

**DEAR ALL,**

“You are our teacher and therefore you are our mentor. Please tell me what you think about it!”

That was the sentence of one of my English students, who wanted to know what I thought about his son wanting to get married to a girl from a low caste.

Even though the Hindu caste system is officially abandoned, the ‘caste-thinking’ is deeply rooted in people’s minds. Most Nepalis already know, just through hearing a person’s surname or how they look, if he or she is from a high caste or a low caste.

In addition to that, marriages in Nepal are usually arranged!

Conversations during which my students asked me for advice were always very special for me. It sometimes happened that an English lesson turned into a counseling session. I could really feel how my relationships with my students got deeper. Some of them called me ‘guru ama’. ‘Guru’ means teacher (doesn’t necessarily have something to do with Hinduism) and ‘ama’ means – you can probably tell – mother.



“Ulli, you are suggesting good changes!”...

...said one of my colleagues to me the other day. Even though I sometimes would have liked to do things differently, I knew since the beginning that I first of all have to learn how INF works in order to suggest changes. Development work can only be successful and sustainable if it is done together with the locals. Sometimes it was challenging not to immediately bring in my ideas. I’d say now: It was worth to first of all have the trust of people of which I do now benefit.

A few weeks ago I went on a 19 hours field trip by bus to a region called Surkhet.

INF runs a leprosy hospital there and it also initiates and supports a lot of self help groups in villages.



One example of a transformational story of such a self help group:

Ram Kumar started farming vegetables after INF provided a training in their self help group. To begin with, he faced a lot of problems such as little support from family members, little money to buy different kinds of seeds and a lack of irrigation. However, he worked very hard and the vegetables that grew in his fields looked very good. Seeing Ram’s wonderful vegetables in the field, his family members were inspired and encouraged and started supporting Ram Kumar with his vegetable farm. Ram Kumar is not only the model farmer at his home, but he is also inspiring his neighbours and he is a model for his self help group, too. He expressed his future plans among his neighbours and with his self help group: He is going to develop his vegetable farm as a seed production centre. Now Ram Kumar is not only able to earn enough for his daily living expenses, but also to pay for the schooling of his children.



Tina with students



Our international small group – all of us go to different Nepali churches



After Sunday service

We are thankful that ...

... we had such a blessed first term

... we arrived back in Germany safe and sound

Please pray with us that...

...self help groups like the one of Ram Kumar will continue to improve the living conditions of many

... God will continue to work in the lives of people we got to know

...there will soon be elections (still there are no news!)

... we may become parents

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In Surkhet I was able to attend INF's Management Team Meeting in which we talked about possible future donors.

Another highlight was the visit to Nepalgunj – where we've been before quite a few times. There I was able to advise the mechanics on some tricky repairs and I could encourage them.



The news that some big donors promised that they will continue to give funds to INF was a relief. Another special event was the visit of a representative of the German Leprosy and Tuberculosis Relief Association. It was so nice to speak German in my business context!

"We've just seen you in pictures in Nepal. And now you are back again?"

Yes, that is right, we're back in Germany!



The two years that we've served in Nepal now already lie behind us. Years in which we learned Nepali language and in which we learned a lot about the Nepali culture. It was a time during which we could contribute something in our jobs with INF. A time in which we were a part of our office, our neighborhood and our church. A time in which we could start many friendships. We came as 'giving people' and left as people who have received so much.



Even though we think a lot about Nepal, we're enjoying all the nice things about Germany right now: Having electricity all the time so that we can use the oven whenever we need it, and drinking tap water. To have a car in which we can drive around for hours without hearing a horn once, living next to the forest and the health care system...

"Where can we meet?"

We'll be travelling around for our home assignment until the end of September. Chances are probably not very high but just in case you'll visit Germany, please let us know so that we can meet!

"What will come next?"

We're still excited about INF's ministry in Nepal. INF would love to have us back rather sooner than later. And we would love to go back, too. However, it's quite likely that our home assignment will be longer than until the end of September. What will come next will depend on how we'll be doing until then – and it will depend on if we still have enough support...

Thank you so much for all your prayers, encouragement in many different ways and for your financial support!

We're sending you many greetings – this time from Sinsheim (close to Heidelberg), Germany!

We'd love to hear from you,

Continue to be a blessing,

Tina & Ulli

