

SPRING
2022



SHANTI LEPAHILFE
DORTMUND E.V.

NEWSLETTER

ISSUED SPRING 2022

FRIENDS, THAT THE ALMOND TWIG
BLOOMS AND COMES TO LIFE AGAIN
DOES IT NOT POINT
THAT LOVE REMAINS?

THAT LIFE IS STILL GOING ON
WHILE BLOODSHED IS SCREAMING
NEVER BELITTLE THIS
IN THE DARKEST HOUR.

THOUSANDS ARE CRUSHED IN WAR
A WORLD IS LOST
BUT LIFE IS A TRIUMPH OF FLOWERS
WEAVING IN THE WIND

FRIENDS, THAT THE ALMOND TWIG
IS COVERED IN WEAVING BLOOMS
SHALL BE A HINT FOR US
THAT LIFE IS VICTORY.

Schalom Ben-Chorin (1913 – 1999) in the year 1942



DEAR FRIENDS OF THE SHANTI-FAMILY,

When I quoted the poem written by Schalom Ben-Chorin in the spring letter of 2021, I could not know that I would have to follow with the entire words – a war in Europe was unthinkable until even a few weeks ago! I am shocked about this fact, I feel overwhelmed by the terrible news pouring down on me, and I am certain that many of you have the same feelings.

The words have such a reality about them that you think they are written in our days – dark horrors being told – but a confidence of hope is overcoming the terror. Like Schalom Ben-Chorin I am looking out of the window, and I see the sun shining in the clear blue sky, watching the first spring flowers turn their heads to the light. Nature striving to the sun excites forces of hope in me: Destruction did not win then, and it will not win today! Life is stronger, and it will be victorious!

We all can contribute to this, within our possibilities. We can help some individuals to gain new hope. We can only do this if you, our dear Shanti supporters, stand by our side! Together it was possible for us to help grow courage and hope, and we are continuing doing so, every day, together. Side by side, we have fought against resignation, we have built and maintained the Shanti centre through many storms – as an oasis of a peaceful community.

I have the pleasure to share the joy about all small successes of the past few months with you and tell you - as a means against resignation - what blessed difference your help has made in the Shanti family. It is true that we will hardly be able to change the general doings of the world. But we can indeed be loyal to the people we support, whose hands we take to lift them out of misery.

DORJEE

During evening food serving, Bijendra, our permanently committed Project Manager, met an emaciated, ragged man named Dorjee. He told him he had been a driver, but tuberculosis had got the better of him. He felt too weak for work, he lost his job, and he was set on the street finally. His wife left him.

Bijendra called me on the phone, asking what to do. "Let us do everything possible", I said. "Isolate him in the clinic to avoid infecting others, and let our doctor care for him."

This story reminded me of the fact that all eleven siblings of our adopted son Puskal had died of TB. He was the only one to survive because he grew up in our home in Germany.

The miracle happened: Dorjee responded well to the medication and put on 18 kilograms (from 38 kg only when he arrived at our place) thanks to our healthy food. He is well today, and strong enough to work as a driver of the small pickup for Shanti. He distributes the daily food portions to the needy children in the slum with that car every day.

All these stories, like that of Dorjee, are stories of hope for me, and make me happy. They help me to not get sucked into the currently very depressing general mood. It is fact that if we look farther than our own sphere, to the people that rely on us in their misery, we ourselves are made more vital, more courageous, go about our own chores more easily. Like the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel, giving us consolation and confidence.

JEDINA, RAJESH, TOGENDRA

We see such a trustful light in the eyes of the children who can be saved by Shanti because of you.



Some days ago, three children were brought to us, Jedina, three years old, Rajesh five and Togendra nine. Their father is among the vast number of working slaves in the Arabic countries, in Dubai, where he got lost three years ago. Nobody knows if he is still alive.

Their mother married another man, leaving the children at the grandparents', who are living like beggars. They were farm hands without any land, bought free, and their only possession is a tiny hut. They have no farmland to live from and cannot feed the children. A compassionate journalist informed Bijendra, who promised help.

We hoped that the grandparents could come with the grandchildren. But they are afraid of the big city and wish to die in their village. The children were taken to Kathmandu by the village chief and his wife. The journey was hard – 55 hours long!

Our Sunita with her great empathy took care of the children like a mother hen. They had no luggage. The travel clothes were given to them by the villagers – nobody wanted them to travel in rags – but that was their only property.

We are so hoping that the three little ones can grow up in the loving care of the Shanti family and learn to laugh again.

SHANTI'S DEVELOPMENT

This small story is only a minute ray of light compared to the misery of the world. But such individual fates touch our hearts. The entire movie industry is profiting from them! They let us share the lives of the people living thousands of kilometres in another world which is so very different from our culture and our life habits. We are so happy that those lives far away remind you of the common features

of all people: a wish to be secure and safe, have a roof over our heads, get our regular meals, go about a useful job, and see a future for our children.

This is the reason why the Shanti centre was founded and has been developing. For 30 years. It grew to be a peaceful place of external and internal healing during those 30 years.

This is where many children could grow up, being supported according to their talents, some of them studying at college, and some working as qualified assistants in our clinic and school. They were able to make some of their own dreams come true, and even some of their parents who are mostly illiterate.

Dear supporters, whenever I reflect on this I come back to the reality of your care, which is like a stone dropping into water: circles and more circles start spreading, and this means that other support measures are initiated some of which we have reported in our previous letters:

Adults and children in the slums next door are being given food, helping them survive the pandemic; the poor around the temple are getting medical help, food and warm clothing, and some of the families or some individuals are getting housing and support from Shanti. Think of the health camps at places where no medical assistance is offered.

Nepal was thrown into a big crisis by the Covid pandemic. Thousands lost their jobs, facing the worst poverty. But the war – raging in a country far away from Nepal – worsens the situation dramatically: food prices have soured – with the result of more hunger. With the difference that in Nepal you do not expect any help from the government. So we need a lot of imagination and ideas to save money, to create jobs and develop a future.



SATCHELS AND RUCKSACKS

One of our challenges: we need satchels for the children. Currently, our school and the kindergarten are frequented by 160 children. And we have 40 college students. We are looking for a solution protecting our environment. All satchels available for sale in Nepal are made from plastic materials and cannot be repaired when the seams crack open, and then they are thrown into the dustbin. The incineration of these materials creates black corrosive in the bad air hanging over the Kathmandu valley.

This is why we looked for upcycleable material, and I asked Bijendra to contact the Red Cross, the police, and the army, even some trekking agencies, to ask for used tents. We were lucky and got a full pickup with tarpaulins for free, and they promised us more tarpaulins.

There are some very big and good ones, too – for cutting too good! We use them for waterproofing the roofs in the slum cabins as many of them have had holes in them for the years. We met a man by the temple whose hut had collapsed during the earthquake. He has lived in the cold, draughty and wet ruin since then. The masonry team at Shanti has inspected the hut and rebuilt it, putting in one of the tarpaulins underneath the roof to really keep the rain out.

LOKENDRA

The smaller pieces are used by our tailors to sew rucksacks which Lokendra has developed a pattern for together with Bijendra. Lokendra came into Shanti's care with his two siblings from a small village one year ago.

When his parents died, he tried to earn his and his siblings living through odd jobs. But they suffered

from hunger and cold. After arriving at Shanti, he wanted to be a taxi driver. When he noticed the murderous traffic in Kathmandu he was shocked by his own fear – he had not thought of that! He was also interested in the tailor shop work which he is now learning. Today he makes clothes unusually carefully and accurately.

The rucksacks are a further perspective for steady jobs for our tailors as we always need warm clothes and summer dresses for our children, apart from the rucksacks.

Our idea is the following: We think of training tailors in some villages which have schools, so that the pupils and also adults will have rucksacks. Everybody carries their belongings and products on the back rather than in bags in mountainous Nepal.

FOOD

I have already mentioned a huge problem: the enormous, ever rising prices of food. The higher petrol price has led to an increase of the transport costs in Nepal, as in other countries. There is no end to the rise.

Our son Heiko had the good idea to buy a small, second-hand electric-driven transporter, at a price of (converted) 4,000 euros. We still have the photovoltaic equipment on the clinic roof. At night, the car can be charged without difficulties.

In Nepal, the climate is very good for vegetable farming. So we extended rooftop vegetable farming, so that people increasingly notice that any small surface can be used for cucumber and tomato plants, zucchini, and eggplants and so on. Shanti has increasingly given out water containers and planting tubs made from car tyres, including seeds and compost.



A group of Kawadi, as the waste collectors are called in Nepal, promised to provide Shanti with one thousand of these 20 litre water containers every month. This means that we can give our 100 plant tubs for 10 families at a price of 160 euros. This will be enough for the vegetables needed for a family of four.

Moreover, our farm hands (both women and men) have fished out our fishpond for the first time! The scales of 40 silvery carp were removed, and the Shanti family had a meal it has never seen before! One of the organisations promised to supply small grass carp, again – they will be fed in the pond with grass, like those before.

TREES FOR THE ANNIVERSARY

In times of great uncertainties as we are now experiencing, you need some signs of hope. This is the reason why we use Shanti's 30th mid-July Anniversary to set a number of hope signs. Mid-July – that will be the right time to plant some trees! We have ordered hundreds of fruit trees – standing ready for pick-up in some nurseries. A measure to remedy the bitter lack of fruit in Nepal! As some time before, we ordered trees of a height of 80-100 centimetres in order to ensure they will start to grow, and that our children will soon enjoy picking fruit.

If you could only see the rich harvest of fruit on our kaki, papayas, and guava trees, which we have planted during all those years! You would be overjoyed, as we are. This joy has now inspired us to shoulder the really big planting project this time. The advantageous climate of Nepal – we are certain that the fruit trees will grow happily.

We are really full of hope to make a difference as the country is importing fruit mainly from India and China for 52 million euros each year. This makes fruit so expensive that only very rich people can

afford it. The government had planned to make the nation independent from fruit imports within three years in 2021/22. We think that this is an election promise before the election in May, however. We rather set us more realistic goals, taking one concrete step after the other ...

You will all get a tree certificate if you celebrate our Anniversary with us on 17 July in Dortmund as a gift at the same time the Shanti children are going to plant those trees during our party! This creates a symbolic bridge of trees from Nepal to Germany on this day to come. Please find an extra sheet in this letter which you can take out and glue on a prominent place! All the important information is written on it.

And now I wish every one of us peace – in Ukraine and everywhere where people try to solve problems with violence. Stay safe – you and all your loved ones!

With warmest regards
Your Marianne Grosspietsch

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SHANTI LEPAHILFE
DORTMUND E.V.

Your Invitation to Shanti's 30th Anniversary on Sunday, 17 July 2022

As some of you may have experienced before, we are going to start with a
Festive Service at St Reinoldi Church at 11.30 a.m.
(town centre, 10 minutes from the central station),
followed by a buffet.

All who are interested can then join us on a visit to the exhibition in the Gasometer in
Oberhausen entitled "**Das zerbrechliche Paradies**" (**The Fragile Paradise**).
We will order a coach for all those not coming in their own car.
Planned trip time: two hours, with a one-hour guided tour if you wish.

The costs should not be a problem
(€ 8.00 for the exhibition + a share of the coach fee).
Those of you who can, could spend a little more so that we can take everybody with us.

Should any Covid regulations make cancellations necessary,
please also include your email address this time when registering
your attendance for easier communication.

**Please send us your reply no later than 25 June
by E-Mail to [info\(at\)shanti-leprahilfe.de](mailto:info(at)shanti-leprahilfe.de) and tell us whether you are going to attend**
- the buffet
-the visit to the exhibition
- the guided tour of the exhibition
- the coach trip to/from Oberhausen.

We are looking forward to this festive meeting with you!

Stay all safe – physically and spiritually!