



Haverdal 25th February

2017

Hello, Tashi Delek, Namaste

In this newsletter, is included an **invitation to the annual meeting of the KMCH SG**, you can also read some reflections on the previous year, about our visit to the children's school, when we were in Humla last fall, and learn a lot about the importance on Nepal's economy of migrant workers in other countries like India and the Arab Emirates within the framework of Anton's KMCH-School. We also informs about some upcoming activities. Read, learn and marvel.

NOTICE OF THE

Annual meeting of KMCH Support Group at Ekebyhov Castle on Saturday 25 March at 2 00 pm.

The annual meeting will, as usual, be at Ekebyhov Castle on Ekerö. The meeting will deal with the usual points including information about KMCHs current and future activities. The Annual report for 2016 – in Swedish - will be found on our website approximately one week before the meeting.

Reflections regarding the previous year.

We have so far no news from school to home. The children are at home with their parents or relatives and are hopefully playing in the heavy snow that has fallen this winter. In last year there came not much snow in Humla and the spring was very dry. This may have been a contributing cause of the water problem we had in the late summer. Much snow this year is a good sign. Now we hope for a normal rainy spring. Both of the photos below are from previous years. They show the village Yangar and some children playing at the School house.



In spring, it is ten years since both KMCH Nepal and KMCH Support Group were formed. These ten years have passed quickly, with a lot of work both in Nepal and here in Sweden. The two young students who graduated from our school last year had been with KMCH since its start in Kathmandu. Both are now studying in Kathmandu and will after they have finished their studies hopefully return to Humla. This is a "loop" that we hope not only may apply for these two students, but to several of the young students from the KMCH that in coming years will pass class ten in the school.

A visit at Shree Mahaboudha School in Yalbang.

(By Italo Pilotti)

At ten o'clock every morning, except Saturday, 300 children line up outside the State school in Yalbang. It is a typical morning at the Shree Mahaboudha School. They all wait to sing the national anthem together with the teachers. Then it is time to go to their different classrooms, group after group, from six-seven year olds up to 17-18 year olds march of.



On the school yard



In a class room



Interior from the data hall

The school day has begun ... but at least for the 50 children from the KMCH's hostel, the school day started several hours earlier. At the school hostel they all have an early start. When I get up around six o'clock in the morning and walk past the House where all children live, I hear a cheery "Good Morning". Take a look into one of the rooms and you'll meet 8-9 children sitting on their beds studying and doing homework. Do the same late in the afternoon and you will see them back on their beds busy doing their homework; no one can miss their will and ambition. A few hours later, after prayer and breakfast, it is time to line up and march of to school.

It is an easy 20 minutes' walk to school. At the school, we are, as in two previous visits, welcome to visit the classes. Some groups are large, more than 30 students, but we also meet smaller groups. The groups are often mixed age. In some of the rooms the children sat on the floor in a ring with a teacher. Groups of older students were often smaller and they sat at desks that they shared with 2-3 students. We visited an English lesson. Just then they worked with increasing their vocabulary. The teacher used a small computer screen. He showed different pictures, pointed at the screen and said in English what the object was called. The children then repeated in chorus. This method seemed to be the way; the children repeated what the teacher said. In another classroom a class 9-10 worked with mathematics. The theme of this particular lesson was quite complicated geometric calculations. It could have been a lesson in my own school, but without the technique of smartboards and computers. The atmosphere in the different classrooms seemed to be very good despite the sometimes large classes. There seemed to be a friendly and helpful tone between teaches and students and among the students. A sign outside one classroom showed us the way into to the school's computer room. Shree Marhaboudha School has bought 10-15 computers, which give the children chances to work with computers. So far though, there is no internet connection.



The children at KMCH are doing their homework in the sleeping rooms,



in class room or outside,as here, if the weather is good

In 2014 we had the privilege to spend two weeks at the KMCH school hostel. We don't speak Tibetan or Nepali, we don't understand what the children say to each other. But I can't recall any situation where I felt that a child was bullied by some

other kid. It is impossible not to compare my experiences from my own school in Stockholm. This year we can only stay for 4 days at the school hostel. The children seem to be happy and easy going. They seem to understand why they go to a school and why they study. They all know that going to school is one way out of poverty. And this is especially important in isolated and very poor regions like Humla. There are now schools in many isolated villages, but often only up to grade five. For a poor country like Nepal maybe the most important factor to move forward out of poverty is to ensure that 10 year old girls continue their studies. Girls at Shree Mahaboudha School and KMCH's school hostel have this chance. And they certainly face up to this challenge. That certainly goes for the boys as well.



As on previous visits we get a chance to meet and talk with the principle. (You can see him and Italo on the photo.) He tells us about the excellent results and mentions that Shree Mahaboudha School has been elected one of the best schools in Humla. It doesn't surprise us at all. As the children get older the more serious they have to be about their studies. In grade 10 the so called Iron Gate is waiting. During the first week of April all grade ten students in Nepal face a number of examinations in several subjects. A good result can open up a possibility to further studies. Gangshar and Sonam, two students who have been with KMCH already from the start, did very well on the exams last year. They are now in Kathmandu and have started their studies to become science teacher (Gangshar) and nurse (Sonam). Both Gangshar and Sonam plan to return to Humla to work after finishing their studies. But, to pay for higher studies is something most families in Humla can't afford. Thanks to very generous contributions from "*The Family Olofsson's Foundation for social development*" and from the organization "*The Society for Street Children in Nepal*" both Gangshar and Sonam now have the chance to continue their studies.

As other schools Shree Mahaboudha School must plan ahead and try to meet new challenges. The principal told us about his plans to open up for grade 11 and 12. He mentioned the future possibility for eco-tourism and to increase and develop agricultural studies. I feel a deep respect for the work that children, teachers, principle and other staff members are doing every day at Shree Mahaboudha School and the KMCH School Home.

Nepalese migrant workers

(By Anton Pilotti)

This time in KMCH-school we'll talk about one of Nepal's biggest exports. By a quick googling on "Nepal" and "export" is found a few websites with lists where metals, textile products and crops, such as coffee and tea. Nepal is also one of the world's largest producers of cardamom. What these lists don't mention is what can be argued to be the absolute most important export, which is the Nepalese themselves. In the

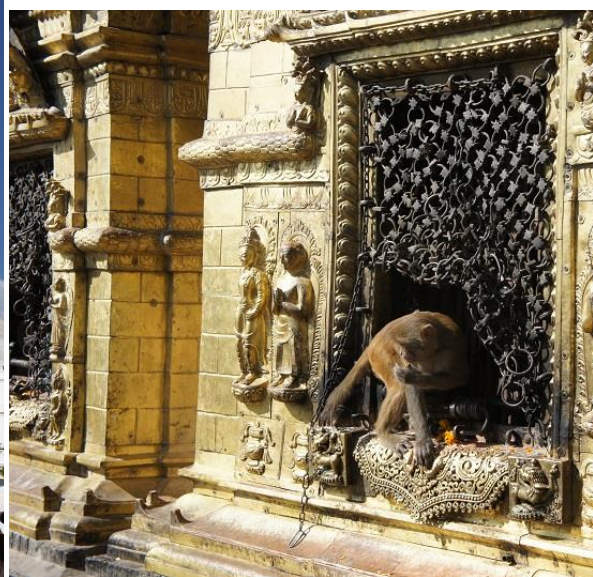
previous newsletter, I have touched on the most romanticized type of Nepalese Gurkha soldiers human exports, since 1800-century served in the British army. Today, we turn instead to focus on the less fabled and much less glorified industry where hundreds of thousands of Nepalese today, namely the guest worker industry.

Although it is not entirely clear how many Nepalese who today find themselves abroad to work as this, it is most likely if there are over 400,000 in Qatar and more than 700,000 in Malaysia. Other countries in the gulf region and South-East Asia are also magnets for migrants from Nepal. One source says that the around six million Nepalese are working abroad, this includes more than three million working in India. Before we get to the treatment of these workers, where the environment in Qatar has attracted international attention, should we consider a little over what this migration means for Nepal.

Nepal has, says political scientist Deepak Gajurel, due to income from migrant workers moved from an agricultural economy to an economy driven by sent home money. This means that income from money sent from abroad is of major importance for the ordinary Nepalese than income from agriculture. Year 2014 sent 5.5 billion US \$ to Nepalese families from relatives working abroad. The same year the State budget amounted to \$6 billion. This gives us an indication of the importance of this money. The revenue increases the material standard of living of the migrants' families. The money can often be enough to help people to move from the countryside to the city, which means that the money that the migrants send home is pushing the urbanization process in Nepal.



The Buddhanath Stupa is almost restored after the earth quake



Detail of Swayambhunath-the Monkey temple- with one of the inhabitants.

As with all other major migrant flows, it is of course the hope of a better life, which runs the Nepalese immigration. Such a thought may bring criticism, arguing that the Nepalese are lured when they are recruited for jobs that are in reality completely different from what was promised. It is often the case, to which we return, but in the case when millions of people make the decision to move abroad, there must also be more reasons than dishonest, trimmings recruiters. That the benefits of the money

that are sent home are great is fairly undisputed. On the other hand, migration splits families with increased social vulnerability for those at home, and that a large part of the most productive population, at the time of writing, is abroad. It is evident that a country, that a large part of the population is abroad or about to move abroad, has big problem.

The situation for the migrant workers, especially in the gulf countries brought international attention in 2015 and 2016. Workers from Nepal, but also from Bangladesh, India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan constitute the largest part of the labor force in the construction of the seven large stadiums in Qatar where the 2022 World Cup of soccer is to be played. In Qatar, a sponsorship system known as Kafala is a system that is valid throughout the whole gulf region. Each migrant worker (which in practice, each worker, because 95% of Qatar's workforce comes from other countries) must have a sponsor, usually the person that hires them. The usefulness of Kafala is that every employee has a person who is responsible for them during their stay in the country. The problem is if that person takes advantage of the situation, and there are plenty examples of that. Passports are commandeers, salaries are not paid on time, or sometimes not at all. Poor living conditions and very few opportunities to change jobs or to require that basic labor law are enforced, are other examples. In my opinion the worst thing is perhaps is the requirement for exit permit. In the case that a migrant worker has a contract for two years and would go home before that, let us say, for example after a natural disaster such as the earthquake in Nepal for a couple of years ago, the employer can deny this. Examples of such events are available.

When voices in 2016 was raised to move the 2022 WORLD CUP from Qatar to another country, Qatar acted by publishing a document with hundreds of points where the rights of migrant workers was described. In the document the right to a decent housing, to get the salary as promised, the opportunity to change jobs and holidays etc. were included. It sounds good. However, Amnesty International believes, after having examined the practical reality, that the conditions have not been changed. Great responsibility for the situation falls on the Qatar's Government, but also on the International Football Federation FIFA. In the case that the situation has improved, it is certainly due to the international stir that put pressure on the leaders in Qatar. It makes you think about the opportunities for improvement that exist in those places where migrant workers are widespread, but that does not attract the attention of international media.

Finally, I would like to inform of two good sources in the case that the reader would learn more about this topic. The first is Amnesty International's report on working conditions in Qatar. It is called "The Ugly side of a Beautiful Game". The report is quite long, but there is an option in a 10-minute video that highlights the same problem. It is called "Qatar: World Cup 2022 forced labor", and is well worth seeing.

It is a new year and thus it is time to renew your membership or become a new Member of the KMCH Support Group.

We would like to see more of our donors also become members of the Association. It costs 100 SEK. Payment may be made separately or together with a gift, but don't forget to announce that you wish to become a member.

From other countries than Sweden use: **BIC-SWEDSESS IBAN-SE57 8000 0832 7990 4500 6518**. You can also use **PayPal** via our website www.kmchumla.se.

Greetings from the Board of KMCH SG



(Richard

has caught some eagles in flight. A bonus for those who trekk in Humla.)

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