

Tashi Delek and Happy New!

Time flies by and the year for us human beings seems to be measured in our traditions and holidays. While today most of us on the west now is preparing for Christmas and maybe feel the stress of buying Christmas gifts, preparing for Christmas food and parties, in Humla people are celebrating Losar, the Tibetan New Year. It is wintertime in Humla too, and Losar is their greatest holiday when everyone celebrates their birthdays. What is past is now left behind, with no backward glancing, and they are looking towards the new. All who are able celebrates the new year in new clothes with dances and songs, games and competitions.



Chembal Lama is the founder of KMCH in Nepal. This years his parents wanted him to celebrate Losar with them and the rest of the family in Humla. But Chembal has been needed in Kathmandu. Two of his brothers have recently been very ill and needed hospital care in Kathmandu and for that Chembal's assistance was needed. One of the brothers, who is our manager of the KMCH Children Home in Yangar village has recently lost his son. The boy was not even one year old. Two of Chembal's sisters will also soon visit Chembal in Kathmandu for health care. One of his sisters has children who attend a charity school in India. But the distance from Humla and the cost for transportation has made in impossible for her to meet her children since they left home, seven years ago. This year, due to her journey to Kathmandu, the children will be able to come by bus from India so they can be reunited for the winter holiday after a very long time apart.

Chembal told me that now when he won't be able to come to Humla his family will put a bowl of Losar Thukpa, noodle soup, on the altar of the shrine. That way he will be served and thought of even if he is not there in person. The thukpa has many extra ingredients

now for Losar and if the family has some dried meat it too will be included in the soup. Meat is scarce, since due to the Buddhist culture the Humlis do not kill animals. Only if an animal die from accident will the meat be saved and dried. For Losar other delicious dishes are served, such as fried bread. I for one can guarantee that Humla made fried bread with potato curry is more delicious than any other dish imaginable. And it is completely organically grown in Humla.



When my husband and I visited Humla and Chembal's family in 2008, we stayed in the same shrine room where Chembal's bowl of thukpa now is waiting for him. I remember well how the mice woke us up by with saw dust from the ceiling when they gnawed in the wood and the sound they made men they stepped on the horses' jingle bells that hang on the walls. On the altar there were burning butterlamps in front of statues of enlightened masters and sacred texts bound in textiles. Outside on the roof terrace the village was surrounded by mighty mountaintops. In the mountains there are snow leopards, yetis and black bear. This year a family of bears made a living up on the same grassland where Chembal's parents went with their grazing herds of yaks and cows. Many yaks and cows were therefore killed. But since the bear, according to local saying, is the uncle of the horse, no horse was killed.

2010 is the year of the Tiger, a powerful year, full of changes, movement, catastrophes and happiness. The children from Humla who have stayed in KMCH Children Home in Kathmandu made a big move this year, moving back to Humla. Many of us are really pleased that this was possible. Now, as the village school of Yalwang will be closed for

the winter holiday, the children therefore can, at last, stay with their own families. They will be able to tell about their experiences in Kathmandu, about cars and TVs, high-rising buildings, running water on taps inside the houses etc. Many of their parents may not have seen any of this. The children can also tell about the playground and swings and the zoo. And they can show their expertise in dancing, Bollywood-style. And they will listen to the elders as they tell traditional stories, as is done every long, cold and dark winter in Humla. During the winter the tiny winding paths are covered by so much snow that the villagers are bound to stay where they are until the snow is melting. In such a winter men and their animals are totally dependent on the food they have been able to collect and store during the rest of the year. There is no fresh food available.



As one grows older in Humla it is common that the elders especially in wintertime spend time in their retreat-huts for meditation and prayers. They pray among others the mantra Om mani pedme hung, a prayer for the happiness of all living beings. They pray that everyone should understand the nature of reality, that all living sentient beings will be able to see his and hers own nature of wisdom and infinite compassion. It is taught in their tradition that “all the happiness in the world comes from the wish for happiness for others, all the suffering in the world comes from the wish for one’s own happiness.” Maybe it is this ancient, basic wisdom that is permeating the Humla-people’s way of

acting in a natural, and kind, way towards their fellow human beings, the animals and the nature.

I hope you all will be able to stop your Christmas preparations for a short while to think of the children of Humla; think of their lives, their future and maybe compare to our lives here in the west. Let us unite with them in a wish for the happiness of all sentient beings, wherever they are and however they live in this universe, or in other places.

To all the KMCH members, to all who have supported our work during 2010, on behalf of the board and KMCH in Nepal I send you a warm THANK YOU!



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