


S H A R E

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FOCUS ~ MINISTRY REPORT

Nepal after the Earthquake

Interviewed by Jojo Poon

Edited by: Tsun Wan Yan and Jojo Poon

Last year, the country Nepal suffered a massive earthquake followed by a series of chaos triggered by the adoption of new constitution in September, resulting in blockade of borders between India and Nepal, causing shortage in many necessity supplies. It's hard to imagine how the Nepalese could survive their harsh winter this year. Tang, a member of CEDAR's Nepal earthquake relief team, previously spent eight years in Nepal. Not only she can speak the local dialect, she is also familiar with the local culture and church network. Her involvement in the relief work reveals many discoveries, and these discoveries enable us to better learn the situation of the quake victims so we can go deeper into their needs, challenges and difficulties.

Love in despair

Since the earthquake, Tang has visited Nepal three times supporting the relief and recovery work. "The earthquake is no doubt a horrible event but there is love everywhere in the country." What Tang meant is, apart from the care and love shown by the local churches and international NGOs, there is also mutual love and care amongst the victims.

"Most of the Nepalese are friendly and have a simple heart. In Hong Kong we rarely talk with fellow travellers on the train, but in Nepal, people chat even with strangers." Tang finds the local people very 'human' and value relationships, and it's such

characters that add a taste of warmth to the tragedy. Despite the terrible condition and without a roof over their heads, people continue to care for each other. Their simple minded may seem foolish but it's this child-like heart and cordiality that unite them together to deal with the adversity.



Laughter from the children moved Tang when she played soap bubbles with the children

However, influenced by Hinduism and the traditional culture, the caste system is still heavily rooted in Nepal, and members of the lowest rank, i.e. Dalits (meaning 'oppressed') are suffering even more after the earthquake. "Not only are they poor, they do not possess any land so cannot re-build any houses after the disaster. Furthermore, as only house owners are entitled to receive relief support, many victims did not receive any relief materials as they were just tenants." Tang grieves for them because they are the ones that really need help. This is the result of social culture and system that many international relief organisations might not realize. They might not even notice the presence of the low-caste families. Therefore, to effectively serve the poorest of the poor it is necessary to visit the quake zones to meet and chat with the locals.

Although we see love in this natural disaster, the life of many Nepalese is agonised by another "man-made" disaster. Nepal needs a great amount of relief materials after the earthquake but its new constitution has upset the Indian government which then imposes a blockade causing a halt in the supplies of fuel, medicine and other basic necessities. The Nepalese have no gas for cooking or petroleum for transportation; it is expected that this situation will continue for a while.



Each blue zinc house built by local churches represents their blessing to the Dalit families

However, the Nepal government is not responding much to these internal and external problems. Tang is worried, "General reconstruction is the utmost priority. Some quake areas are badly damaged and resettlement is the only solution, but the government has made no arrangement and the promise to give victims cash to meet emergencies and rebuild houses is not delivered, greatly hindering the process of recovery."

Starting afresh after the earthquake

Over the past decade CEDAR has been supporting Share and Care Nepal (SCN) to promote the development of mountain villages in hygiene, women's empowerment and villagers' livelihood, and we have witnessed many changes. Tang says, "Some of the programmes were close to completion, but the earthquake wrecked the works and both the villagers and staff of SCN felt frustrated."

SCN told us that the earthquake was unprecedented and thus nobody knew how to respond. "The frontline workers are themselves victims – they have both their families and the victims to care for." Tang feels that although the neighbouring countries have had similar experiences, their earthquake prevention measures may not be fully applicable, so our partners need to learn and then draw up disaster prevention and resistance strategies appropriate to Nepal's unique local situation to be adopted in their community reconstruction and development programmes.



Residents of Nuwakot are very grateful to SCN for not withdrawing from the district after the earthquake but staying to help

After the April earthquake, many local churches joined the international relief organizations in rescue and relief. Tang says that in the past, the local Nepalese churches believe that bringing people to Christ is the main task and used conventional or straight forward evangelism methods, such as passing on pamphlets, holding evangelical meetings, and even warning people that non-believers would go to hell after death. Such tactics offend even the friendly and forbearing Nepalese. After the April earthquake, the churches began to reach out to the community, and the barrier between the two started to dissolve and the Nepalese then show a higher acceptance of Christianity and some even start to attend churches. When the church follows Jesus' commands, reaches out and serves the community, people will encounter the gospel and see hope.



A wall-less church helps people seek the gospel more willingly

Eight months after the quake, the resilient Nepalese began to collect sticks from trees to use as fuel to fight the cold. SCN has completed the first stage of relief and is planning and following up on reconstruction projects. CEDAR has also liaised with various local organisations to combat the worsening human-trafficking problem, and will continue to seek protection and benefits for the poor and disadvantaged during the adoption phase of the new constitution.

Metamorphosis hoped in the next decade

Tang first visited Nepal fifteen years ago and was deeply attracted by the beauty of the place and the friendliness of its people. Not only has Nepal then become a favorite place of hers, Tang even lived and served there for eight years. Tang in her recent trips to Nepal, is happy to see that although many villages and places have changed in the last 15 years, the people remain friendly, cordial and simple. Tang and CEDAR pray and hope that in the next 15 years, this beautiful mountainous country will recover from the trauma of the earthquake and its inhabitants will live a more beautiful life like a butterfly emerging from the chrysalis.

STEP INTO THE WORLD



Help Nepal Metamorphose to a Different Life

Thanks to many churches in Hong Kong, our long time supporters, and participants of Barefoot Walk that because of your generous donations, CEDAR and our partners can provide timely relief to over 3,900 affected households in Nepal after the April massive earthquake. These are what were provided:

- Basic materials (e.g. food, clean water, tents and blankets)
- Zinc sheets and materials to repair and enforce temporary shelters before the rainy season
- School tables and chairs

At the reconstruction stage, CEDAR is supporting our partners to re-build the communities by:

- Enabling resumption of agriculture and animal husbandry, including giving small loans to farmers so they can start over
- Building temporary houses
- Rebuilding sanitation and social infrastructure, providing basic medical services
- Providing schooling materials, such as uniforms, stationery and recreation facilities
- Giving disaster management training and mobilising volunteers on disaster prevention and relief

Further, CEDAR is sponsoring our partners to develop women's skills and combat child trafficking by:

- Setting up women's and children's groups to enhance life skills and to raise awareness of human trafficking
- Giving families livelihood support and facilitating women's business groups to improve livelihood
- Educating and raising awareness of community leaders and parents on prevention of human trafficking
- Placing children vulnerable to human trafficking in children homes and providing education to them

We sincerely invite you to consider making a long-term regular donation to support "Nepal's community development" so that their lives can be continually improved.

JOIN HANDS JOIN HEARTS



Wish them a Life with Strength

Chennai, the largest economic and trading city in south India, is unfortunately the top suicidal city in India. Last July, our staff Fountain visited Christian Missions Charitable Trust (CMCT), CEDAR's local partner in India, and spent some time with the families of the children beneficiaries to better understand their lives.

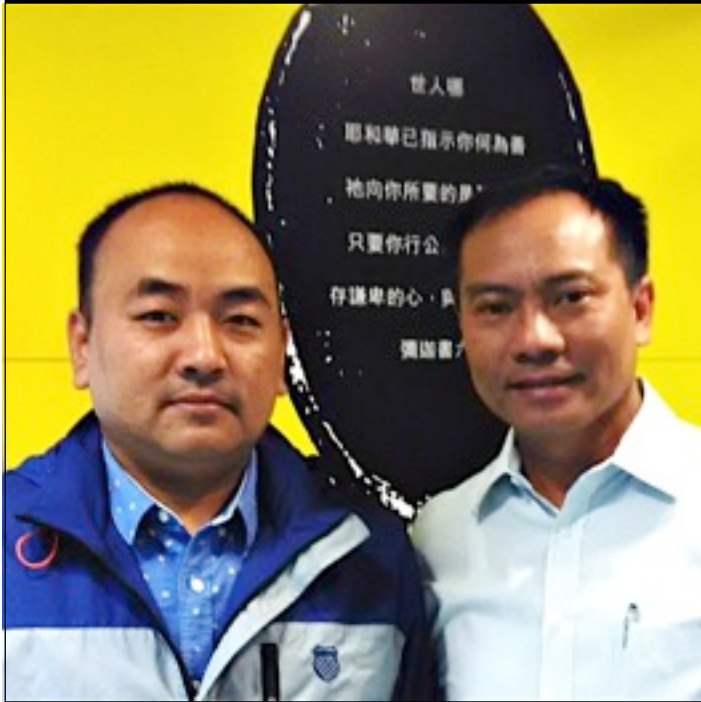
"When I saw the slums in Chennai, I was shock to find out that their living condition is much worse than that in Delhi," says Fountain. The unemployment rate in Chennai is very high, and even people with high academic qualifications have difficulty in finding a job. Facing such a serious unemployment situation and the stress in life, it is not difficult to understand why Chennai has become the top suicidal city in the country.

Among the families visited by Fountain, some have no choice but live on the street because they cannot even afford the rental cost in a slum. "One of the girls whom I met is a junior high school student. She has a lovely face and you could imagine how dangerous and risky for her to live on the street." The local staff also told Fountain that these families sleep at bus stations during rainy days, where kidnapping and child trafficking are rampant.

CEDAR and CMCT together serve over 200 children in the slums, providing food, education and medical care. Some of the beneficiary children enrol in schools run by our local partners and score with high grades. Fountain met several graduates of the child sponsorship programme, some of them have already completed their Master degrees and found decent jobs. Growing up in a tough environment, these young adults had to deal with all kinds of family issues since young, such as parental alcoholism and single parenthood, but most of them have displayed a life of strong faith.

Though God has not promised a life without pain, He has promised us a life full of strength. How should we pray for these children? "Not success, but strength," Fountain answers. ►

TAKING ACTION



Mournful, Touched, Grateful ~ An interview with a Nepalese believer in Hong Kong

Interviewed and edited by Jojo Poon

The Jordan district in Kowloon is known as 'Little Nepal' because many Nepalese live there, and Yuen Long is another district where many South Asian families inhabit. Dev Raj Rai lives in Jordan, works in Yuen Long's Pat Heung Central Primary School, and his daily routine is to travel between these 2 districts, serving and ministering to his fellow Nepalese.

Dev is a descendant of Gurkha and migrated to Hong Kong in 2003. He was grown up and educated in Nepal. After graduation, he worked in the area of community development by broadcasting community and healthcare information on the radio. "Broadcasting through media is my profession which I use to serve my community."

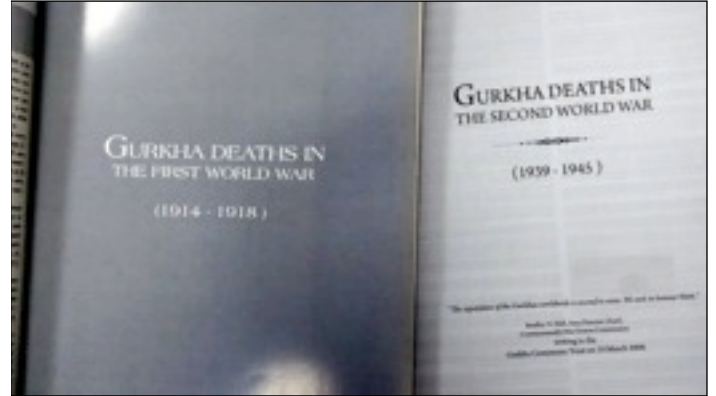
Dev's father and grandfather were both Gurkhas and his grandfather fought against Japan in WWII. "Many Nepalese came to Hong Kong not because of poverty but because their forefathers were Gurkhas who once contributed to Hong Kong's security and prosperity."

Seeing that the mainstream media often reports negatively on the Nepalese, Dev decided to correct this perception by using his profession in internet broadcasting¹. He started an internet radio channel, broadcasting news to his fellow Nepalese and encouraging them to show friendliness to their neighbours. The radio also features news about the Hong Kong's education and healthcare systems, hopefully with more information the living of his countrymen can then be improved.

"After 1997, Hong Kong is less diverse socially and the society seems going in a direction to convert the non-Chinese residents into a more 'Chinese culture' way of living. Dev feels that social inclusion can be achieved when peoples respect each other and work together to build a diverse culture. Each year Dev will bring young Nepalese adults to the Gurkha Cemetery in San Tin Barracks to pay respect to their forefathers who sacrificed their lives for Hong Kong. "Their biggest difficulty is that they are without an identity. They are being treated as second-class citizens here and at the same time considered as foreigners in Nepal, they belong to nowhere... Hopefully, through these visits they can find their roots and identity." There are fourteen

Nepalese churches in Hong Kong and Dev is a member of one. "Hong Kong churches can liaise with Nepalese churches to create a multi-cultural environment and edify the new generation."

At the end of the interview, Dev showed me two registers compiled by him and his friends, containing information of those Gurkha soldiers who fought WWI or WWII globally. They died in foreign lands but received no gratitude and are not remembered, and their own country is reluctant to mention the country's history of forced export of mercenaries. These registers felt so heavy when their hundreds of pages were turned.



1. Dev runs HK Nepali Radio (<http://www.hknepaliradio.com/>) by his own and helps to maintain Holy Vision Radio (<http://www.holyvisionradio.com/>) to share the Gospel with Nepali around the world.

DONATION & PARTNERSHIP

CEDAR would like to appeal to churches and Christians for regular donations so that CEDAR can continue to support ongoing projects.

Direct deposit> HSBC 600-385678-001

Cheque> Payable to 'CEDAR FUND'

Autopay> <http://cedarfundeng.wordpress.com/donations/>

Online donation> <http://bit.ly/cedar-online-donation-eng>

OPERATING STATEMENT

			Jul - Nov 15
Income	Donations		HK\$ 4,434,100
	Grants		-
	Appeal for Relief		2,211,196
	Other Income		46,948
			HK\$ 6,692,244
Expenditure	Projects	Asia	1,611,707
		China	1,181,502
		Africa	781,258
	Relief Projects		1,337,460
	Education Ministry		671,773
	Administration		505,840
			HK\$ 6,089,540
Surplus/(Deficit)			HK\$ 602,704

Please visit our website for a detailed financial statement. Budget for July 2015 to June 2016 is HKD19,464,490.

Please remember the needs of CEDAR and partner, through prayers and donation, to ensure all the project to be implemented.