

WALDRON NEWSLETTER

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Greetings from Nepal!! We finally arrived in Nepal after 17 days on the road, so to speak. We left Dindigul in South India as planned on Saturday October 7th and returned by car to Coimbatore (girls' and boys' schools) for the Sunday worship. Shortly thereafter we were driven to the airport and caught our flight to Bombay. We were scheduled to stay one night in Bombay then go the next morning at 6:00 to Delhi, where we were on the waiting list (Stand By) for our flight to Kathmandu. Jim said he knew that Indian Air had a flight going to Delhi Sunday night at 7:00 and he was praying that we could change our tickets in Bombay and go right on to Delhi Sunday night. When we arrived we had two hours to get this done

Indian Airlines at the Bombay Domestic Terminal is at a separate building from the other airlines, though they are within a couple of blocks of each other. After waiting for some time for our baggage to come in from the plane, we loaded two trunks, two personal suitcases, two pieces of hand luggage plus Jim's laptop on two carts, and pushed them the few blocks to the Indian Airlines Terminal. It was a bit uphill and the temperature in the 90s. By the time we reached the Indian Air terminal my face was red and I was breathing hard. Needless to say, Jim was way out ahead of me, and him with recent by-pass surgery! We were blessed though and were able to change our tickets for the 7:00 p.m. flight and go on to Delhi Sunday night.

One of our trunks (loaded with Holy Spirit tracks printed in India) was to be stored temporarily at the church building in Delhi and picked up on the way back through Delhi bound for the USA, so we needed to spend the night in a hotel near the Church building, which is all the way across town from the airport. After making reservations from the airport we set out in a taxi, but before we had completed the long trek across town we were tied up in a bus traffic jam that took an extra 30 minutes. Apparently that weekend was a religious holiday and a lot of people were going on a pilgrimage to a temple some 150 miles away. The streets were packed with hundreds of buses stopped in the road and merging from side streets and people walking trying to find a bus that was not full already to stop for them

Next morning we loaded our luggage in and on top of a taxi and went by the local church building to drop the trunk, then on to the airport. We arrived in Kathmandu in the early afternoon, were fortunate to get a good taxi driver from the airport who took us to a hotel nearby where we had stayed before. The room was tiny but clean. We did not have tickets to (Bharatpur) Narayangarh, so that meant we had to go to a travel office to purchase tickets, hoping to get a flight the next morning. Our little taxi driver agreed to drive us downtown and stay with us for three hours. Ernest Burnette had asked us to purchase a microwave (220 current) for the apartment in Narayangarh. Our driver took us to a good appliance store where we were able to make the purchase. We were told at the ticket office that the first available flight was Wednesday morning. That meant we had to spend two nights in Kathmandu. This gave Jim time to rest a little and visit the email office to catch up on his mail.

In the waiting room at the airport on Wednesday when our flight number (**we thought**) was called we went to the door to get on the bus to ride out to the plane. It is sometimes very difficult to hear the announcements or even to understand them. They looked at our boarding pass and told us not yet, these people were going by our assigned airlines somewhere else. But we saw our trunk and the microwave box on the bus. We nearly panicked. Jim said why is my baggage on that bus if they are going somewhere else. They assured us (in sign language) not to worry. In about 15 minutes they did call for our flight. There were only nine of us. When we got to the plane, they showed Jim two of our pieces in an outside compartment at the rear of the plane and two of them in a compartment in the nose (because they had to balance the load). And smiling real big said see we told you not to worry. While we stood under the wing of the plane waiting to go inside, the gasoline truck came and filled the tank. It was a really busy time at the Kathmandu airport that day, and probably only one tank truck!! When we checked in and they weighed our baggage we were charged over weight. We expected this because of the size of the plane. But what we did not expect was while we were waiting for our flight to be called the ticket agent hunted us down in the waiting room and refunded 20 rupees (28 cents), said he had charged too much. Jim was amazed!!! It was almost unbelievable for someone to be so honest!!!

Our flight down to Bharatpur (Narayangarh), southwest of Kathmandu, was very enjoyable on Ghorka Airlines in a small 18 passenger twin engine prop plane. Flying at that altitude is a wonderful way to fly because one can see everything. However, the 20 minute flight, which was supposed to leave at 11:00, had been delayed 1 and ½ hours. Our friend Rudra had gone to the airport in Bharatpur to meet us at 10:30, because he said it was hard to get a big taxi and he wanted to be sure he had a good one

this time. So he and the driver had a 2 and ½ hour wait, but both were very patient, not put out at all. On our previous trip to Bharatpur Rudra had gotten a large high bed utility truck to meet us, and there were three men plus him already on the truck. They took our luggage but I refused to ride in it, so we had to walk a long ways before getting a taxi on our own. Taught me a lesson, to be grateful for any conveyance at all! As we came in this time I said no matter what kind of conveyance Rudra brought I was going to ride in it. The runway where we landed is a grassy field, bumpy but adequate!

The apartment is, according to Nepal standards, convenient. One of the things I appreciate most about it is that we can look out the back as well as the front and see green grass and open fields. It is a daily occurrence for a herd of black water buffalo to go by in the fields in front and back of our building grazing on the grass. No need for lawn mowers! The noise in India and the masses of people are a great distraction there. Here we are on the second floor so we can see over the wall into the road (unpaved as it is), and have the benefit of any breeze that happens to be blowing. Jim has had fans installed in the four rooms, and that helps a lot to keep us moderately cool. Also we have the use of the flat roof, where we can hang our laundry. We are not in a crowded area and the noise is at a minimum. An interesting thing occurred the other night at midnight, however. Rudra lives downstairs and he still had his outside light on, when we heard someone chanting and blowing a horn at our gate. As the Buddhist monks are known to go about begging, we assumed it was probably some of them begging for food, etc., but were told the next morning that it was an exorcist who came to drive away evil spirits. He came back the following morning wanting to be paid for his work.

It was my practice every morning after Jim left for class (at 8:00) to wash out our clothes from the previous day and hang them on the line on the roof. I noticed that all my neighbors just draped their wet things over a drooping line or the wall without pins, but I had taken clothespins anticipating the need. The buildings are concrete with flat roofs surrounded by a low wall. The laundry is done in a couple of buckets in the bathroom (some of you can probably remember doing that as a girl – but haven't we come a long way since then!!), which has a ceramic floor sloped toward a floor drain. There is no bathtub but we were fortunate to have a shower, incidentally consisting of a showerhead sticking out in the bathroom, with the water falling on the floor – no enclosure at all. The shower is near the door (which is covered with a layer of tin), the commode on the other end of the room.

A two-burner gas hot plate and a small Black and Decker Toaster/Oven are used in the kitchen (and now the microwave has been added). Our fridge is about 9 cubic feet in size. A concrete shelf runs down one side of the kitchen, at the end of that is a metal sink. For a while the faucet above the sink in the kitchen was not working, so to wash dishes we brought them out to the next little room that is the dining room, to a ceramic sink. Before we left we had a plumber come in and put a new faucet in the kitchen. We store food and dishes, etc., in a metal cabinet with shelves (the size of an armoire). On the other wall we have a long student's desk covered with a plastic tablecloth for workspace. You can think of it like a mountain retreat cabin!

Jim is very busy. He goes to class at 8:00 and gets a break at 10:00. Sometimes he comes to the apartment as the school building is only a five-minute walk away. One day he just laid down on the floor of the classroom and rested while the students had their breakfast. They have two large meals a day, breakfast at 10:00 and dinner after 7:00 p.m. Sometimes if he has business to attend to he will run downtown and back during this break. It is about a mile and a half. He has gone to the bank this morning on his break, and will ride a bicycle driven rickshaw back because class will begin again at 11:00 and go till 12:45. Then they will break for 30 minutes and go back at 1:15 until 3:30 p.m. They are studying Old Testament Survey.

There is a large long field at the back of our apartment running behind several other houses as well that has been rented for the school. They worked out there each evening getting it ready to plant vegetables. First they all got together and pulled up a bunch of bean plants that were ready to harvest. Instead of picking the beans they pulled the plants and dried them and then beat them with a stick to get the beans to fall out. Afterwards winnowed them as in the old days to separate the chaff from the beans. Next they hired a tractor to plow the ground, and all the students strewed lime all over the ground, then a man with an ox team came in and laid off rows. Jim also had them dig a huge hole for a compost pit, taking the soil from it in flat round pans and strewing it over the ground. They are good workers, Jim says. There are 31 students, some of them are good students in the Bible classes, but others have poor secular education. The students were sent out two by two on Saturdays to visit the little churches, returning to school on Sunday afternoon. A couple of them were to ride the bus for about 30 minutes then get off and walk for four hours into the mountains. Jim asked what they would do for the communion juice. They had prepared small bags of raisins for each group to take with them. The raisins will be boiled to produce grape juice. They use the local bread which is a flat round unleavened pancake called a chappatti.

Jim returned to south India on the 31st of October for three more weeks as I returned to the States. He will visit the various school locations and get back to Dunlap by the 21st of November, just in time for Thanksgiving turkey! We are ever grateful for your prayers and support.

Much love, Laura