Some of you may wonder how Chembal's flight here was paid for, and I can ensure you that it has not been paid by donors' money. A friend of Chembal, who himself is from Humla but lives in the US today, generously paid for Chembal's travel expenses when he heard about our wish to make an exhibition about Humla in Sweden.

Chembal Lama's visit has benefited us in many ways, many of you have met him and we are happy to have received new members and sponsors. It has helped our finances and our future dreams of doing even more for the benefit of the population of Humla. I am happy to inform you that already we have received a big donation that will cover our expenses for medicine and equipment to Namkhyong Charity Clinic. We hope to be able to also have visiting doctors and specialists to the health clinic as well. We are so happy because this health clinic really makes a change for so many people in a region where there is hardly any healthcare at all. We are also happy to have received the long-term support for another adult teaching project in another village. As soon as Chembal can, he will start the new project. On behalf of the board I wish to express our gratitude to all of you, to all new contacts, for all advice and support in many ways, for your smiles, encouragement and suggestions for improvement that will help us in the future work.



The first time skiing.



Chembal at Swedish market place

Warm regards

Pernilla Smith, secretary of KMCH Support Group



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