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# NEWSLETTER

ISSUED CHRISTMAS 2025

## SONG FOR TOMORROW

We do not know what tomorrow will bring  
We are rather simple people  
Spades are ringing, sickles are whirring  
We do not know what will come tomorrow  
We are just tilling and ploughing  
What is today's job

But we know what has happened yesterday  
We hope that we never forget it  
We sew our bread, and bread is rare  
We hope that we will be still there to eat it, too.

We do not know what will happen tomorrow  
Whether battle is waiting or peace will be enjoyed  
Whether the sickles are whirring or the sabres ringing for us  
The only thing we know is  
That tomorrow will surely come  
Where we forge the swords into ploughs.

Mascha Kaléko



## DEAR FRIENDS OF THE SHANTI-FAMILY,

When a friend drew my attention to the poem opposite and which I knew already I immediately thought: This is what I wish to share with you! Especially for Christmas – although it is not expressly a Christmas poem.

It is however true that all our fears after this worrying and difficult year – and our longing for peace are expressed in the metaphors Mascha Kaléko has used in her poem.

But all those fears are answered by the hope for a tomorrow – a tomorrow which offers a peace we can help to build ourselves – the “peace to all people of good will”, like the angels announced to the shepherds on Christmas day. They announce a tomorrow on which we can contribute to peace with our own support, wherever we are able to, and be it only a small one.

In Nepal, the longing for peace is immense, only think of the devastating and bloody riots in September. We are still aware of their impact. Insecurity is prevailing. New elections have been announced for March – until then, there is no functional government which can develop plans and remedy any grievances.

## THE SPREADING NEED

Talking of remedying grievances – in the first place that should be the battle against the need that is being suffered by the poorest of the population: which is the target group of Shanti!

It is hard to see this misery every day, and also to be aware that the interim government has no money for relief measures. Especially after Mister Trump cancelled all financing of relief projects immediately after he got into office! We could

really fall into despair if we had to face this alone. But you, my dear friends, feel this misery from far away and help us with all of your powers!

I know that many of my acquaintances no longer want to watch the daily news on the media – they shy away from seeing and hearing about wars, climate disasters, grievances and crimes in the world, telling me with a resigned sigh: “I am myself unable to do anything about it – the world is just as it is!”

But we have seen over and over again that such words are just not true! We can change things! For example, you who are supporting us, you let yourselves ride on the wave, you are touched by urgent needs, and you give us new energy whenever we are about to become paralyzed. With your help we were able to remedy individual misery again and again.

We are currently having several thousands of jackets and sleeping bags sewn by our tailor shop because the weather has become really cold. Our staff distributes the sleeping bags to people who have lost everything – by the riots in September, for example, or by the fact that Kathmandu’s mayor, Balendra Shah, has repeatedly ordered the huts in the slums to be torn down by bulldozers.

## NO MORE „HAWKERS“

We much regret that the mayor has some fixed ideas how his town should appear to the outside: The poor are pushed out of the city to the boundaries, removing all their chances of earning and living.

The hawkers used to sell fresh fruit and vegetables and similar products from their bicycles which were loaded with big baskets that they had filled at the central farmer’s market. Everybody visiting



Kathmandu has seen them – the city was empty without them. Moreover, they ring the bells at the houses, and housewives can come down and buy everything they need for the day from them. There is no need to go down to the market themselves, which is a great distance from their homes! No other sellers are between, which is the reason why the prices stay low.

And what is more, nothing is wasted as they only buy what they need for the day. The next day they order some more. This has been a very reliable and daily “delivery service”! The women could also have a chat with each other, small children get a mandarin placed into their small hands – which is testimony of a friendly neighbourly climate.

Many of the hawkers were even arrested by the police, their bicycles taken away or destroyed. They are greatly afraid and have largely disappeared from the streets. When our employee Bijendra took a photo of the peanut roasting woman, the police came and took her cart away in exactly that moment. She is a mother of three and relies on the income, selling roasted peanuts. Her lungs are damaged from the wood fire, and she needs medical help. Which is way beyond her means! Bijendra invited her to Shanti where she gets medical help and more support.

We think this is a great loss as the day labourers have lost so many ways of earning a little money, and the housewives lead more difficult lives, and the streets are empty of traditional life and colourful local atmosphere. We try to compensate the misery of the families a little by installing more roof gardens. This was a project we have started some years ago, and everybody was happy about it! We wish to enlarge the roof gardens and intensify this farming idea.

This specifically means that we bring vegetable plants and fruit trees to the houses of the families who need them, placing them on their flat roofs in big pots. They can grow there, regrow again, and they can harvest right there in their own homes. They can exchange whatever surplus they have – which is very important as they cannot afford the prices in the shops any more.

Another plus is that the potters in Timi, the village where everybody earns their living from making pots will now have enough work!

#### CONTINUING EDUCATION IN AGRICULTURE

We have become more and more aware that continuing education is very important for the people in Nepal. As the hunger grows, farming education at a higher level is urgent.

So we are very happy that Walter Hahn has visited us again. He is an agricultural specialist and offers training in the Demeter farming method. His wife, Grace Hahn, has spent her time as a doctor with us during this visit. It is a good thing that we are now cooperating with multipliers from remote villages. Shanti has made it a task to coach a Dalith village, where only “untouchables” are living. We want the village to become a sample village and support it on this path.

One of the villagers is Dipendra who has lived at Shanti for three years. He is an apprentice silver-smith and is also learning to drive a car, and he is smart, reliable and willing to work which is the most valuable asset. Shanti has been ready to use him for the most diverse projects, for example fruit tree planting. Today, he accompanies five young men from this village who are going to learn about the Demeter farming method from Walter Hahn.



They are then going to teach other farmers in their village what they have learned. Who will hopefully teach it to other colleagues so that in the end the entire village is interspersed with ecologically helpful agriculture, saving resources and yielding a high output of valuable products.

#### OUR GARDENER LILA

Whenever we think of our farming projects, we immediately have Lila in our minds all at once. This is what our director Apsara Kharki has written about him:

*„Lila Bahadur Pantur has been at Shanti for a really long time – nobody knows exactly since when! He is just a big asset. With his 70 years, he is a model of someone coming out of misery and growing in strength and developing compassion.*

*He is the teacher of a small group of former leprosy patients, Dalith farmers who were marginalised commercially and socially, in biodynamical farming. He works on our farm every day, although he has some physical limitations, carefully fertilizing the soil with animal dung, checking the plants and planting seedlings at the right time. Together with the people ordered to help him, they farm healthy organic vegetables and fruit – from donated Bingenheimer seeds and from the seeds they have already yielded in former years. They can harvest food and also give hope to many poor families in this way.*

*Every day, Lila supplies our centre with baskets full of fresh vegetables using Shanti's electric cars, where the meals are cooked in the steam cooker to be handed out to our children and the slum dwellers – around 1,600 meals every day!*

*Sherpa Ama, one of the women farmers of his group proudly told us: "I am so happy to farm green*

*vegetables for the children! It makes sense and is fun!" She also cares for 60 chickens that lay fresh eggs for the children and the disabled home inhabitants and the senior people living at Shanti.*

*Another of the group, Ghanashyam, started in cow husbandry, supplying the children with fresh milk, while the cow dung is used for fertilizing the farm soil.*

*Whenever Shanti's field produce is not enough, Lila buys some vegetables from neighbouring farms. These farmers are happy about fair prices, the local community being empowered at the same time.*

*This year, our farm produced 300 kilograms of avocados from three trees, 50 kilograms of khaki fruit, 158 kilograms of plums from Godavari and Sundarjal, 80 kilograms of lapsi, 9 kilograms of plums pomelos and 3,696 kilograms of vegetables, so that the children and patients have been happy about fresh and delicious produce from their own operations.*

*Two Dalit families in Sundarjal joined the project, learning biodynamic farming, receiving money in cash, food and support for their children's education. For people who are generally excluded from such chances this initiative gives them hope, dignity and the chance to get good education for the young.*

*At the same time, the farming project offers occupational therapy and helps patient to get healthier through the use of their muscles and senses during rhythmic activities both physically and emotionally.*

*A really important thought comes to mind when we think of Lila: He is always an understanding and loving grandpa for our orphans!*



### LITHO IMPROVEMENT

I am always and continually pondering about how to challenge hunger and its impact. During my researches, I found that peanut butter is an important product which is successfully used against malnutrition in Africa. Peanuts have always been legumes that are cultivated in Nepal. If we added more peanuts to our nutritious Litho porridge we will not introduce something new but would only enrich our porridge with a well-known and popular legume. Instead we would omit the sweet corn which has only 100 calories, but peanuts have 567, including some valuable vitamins and minerals.

When you think back, we have always brought some Litho when we held our health camps, giving them to the families for their children and for weak elderly people. We will deliberately not hand out some peanut butter like the relief helpers do in Africa, for the Nepalese would not know how to use it. But they all love our porridge – and familiar food acts like caressing the senses and the soul, too!

The demand for litho will be ever increasing, so we are going to buy another mill and create ten employment positions. The women will roast the cereals and the legumes, mixing and milling the mixture and packaging the mixed powder for transport to the villages.

### OUR DOCTOR

In our last newsletter, we introduced you to Dr. Bhuwan, our new doctor. And we have announced that we will present you with the letter Dr. Dikshya wrote about her ideas as a doctor and her first experiences at Shanti:

*"I am Dr. Dikshya Lamichhane, the newly employed doctor at Shanti Sewa. I have now been employed by this organisation for the past nine months and I*

*feel very privileged to be part of the Shanti family. I come from a family in which my parents taught me the values of friendliness, respect and helpfulness. With these principles in my heart, I was very curious when I heard of Shanti Sewa for the first time: I urgently wanted to know more about the goal of Shanti Sewa and get to know the people behind it. Ms. Apsara, Shanti's director, was so nice to show me around the rooms of the centre. I met many people and could talk to them.*

*This experience opened my eyes for another approach to life: I was conscious of how happy we are to have access to the basic necessities of our lives, while many people are refused such access. This inspired me to look deeper into the work of the centre. As a doctor, I do not always have the chance of really getting to know every patient who I am treating. Shanti Sewa however offers me a place where I can establish a connection to the people I treat medically – through love, emotional support and care. Talking to the people has shown me the emotional struggles they live through: Some were left by their families, others by their spouses and some even by their own children.*

*It is heart-breaking to hear their stories. All the more, I am grateful for my own parents and determined to serve these people with compassion and loving care. I am convinced that it is not only medical treatment which is essential but also compassion – to be gentle, polite and patient, to understand the peoples' problems and react with loving care. This means that emotional healing is as important as physical healing.*

Dikshya then mentions some other areas in which she can see further developments, such as: school education for the children, empowerment of women, protection of the environment and our health camps. She continues with the words:



*I am aware that changes need time, but I hope, with my continual commitment, to contribute to more happiness and satisfaction being brought into the lives of the people who have been entrusted to us. I am very thankful that you have embraced me into the Shanti family, and I am looking forward to the chance of growing and serving at Shanti Sewa."*

These are the words of our doctor who has been working in our centre for nine months, "serving" her patients.

#### YUK

I wish to end this letter with the story of Yuk because I know that you will have much pleasure: A young boy of 8 years has been relieved of his sorrow by your support, so that he can continue on a healthy way of development. What we need around the time of Christmas is indeed joy, one of the big pleasures of the season!

Yuk was born with droopy eyelids which covered his pupils so much that he could not see very well during school. He could not follow the lessons, got shy and shy and totally isolated. He was angered by the questions people put to him, and the children teased him. He was deeply disturbed in the end. His parents were dirt poor. From their village, they moved to Kathmandu with their two children, hoping to find a better life and help for their son. They had actually heard of the good ophthalmological clinic in Shanti's neighbourhood.

The clinic demanded 352 euros for the treatment (converted). This is maybe not much in our terms,

but Yuk's parents would have to have worked three full months for such a wage – never being able to pay this amount!

Our nurse Kopita found the child and advised the family to come to Shanti. Now imagine that the first surgical intervention was successful! Yuk will only need one further operation to have a normal external look and see correctly with his eyes!

We have simply adopted the whole family immediately into Shanti: Yuk and his sister are attending our school, one of the big boys will give Yuk extra lessons so that he can cope with the classes, and the mother can work at Shanti. The father is unable to work.

Dear friends, it is true that your support was the means to help individually in cases where misery was overwhelming and it could enable the poorest of the poor to lead a humane life – this makes me so grateful and happy again and again! We – the entire Shanti family – say many thanks to you from our hearts!

We wish you a blessed Christmas. And we hope for the year 2026 that peace will prevail and conquer the world – wherever it is much needed, both in the near surroundings and far away from us.

Stay protected – you and all those that are close to your hearts!

Marianne Grosspietsch