

SUMMER
2018



SHANTI LEPAHILFE
DORTMUND E.V.

NEWSLETTER

ISSUED IN SUMMER 2018

THANK YOU

FOR THE FRUIT OF OUR TIMES
FOR THE FRUIT OF OUR EARTH
FOR THE SUN AND THE RAIN
FOR OUR EMPLOYMENT
FOR THE HEALTH
FOR THE CONFIDENCE
FOR THE WARMTH
FOR CREATIVITY
FOR THE BELIEF
FOR THE FRIENDLINESS
FOR LOVE
FOR THE FRIENDS
FOR THE WELCOME
FOR EVERY SMILE
FOR EVERY KIND WORD
FOR THE READINESS TO HELP
FOR THE FEELING OF HOME
IN THE FAMILY
FOR EVERY NEWBORN CHILD.

by Hans Kittinger

DEAR FRIENDS OF THE SHANTI-FAMILY,

you may have been waiting a long time for this report. Please accept my deepest apologies! Both my husband and I had to overcome some health issues. Now we have enough strength to be ready

and fresh for committing to the Shanti Family!

I had to postpone my travel to Nepal twice, until I flew off on 15 May finally for a two-week stay only. But looking back to those two weeks, I feel they were more like five weeks...



MANAGEMENT

I was really anxious on the flight to Nepal. On the one hand, there was **Dipa Sedhain**, our manager, whose husband has been deployed to a position in southern Nepal - she followed him there, of course. She is pregnant, and now she is in a condition that makes her unable to work. I suddenly had an idea – a flash of spirit (the Pentecost week had just begun): Kumar would certainly be ready to do Dipa's work!

Kumar Karki was the head of our bookkeeping department. He truly knows everything about Shanti, and he has already worked in other humanitarian organisations. This would be a good solution – we had not thought about it earlier! Now we are feeling relieved.

OUR DOCTOR

The next question was: who would be our next medical doctor?

Kumar Paudel has been working with us for some months; his background includes two further training courses completed in the Filderlinik near Stuttgart in Germany. The patients love him well, as he treats everybody, including the "Untouchables", as human beings although he belongs to the highest case, the Brahmins, himself. He will only have to work in a state-organised clinic for one more period to be awarded his last qualification and not losing his medical licence (he is called "Doctor" by everybody already – in Nepal, all physicians all called "Doctor").

I am asking myself – where on earth could we get a physician to replace him? One who is as empathic and sympathetic towards the patients as he is? A solution for that problem came about wonderfully quick, too: his cousin will replace him.

Kripesh Lamichhane, who also comes from a respected family, wishes to work for Shanti; Kumar enthused him for being employed by us. All of us gained a positive impression from him. Kumar is very proud of the fact that he did not prescribe any penicillin for half a year. Heiko never tired in explaining to him that it is very harmful to prescribe penicillin for any little complaint. In Nepal, they used to prescribe penicillin for a harmless cold – although a cold is caused by virus, and penicillin only has an antibacterial effect!

Even the Nepalese press media published the fact on 25 May that many rich people are already resistant against penicillin - because they take it whenever they feel a little ill. And also because they eat so much chicken meals. Chicken food is already contaminated, however, because the farmers put penicillin into the chicken feed...

We well understand that our doctor is proud to have abstained from prescribing penicillin for half a year. He has actually learned to precisely evaluate the case and look for a milder and nevertheless effective alternative first.

Dr. Kripesh is keen to be trained on a broader basis and in more specialties; he looks up to Dr. Kumar as a mentor. Praise to the modern communication technology that will make such training for the two doctors possible! We are confident that Kripesh will care for our patients in the best practical way – another rock dropping from our hearts ...

DENTAL SURGERY

I really have to tell you about another, very positive development in this connection: We have installed the first and only free dental surgery in Nepal! We ordered a practical, compact dental surgery unit via "Action Medeor", which I was able to transport to



Nepal in November. I also took a special lamp with me that Heiko installed above the dentist's chair without delay. The next time I fly to Nepal in July, I am going to transport a small digital X-ray unit in my hand luggage, which only weighs 3Kg.

Bibita Adhikari, a young dentist, treats the patients in a well-lit clean room. The special thing here is that **Shyama**, a leper patient who is severely disabled, has designed the walls of the room with a happily painted, colourful flower frieze, with elephants trotting away underneath the window!

Once she has done this, she will paint a mandala of multiple colours on to the ceiling. This will certainly take the fear from the patients sitting in the dentist's chair. Another happy event: Dr. Bibita's assistant is a child of Shanti, Saru. She came to us as a small girl, and after her secondary school qualification, we sent her to formal tooth hygiene training. What a privilege to have a dentist who checks the teeth of all our school pupils as official school dentist – and instructs them in tooth hygiene thanks to Saru!

We are the exclusive school in whole Nepal whose children are provided with medical and dental care. The entire Shanti Family is very happy about this – and we are grateful to you, our friends, who enable us to do this with your financial help!

A VISIT FROM THE EMBASSY

Only a few days after my arrival, we had a visitor: Florens Vogt, an official from the Ministry of the Exterior in charge of non-governmental organisations. To welcome him, our children sang their transitional folk tunes, they danced classical Nepalese dances, and each of them had painted a picture for him.

We loved to see him personally look at each picture and praise it. And he had brought really

much time with him ... He went through all the departments of our charity organisation, approaching the people with their disabilities, sometimes of a severe nature, with friendliness and much esteem. It is really nice to see that a visitor in a country where people with handicaps are classified as "Untouchables" really notices them. To celebrate the day, Mr Vogt gave to all of the Shanti members a banana!

PRINCESS HIMANI

I must not forget to tell you about another encounter. The one or other of you may recall that last November, a cousin of the former Crown Princess Himani had visited us on the occasion of our anniversary festival, as Himani herself was not in Nepal at the time). Since the monarchy ended in Nepal, Princess Himani dedicates her time to her large social charity organisation, the Himani Trust. Our Junior Manager Bijendra had the chance of organising an audience for us before her; so we went to see her, Heiko, Bijendra and myself. Pari was among our group, too!

This visit was a nice one, held in an amicable, positive atmosphere. The Princess and her two cousins were really interested in our work; and we thought about whether to bundle our efforts in some areas, cooperating together.

THE DIARRHOEA EPIDEMIC

Exactly two days after this meeting, our cooperation was put to the litmus test: We discovered a horrible report in the newspapers about a serious diarrhoea epidemic in Dhang, 600 km west of Kathmandu. Within three days, 1,560 people suffered from this disease. The doctors estimate that the Dhang population drank contaminated water from the river, without filtering it first. This is the most frequent cause of death in Nepal, mainly of children; cholera, typhus and other diseases being the result.



We recommended that Bijendra contact the Himani Trust immediately. We would transport four of our water filters, the PAUL equipment, to Dhang. We were afraid, however that they would not reach the real persons needing them. Our plan was that the Princess should approve our intention, blessing it. She immediately agreed – we should refer to her name. So it happened that Heiko packed four PAULs on to a pick-up.

Bijendra accompanied him to Dhang in order to instruct the people there in the maintenance of the filters. Some other charity organisations had gone to Dhang; they were only able to distribute water in bottles, however.

What a blessing are our sustainable filters, which can filtrate 1,200 litres of dirty water to germless drinking water every day for ten years, when they are cared for properly!

We are still imagining of distributing of PAUL filters throughout Nepal to protect the poorest people from diseases. Every year during the monsoon, there are many victims of diarrhoea illnesses. But Nepal is far away from a system disposing of toilet water in a sewage system which does not just evacuate faecal matter into the rivers. There is still a long way to go to obtain healthy drinking water for everybody.

We were very happy that Bijendra came back in a healthy condition after a terribly exhausting journey of 20 hours each way.

PARI

You have read about all the worries I described above I felt when I flew to Nepal. And now you have seen that one worry after the other was so luckily solved. But there was another matter which I went over in my head numerous

times. Do you remember Pari, the early infant Heiko is caring for and who is growing up in his household? I had not seen her for almost six months, and I asked myself whether she would develop to be a “normal” child? Fact is that she was born two months too early, and both her parents were mentally ill and unable to care for her due to their disability.

Who did I meet when I arrived? A happy, lively small girl, eager to learn, making her first steps, enthusiastically playing along with finger games, and a great happy laugh! I practised some rhymes with her as usual, and thank Heavens for the joy I experienced with that little gaudy person every day.

OUR SHANTI CHILDREN

It was not only Pari who made me happy whenever I was overwhelmed by the work, but also the time I spent with our children and played with them. What a blissful group we have been growing in the Shanti Family! Behind every laugh or smile, there might be concealed some big sad story. Everybody of them has such a story to tell – children who lost their parents, the girls they cast away ...

I am ever so happy about our volunteers, who are capable of addressing the individual child, in order to gather what sorrows their little souls have to endure. I myself have not always the time to do so, which I regret. On the day before last of my stay, I deeply experienced a special event. 6-year old Jussuph arrived one morning, clad in a very dirty school shirt. I took him by the hand and went into the tailor’s shop where they were sewing the new summer school clothes.

A seamstress asked him friendly and emphatically: “Did your Ma not see that your shirt is dirty?” Jussuph’s small face went rigid: He had to see how his mother died during the earthquake three years ago! Remembering all those horrible events must have deeply shaken the small boy. I embraced him strongly, went



to the storage rooms and selected a clean shirt for him with him.

I wish to create a routine of story-telling afternoons, where the children and grown-ups can talk about their story if they wish to do so. This is a means to get to know each other better and integrate into the big Shanti Family better. May such a pain, like the one Jussuph had to go through, never be caused again just incidentally.

VIDEO ABOUT SHANTI

During the first few days of my stay, we benefited from the visit of a documentary film maker, who is empathic and experienced in her work: Mahima Anand is an Indian national, she shot a film about Shanti for a few days. She approached our patients with much warmth of the heart, gaining their confidence very quickly. We are looking forward to the result, which will take some time, of course.

In a preview trailer, we will tell the story of Nathuni whose fine drawings in our letters are so unique. We shall be informing you when the film is available, of course.

FROM SIDHOUPALCHOWK

Finally, I would like to report on the situation with the rebuilding project in Sindhoupalchowk, the earthquake area: The Portuguese supporter group dissolved, they will not send any more money. The main burden of financing for the 220 houses therefore remains with Shanti - we cannot simply leave the people, who have suffered so much, standing in the rain after almost a quarter of the work is done!

The men can continue to do rebuilding work in spite of the monsoon, although we did not expect this, because the roads are still fine for material transport. We are very thankful for this.

As the families have no income whatsoever, the women impress us by working very hard, knitting all those lightweight, finely patterned shawls, caps, pulse warmers and even children's clothing made from the warm alpaca yarn.

You should have seen the happy faces of the knitters when we paid them out! To receive money which they themselves earned, and being relieved of so many tormenting concerns – I was deeply touched by their gratitude.

One woman, who worked especially hard, got almost 400 euros, converted into Nepalese currency. She broke into tears, and said among big sobs: "Now I can finally pay back the debt for the college for my daughter!" She had to borrow the money from a loan shark who demanded 30% (!) interest from her. Poor people do not get bank loans in Nepal which would be granted at a rate of up to 18%.

I am working towards women forming a cooperative with the help of their daughters educated at the college, enabling them to market their knitted art over a longer term independently.

Dear friends, women and men – I am so grateful to all of you that you facilitate our work with so much help in a multitude of ways!

From my heart, I wish that you may also experience many reasons for gratitude and joy in this summer-time!

Stay protected, all of you!

Yours

Marianne Grosspietsch