

Langtang Free Dental Volunteer Camp, March 2008

6th March 2008

Last year we talked with Dr. Agnes for starting Langtang Free Dental Volunteer Camp but due to inappropriate time schedule we couldn't make it. Finally March 2008, we are able to start our Dental camp with Dr. Agnes Wagner and Dr. Klaus Dathe.

Today we are starting our Langtang Dental Camp. In the evening I told doctors that I will pick them up from hotel at 7:00 AM but when I wake up and took Jeep towards hotel I came to know that today is Shiva Ratri festival. Shiva Ratri is Hindu festival celebrate in name of God Shiva or Shankar or God living in holy Mt. Kailash. In this festival time people, especially children put rope on road and block the way for asking money. To reach hotel I was stop for seven times and I couldn't reach on time. When I reach hotel it was already 7:30 AM and then we all ride on jeep moving forward for Shybru Bensi our first stop point. Normally traveling by jeep it took 5 to 6 hours but we took 12 hours to reach stopping point. We were almost stop nearly 248 places and both doctors were tried and get agitated with this kind of festival. In this particular day we can't do any things besides paying one and two rupees every blocked point. Now I came to know that its not good idea to travel at time of Shiva Ratri festival and it was my first time even I was from Nepal. I like to suggest everybody not to travel at this particular day. Our driver and I make change small coins money and we keep on giving one, two, five, ten, fifty and some where even we have to pay hundred rupees as well. Some where they asked 500 hundred but we never pay more than 100 rupees. Both doctors were disturbed with stopping every one or two minutes. Dr. Agnes gets off every stopping point and starts walking from there and again gets in after few minutes of walking. Finally after long restless and tiredness travel by jeep was ended at 7:30 PM. Today was worst travel I ever made in my life. After dinner I described little bit about next day camp and about way.

7th March 2008

Today morning when I wake up both doctors were down at dinning table. I was last one to wake up. After breakfast we start our second day and first day of walking to second stop place. Two porters were arrived early morning and we start our day at 9:00 AM. Our camp was at Khamjim Village which was 4 hours walk from Shybru benshi. To reach stop point they was two way. One was steep up hill and another was longer but less steep up. I took Doctors from longer way to reduce stress. Dr. Klaus was very good in climbing up hill and for Dr. Agnes, she feel little difficult. We reached Khamjim around 1:30 PM and after few time of resting we took lunch. Every body took Dalbhat for lunch and we wait for porters to come because both doctors' clothes were in porters carrying luggage. Porters were arrived at 5:00 PM and in evening we discuss about our first dental camp location. We choose Khamjim Village for camp place because this village was center points for other five villages near by.

8th March 2008

Today was our first dental camp day so I was little nervous because we have to play with blood. Our team decides to start camp after 9:00 AM. From early morning we start preparing equipments. We choose front ground of small hotel named Yak. It was safe from windy and was little bit bright. We found new way of sterilizing equipments which was from cooking all equipments in press cooker. After finishing preparing all equipments and place ready from dental camp, we all sat for breakfast.

Our first patient was little girl of 5 years old whose teeth was infected little so Doctors clean it with machine. When Doctors put machine into her mouth she starts crying with out any pain and that's make her mother feel afraid and worried. Our main aim was to extract infected damage tooth which means to remove the most infected tooth. We were very busy doing extraction of teeth and in mid day we took one hour break for lunch and then after we again continue. Our treatment was ended at 5:00 PM in evening. Altogether 34 patients were present at camp for treatment and out of them 24 teethes were extracted. We did scaling for two patients and filling for three patients. Our dental camp was out side at hotel Yak ground where everybody can see our way of doing treatments so some patients were very afraid and scared so they run away without doing any treatments. We teach all villagers how to brush and when to brush and even distribute some tooth brushes to small children. In evening I went around the village to know their opinion about our Dental camp at their village and most of them feel it that it was greatest support ever someone did. In the village this was first dental camp ever happen up to now. People told us that this camp was so helpful to those poor and old villagers who cannot afford to go to Kathmandu nor Dunche for treatment. In every VDC there is small health post but not any dental program over there. Villagers were saying that if every year such dental camp will be organized in their village then this would be the greatest work that one ever do. All villagers were blessing for longer life to those who plans and make this dental camp happen to their village and heartfelt of thanks to helping hand behind it. Dr. Agnes told villagers that brushing early morning is not necessary; one has to brush after lunch and after dinner. This will be proper way of brushing and one has to teach other same way of brushing. To clean teeth it is not necessary to have tooth paste if poor people don't able to afford it, we can brush teeth without tooth past as well. Later in evening we again sterilize all equipments and then pack it for next day hiking further to lama hotel our next day stop.

9th March 2008

We all wake up at 7:00 AM in morning and then had breakfast and around 8:15Am we get ready for climbing up hill. Khamjim village was around 1900m and our destination stop point was 2400m. It means we have to climb 500m. After walking of one and half hour we finished climbing up and then the trail was little bit zip zap for two hours but scenery was very beautiful that Mt. Ganesh was seems like watching behind us. We were walking from nearly top of hill from where we could see Thulo shybru on the other side of hill. After two hours of walking we reach small village called Sherpa Goan where we took our lunch. This small village was at 2678m and Lama Hotel was at 2400m so that again we have to walk down. After walking one hour we reach Lama Hotel around 2:00PM. After few minutes rest Doctors took hot shower. Later in evening some patients from Sherpa Goan followed us up to Lama Hotel for extraction. We don't have

any plan for doing treatment in Lama Hotel so I was little confuse to ask Doctors for treatments but those poor patients walked so long way that we can't say no. Then I went to Doctors room and request them. Both Doctors agree to do extraction and we did for four patients. With three patients we extract six teeth and one patient has general check up only. After finishing treatments we again sterilize all equipments and pack for Langtang Dental camp.

10th March 2008

As normal day we start walking from Lama Hotel at 8:00AM. On the way we could see some Langur and panoramic view of Mt. Langtang Lirung. After 3 hours of walking we stop at Ghora Tabela for lunch. After finishing lunch then we start walking. Few minutes of walking we reach Army check point where our Doctors pay for national park Permit. Normally we have to pay at Dunche check point which was Langtang National Park headquarter but when we drive in at that time we reach dunche around 6:00Pm and it was quit dark. There was no body to whom we can pay permit fee. We reach Langtang Valley around 3:30PM. Doctors went to room and after few minutes both doctors took hot shower. Dr. Agnes always stays at bed with book to read. Dr. Dathe came to dinning room for hot heater and start reading book.

11th, 12th, 13th March 2008

Today we wake up little late because it was little cold up here. First we decide to do check up for Mandala School children and then later for villager. First we search for dental treatment place, for that we went to health post but it was very dark and then we check school area but there also it was not possible so we came back to Village View hotel where we found barenda with glass all around near entrance to the room. This place was very bright because light come from all glass windows around and protect wind as well. Today we thought to do treatment without other patients allow seeing. Then we make waiting place down at ground and one has to go when they are call up. After preparing all we sat for breakfast. At same time our Mandala school teacher told me that they want to welcome Doctors. We wait for all children to gather together. Around 9:30AM, all children came to hotel and line up at hotel ground. UKG children had white scarf to offer to Doctors which was cultural way of welcoming guest. Some children came forward to offer scarf to doctors and went back to their line. First all children sang Nepali new National anthem and then they sang other song. Some children move forward to show their dance. After welcoming program was finished Dr. Agnes distributes tooth brushes to all children of village and teach them how to brush the teeth. We have model of teeth in big size from where we show all the children about proper way of brushing. After that we start doing check up to children and altogether 49 children were present. Only one children milk tooth was extracted. Out of 49 children three had defect in teeth but they refuse to do the treatment.

After finishing children checkup we start with villager, first patient was 50years old man who was little drunken and injection was not working totally. Lots of alcohol smell was comig out of his mouth. I ask the man why you came drinking alcohol and in return he reply that he want to remove his fear by drinking. Up to evening we were able to do

treatment for 20 patients and rest we ask them to come next day. From 20 patients we extracted 27 teeth and one filling because machine was broken. One patient root canal treatment was done.

Second day also we starts treatment with extraction of teeth. Most of villagers were very busy in field work because it was time for wheat plantation. Most of them went far away in field to work and we got 12 patients. Out of 12 patients we extracted 19 teeth and one filling. There was 60 years old man from Sindum who extracted 6 teeth at once. This was biggest number we extracted from one person. In the evening doctors had some free time so they went around village and I went to Mandala school to look around. Teachers were busy preparing question paper because they have to write all question paper many times. I help them preparing question paper and some time I watch teaching method of new Tibetan teacher. In evening some patients came but it was too late and already dark so doctors can't see better so we didn't do any treatment.

Our two day Dental Camp at Langtang was finished. Today doctors were going to visit Kyanjen Gumba and return back to Langtang. Both doctors went early morning and I didn't went up with them because I was little sick with my throat. I couldn't able to speak properly and pain was there too. Doctors told me that they don't need any guide to go up there but it was my duty to see them that they are alright on the way so I send one of porter to walk behind them to see that they are safe up and return back safe. In mean while I went around village and to school.

14th March 2008

Today we have to return back to lama hotel for our next dental camp destination. Early morning around 6:00AM my room door was knocking. I was surprise that who it will be in such early morning. I open door I found one young boy pressing his hand on his cheek. He was requesting me to ask doctors for extraction of his teeth. I told him to wait until doctors wake up. I ask him to come little later but he was waiting out side until 7:00 AM. Doctors wake up at 7:30 AM and then I told doctors about boy and doctors get ready before breakfast for extraction. His tooth was easily extracted and then again one old man was on queue. Then doctors say he will be last man because we have to move down. As soon as old man extraction of tooth was finished we went for breakfast. Our porter make lugged ready. There were some villagers who came to say good bye to us. Villager offer white scarf for good luck on the way. Then we say final good bye to Langtang Valley. We plan to go further than Lama Hotel because it would be easy for next day climbing up hill. I told doctors that we will be going to Landslide Lodge for night so that next day we don't need to go down and only uphill but when we reach Bamboo Lodge it starts raining. So, we stop there for over night because we don't have any rain coat.

15th March 2008

As usual after breakfast we start walking for next Dental Camp site. Our today's stop point will be Thulo Shybru village which was four and half hours from Bamboo Lodge. When we reach first house of village, the house lady invite us for milk and Tibetan bread (Hard one that can be store for more than months). We reach hotel around

1:30 PM and took whole day rest because day before we walked long way from Langtang to Bamboo directly. At 3:30 PM Doctors were tried of staying like that so, we prepare place for Dental treatment. We hired one room which has big windows from hotel owner for treatments. We start doing treatment for two patients. From these two patients we extracted six teeth. Then in evening we discuss for the further days to go.

16th March 2008

Today I was the last one to wake up. As other camp we did before, today also we plan to start treatment at 9:30 or 10:00 AM. After tea I prepare equipments for sterilizing. Today our first patients was little girl of 13 years old. We extract her front tooth because there were two teeth at same place. We got 16 patients; out of them we extracted 24 teeth. From the total patients 14 were women and 4 were man. In this village also we distributes tooth brushes to children and some adults. I gather some children from Village and teach them how to brush teeth daily and why it is important to brush teeth after every meal. There were some patients who were not talking with hotel owner where we stayed so they didn't come for treatment but this was not our mistake, if they need something then they have to give something.

In evening I discuss with Doctors about next day trek. Dr. Agnes was little bit nervous that whether she can cross the Gosaikunda or not. She was not sure whether to move uphill or return. Later I talk with Dr. Dathe and I told him that if she is not ready to go further then Dr. Dathe can go on with me and Dr. Agnes can go down to Dunche with one of our porter. But Dr. Dathe says if we go, we go together and if we return then we return together. Later I told Dr. Agnes that we will go up to Gosaikunda then we decide whether to come down or move further. She agreed with me.

17th March 2008

In the morning everyone was ready for breakfast. Dr. Agnes seems little stress. Later on I ask her why she is stress and she told me that she couldn't sleep last night because some one snored loudly. I and two porters slept next room to Dr. Agnes and I don't know who snored at night; it might be me or other two porters. Anyway I said sorry to doctor. We start walking up hills. Two porters and Dr. Dathe walked very fast and I couldn't see them but I was waiting for Dr. Agnes. I felt she is not feeling good and her face seems so stressed. I told Dr. Agnes that I will be always there with her and she doesn't need to worry we can walk slowly uphill and she can do it. After little bit later she makes herself comfortable and then I feel good as well. After one hour walking uphill there was small place for tea and we stop there and had cup of tea. There Doctors Agnes brought Tibetan cultural belt. After few minutes of stop we again move uphill. After one and half hour we reach top of hill named Phubrum Danda which was lunch place. There were two small hotels where we had lunch. Dalbhat was worst over there so I ate little bit. From this place our camp was one hour walk. We reach Sing Gomba around 2:00 PM. We went to small hotel at end of this place named Lhasa Hotel. After reaching there I show them rooms and arrange bucket of hot water for shower. Dr. Agnes went for rest at room and Dr. Dathe starts reading book so I don't have anything to do. There was other group staying at this hotel and they were playing football outside so I went to join them. It was

great to play football with tennis ball which was very small and later on one of the other group Sherpa cut his leg with something. It was deep cut and we stop playing. I came inside and they were doing some treatment. Later evening I told doctors that if Dr. Agnes feels hard then tomorrow we will stop at Laureybinayak but we will see until we reach there.

18th March 2008

After normal task, we start our day around 7:30 AM. Today Dr. Agnes seems much better than before. Up to cholongpati the way was not much uphill but from there it was stiff uphill to Buddha Temple. We reach tea place after one and half hours walking where we stop for tea and took some rest. Then again we start walking uphill. We reach Laureybinayak 11:30AM and it was so early so we plan to go to Gosaikunda. After talking lunch at hotel Maya we move further to Gosaikunda. We reach Gosaikunda around 4:00PM and as soon as we enter hotel it starts snowing outside heavily. While on the way we saw both two small lakes were frozen at this time as well. After few minutes outside Gosaikunda was cover with white snow everywhere. Everything was cover with white snow no other color was seen. Snow was continued until we went to bed. Before that I told doctors that if it snows whole night then we will not go further tomorrow. Before doctors went to sleep I told them that we are not moving tomorrow so wake up little late. We all went for bed with three blankets.

19th March 2008

I was first one to wake up at this hotel because I was little curious to know how much was snow outside. When I wake up it was 6:30AM and I saw some group moving further. Then after few minutes I saw some friend of mine where also coming with some guests and they were also moving further. More than fifteen people were moving further and I thought that now the way will be open easily if we walked little bit later and after them. I went inside and wake up Dr. Dathe and porters. First I asked our porters that they can go further or not but they said they can go. So, we took our breakfast very fast and prepared everything and start walking. First few steps into snow were interesting but later on every step becomes very hard and tireless. Every hill was likes Mt. Everest to us. We climb one and another will be seen to be climb. After walking two hours we reach Laureybina Pass which was around 4630m and we thought of talking picture at pass but it was so windy that we couldn't even stop for second. We move down faster and there was big rock we hide ourselves there for some rest. Then moving down was horrible. The place seems so near but never reach there. After one hour walking down there was tea shop where we stop and had tea.

The way from Gosaikunda to Ghopte was nearly 7 hours but scenery on the way was unforgettable. So beautiful mountains all around and those frozen lake seems like round ground. From the tea shop we still have to go down more one and half hours for lunch at Phedi. When we look from tea shop; Phedi look very near but while walking it always run away from us and never reach there. Finally we were able to reach Phedi where we took lunch. Now the remaining trail was up and down with very difficult way. After taking Dalbhat we start moving forward to our last point. I send one porter ahead to

book room at Ghopte because there are only two hotels which are also not so good. I was so tired and don't feel like walking. I always walked beside Dr. Agnes to guide her because she was walking so slowly and I don't want her to be hurt on the way. Finally around 4:00PM we arrived at Ghopte. Both the hotel was full up with Guests.

After dinner we all went to sleep and I was given small room near to guest room which was so windy and not good bed. They gave me two blankets but it was so short that if I cover upper part then legs don't cover and if I cover legs then upper was without blankets. So, then I separate two blankets and one I cover down part and one I cover upper part. My room was so windy that I couldn't sleep whole night and I was nearly frozen. Then I took out all my clothes and wear it and then went inside Blanket. Finally in morning time when windy was stop I was able to sleep for some times.

20th, 21st and 22nd March 2008

From Ghopte we can easily see Tharepati which was at top of hill and seems far away. Early morning we wake up and the days were very clear and hurry for breakfast and ready for walking. Dr. Dathe went with porters and we didn't saw him walking so I and Dr. Agnes wait for him but little later we came to know that he already went away. So, we follow the trail as well. The trail was always up and down and very slippery because of melted snow. After walking two and half hours we were finally reach Tharepati where we met Dr. Dathe and our porters. At Tharepati we took tea and then I send porters first to order Dalbhat at Morgan Goat. Then I walked with doctors and after one and forty five minutes we reach lunch place. From lunch place we have to go down all the way to Kutumsang village. After walking two hours we reach Kutumsang and we camp there. Later evening I brought one Kukuri (Gorkha soldier knife) and I brought two Tibetan guitars for Dr. Agnes. If she buys herself then price will be much higher so she asks me to buy it for her.

Today 21st march 2008, our camp will be at Chisopani which will be seven hours long walk. I have been to Kutumsang and not further to Chisopani so I don't know the proper way. First we have to climb up hill then we have to go down to Gulbhanjyang. Then again we have to climb next hill and again go down and finally we again climb up last hill to Chisopani. We reach Chisopani around 4:00PM and stop there.

Later in evening I went around village for search of Laxmi who was logo in our Nepal Kinder Hilfe e.V. Later on I found out that she was grand daughter of Hotel Dorje Lhakpa. I ask hotel owner about her and he told me that she stay two hour far away from Chisopani. I request him to call her and he was agree to call her next morning. Then I was waiting for next morning to come. Later in evening I ask some family background about the little girl Laxmi. Her grand father told me that she has one elder brother who is going school in Kathmandu with help of grand father but she is going government school in Chisopani. Now she is already in class five. Then I ask her grand father why she is not going in good school like her brother then he says that her father run away from home almost two months gone with other girl. Its means that Laxmi father left them alone and her grand father is helping other five children from their family members to go to school. So they were not in condition to send Laxmi to good school in Kathmandu. Her mother is house wife only and doing some normal farming near their home. Her grand mother has

tea shop in front of hotel Dorje Lhakpa. After conversation with Laxmi's grand father then I was hoping to see her in morning and I prepare some gift but I had nothing with me. So I check my bag and found out two nice copies that were gifted to me by Korean people and I plan to give it to her because she is student and she needs copy. Today I went to bed sooner than usual time because my knee was hurting a lot.

In morning when I wake up my knee was still paining. Slowly I went out to see Laxmi but she was not yet arrived and then I was worried that she will not come before I left this place. I had a cup of tea and waiting for my breakfast. Doctors already finished their breakfast and were getting ready for go. I feel little sad because Laxmi was not yet arrived; suddenly I heard that Laxmi is here. I ran out with Camera to take her picture. I had book written by Mr. Juergen which was given it to me by Dr. Agnes. In book there was her picture and I show it to her and she smiles seeing it. Then I told her lots of greeting from those who took this picture in 2004. I gave her copy as present and say the final good bye and start walking further destination. From chisopani we have to climb little up to Borlang Bhanjyang and then have to walk down all the way to Sundarijal. Nearly four hours walking we reach Sundarijal and from there we took Micro Bus to hotel Bajra. The interesting thing was that one of our porters Pemba Tamang was first time in Kathmandu. He is 22 years old and married 6 years before. He had 3 years old son and was first time to Kathmandu. I had to take care and have to return him safely to Langtang.

With this our Langtang Free Dental Volunteer Camp, March 2008 was ended.

With warm regards,
Lhakpa Jangba