



CHILD ACTION NEPAL

Newsletter No 4

March 05

Tihar



Last November I went back to Nepal to celebrate with the children one of the most important Nepalese festival: Tihar also known as the Festival of Lights. Tihar lasts 5 days and it is a holiday for the children. My Mum, 75 accompanied me and it was her first time in Nepal.

On the first day, people offer rice to the crows which are sent by Yama, the god of death, as "his messengers of death". On the second day, dogs are honoured with tikas and garlands of flowers. It is the dogs who guide departed souls across the river of death.

Decorating the house

The third day is the most important day of the festival when Lakshmi (Vishnu's consort and the goddess of wealth) comes to visit every home that has been suitably lit for her presence. As a result all the homes throughout the country are brightly lit with candles and lamps.

At LBU we made sure that Lakshmi was going to visit us and lit many candles and set up offerings in the office. According to the custom, the children were playing and singing in front of all the houses in the neighbourhood to collect money, rice and fruits. It was a lot of fun for them.



Getting ready to sing doors to doors

On the fourth day, bullocks are honoured. It is also the start of the New Year for the Newar people.

The fifth day is known as Bhai Tika and on this day brothers and sisters meet and place tikas on each others' foreheads. Sisters offer small gifts of fruits and sweets to their brothers while the brothers give their sisters money in return.

At LBU our children are like sisters and brothers so Bhai Tika is a big affair. I also placed a Tika on Rolak who is my Nepalese brother.



The girls with their big red Tika. It is what happens when you have 10 brothers!



The boys with the knitted scarves made by the girls

Please do not hesitate to send your comments to info@childactionnepal.org.uk
Child Action Nepal, Reg. charity number: 1097447, www.childactionnepal.org.uk
c/o Florence Krief, PO Box 39679, London W2 6YP Tel. 07773 277 647



CHILD ACTION NEPAL

Newsletter No 4

March 05

Bikash

Bikash was brought up in a small village of Central Nepal. He is 10 years old and was very intimidated when he first arrived at LBU. The house was so big and clean that he barely dared to enter. However, like all the children of his age, he was quick to adapt himself to his new environment and very much enjoys his new home and his new friends. Now he is one of our loudest children and is full of joy.



Bikash was only two years old when his mother decided to leave her husband and remarry another man. A few months later Bikash's father also re-married. He had two children with his new wife and Bikash was living with them. Bikash's father died in an accident when the boy was only seven years old. His stepmother decided to go back to her mother's house with her two children and she put Bikash with his grandparents.



Bikash's grandfather died in 2002 and his grand-mother, being too old to take care of him, had to find a new place for Bikash to live. LBU's house manager, Rolak, is from the same region as Bikash and he was told of the situation and Bikash was welcomed at LBU. Bikash went to school in his village but his academic level was very low. He is now in Class I and studies hard.

Informative outings

We believe that it is important that the children know their country and are proud of it. Therefore we try to organise days out which are not only fun but also informative. For example we like all went to Bhaktapur which was the capital of Nepal during the 14th to 16th centuries and has been remarkably preserved. We had a guide for the history and the monuments.



Bhaktapur is traffic-free and the children really enjoyed walking in the cobblestone streets linking temples, monastery courtyards and squares. We also watched the potters and woodcarvers at work. We visited the botanical gardens where the children loved playing in the streams and felt very close to nature.

The children in Bhaktapur

The children at the Royal Botanical Gardens



Please do not hesitate to send your comments to info@childactionnepal.org.uk
Child Action Nepal, Reg. charity number: 1097447, www.childactionnepal.org.uk
c/o Florence Krief, PO Box 39679, London W2 6YP Tel. 07773 277 647



CHILD ACTION NEPAL

Newsletter No 4

March 05

Entertainment

As all the children were on vacation and Tihar has an atmosphere which is similar to Christmas, I decided to treat the children by spending half a day at the only amusement park in Kathmandu. We are far from the sophistication of western amusement parks but our children are not difficult and for them all the roundabouts were very exciting. It was really a pleasure to see them enjoying themselves whatever their age. It was the first time in their lives they had been to an amusement park.

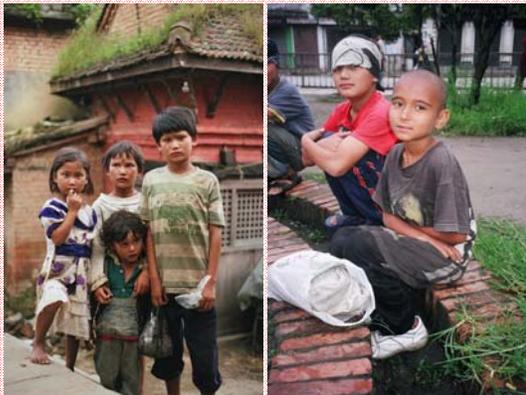


Impact of the political instability

Constitutional monarchy was introduced in Nepal in November 1990. During the next 14 years there have been more than a dozen governments, many of them frail coalitions that lasted less than a year. In 1996 the Maoists declared the "people's war". Since then it is mostly the farmers in the country side who have suffered. Their children are enrolled by force by the Maoists who also coerce them to provide lodging and food when they barely have enough for their family. Tourists are safe though as the Maoists care for their international image.

Should the farmers refuse they are killed by the Maoists but should they accept they are killed or imprisoned by the army. As a result many poor farmers send their children to the big cities causing the number of street children to increase.

Street children in Kathmandu



Vegetable market in Patan

In big cities like Kathmandu, life also becomes more difficult. The Maoists organise large strikes and the shopkeepers have to close or they are killed. It is the same for the schools principals, who dare to open the school. Sometimes the Maoists organise a blockade of Kathmandu and then the prices of vegetables and rice increase. This winter we also had trouble getting Kerosene and gas. It is very cold inside the houses in winter and we had to use electric heaters due to the lack of Kerosene.

Please do not hesitate to send your comments to info@childactionnepal.org.uk
Child Action Nepal, Reg. charity number: 1097447, www.childactionnepal.org.uk
c/o Florence Krief, PO Box 39679, London W2 6YP Tel. 07773 277 647



CHILD ACTION NEPAL

Newsletter No 4

March 05

Thank you for your support

You can also support us and have a wonderful time by coming to our next fundraising event on the 23rd of June on board HMS President on the Thames river in London.

We also promise you the time of your life with our Annapurna Trek in March 2006. Watch out for the trek brochures in May! Details of the trek will also be available on our web site.



Bhai Tika with my Nepalese brother Rolak

Sponsoring a child

Any donation is welcome and even £10 or £20 makes a difference. However, should you wish to sponsor a particular child and follow his/her progress as he/she grows up, the cost is £40 a month. If this amount is too much for you, you can co-sponsor a child with friends or family or we can arrange for you to have a co-sponsor.

Gratefully yours

Florence Krief



CHILD ACTION NEPAL

Standing Order Form

Name(s) and address of the account holder

Title:.....Forename:.....

Surname:.....

Address:.....

.....

Postcode:.....

E-mail:.....

Name and full address of your Bank/Building Society

To: The Manager.....

Bank address.....

.....

Postcode.....

Bank/Building Society

Account number:

Sort code:

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society:

Please pay* monthly/quarterly/yearly from account

number above, the sum of £.....to Child Action

Nepal's account at Caf Bank Ltd:

Account No: 00010441 Sort code: 40 52 40

until further notice starting from:

DD MM YY

(date of first payment**)

Signature:Date:

.....

.....

I want all donations I have made since 6th of April

2005 and all future donations to be Gift Aid until

further notice. I confirm that I am a UK tax payer

and the income tax and/or capital gains tax I pay

will be at least equal to the tax that the charity will

reclaim on these donations.

Signature:Date:

.....

Please do not send this Standing order form

direct to your bank. When completed and signed

please return to: Child Action Nepal c/o Florence

Krief, PO Box: 39679 London W2 6YP

* Please delete unwanted options.

** Please allow three working weeks from date of

signature

Please do not hesitate to send your comments to info@childactionnepal.org.uk
Child Action Nepal, Reg. charity number: 1097447, www.childactionnepal.org.uk
c/o Florence Krief, PO Box 39679, London W2 6YP Tel. 07773 277 647