



A Road Less Travelled

I hope you will forgive me for writing about a personal journey that we did in April. Some of you might have already seen the post and some of the pictures we added on Facebook, but here is a bit more about what happened on this trip.

The children got two weeks out of school for Easter and I really felt we needed to get away as a family, really to rest. I had suggested to Sudip that we might go to Malaysia or somewhere and take a family vacation and get away, since the tickets to fly there is not very expensive. The whole stress with the road situation at Mahima Children Home (more on this in the next newsletter) had really started to tear on our family and we needed a break. We looked at tickets and hotels, but in the end of the day we decided to stay in Nepal and do something here.

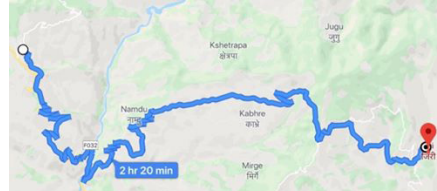
Sudip has wanted to take the kids and me to see where he was born, so it seemed like the right time to do this even though I had doubts that it would be the restful vacation that I was looking for.

On Thursday morning we left our comfort in Kathmandu and started our adventure. The first day we drove a total of 80 miles and it took us from 11 in the morning until 7 at night to reach there because of the road conditions. At that point we felt the road was pretty bad, as they were doing road work and it was mostly gravel and mud, but this was only the beginning!

The second day we drove from Charikot to Jiri. This is not really a long trip, but the road is pretty impressive so it took us half a day of driving. (I have attached a map for your amusement) The road curves up and down the mountains, from foggy 8330 feet all the way down to 2780 feet and rice fields. This road was built by Switzerland more than two decades ago and there has been no maintenance done on it since it was built. This used to be the main road for people to travel to see Mt. Everest. When you finally arrive in Jiri at 6200 feet, it is well worth the trip there. A beautiful village situated between massive mountains and from here people used to walk to the mountains.

Since we had been told there was a road to drive the next morning we got in the car and drove into the unknown. Google map showed no road (trust me, I have checked several times), but we kept on going. The road became more and more narrow and on the one side was the top of the mountain we were climbing and on the other side, the bottom. It started raining and we came up to meet the clouds again, but somehow after several hours climbing the mountains, we finally made it to a stopping point. After all of this travel we had still not reached Gupteshwor, where Sudip was born. If we would have known better we probably would have parked the car here at this point, but the people living in the village told us there was a road and our car would be able to go there...

At one point we actually parked the car and started walking and the mud road where we walked was not much worse than where we just came from. The villagers all said that the road was like this all the way to Gupteshwor, so since we didn't know how many hours of walk it would be, Sudip went back and got the car. What a mistake! The road just got worse and worse, it was slippery and huge parts of the "road" had crumled and we didn't know if the weight of the car would have the whole road dissolve into valley. At one point Sudip asked the children and I to walk, worst case scenario, then at least we would survive. By God's grace we somehow made it to Sudip's



SOME OF OUR JOURNEY FROM CHARIKOT TO JIRI



PEOPLE USED TO WALK THIS ROAD TO REACH MT. EVEREST FROM JIRI



I WAS IMPRESSED THEY HAD A BUS STOP HERE!



JIRI, WHERE SUDIP MOVED AFTER HIS FAMILY LEFT GUPTESHWOR



THIS ROAD GOES FROM KATHMANDU TO JIRI AND WAS BUILT BY SWITZERLAND OVER 20 YEARS AGO



JIRI VALLEY IN THE BACKGROUND OVER 6000 FT ALTITUDE



FILLING GAS IN JIRI



WE KEPT MEETING TRAFFIC LIKE THIS WHEN WE COULDN'T HARDLY SEE THE ROAD



COUSIN'S HOUSE WHERE WE STAYED



cousin and stayed in his house for the night. They live like the majority of people in Nepal, in a simple house made with stones, cooking over fire, living off the land with some livestock. The only change in almost 40 years in this village was that they now have electricity, everyone has cellphones (even though ours didn't work in that area) and they are the proud owner of one of the world's deadliest roads. Sudip and his family left this place after his family was extremely sick and two of his siblings died. His mother tried to carry his brother the 2-3 day walk to the nearest hospital to receive help, but he died before she made it there. They then moved to Jiri and stayed there for many years before they moved to Kathmandu.

The next day, after a night dreaming of us all falling to our deaths, we headed out again. We had no choice but to continue on this road that we had started. We were trapped between two mountains and there was no place to turn. It took us from 11 in the morning until 3 in the afternoon, around 8 village people digging out stones from the road and a tractor pulling us up the final mountain, before we made it out to village "civilization". It took us another 2 hours to make Jiri and where we found a guesthouse and stayed in the night.

The next day we headed to Dhulikhel where we ended up staying for a couple of days, recovering from our adventure. We also visited my sister in-law and her husband where the children got to carry around goats and play with their dog and chickens before we headed home to Kathmandu.

In a country where you do not have Disney or beaches, a trip to the village seemed like a great option and it definitely gave an experience to remember.

When Sudip tells stories to our children, from when he was young he remembers village life as a good life. He used to have a sheep that would follow him around and if they wanted to eat meat, they would eat from their livestock. That would either be goats or chickens, but for the most part they would eat potatoes, corn and whatever else that would grow on the land.

The first school he attended he would walk one hour to get to preschool. The building was simple with mud floors and he would carry a stone and some chalk to practice his Nepali alphabet. To walk back and forth to the nearest "store" would take you one day and everything you bought you would have to carry with you up and down the mountains. (Something to think about next time you shop at Walmart). He also always talks about his one piece of cloth that he would get once a year and how happy he was.

As most of you know, because he was the oldest son in the family, he was sent to South Nepal to receive an education there. His sisters were never educated, even in the local school. When Sudip came back to the village after becoming a Christian, he was kicked out from his home and his village. He then asked the pastor, whom was running the school he was attending in South Nepal, if he could stay at his children's home.

Now there is a small church in Gupteshwor. People must walk more than one hour to reach there. But if no one was willing to go to these remote places, these people would never be reached. Look at the tremendous impact Sudip has had on his family and on Nepal. His pastor was one of the first missionaries to Nepal and he was willing to go.

This is what it is all about; reaching the unreached and going places where no one has heard.

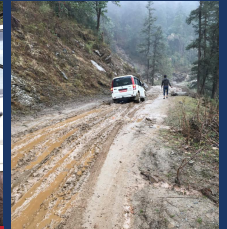
Sudip, Anne Lise, Rebecca, Samuel og Sarah Khadka



ON TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN WE MET THE CLOUDS



VILLAGE MEN BREAKING ROCKS TO GET THE CAR BACK ON THE ROAD



ON THE BETTER ROAD



SUDIP AND HIS SISTER



SUDIP'S OLDEST SISTER'S HOUSE



DOESN'T GET MUCH CUTER THAN THIS!



THE TINIEST BABY GOAT



SUDIP WITH HIS COUSIN & SOME OTHER MEN HELPING US



DRINKING TEA COOKED ON FIRE



THE NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE



SUDIP'S HOME VILLAGE GUPTESHWOR



2 WAY BRIDGE, BUT ONLY ROOM FOR ONE CAR AT A TIME



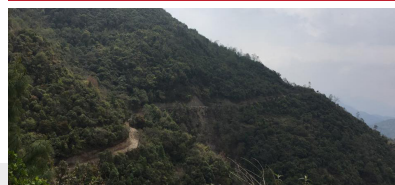
SHOPS IN JIRI



MORNING TEETH BRUSHING



OUR VIEW AS WE WERE DRIVING BACK HOME



VILLAGE ROAD IN GUPTESHWOR



VILLAGE ROAD IN GUPTESHWOR

