THIRTY YEARS IN POKHARA

You must have seen a lot of changes

Dorothy Mierow
THIRTY YEARS IN POKHARA

PILGRIMS BOOK HOUSE
Kathmandu ♦ Lalitpur ♦ Varanasi
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This book describes changes observed over 30 years in Pokhara. I went there as a Peace Corps Volunteer in 1963, intending to serve my second year teaching Geography in a small new college, having taught my first year in Kathmandu. I intended to return to America after my two years of Peace Corps service, with interesting memories of Nepal, but Nepal was to become more than a memory. It became a way of life for me. I found myself designing and building a museum on the college campus. I lost my heart to Pokhara and its people. I returned again and again to see various projects to completion. Before I knew it, I was being addressed as Ama (mother) instead of Didi (older sister); and then I became Hajur Ama (grandmother), although I hadn’t noticed when the wrinkles and gray hair appeared. I didn’t feel any older. Now I have lived in Nepal longer than most Nepalis! Whenever someone is introduced to me and told how long I have lived in Nepal, they almost always say, ‘You must have seen a lot of changes!’

Since they also ask what things were like when I first came in 1963, I decided to write about these changes, and illustrate them with photographs. Many of the people who are important to me in Nepal now were children, or not even born, when I came. The Pokhara I learned to know then is as new to these Nepali friends as to foreigners.

I was closely connected with the Prithwi Narayan College in Pokhara, which started with George John as Principal in 1960. I persuaded him to write his first impressions of Pokhara for this book. Perhaps, between us, we can recreate some of the innocence and rural charm of Pokhara before electricity, roads, and a population explosion made irreversible changes.

I have also included a section about the Shining Hospital. Its founders, who were still there when I came, made my life more pleasant by sharing their meals and caring for me when I was ill during my early days in Pokhara.
The people of Pokhara are remarkably varied. A number of different ethnic groups lived there, having made the area their home, long before it became a tourist center visited by people from all over the world. I have tried to give an impression of the friendly people who give Pokhara its distinctive flavor.

By 1993 according to the Statistical Yearbook of Nepal the city of Pokhara had a population of approximately 95,000 people living in about 20,000 households.

The Kaski Zone in which Pokhara is located extends to the crest of the Annapurna Range and so includes ¼ of the ACAP region - Ghandruk, Birethanti, Lwan and Siklis as well as the Kaski ridge villages. Almost another 200,000 people are included in this enlarged area of farms and villages making a total population of about 293,000.

This population is very diverse, representing numerous ethnic groups. More than 30 different languages are spoken at home, 15 of these are 100 or more households as recorded by the 1991 Nepal Census. Nepali is the dominant language (234,148) followed by Gurung (36,958) and Newari (8,965). Other languages spoken include Tamang (2,602), Rai or Kiranti (2,807), Magar (1,764), and Hindi (1079). Bhajpuri, Tharu, Limbu, Urdu, Maithali, Sherpa, Thakali and English are all spoken by 100 or more.

This does not include Tibetan which is spoken by the many Tibetans living in two refugee camps as well as at the Lakeside and other settlements, perhaps because they were later arrivals and have not been given citizenship status. Students and tourists would add to the numbers and diversity of people in Pokhara but are naturally omitted from any general census.
I wish to thank the American Peace Corps and the people I met through this organisation in the over 6½ years that I served as a volunteer in three terms - without this assistance I would never have reached Pokhara. Then I would like to thank the Nepalis in the college, University, ACAP, government and other places who have been friends and helped in various ways. I have had especially friendly and warm relations with the Tibetans, Gurungs and Newars.

Ruth and Walter Kenning, were especially helpful in correcting proof on their computer when I stayed at their house with a broken ankle in Colorado. Rama Tiwari’s staff at Pilgrims have the difficult job of typing the manuscripts onto the computer disk and several friends have read proof.

Old fishermen’s houses between Mahendra bridge and Bagh Bazaar
Villagers lived in the hills before Pokhara was established.
Chapter 1

MYTHS, GEOLOGY AND HISTORY

The valley of Pokhara lies at the base of the Annapurna Range, 125 miles west of Kathmandu. The name comes from “Pokhari” meaning a pool of water, which refers to the three fair-sized lakes and several smaller ones found in the valley. In spite of the lakes still present, Pokhara’s valley floor was never a lake bed, so the soil of the valley is very hard and stony and not as fertile as Kathmandu Valley. For a long time it was a mystery how Pokhara Valley was formed and why there are so many very large rocks at the upper end of the valley.

Local legends tell how the powerful hero, Bhim, threw these rocks from Machapuchere. One especially large, round one on the college campus is worshipped, and the area is called Bhimkali Patan because of this rock. Another legend tells how a God, taking the form of a hermit, visited the community living in the Fewa Lake area. All the people were rude and inhospitable except for one old woman and her daughter who took the stranger into their home, though they had very little to share. They were told by the stranger to leave their house the next morning and go on up the hill. This they did, just in time to avoid a great flood that swept all the houses and wicked villagers away, leaving Fewa Lake where the village had been. The temple on the island in the lake honors this God.

Recent discoveries, and a better interpretation of the forces at work in glaciated mountains, have led geologists to conclusions indicating that the legends have some truth to them. The rocks did come from Machapuchere. There was a glacial lake on the mountain above which flooded the valley and filled it with rocks when the dam of glacial deposits broke (see ICIMOD Occasional Paper No. 1, Kathmandu, Nepal Aug. 1985).
If one follows the Seti River to its source on Machapuchere, the way becomes difficult because of the narrowing of the valley and its steep sides. Although the valley is V-shaped and not the U-shape recognized as that formed by a glacier, the fine sediment which gives the river a milky white look indicates that it comes from a melting glacier. Colonel Roberts, who founded "Mountain Travel", said that the local young people get to the lake at the source of the Seti over the top, through his pheasant preserve. This lake used to be much larger, as indicated by an old shore line high on the sides of the natural amphitheater surrounding it. This indicates that a cataclysmic event, probably an earthquake, had caused the cliff face to shear off into the lake and break through its ice-moraine dam. Flood waters from the moraine lake carried 5.5 cubic kilometers of glacio-fluvial material into Pokhara Valley below. The flood and landslide must have filled the valley in a matter of minutes. Larger rocks were left at the upper end of the valley, and smaller ones were carried farther down the valley. There is just mud, silt, and clay in the outwash at the lower eastern end, where bricks and pottery can be made. One Harka Gurung recognized that Pokhara Valley represented glacial outwash in his Doctorate thesis on Pokhara Valley in 1963, but "catastrophic glacial dam outburst" was not a recognized term, and had not been studied much then.

Catastrophic glacial dam outbursts have been observed in other places in high glaciated mountains. For example, a few years back, the Dudh Kosi's glacial lake broke through its dam and washed out bridges and trails in the Everest region.

Since the Seti River carries a large quantity of limestone ground into fine sediment by the glacial action above, the rocks that filled Pokhara Valley have been cemented together into a hard conglomerate bedrock. The caves and deep gorges are due to the erosion of this limestone matrix. As the limestone-cementing material was dissolved in slightly acidic water, some
stones were released and washed away. The remaining pillars and caves have a characteristic topography called “karst”.

Caves, sinkholes and gorges are found in other parts of the world where there are deposits of limestone, but there has not usually been mass wasting and the formation of conglomerate as found in Pokhara. Similar formations are found in some of the valleys to the east.

The infertile condition of the soil and lack of forests in the valley are an indication that this event happened about 600 years ago. This would have been shortly after Nepal was invaded by the Sultan of Bengal in 1349 A.D., when the western world was involved in the crusades.

At the lower, eastern end of the valley, the silt and mud have been sufficiently fertile to support Sal forests. Since malaria control made it safe for permanent settlement in the 1960s and the road was built to Kathmandu, this area has been divided into lots, and settlements with paddy and rice fields are growing fast. Termites and other soil-forming processes are at work in the rest of the valley, but to form really fertile soil takes more time than has passed in Pokhara since the catastrophic dam outburst. Stream-rounded stones were carried to the edge of the hill to the south of Pokhara Valley to form Fewa Lake. When the man-made dam for Fewa Lake broke some years ago, a lake bottom of limestone deposits was revealed, with interesting shapes and holes, where the limestone had been dissolved.

In the years following the catastrophic dam outburst, the Seti River has cut and dissolved its way down several times to form numerous river terraces and deep gorges in the conglomerate bedrock. When the Mahabharat range rose to the south of Pokhara Valley, as it has been doing for many thousands of years at intervals since the formation of the earlier and higher Himalayas, it slowed down the flow of the Seti and other rivers draining the midlands. At times when the river drainage was cut off Begnas and Rupa Lakes were formed in the then lower north
side of the valley. Whenever the stream flow has slowed down, meandering has formed a river terrace. When an outlet to the valley is cut through, the increased cutting force of the stream has been able to cut through the terrace until another river terrace is formed lower down. In many places it is possible to see five to seven different river terraces formed by changes in the velocity and cutting force of the river.

It is probable that the settlement of Pokhara Valley came very slowly after weathering and plant growth made more mature soils along the edges of the outwash. The marshes surrounding Begnas and Rupa Lakes have harbored malarial mosquitoes. Malaria kept the lowland plains and low valleys like Pokhara free from permanent settlement until relatively recent times.

Pokhara is located at the crossroads where east-west travellers met north-south travelers. Traders came through in the winter when danger from malaria was at a minimum. Seasonal teashops were set up to take advantage of the demand by the traders. Some farmers settled on the hills above the mosquito zone and cultivated rice fields in the valley during the day. If they returned up the mountain at night, they could usually escape malaria. Sometimes farmers would build houses lower down, around the hills surrounding Begnas Lake and live close to their fields a number of years. It is possible that some of the hill people settled some low caste people in this area to raise rice in the fertile but unhealthy lowlands near Begnas and Rupa Lakes. Metal workers, shoemakers, and tailors then would have been the early settlers in Pokhara Valley, but the valley was ruled from the higher and more healthy Kaski ridge. The Kaski kings had a winter home in Batulechaur.

Muslim traders in bangles and colorful ornaments have brought their goods to the villages surrounding Pokhara from very early times, perhaps from the time that Nepal was invaded by the Sultan of Bengal in the 14th century. Other traders were Tibetans bringing salt, wool, and hides from the Tibetan Plateau.
They often brought the salt on the backs of pack sheep and goats and transferred the loads to donkey and mule trains at lower elevations. The salt and wool or hides were exchanged for grain. This trade route was almost completely cut off when China closed the Tibetan border in the early 1960s. Cloth goods and manufactured items came up from India as is more and more the custom today. Ghee from buffalo butter and medicinal herbs are exported from the mountains around Pokhara.

Pokhara Valley probably remained without permanent settlement until the time of the Shah kings in the 18th Century (Pokhara the Heart of Nepal L. B. Thapa, 1990). Pokhara bazaar was built then and Newars were invited to move in from Bhadgaon and build modern houses typical of Kathmandu Valley. Pokhara was made the headquarters of West No. 3 (Kashi & Lamjung) and a post office, court, and military camp were established. It was not until 1920 that General Babar Shumsher Rana brought piped water to Pokhara.

In 1899 Ekai Kawaguch, the Japanese Buddhist scholar, was the first foreigner to visit and describe Pokhara. He said: “In all my travels in the Himalayas I saw no scenery so enchanting as that which enraptured me at Pokhara.”

Toni Hagen, who traveled widely all over Nepal on foot, said of Pokhara in his classic book Nepal (1961), “Pokhara is certainly one of the most extraordinary and most beautiful places in the whole world.”

Unfortunately, Pokhara is located in the sub-tropics where malaria has been prevalent in the past. A resurgence of malaria or a cholera epidemic would cause the farmers settled in the more fertile lowlands around Begnas lake to move back up to the ridges where clean water prevented cholera, and fresh breezes drove out the mosquitos and kept the people healthy. Government workers were less able to move out once offices became established.
Under the Ranas in the 19th century there was frequent traffic between Kathmandu and Pokhara. Covered resting platforms for overnight stays by travelers can still be observed along the road to Kathmandu. Early Rana officials copied the British in planting attractive gardens with flowers introduced from all over the world.

As more people settled in Pokhara after malaria control made it safe in the sixties, many of the temporary teashops became permanent. More Newari merchants moved in from Kathmandu Valley and started cloth shops, metal casting, and hardware shops. Thakali traders had built godowns (warehouses) for trade goods in transit and to house the pack saddles and equipment for the donkeys and mules. A two-mile line of shops was built along the main north-south trade route and another developed along the eastern route to Kathmandu. Pokhara became known for its long bazaar.

All the houses along the roads had shops on the lower floors facing the roads, with sheltered verandas. During the day people sat there, talked, and made their purchases. At night, travelers often occupied the veranda and were given facilities for cooking their food and straw mats for their beds. The travelers had usually bought or sold something at that house. Well-established merchants had customers from the hill villages. It was taken for granted that shopkeepers would provide both bed and cooking facilities for customers and their porters.

It took about fifty years for the banyan, peepul, or siami trees on the resting platforms (chautaras) to reach a good size. The streets leading to Fewa Lake from the western side of the bazaar were wide and grassy, and were provided with numerous resting platforms with magnificent shade trees.
An earthquake in 1934 and fire in 1948 caused much damage, and there was rebuilding after each disaster. Development, since Nepal was opened to the rest of the world in 1950, has caused more changes than the earthquake or fire.
Grocery shops in Pokhara during 60s.
Dried fish, momo pans and tea pots

Making beaten rice with Diki (Chura)
Porters carrying loads from the airport

Many people carry their own loads.
Bhim's Rock is worshipped on the Bhimkali Patan Campus

Local legends say that Bhim threw it there from Machapuchare Peak seen behind.
Views of island and temple in Fewa lake
Poinsettias may be ten feet tall

Rupa lake still has good forests around it
Seti river terraces with Annapurna Range
Chapter 2

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF NEPAL
and Pokhara (1957) by George John

Soon after Nepal was opened to foreigners George John, an Indian, arrived from the state of Kerala. He was just out of Bible College and entered the new Nepali University where he graduated with an M.A. in English in first class to start teaching in the School of Commerce at Kathmandu.

Thomasite Christians have a long tradition of taking Christian names; yet, his name, George John, sounded very western. His views on social service and the dignity of labor sounded as western as his name, and Peace Corps Volunteers got support from him when assigned to the struggling little college newly established in Pokhara under his direction.

I asked Mr. John, the founding Principal of Pokhara's college, to tell of his early experiences in Nepal because he came to the country much earlier than I did and, perhaps consequently, had different experiences. In the spring of 1950 he was 16, traveling with an older friend from Kerala in South India to Nepal. They hoped to reach Kathmandu during the Shiva Ratri festival in February, the only time Indians were allowed into Nepal then. They planned to take a train to Amlekganj, where the freed slaves of Nepal were settled about 20 years ago. Unfortunately, it was too late to enter for the Shiva Ratri festival in Kathmandu, so it was suggested that they try the border further west and head for Pokhara. Now it was time for Holi, the Hindu celebration of Spring, celebrated in different ways in different parts of India.

It was already April, and the Festival of Colours, or Holi, had begun. In the south of India I had never seen such a
celebration. Stones were hurled at the running train. In some places it would be cowdung or mud. Though it was very hot, the wooden shutters of the train’s windows were all down, the odor similar to what one may find in outhouses. We were told that, in a day or two, there would be real colours, either liquid ones or powders. We changed trains at Gorakhpur for Nautanwa. It was already the big day. Between stations the closed windows stopped the colours, but when we stopped it was different. It seemed like the battlefields I had read about in books, describing ancient wars.

As soon as the train reached the platform, the crowds would break the main gates open and advance upon the train with buckets of coloured water in one hand and bamboo water guns in the other. Those who got out of the train would clutch their baggage and run wildly toward the gates, becoming the revelers’ targets. In a trice, their clothes would be soaked in red. Some smeared people’s faces with coloured powders. People would sometimes get entangled in their dhoties or saris, falling down to be soaked in buckets of colour. The whole scene looked like a bloodbath to me. As we passed through one station after another and ultimately reached Nautanwa, I could feel my enthusiasm for Pokhara cooling.

From the Nautanwa Railway station, we shared a horse carriage to cross the border and go to Bhairawa in Nepal. Since it was already midday, there were very few people on the road. We were told that we had to get the permission of the Bada hakim (Governor) of the area to go to Pokhara. Despite all the colours, it had not occurred to us that it may be a holiday. Fortunately he lived adjoining his office, and we were taken straight to his drawing room to be presented to a fair young man in what must have been a pair of very white pajamas and a kurta that morning, now full of every imaginable colour. When we told him we were from South India in our broken Hindi, he switched to English. We told him of our desire to visit Pokhara, and he said that he
didn’t have any objection, but cholera was raging along the way as well as at Pokhara, and that he wouldn’t advise us to make the journey then.

The day’s events had already dampened our enthusiasm and this piece of friendly advice was all we needed to persuade us to turn back and try our luck at a later time. As flotsam is pulled and pushed by the waves of circumstance to find itself in strange places, I found myself in Kathmandu in 1953 as a teacher of Pitman’s Shorthand and Typewriting during the day, a college student at night.

After four years’ study and teaching in Kathmandu, Mr. John finally got to visit Pokhara. It was five years after plane services had made it possible to travel to Pokhara for 60 rupees and get there in less than an hour after take-off. His experiences were quite different from those of a traveler of today:

In 1957 I was invited to accompany a friend who was visiting Pokhara and didn’t know Nepali. As we waited on the wooden benches of the thatched shelter of Kathmandu Airport, I noticed that many passengers carried cloth bags as they came in from Pokhara. I was told that these contained money to make purchases in Kathmandu and paper currency was limited in those days. The DC2 Airlines were run by private companies and there was a minimum of formality there, whether it was selling tickets or taking off from the airport. The airplanes had benches with bucket seats on both sides which could be folded when the plane was only transporting goods. Passengers were weighed as well as baggage, then the baggage was piled up in the aisle and tied down with a long rope from one end to the other. We took our seats, fastened our seat belts and held onto the rope in front.

The windows were behind, but I managed to have a look through the window now and then. Walking over the baggage, the steward collected the tickets from the passengers during the flight. Soon we were in the clouds and it was dark inside. I felt as if I were in a light boat going up and down the waves. In about
forty minutes we were at the Pokhara airport. Kathmandu had a control tower, wireless facilities, a torn windsock and a barbed wire fence around the runway. The airport at Pokhara was just a patch of green surrounded by cattle, no control tower, no windsock. But there was a small *siami* tree under whose shade passengers, porters and onlookers took shelter from the sun and rain. When the plane taxied to the apron there were hundreds of porters with ropes and baskets vying with each other for the baggage.

Not very far away was the lone bullock cart waiting for bulk loads from merchants. At Pokhara, the plane would shuttle between Bhairawa and Pokhara the whole day carrying mainly ex-servicemen and goods. When there were no passengers the seats would be folded and removed to make room for heavy loads. After the last trip to Pokhara the benches would be opened again and passengers taken to Kathmandu. The afternoon weather in that pre-monsoon period was unpredictable, so one could never be sure when the pilot would decide to stop shuttling to Bhairawa and return to Kathmandu. During the hour the plane was on the shuttle flight the cattle would return to the airfield to graze. Outgoing passengers, often with coloured *tikas* on their foreheads and garlands around their necks, were already in a queue, ready to go as soon as the plane landed. Many were soldiers returning to Hong Kong after leave. They may have been waiting at the airport for most of the day, since no one could tell for sure when it would make its last trip to Bhairawa and head for Kathmandu.

It was not difficult to locate our British hostess among the hundreds of people who had advanced to the airplane door. By the time we had greeted each other and confirmed our return flight, the plane was already taking off for Bhairawa. We crossed the airport to the east with our hostess and porter, then sat on a *chautara* step for a moment while the porter adjusted his load.
Mr. John and his friend then crossed the scary *Chor Sangu*, or Robber's Bridge, where the Seti River flows through a very deep, narrow gorge. They continued north on the eastern side, past the old Soldiers Board Hospital, through mostly uninhabited pasture lands, until they reached the place where the Mahendra Bridge now stands. The earlier bridge had bamboo railings, and was approached by steps. Mr John continues:

The road across the bridge was paved with flagstones. The locality was called *sangh mukh*, or the bridge's mouth. The bridge not only connected the two parts of Pokhara, but also the main "road" leading to Kathmandu. After the bridge there was nary a house for about 50 metres. Then there were a few huts where they had *dhikis* for pounding rice. Beyond that, after about a hundred metres, there were permanent houses on either side, mostly with slate roofs. There were lean-tos to all of them and the ground floor was used for shops which sold mainly spices and salt. Here and there stood shops exclusively selling cloth. A little further up, the road forked; we took the right fork, which was not paved with flagstones.

At first there were no houses on this road; then we saw some thatched huts. There were fishermen's nets in front of most of the houses, and hogs were wandering all around. In Kathmandu, hogs are found around the sweepers' colony but, in Pokhara, it seemed the fishermen kept the hogs. There were no houses until we saw a long thatched shed of bamboo and mats by the side of a *chautara* and were told that it was the new High School. We had come to a cliff and a pathway wound down. We could see the Kahun Hill to the right, the Seti River emerging from a gorge joined by two tributary streams, a vast wilderness in front. The high mountains beyond were covered by clouds. Little did I know then that I would be spending most of my life there. This was the future site of Prithwi Narayan Campus. In the afternoon we reached Shining Hospital, which was run by our hostess, to spend the night. It was a little away from the northern
By 1953 they had set aluminum Quonset huts up and opened their doors as a hospital. Not many patients dared to come at first so that the English doctors walked the trails to the surrounding villages and gave medical help when they found the need. People saw the shining buildings and came to investigate, so it was called the Shining Hospital.

Soon they were well known in the region, and any foreign woman walking the trails to the villages in the early years was looked upon as a doctor. In time patients flocked to the regular clinics. More doctors and nurses came to help from Australia, New Zealand, Germany, and other European countries, as well as nurses from Nepal, and Kerala or Darjeeling in India. Those who came were filled with missionary zeal and willing to work hard for very little money. They soon found that all their time would be taken up by the sick and their problems. They needed to set special times aside for prayer and recreation to revive their spirits and stay healthy enough to serve the community.

Only Soldiers Board Hospital served the people of this very large area of western Nepal before the founding of this small hospital. Between 1957 and 1976 they performed 6,000 operations. By 1960 there were 40 beds for patients, but usually there were 60 patients in need, so the extra ones took up floor space. Each patient had to have a sathi (friend) who came from their household and slept on their own mat and bedding on the floor nearby. They cooked food for their sick friend or relative and took care of some of the basic needs of the patient. Without these friends of the patients the hospital could not have operated, since caste restrictions and staff shortages prevented the kind of care expected in western hospitals. This made it possible to give care at a minimum of expense to hospital and patient. In those days, Nepal was often run by a barter system rather than on money economy. Payment for services was often in the form of precious eggs or milk.
A hospital needs plenty of water to maintain proper standards of cleanliness, yet every drop had to be carried there in those early days. Lack of water was almost universal in Pokhara. There were very few water taps, and the water ran from these taps for only a short time in the early morning and perhaps again in the late afternoon. Women lined up with their large copper or brass water containers long before daylight, and would fight with anyone who tried to jump the line.

When the hospital became known, people would travel a week or more carrying very sick patients over the mountains. Since most village homes have their fire in holes in the center of the room there were frequent terrible burn cases, mostly from children getting too close. Many people knew enough to apply a tourniquet for snake bite, but few knew enough to loosen the tourniquet in time so as not to stop the circulation altogether. The resulting gangrene made amputations necessary, too often on young children and adults. Some of the most distressing accident cases were from bear mauls, buffalo gores and hands blown off from bomb fishing.

In Nepal the mortality rate for women is higher than for men because of the many problems encountered in childbirth. Some of this was because of pregnant or recently-delivered mothers carrying heavy loads in mountainous terrain. In time the individual patients lost their fear of the foreign doctors because of help received. One expressed it well. “Before you came, if we had difficulties in childbirth we just used to die. Now we don’t need to die.”

Leprosy was such a terrible problem that a separate hospital, “Green Pastures”, was set up across the airfield for patients. Milk goats, vegetable gardens and crafts were added to help the patients. Special sandals were developed to prevent injury to numb feet. Specialists came to operate and show the
end of town, and there were very few houses nearby. There were some army-type aluminum huts there that were very bright and shiny, so the hospital was named the Shining Hospital. We were given a one-room cottage in the residential part of the hospital, one among many there. It was made of bamboo and grass for the roof and walls. An earthen floor was covered with bamboo mats. Small bamboo mats with bamboo frames served as shutters for the windows and door. We asked about the usefulness of the shutters and were told that they were to keep the wind and rain out, theft being unknown, at least in that part of town. Well, with nowhere to go and nowhere to hide, and everyone knowing everyone, what could one do with stolen goods? A bigger hut housed the communal kitchen and dining room.
Mr. John’s hostess at Shining Hospital was Dr. Pat O’Hanlon, one of the founders of the hospital, which had started in 1952. By the time I arrived in 1963, she was semi-retired and had time to entertain guests hospitably - sometimes without considering whether there was sufficient food in the kitchen. With the help of Mildred, who came in 1960, and was one of the early workers, I will give some impressions of the old Shining Hospital.

A group of inspired women doctors and nurses worked for years at a hospital in Nautumwa on the border of Nepal. A Brahmin came from Pokhara for treatment and was so impressed with them that he urged that they set up medical facilities in Pokhara. Land was offered. When Nepal was opened up to the rest of the world, the little band of British medical women walked up the trail from the border, armed with a desire to serve and faith that this was God’s will. They made a church on the Brahmin’s land and started their hospital on land provided by the local government. It was near the burning ghats, nd thus deserted, because of fears that the ghosts of the dead who had been cremated beside the river were still around.
By 1953 they had set aluminum Quonset huts up and opened their doors as a hospital. Not many patients dared to come at first so that the English doctors walked the trails to the surrounding villages and gave medical help when they found the need. People saw the shining buildings and came to investigate, so it was called the Shining Hospital.

Soon they were well known in the region, and any foreign woman walking the trails to the villages in the early years was looked upon as a doctor. In time patients flocked to the regular clinics. More doctors and nurses came to help from Australia, New Zealand, Germany, and other European countries, as well as nurses from Nepal, and Kerala or Darjeeling in India. Those who came were filled with missionary zeal and willing to work hard for very little money. They soon found that all their time would be taken up by the sick and their problems. They needed to set special times aside for prayer and recreation to revive their spirits and stay healthy enough to serve the community.

Only Soldiers Board Hospital served the people of this very large area of western Nepal before the founding of this small hospital. Between 1957 and 1976 they performed 6,000 operations. By 1960 there were 40 beds for patients, but usually there were 60 patients in need, so the extra ones took up floor space. Each patient had to have a sathi (friend) who came from their household and slept on their own mat and bedding on the floor nearby. They cooked food for their sick friend or relative and took care of some of the basic needs of the patient. Without these friends of the patients the hospital could not have operated, since caste restrictions and staff shortages prevented the kind of care expected in western hospitals. This made it possible to give care at a minimum of expense to hospital and patient. In those days, Nepal was often run by a barter system rather than on money economy. Payment for services was often in the form of precious eggs or milk.
A hospital needs plenty of water to maintain proper standards of cleanliness, yet every drop had to be carried there in those early days. Lack of water was almost universal in Pokhara. There were very few water taps, and the water ran from these taps for only a short time in the early morning and perhaps again in the late afternoon. Women lined up with their large copper or brass water containers long before daylight, and would fight with anyone who tried to jump the line.

When the hospital became known, people would travel a week or more carrying very sick patients over the mountains. Since most village homes have their fire in holes in the center of the room there were frequent terrible burn cases, mostly from children getting too close. Many people knew enough to apply a tourniquet for snake bite, but few knew enough to loosen the tourniquet in time so as not to stop the circulation altogether. The resulting gangrene made amputations necessary, too often on young children and adults. Some of the most distressing accident cases were from bear mauls, buffalo gores and hands blown off from bomb fishing.

In Nepal the mortality rate for women is higher than for men because of the many problems encountered in childbirth. Some of this was because of pregnant or recently-delivered mothers carrying heavy loads in mountainous terrain. In time the individual patients lost their fear of the foreign doctors because of help received. One expressed it well. “Before you came, if we had difficulties in child birth we just used to die. Now we don’t need to die.”

Leprosy was such a terrible problem that a separate hospital, “Green Pastures”, was set up across the airfield for patients. Milk goats, vegetable gardens and crafts were added to help the patients. Special sandals were developed to prevent injury to numb feet. Specialists came to operate and show the
local doctors how to do remedial plastic surgery necessary for severe cases. More clinics are being set up closer to where afflicted groups live, so they will not have to travel as far on numb or infected feet to get medicines for their sicknesses.

As in most poor, underdeveloped areas of the world, tuberculosis (TB) is very common in Pokhara. It may affect the bones and other vital organs as well as the lungs, and cause deformities as well as death. When people are weakened by TB they are more susceptible to leprosy. A special clinic, and later X-ray equipment, was set up for those with TB.

Until smallpox was eliminated in 1972, it was a great scourge. In 1963, there were epidemics in many cities of Nepal and India. Some Tibetan refugees walking up from India in the last stages of smallpox stopped for a drink at the bazaar tap. A local woman contracted it by being at the tap at the same time. She recovered, but the Tibetans died in their tents.

The Tibetan refugees suffered from many sicknesses in their first years in Pokhara. They came from a cold climate and had not built up a resistance to the diseases characteristic of the tropics.
Almost complete lack of latrines and the fine dust blown around in the spring have contributed toward water and food pollution, made more acute by flies and monsoon rains. An almost universal infestation of round worms and periodic bouts with diarrhea, dysentery, and other types of worms, amoebas, or bacteria keeps the population thin and the hospital busy.

Since many of the outpatients came from long distances and were not likely to return for further treatment, they were often given fairly strong medicines or shots at the hospital whenever possible. Pills are too often lost, forgotten, or taken in the wrong doses by patients who can’t read.

Rabies has been a scare at intervals. The treatment with shots in the stomach is still less terrible than the disease. Rabid dogs or jackals have bitten cows and buffaloes as well as other dogs and people. The bitten (except for people, who can take a series of shots) must be destroyed. Once the well loved Tibetan Apso dogs of the hospital compound had to be shot along with the stray dog that entered and bit them. A group of cows had to be driven into a pit as they could not be killed, being sacred to Hindus. There they could not infect others as they slowly developed the disease and died. Rabid dogs are generally stoned to death.

![Shining hospital patient with helper.](image-url)
In the days before there were any European-type hotels in Pokhara, the Shining Hospital became the place where foreign visitors found hospitality. Expeditions to the Annapurnas generally stopped there on their way, and again on their return, to tell of their experiences. The hospital staff were the first to hear of disasters, as victims were brought in for care.

I was fortunate in being able to know most of the original "Nepal Evangelical Band", as they called themselves. They lived simply but graciously. Improvements came slowly as they felt that everything would be provided by God. Some later arrivals felt that Providence would answer their needs faster if they wrote to the Missionary Society about them. Difficulties were accepted as adventures.

The spring storm that destroyed the first college building and blew the tin roofs off the Multipurpose School and hospital staff kitchen caused the thatch over the dining area to leak, and I remember sitting at meals with an umbrella. Before this happened we enjoyed watching the swallows that nested above the table and a bold little mouse that came out and sat on the cake plate. Unfortunately the malaria control team destroyed the swallows along with the mosquitoes when they sprayed the interior of the building with DDT. Many a lively evening was spent around the table listening to the pioneers tell of their early experiences.

"The early missionaries were filled with the zeal of the Lord and this sometimes led to conflicts of culture. Baptism, an important external symbol for early Nepali Christians, was outlawed by the Nepal Government and so two Nepali pastors and a number of the new Christian converts proudly went to jail to show the strength of their faith. The tika, the colour marking placed on the forehead, was thought to be so much a part of Hindu religion that it was discouraged by the first missionaries and discarded by the followers of the new religion. This
necessarily led to sharp conflicts and divisions within families and within the community with the result that the government took further measures to limit the activities of those apparently more eager to save souls than bodies.

When the modern Gandaki Hospital was built in the 1980s it took over the functions of both the Soldiers Board and Shining Hospitals. Shining hospital was closed as a hospital but two or three doctors were invited to assist in the government facility. The Nepal Evangelistic Band now changed to INF (International Nepal Fellowship) expanded their territory and directed their attention to Leprosy and Tuberculosis and numerous other services made possible by their increased international staff. People suffering from Leprosy and Tuberculosis now could get help in centers from Ampipal to Tansen and as far west as Surkhet, Jumla and Ghorahi. The aim is to assist the government in controlling Leprosy in 28 districts of the West and Mid West regions. TB is to be detected and treated through 50 health posts. If Leprosy and TB are to be controlled and eliminated, even isolated cases must be discovered early and given treatment when a cure is possible and before it spreads.

The INF has also taken an interest in public health. Nutrition sanitation and literacy are necessary and training makes progress faster. In recent years there have been more short term expatriate volunteers and Nepalese have been trained to run more of the projects. Classes for villages midwives, animal health teachers, latrine construction and Laboratory assistance have taken place in Pokhara and other new centers. The founders would say that this expansion which came after the plans to enlarge and modernize the original Shining hospital had been stopped by the government were all part of God’s plan.

The Tom Dooley Foundation provided volunteer airline hostesses, known as the Dooley Girls, for awhile to help with the work at the new Gandaki Hospital. It also provided several
prefabricated round rooms of unique design. When a severe pre-
monsoon storm hit one of these at Damouli, it was said to have
"opened up like a lotus and floated down the river." The last
contact I had with the Dooley girls was in Kathmandu where they
were helping Mother Theresa’s followers to feed the beggars at
Pashupathinath Temple.

The latest addition to Pokhara is the Manipal Medical
College from India. High entrance fees ensure financial success.
Students come from a number of foreign countries as well as
India. A few seats and scholarships are reserved for Nepalis. This
replaced the Women’s Training Institute on its grounds in Deep.
Since this was across from where I live in Pokhara, I decided to
find out more from those who teach at the Medical College when
they visited my museum on the Prithwi Narayan Campus. They
gave me a little book telling about their founder which impressed
me so, I’ll tell more about what I learned.

An act of selfless dedication to establish a hospital or
college inspires others to do similar things. The philanthropy of
missionaries in south India inspired a small town country doctor
to devote his life to working out solutions to India’s three great
problems: poverty, unemployment, and disease. Dr. T.M.A. Pai
had an organizational acumen which enabled him to use local
solutions to build banks to alleviate the poverty; vocational
schools and later colleges to train for employment and finally, a
private medical college and hospital which grew into a complex
center of learning and medicine. Music and the arts were not
forgotten.

He felt that poverty was the result of want of thrift, so his
first bank was adapted to encourage the poor to save, if only a
little each month. His enthusiasm persuaded wealthy parents to
not only pay tuition for their own children, but also support the
schools, so that students need not give up their education because
of a lack of money. Likewise, no patient is ever turned away from
the hospital. Over half the beds are given to those who cannot
pay. Those who can afford to do so support the hospital. Dr. Pai and his family worked with shovels and baskets in the gravel and mud to start the Mahatma Ghandi Memorial College in south India, inspiring many to join the enterprise.

In 1942 the only source of income for the town of Manipal was clay from a nearby pond for making tiles. It is now the headquarters of one of India’s leading banks and a center of learning as well as a treatment center for the sick from all over India. It has primary and secondary schools, a school of music, liberal arts, commerce, engineering and medical colleges, and a hospital, though it is still a relatively small rural community. It has received attention and recognition from UNESCO, the Christian Science Monitor, and the Rotarian as well as from other international publications and Indian leaders.

Now a branch of the Manipal Medical College has been established in Pokhara. In time the Gandaki Hospital will be enlarged, and it is hoped that it - and Pokhara - will benefit from the cooperation of medical missionaries with Christian backgrounds as well as Hindu philanthropists. One hopeful, happy result is that the army firing range is to be taken over as land for the new hospital group so the Prithwi Narayan Campus of the University should be free of the noisy explosions across the river.
A steam roller at airport with bullock cart

Tea shops at Pokhara airport in 60s
Fishermen's houses near Mahendra bridge

Newar houses of 18th century
Dr. O'Hanlan - One of the founders of Shining hospital

Dr. Ruth Watson of Shining hospital between Mrs. John & Mrs. Thapa
Leprosy patients at green pastures

Headquarters of INF in 1990s
Gandaki hospital

Dooley Foundation rooms
When I first came to teach Geography at the college named after Prithwi Narayan Shah, the little college was entering its third year on the bare, windswept Bhimkali Patan campus. It was started in 1960 with just two teachers and a score of students and, by the time of my advent, the three Peace Corps Volunteers made up half the faculty.

Since Nepal was just emerging from a century in which there were no schools for the general public, it was rather remarkable that there were any students at all ready to begin college. Now that the Rana family was no longer withholding education from the common people of Nepal, primary schools were sprouting up everywhere and trained teachers were in great demand. The first Peace Corps Volunteers came in response to this need, and the students attending the college were mostly full time teachers in the new little primary schools, studying to obtain their Intermediate Arts Certificates. Classes were held between six and nine in the morning so that students could subsequently eat and teach their own classes between ten and four in the afternoon.
This little private college began when the first graduates from the Multipurpose School (built with USAID funding) requested higher education. Some, with the backing of a few local businessmen, asked Mr. John to come away from his teaching post in Kathmandu in order to get college courses started in Pokhara.

When we consider that women, even today, are in a minority in schools, it is interesting to note that the first meeting place for college classes was at the Girls' School at night, when the day classes were over. As there was no electricity in Pokhara, this meant pressure lamps were needed for classes, and flashlights to return home through dark lanes.

When the girls were practicing for a program at night, public opinion was against allowing boys to have classes in the same building, so classes were moved to a small temple rest house. Here the formal inauguration of the college took place and it was decided that it should have its own campus and building.

The government assigned some land for the campus, and students cooperated with the three faculty members to get the bamboo and thatch for their first college building. It was hard work to cut and carry bamboo, so they had to enlist help from some younger school children. It took fifty, not ten, days to get enough bamboo for their building. Getting the thatch brought them into conflict with the Brahmins who owned the fields below the campus where the grass grew. The Brahmins were already angry because the land given to their ancestors by the Ranas had been taken by the government for the new college. Faculty and students spent a long day cutting the thatch but, when they returned the following day to finish the job and pick up what they had cut, they were told that they had been given permission to use only one day to cut the thatch. Tempers flared on both sides, but they were finally able to take the thatch necessary for the roof of the college building. They used stones gathered from the field for the lower walls, and bamboo to hold the roof up and tie down
the thatch. In the end they had to pay professionals to lay the thatch and cut the bamboo supports, so they put on a cultural show to earn this money.

This was the building being used when I arrived in August 1963. The building was shaped like an L and included an office and four classrooms. My Geography class of six students met in the end room around the corner of the building. Simple benches and tables furnished the dirt-floored hut. Several extra-high beds were made into tables or a platform in the daytime, and two faculty members slept on them in the classroom at night. Mrs. John's chickens wandered in and out of the rooms and cows, buffaloes, horses, and donkeys grazed on the unfenced grass outside. The normal School held its education classes in the building in the day, and college classes were held in the early morning or late afternoon and evening.

This picturesque building blew down in a spring storm during my first year. Fortunately, one of the Peace Crops Volunteers who was an architect had already designed a more permanent building and it was all finished except for the roof. An unsuccessful trip had been made to Barabari at the upper end of Pokhara Valley that day to try to arrange for slate. Returning wet and tired in the dark we found that, not only had the classroom building collapsed crushing the two book cabinets, but also the thatched hut where the Johns and Thapas were living was leaning over dangerously.

"If this had happened a year ago, I would really have been discouraged," said Mr. John when he saw the devastation. In order to continue classes without too much disruption, he abandoned the plan to use slate for the roof. The new Arts building was first roofed with canvas, later with tin sheets which, of course, made a loud roaring sound when it rained.

The College could not be run on just the tuition fees from the students. Each year, a fair was held with a cultural program of plays, songs, and dances. At one of these, I showed color slides
with a pressure lamp projector. Later, the college purchased a generator and the roaring sound, along with some testing on a loudspeaker, would indicate that a program was to follow. Then, people from the bazaar would start collecting. As the crowd increased, it became necessary to rope-fence sections for VIPs, and for women with small children.

Just before I came, BA and Intermediate Science classes were started but the University decided that there were too many small colleges and Tansen would make a better college town than Pokhara. This setback was forgotten a year and a half later when work was started on a science building and museum-library. At the same time, normal school buildings were going up with the help of USAID.

Each year a social service project was selected for students and the faculty. The first project after the classroom building was finished was to level the ground for a stadium and put in some seats. Since the ground is almost solid rocks cemented together naturally with lime carried by the Seti River, professional contractors had to be hired eventually. Later, a girls' common room was built with both students and faculty passing baskets of dirt along the line. Still later, we went to help a little school across the river that had almost been washed away by flooding and rock slides. Much later, after the road to Kathmandu had been built, Mrs. John and I went with a bus load of students to Mankamana, visiting the fort at Gorkha on the way. At Mankamana we built the first latrine for this pilgrimage center and prepared a volleyball court for the school complete with net and ball. Then we inaugurated it by having a game with the high school students.

I had built a little thatched house on the campus, which was removed to make room for the science building. My larger, new house was on the edge of the cliff overlooking the Seti River and with a view of the Annapurnas in the north. The views in all directions were magnificent, and I enjoyed watching the
mountains to the north as I ate breakfast on the porch. If I sat on
the other porch I could watch the Seti River flow into the gorge.
Sometimes, after heavy rain, the gorge would become blocked
and a lake form below the campus. Rainbows might add color to
the charming scenes which delighted my visitors.

In the late ‘60s and early ‘70s, the American Peace Corps
Volunteers were joined by volunteers sent to Nepal by Germany,
Japan, and The United Kingdom. Mr. John asked for some help
from the VSO (Volunteer Service Overseas) as he felt that the
English may be the best-qualified to teach English to the Nepalis.
All of us joked about how they spoke American instead.

The first two British Volunteers were Mik and Jon and
they admired my house so much, I suggested that like myself,
they ask for their year’s housing allowance in advance and build
their own house next to mine on the cliff. They did it cheaply by
designing it like an Afghan tea house and putting rocks on the tin
roof. They had hippie tendencies like many of their generation,
and stayed up late composing protest songs and smoking.

There was only one house at the lake and the owner was
more interested in renting his dugout boats than running a hotel.
(It was quite a bit later that his son, a graduate of the college,
started the Snowland Hotel). Most of the travelers and hippies
headed for Mik and Jon’s house. When the owners couldn’t
stand the crowd, they sometimes took their music to Tato Pani
or some other place, and left the key with any guests they might
have. If I went to Kathmandu for any length of time I might find
that my house had become an annex to Mik and Jon’s. I had
encouraged them to use my house, so I was not surprised..

Once I found an Italian TV producer at their house.
When he saw me he said, “Ah yes, I hear that you are the
Godmother of this house.” He left the key with a girl studying
Eastern religions, from Carleton College, and I went back to
work in the museum. Later, I saw clouds of smoke arising from
the direction of our houses. I joined the students running to put
out the fire. The latest guest had tried lighting the kerosene stove to make tea in Mik and Jon’s house and it had flared up, setting fire to the curtain and matting under the roof tins. Since the roof was only held down by stones, it was easy to put out the fire. Stones and roof tins were thrown off and then buckets of water poured into the house after pulling out the flaming mats. The students went back to their classes, and I proceeded to make tea for my poor shaken-up friend. Just then an idealistic hippie girl from New York City showed up looking for Mik and Jon’s house. I invited her to join us for tea and both girls spent the night at my house.

The next morning the girls bought new mats, dried the pillows and blankets, and got help from some students to put the roof back together. They had lost their interest in staying, so when Mik and Jon returned the house was empty. They said nothing about the state of their house until I asked, and then they said that it did seem a little different.

Every dry spring the Brahmins set fire to the river terraces below the campus after the thatch grass had been cut. This was always a worrisome time as too many faculty houses had thatched roofs and were likely to catch fire with more damage than that suffered by Mik and Jon. Sometimes we set backfires on the edge of the cliff at night and watched them until a safe strip was burned while the wind was blowing down the valley.

Once I joined several faculty members on a hike up Kahun Hill across the river from the campus. There is a watch tower there built by one Major Gurung who lived a little below it. He had been involved in the construction of the Soldiers Board School and Hospital. As we neared the top, the Professor of History asked to borrow my binoculars and went on ahead. He was strangely quiet as we approached, then said, “I have seen something that shouldn’t happen.”
We all rushed to the viewpoint and discovered that a fire on the lower terrace had spread up the cliff in several places and reached the faculty houses. Two were already burning and students were now trying to keep the thatch of John’s house and that of the History Professor from catching fire. Water was scarce, so the flaming grass was smothered with wet burlap sacks and leafy branches. By now, there were banana trees by some of the houses and their leaves were useful for many purposes. My house by the cliff had a tin roof and low stone wall around it. Luckily, the fire had gone all around outside the wall but had not crossed it.

“We can run down the front of the hill and get there in an hour or two,” I said.

“No,” replied the Professor, “I have always been in the center of every crisis. This time, since there are already plenty of students fighting the fire, we will go to Major Gurung’s house, have tea, and tell him all about it.”

So we did, and the fire fighters saved his house but removed all its contents to the newly-built museum next door. The family stayed there until they could get things back in order. The other two professors who had lost their houses and contents in the fire had to find a place to stay off campus. The History Professor said that it was the will of the gods because they had been quarreling with each other. Now they joined forces to rebuild their houses.

In 1970-71 there was a student body of several hundred. Political agitation had already come to the campus when day classes had been added. These younger, non-working students were eager to use their political parties to organize strikes and tell the government what to do. We began to see why the Ranas had wanted to avoid educating the masses, building a few schools just for themselves and a select elite.

I had returned to teach at the campus that fall and discovered that my house had been turned over to a VSO
Volunteer, but the Johns had built a room for me onto their own house close to the classroom buildings, so I had a front row seat for all campus events. Examinations were now held on the campus and an observer came from the University in Kathmandu for overall supervision of the final exams.

In January, the examinations were organized with “invigilators” (proctors) in every classroom and the Observer in the office. Mrs. John and I were assigned to observe in a room with women students and all went well. One of the teachers in another room spied a cheat sheet, confiscated it and, on the insistence of the Observer, sent the offending students out without a second chance. After the examination the students, looking for an excuse to raise a ruckus, joined others outside the walls and a fairly large mob approached the examination hall to complain. The faculty were all gathered in the long passage between classrooms as this group of students approached. The leader began addressing the Principal but the rest broke away, forced their way into the office where the completed examination papers were stacked, threw the piles out of the window and set them on fire.

In the afternoon, it was decided to go ahead and give the BA students a chance to take their examination. The frustrated IA (Intermediate Arts) students threw rocks onto the tin roof of the Arts Building, then drove the BA students from the examination rooms and tore up their answer sheets.

The police had been waiting outside with clubs and tear gas. They now charged through the center of the building. I had been milling around in the hall with the faculty and those students not directly involved in the strike. A policeman grabbed Mr. John and was about to club him, but his students quickly objected and said:

“No. No, he’s our principal!”

The policeman clasped his hands in a “Namaste, sorry” and went on to find a proper student to hit. The trouble was that
they did not pick the strikers out carefully. Innocent ones who suffered at their hands joined the strikers. I found a student under my bed, and a couple of others took refuge in my room, as it was in line with the arts building corridor where the action was taking place. I patched their wounds with bandages from my medical kit.

The Observer and reporting proctors took refuge in the office, which was now locked. I was able to bring them some tea, but otherwise they did not dare to leave until dark. Then they got as far as the Johns' house where they were fed, but only after the mob had dispersed late at night did they dare to return to their own houses. The students were threatening to burn the faculty houses and asking when they could have another chance to take the examinations. Luckily the police had not fired the tear gas into the crowd, but only fired a bomb into the field, where we watched it smoke respectfully. The police left the campus pursued by some of the mob, who then returned with threats against Mr. John for having allowed the police to enter the campus sanctuary. Mr. John knew them all, and went out to talk to them. He discussed the funny things that had happened during the strike and got them to laugh, so the dangerous moment passed. Similar strikes had occurred at this time during examinations at other colleges in Kathmandu, said to have been organized by the student union and politically motivated.

It was a year before examinations were held again. If a student failed in one or two basic subjects like English, the entire examination had to be repeated. Quite a few failed, and two years of education had been lost for many. Perhaps this kept them from becoming the "educated unemployed." That problem developed only later.

After the big strike, classes were suspended indefinitely. I then took two months off to walk around the Dhaulagiri massif and on to Rara and Phoksumdo Lakes in far western Nepal. The
pictures taken on this trek were used later in my book, *Himalayan Flowers and Trees*.

By the early seventies English was no longer the language of instruction, but was taught as a foreign language in the "New Educational Plan." All the private English medium schools were closed or changed to Nepali medium. The effect of this gradually moved up to college level and most students were no longer able to understand spoken English as well as before so, except for Science, college classes were now taught in Nepali with Nepali texts whenever available. Since the first teachers on the campus in Pokhara had come from India or were Peace Corps volunteers from America, classes and faculty meetings had always been in English. My understanding of Nepali was limited so I felt more isolated.

There were now many more students on the campus and their interest seemed to center on political parties, outlawed in Nepal but active on university campuses, and the college had become a part of the university. There was the Congress Party, with possible connections with India and the elected party members who had been put in jail by King Mahendra in 1961 when the *panchayat* system of government was introduced. Then there was the Communist Party, which was said to be supported by the Russians or Chinese, and often broken into sub-parties. The third party was the Loyalists, said to support the King's Government by taking the weaker side, thus keeping the other two parties fighting each other instead of the government.

Later, in 1990, strikes on the different college and university campuses in Nepal became more violent until the parties united and managed, with the help of the dissatisfied people to overthrow the government. The Party System with democratic elections took the place of the Panchayat System sponsored by the king. Historically, the movement began on this campus in Pokhara. The Congress Party, with its Supreme Leader Ganesh Man Singh, was elected to power. Singh had
spent many years in prison after being elected in 1959, and was removed with other members of that government by King Mahendra in December 1960. Sahana Pradhan, who taught Economics at the campus when I first came, was elected to represent the Communist Party of Nepal in Parliament.

When I see students in processions carrying flags and shouting slogans, I sometimes wonder what we have helped create. However, the college has not only produced student leaders, but also leaders in government and all kinds of endeavor. One of my first students has been very active as a leader in the Boy and Girl Scouts. Another, who also served the college as a Librarian, became Member Secretary of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation and was actively involved in establishing the Annapurna Conservation Area Project. A former head of the Student Union in the college is now active with the UNICEF. A number have continued their education abroad and now have Masters and Doctorate Degrees. Some have returned to teach on campus. One distinguished graduate now heads the department of Anthropology at Tribhuvan University. There is hardly a school, college or other organization in this area that does not have alumni from the Prithwi Narayan College on their staff.

The college has grown from a handful of students and two faculty members to an important branch of Tribhuvan University. It has a faculty of 230, over 50 buildings, and a student body of about 9000, including early-morning, day, and evening classes.

The “New Education Plan” of the ‘70s, which required all instruction to be in Nepali, was abandoned by the late ‘80s, when the worldwide importance of English was recognized. In 1995, there were 70 English-medium boarding schools in Pokhara, 50 of them at the primary level.

Future plans are to extend high school classes to include the former Intermediate Arts level education. That would make
for 12 years’ schooling before entering college, and limit college to the more mature students. The College in Pokhara would become independent and offer Bachelor’s and Master’s Degree level classes plus research, and offer a greater variety of subjects. The World Bank has promised to help improve the campus setting and buildings.

*Students and faculty work to level the playing field.*
George John in front of the old college building 1963.

R.B. Singh, Douglas Bingham, Bert Puctler, S.P. Yadav, Mahendra Thapa (standing row)
Yagya P. Acharya, Dorothy Meiraw, George John, Sahana Pradhan, Bhola Nath Parajuli (seated row)
Arts building in P.N. Campus and my red house

First college building after spring storm of 1964
P.N. Campus site in 1962 (with arches for King's visit)

P.N. Campus about 30 years later
Main room habitat of Terai animals in cement relief

Evolution circle and animals in cement relief
ACAP room in Museum

Mountain animals - main room
Butterfly on wild Lilac bush

Colin Smith (right) collected butterflies from the 1960s to the present
Museum staff in 1995

School girls visit museum in 1970s
Museum construction 1965

Museum with ACAP addition of 1986
Snake chart

Philosophers of the school of Athens

Saraswati - goddess of learning
On first coming to Pokhara, I was amazed when a lively neighbor came up to my room from her restaurant around the corner, counted my shoes and dresses, and looked at my paintings. She and my landlord or landlady often brought friends to see the wonders in my room. I had been told that a museum was needed by the college. Now I decided that Pokhara needed better entertainment than my room afforded. The generator of the only movie house was not always in working order, and fairs or festivals were not always going on. I returned in 1965 for a second term in the Peace Corps in order to design and build a small museum on the college campus for the people of Pokhara.

Learning how buildings are constructed in Pokhara proved to be very interesting. Since the college was overseeing the building to keep the costs down, and ensure careful construction, I was able to follow many aspects in the process of the building.

First there was the problem of the location. Although the campus was small then, Mr. John visualized a future when much more space would be needed for the college, so he extended the projected building over the low wall that had been looked upon as the possible campus boundary.

The land had not been used for many years and was very hard and full of rocks, but now that the college was going to use it, the Brahmin women shouted insults at me. They felt that the rich American should at least buy them new saris to pay for the land the government had given their ancestors, and had now been taken away for college use. Most people did not know what a
museum was, and it looked to them as if I were going to build a big private house for myself.

Fortunately, there was a lot of building activity going on at the same time on Bhim Kali Patan, as the campus area was called. USAID was assisting the Nepal Government to build the Normal School for teacher training just north of the first permanent college building and this meant that we were able to get help in constructing the museum from them. I had made many different designs for the museum building, from an impractical round one, based on the thatched round houses of Pokhara, to the more conventional C shape or E shape of the more traditional Nepali buildings. Mr. Bhattarai, the engineer for the normal school, gave his services and created a workable plan from my rough design so that an estimate could be made for ordering materials and hiring workmen. Heavy non-breakable materials from nearby locations might be carried by oxcart, but porters were necessary to carry the glass from the airport, as well as rocks and timber to places where they could be picked up by oxcart. There were no trucks or taxis in Pokhara at that time, and people expected to walk the three and a half miles from the airport to the campus with their porters. Two or three jeeps had been flown in for the use of VIPs. On seeing one being taken out of a freight plane, some exclaimed that “the plane had a baby!”

A man was put to work probing the ground for building-stones on-site. He used a metal pole and other men helped dig to remove the large rocks he located. They were water rounded stones of gneiss, schist, or pegmatite. The pegmatite was often white with large crystals of tourmaline, while garnet crystals often appeared in the schist when flat pieces were split and trimmed to cover the floors. I had a wonderful time selecting pieces that could be shown in the museum display, and later used in Geography classes.

Women filled baskets with the rocks which had been dug up and carried them to the building site. There stone masons
knocked off various edges, and laid them in the trenches that had been dug to mark where the walls of the building would go. Because cement was expensive and difficult to obtain, mud was mixed in useable quantities to serve as mortar for the foundation until the floor level was reached. At this point there had to be a good layer of cement or lime which would prevent moisture from creeping up from the ground to weaken the building structure. After this, it might be possible to use mud for mortar again, if the spaces between the rocks were faced with lime or cement. Cement became more available after the road to Kathmandu had been built in the 1970s. The first buildings depended more on lime that had been prepared in kilns near Batulechaur.

Since the metamorphosed igneous rock did not break evenly, door and window frames were finished off with limestone rocks from outcrops near Shining Hospital and across the Seti River from the campus. Stonemasons spent a lot of time making uniform blocks out of these flat-sided rocks. Schist split into very hard flat surfaces suitable for floors.

Women were paid one to three rupees a day to carry the stones in the baskets to the building site. The more skilled masons received five to eight rupees a day for their work. At that time there were about eight rupees to a dollar.

My little thatched house built of field stones with mud mortar was just in front of the Johns’ house near the construction site. Workmen would often come in their free time to look through some old stereoscopes at pictures from my grandparents’ time which I had brought from home. The pictures were old scenes of Niagara Falls, New York, London, Paris etc. at the turn of the century and black and white unless tinted. The three-dimensional effect fascinated everyone, and there was always someone who would tell the others that all of these things were in Kathmandu. Distances outside of Nepal were beyond the experience of most, and they often asked me how many days walk it would be to America.
In the 1960s there were still enough trees in the forests on the hills above Hyangia and Batulechaurf to provide lumber for building. *Sal* wood could be obtained from the forests south of Pokhara toward Begnas Lake. Logs were brought to the campus site by oxcart and manually sawed lengthwise into boards and beams by two men who were protected from the hot sun by bamboo mats as they worked. There were no trees on the Bhim Kali Patan campus except one by Bhim’s rock. Efforts by the students and faculty to plant little groves of trees were to no avail, as this was traditional grazing land for cows, buffaloes, mules, and donkeys, and any growth was promptly eaten up.

It was not until the mid-seventies that an effective wall was built around the campus. After this it was possible to have gardens; trees were planted which reached a goodly size. By the late 1980s one could hardly see the college buildings through the trees. Perhaps there was a little too much enthusiasm in planting trees, as now the magnificent view of the Annapurna range is also obscured in many places and mosquitoes, which used to be blown away when the bluffs were bare, are more numerous because of the lush vegetation. When the museum was being constructed it hardly seemed possible that so many trees and bushes would be able to grow in the hard, stony soil of the college campus.

The museum walls went up quite fast, and window and door frames were fitted in as they were completed. Pulleys were not available in Nepal when the museum was built, and pulling the heavy roof beams up was a feat of sheer strength.

Although we had not been successful in obtaining slate for the Arts Building, it was now possible to get it for the museum roof because small square slates were being used in the construction of the normal school next door. They were being carried down from Taprong, a day’s journey to the northeast. The builders of the normal school were not ready when the first slates arrived so these were turned over for use on the museum roof. They looked rather like fish scales and were quite attractive,
but we found later that the trouble with such small, neat slates was that strong winds would lift them up and the rain would then come in under them. This still happens in the spring storms, and we still try not to put important exhibits in the places where leaks are likely.

I had to make special trips to Kathmandu to escort the glass for the windows and cases, and the bathroom equipment, to Pokhara. The trips to escort heavy but breakable materials to the campus were an adventure in themselves. I usually had help from someone in the Peace Corps with a truck to get things from storage to the airport. Unfortunately, the planes could not be counted on to fly on regular days. If something came up and the flight was canceled I had to locate the truck to take my things back, then return on the following day. Once, after two days of canceled flights, I couldn’t bear to locate the truck and take all the heavy boxes back for a third try; I left the unwieldy boxes in the middle of the airport floor. The equipment was put on a plane to Pokhara the following morning. When I reached Pokhara I was met by the college peon. [ In America we would have called him a janitor or handyman.] Man Bahadur had remarkable strength and he was willing to carry heavy loads, like the glass for the windows, without help for the three and a half miles from the airport to the campus. I walked with him, and we made frequent stops at the shady resting platforms under the chautara trees.

The Porch of the Maidens of ancient Greece inspired me to have carved figures of five different ethnic groups of Nepal placed to support the roof of the porch in front of the museum in Pokhara. In this way the museum would get a colorful appearance, and villagers who had walked a long way to see the museum would see something even if the museum should be closed. These ten figures were carved in Cottage Industries in Kathmandu and represented people that live in different regions of Nepal; Tibetans from the mountains, Gurungs from the hills, Tharus of the lowland plains, and the Brahmins and Newars of
Kathmandu. We are kept busy keeping them painted and protected against the rain.

Since a museum is a “Temple of the Muses”, and my father taught philosophies and religions of the world in his Biography courses at Carleton College in Minnesota, it seemed appropriate to decorate this museum with some traditional Nepali-style roof props representing some of the major gods, philosophers, and religious leaders of the world. These were designed by the late Chandra Man Maskey, a well-known artist of Kathmandu. They were carved in Patan by Purna Bahadur and Sons, and placed inside, as they were too nice to expose to the elements. On the western wall of the main room are the Hindu trinity; Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the preserver, and Shiva, the destroyer. The ancient epic, the Ramayana, is represented by Sita and Ram. Hinduism, being the national religion, was represented by Parbati, the goddess of the Himalayas, and Saraswati, the goddess of learning, in the room to the south. In this same room are also roof props representing influential religions and philosophies of the world; Buddhism represented by Buddha; Judaism by Moses; Christianity by Jesus; Eastern philosophy by Confucius. The School of Athens includes three major Western philosophers; Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle on one prop. Islam is represented by decorative scrolls, and Bahai by a framed statement.

Mr. Trylokyanath Shrestha, the College Managing Committee Secretary, located old windows which were placed on either side of the center door. They came from Kathmandu, long the center for fine Newari wood carving. In an effort to encourage local artists as well as show the fine work done in the past and today in Kathmandu, Padum Bahadur, a local blacksmith-carpenter, was selected to carve the front door. He chose the traditional snake motif and flower design for the door frame.
On the upper left hand square of the door is the college emblem. Beside this is the national flower, the rhododendron. Beneath the national flower is the national bird, the Impeyan Pheasant. To its left is the peacock, and below this, Nepal’s national animal, the cow. This design comes from an ancient coin of Nepal. Elephants, in a traditional fighting pose, are represented in the lower right hand corner. They are used for royal processions in Nepal.

Even before the building was finished I had to think about what things to exhibit, and how to display them. I had a very limited budget, and it was very difficult to get the kinds of exhibits and materials which might be found in the museums of the developed countries. My main interest was natural history, and I wanted to stress the need for conservation. Unless people know what they have around them and have really learned to know and love the birds, flowers, trees and animals, they cannot be expected to be interested in protecting them for future generations to enjoy. I was not very sure myself at that time what the local birds, trees, flowers, and butterflies were. School charts pictured birds and animals from Great Britain and Africa, and general guide books on the local flora and fauna didn’t exist.

Shortly after the museum was built, Colin Smith came from England to teach at the newly-established Gandaki Boarding School. He collected and knew a lot about butterflies. I asked him to collect butterflies for the museum, and Mr. John assured him that if he would design cases and cabinets for the butterflies he collected, the college would pay to have them built for the museum. Colin stayed on and taught math at the campus and enlarged his butterfly collection. He has been with the museum in Pokhara from its start and has built up a collection of equal size for the university at their museum in Swayambunath, Kathmandu. The insects, especially the moths and butterflies, are well kept and they have attracted so much attention that the museum used to be called “The Butterfly Museum”.

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In order to economize and keep things simple, I drew and painted life-size animals on the inside lower walls. Above the animals I had chicken wire fitted at eye-level so that charts and posters could be fastened for easy display without worrying about dampness from the walls. Displays could be put up and changed easily as well as adjusted to different levels. The United States Information Service provided large posters of the moon landing, and, for a short time, some moon rocks for display. People came from distant villages to see the moon rocks long after they had been returned. The posters from UNESCO on the problems of poverty and illiteracy around the world remained on display for long periods when there was nothing else to show. Colin put up astronomy articles and a stamp collection, and I fastened my doll collection to the chicken wire for a while.

With limited funds and very few things to display at first, it is not surprising that the museum was of more use to the college as a library. As the college grew, the library was steadily enlarged, and the museum exhibits were given less space and importance. In time the library took over the main room. The chicken wire was removed, and the painted animals were covered by bookcases and magazine racks.

The museum cases with rocks and butterflies were moved to the smaller room, and then later, into a larger wing which had been added by the college to make more room for the library. A second addition to the museum-library building gave more room for the stacks, and the enlarged building served as the library for the campus until 1984 when the entire library moved to a new building and this left the original three rooms and two additional ones for museum use.

When the books and other library equipment were removed, the museum looked very empty. Animals that had been painted on the walls almost twenty years before were revealed, and some didn’t look too bad. By now there was a road to Kathmandu and another to the Indian border, so cement had
become available. At my request, the college artist, Durga Bharal, had his assistant, Rana Bahadur, make some animals in cement relief around the lower walls.

Not many visitors could read English, except for a handful of students, and Nepali signs were not used in the beginning since few in Nepal would read or write until the middle 1970’s. Even billboards and trail signs were not in use. Instead, I used simple self-explanatory pictures to describe each display. When electricity came to the museum I covered the wires with strips of plywood upon which I painted pictures of birds and flowers. Students wrote the Nepali names on these pictures.

Dr. Alyama John, the Principal’s wife, had always taken an active interest in the museum. In 1985, on the 25th anniversary of the founding of the college, she organized a Science Fair to celebrate the occasion. All the rooms of the enlarged museum were filled with exhibits prepared by children from various participating schools. They made posters and conservation exhibits as well as the usual demonstration of scientific experiments. Tables were placed the length of the room on the northeast to display jars with snakes and fish preserved in formaldehyde by the Zoology Department.

The main entrance room, with its life-size animals in relief, was made into a giant habitat with live ferns and plants in front of the animals in their background settings. The windows were covered with green paper to create the ambiance of a mysterious jungle as the visitors walked through. Thousands came to see the displays in the week of the fair. Once the fair was over and the teachers, children, and parents returned to their schools and villages, the newly-emptied room looked bare.

Fortunately, the recently-established King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation was starting a new trend in conservation in the Annapurna Region just at this time, and they needed a building. They added a second floor on the northeast wing of the museum, and used the entire wing for their displays.
to explain the activities of the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) to tourists and local people. A conservation library and space for changing displays is included on the second floor. The ACAP displays were developed by Maaike von der Meer, a Dutch Volunteer from the Netherlands branch of the World Wildlife Fund. The King Mahendra Trust provided funds for necessary repairs, hiring staff and upgrading the museum so it would appeal to Pokhara’s many tourists as well as the students and local people. Future ideas include enlarging the Natural History Library, video shows to supplement the museum displays, and nature guides for the visitors.

The Annapurna Region of Nepal has the greatest variety of scenery to be found in a two-week trek, and is easily reached in a relatively short time. It has become one of the most popular trekking areas in Nepal. In 1976, it drew 11,060 foreign trekkers. By 1986 the number of trekkers was 33,609, and in 1987, only one year later, the number had increased to 36,164. There are about 40,000 inhabitants in the villages of the area and this number has also been increasing, but more gradually.

New restaurants and hotels are continually being established for trekkers, and the demand for construction timber and firewood is fast destroying the rhododendron and evergreen forests. It is neither wise nor practical to remove the villagers who had settled and grown up in this beautiful spot as has sometimes been done to protect an area in a National Park. The Annapurna Conservation Area Project is a new concept developed to help the villagers plan for future generations by balancing the needs of villagers, international visitors, and the environment.

The heart of the program is conservation education for villagers, school children, and trekkers. Most of the material to teach this is still being developed as it is tried out in the schools, and in the training for hotel owners and foresters. New museum displays and publications are aimed at foreign visitors as well as
school children and villagers. Deforestation, erosion, and habitat destruction are partially remedied by alternative energy sources and reforestation from plantations started by the villagers. ACAP has also encouraged the villagers to improve their living conditions by working to get pure drinking water, proper latrines, sanitation, rubbish pits, health posts, women’s programs, and trail repair.

Early trekking groups often went through the area using firewood and leaving rubbish. The local people did not receive benefits nor understand the Nepal government’s need to promote tourism. Some tried sending their children to beg. A tourist, unaware of the value of a rupee, often gave away as much as the earnings of a day of hard work, and so encouraged parents to take their children out of school to beg.

ACAP now collects a fee from each trekker who passes through this beautiful Annapurna region. The money is used to improve the life of the villagers in various ways. The construction of alternative energy sources helps eliminate the need for some of the firewood and preserves the forests. In time most villages should be able to receive power through electricity generated from small streams or from solar panels. Solar cookers, solar heaters, and back boilers will make hot water available and purify drinking water. Proper latrines will be constructed for improved sanitation. And the beauty of the environment and trails can be maintained by requiring trekkers to carry their rubbish out.

The expertise and funding of a group of international organizations have been joined in an effort to help the Annapurna Conservation Area Project start its projects. These include the King Mahendra United Kingdom Trust, the Netherlands Development Organization, the German Alpine Club, World Wildlife Fund (USA), Tibetan Refugee Aid Society, and USAID. In the future, it is hoped that projects initiated by the villagers through ACAP will be financed by entry and user fees. In this way, trekkers can feel that they have contributed to conservation
and improved living conditions for the villagers. In turn, the villagers will develop a greater appreciation of their contact with foreign trekkers.

ACAP’s activities began in Ghandruk, Siklis, and Lwang, and have since expanded to Jomson, Manang, Bhujung and Mustang. The efforts at Ghale Kharka have promoted eco-tourism in the region. An office in Pokhara helps to integrate the programs, establish radio contact, and facilitate transportation for the heavy equipment which is often ordered by villages.

The museum continues to be active in producing displays and teaching materials which concentrate on the Annapurna area and its natural history. The villagers are in charge of protecting their forests from over-cutting, and protecting the wild animals from over-hunting. Research on the wild animal population is being funded by grants from the King Mahendra Trust. It is also hoped that publishing this material, and guide books on Natural History, will contribute to conservation education. The museum and ACAP continue to change and develop as new ways are found to preserve and protect Nepal’s precious environment.
Second floor added to old Arts building.

Newly completed Museum building 1966.
ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR WOMEN

Most Hindu parents feel that they must have a boy no matter how many girls they already have in their household, so families keep getting larger until they have a boy or two to take care of death duties and inherit the land and name. Of course girls often will work harder than boys on the farms and villages, and children can be put to work when they are very small. Many children are usually considered an asset. In large families, the older children take care of the younger ones, and become little adults very early.

The early rulers and Ranas of Nepal used to take beautiful girls as concubines, and this was often a move up for the latter and their parents in the social scale. Girls have, in some places, been sold to become prostitutes. Pretty Nepali girls are in great demand, especially in Bombay. The girls often go willingly, as they think they are about to marry rich men. Now, when girls are rescued from being prostitutes in India, they may have AIDS and are usually not wanted back in their homes and villages. Consequently their future is often bleak. A very good Nepali film has been produced and shown on TV on this sad topic.

Now that schools are becoming available, education is looked upon as the best means to improve one’s lot. Young people in the “underdeveloped world” can achieve as much as those from richer countries when given the chance. When properly educated and given the opportunity, girls can do as well as boys, but girls have too often been overlooked as they are needed at home for household duties such as carrying water and taking care of younger children.

In 1972, in order to start the process of giving girls leisure to attend school, the UNICEF had a program for bringing
safe drinking water to the villages. As springs dried up in the dry season, water had to be brought from farther and farther away, and it was not always safe to drink unless made into tea. Sometimes over half a day might be spent fetching the necessary water from distant sources. In order to bring water to the villages, pipes were needed. These were very long and heavy. Coils of polyethylene pipes were assembled at the Panchayat Training Centre opposite the campus and then these large coils of pipes were transported from there by helicopter to various isolated villages of the Annapurna Region. Since my house was on the campus within sight of the operation, Mr. Hal Kuloy, the dynamic UNICEF Director, stayed there during this operation. It was a very dramatic sight to see the heavy coils dangling below the helicopter, as it left for the back side of Annapurna, and it was fun to see what came back in the plane. Passang Sherpa, who introduced grapes and apples to Marpha, returned with a fine mastiff puppy from the monastery in Mustang.

This was the opening wedge for the new Access to Education for Women, an effort to get girls educated and improve the status of women. Because in 1972 Nepal was one of the three third world countries that had the lowest literacy rates for women, it was selected by UNICEF and UNESCO for this program. The literacy rate for women then was about 1%, while for men it was slightly over 10%.

The Education Wing of Prithwi Narayan Campus in Pokhara was selected as the first site for this program. Since I was living on the campus and working on school charts to be printed by UNICEF, I became well-acquainted with this program. I was asked to assist in an unofficial capacity several times, and have some interesting memories of what went on.

There was a French woman anthropologist who was to make a preliminary study of why villagers didn’t send their daughters to school. Interpreters from Kathmandu with Master’s Degrees were employed instead of a local person who
understood the language and customs of the village. Nepali is the national language but different ethnic groups have their own languages, and village women often do not understand Nepali.

The program was well under way before the results of her study, written in French, were submitted. Eager participants arrived to take part in the program before there was a place for them to stay. Some had come from villages several days away. The initial confusion gradually subsided to normal.

When the program was ready and the UN expert for implementation of the program had settled comfortably in her lodgings, the girls returned and were given rooms above a store in the bazaar. Later they were made more comfortable in a hostel built, but not used, for the Multi-purpose School located a short distance from the campus. In another year they would be able to use their own hostel, to be built by UNICEF, for the girls, on the Teacher Education part of the campus.

I had been asked to find an interpreter for Mrs. Höge, a Norwegian expert, who would work with the girls selected for the program. My friend, Miss Raji Thapa, had recently left the Bala Mandir School near the campus, and was able to get leave from teaching English at the Girls’ School next to it. She would serve not only as interpreter, but would live with the girls and share the responsibility for their welfare. Miss Thapa and I became good friends with Mrs. Höge and had many a game of badminton or cards after a delicious supper prepared by her Gurung cook.

Mrs. Hoge was 63 years old when she came, yet very athletic and full of enthusiasm. Miss Thapa sometimes joined us on short excursions and, on one memorable occasion, we all camped together in a tent on the far shore of Fewa Lake.

Mrs. Hoge was very much concerned about the welfare of these girls from small distant villages. When the checks for the girls’ living expenses did not come through on time, she made special trips to Kathmandu and waited at the government offices
at Singha Durbar until she was given payment. When the food allowance did not provide for meat in the diet, she added her own money to it so they could get enough proteins. The regular college student uniform for girls was a maroon sari. These girls, although in a special program, wore it too. The sari is very impractical for athletic games, although the girls were always willing to try doing anything in it. I remember playing field hockey with the college girls, all of us wearing saris. The ball would disappear under someone’s long skirts and no one dared to hit it. Mrs. Hoge designed and gave bloomers to the girls in her group, so they could have more freedom for sports.

One of the most popular destinations for trekkers with just a week in Pokhara is Ghorapani and Poon Hill. From this 9,000 ft. ridge above a rhododendron forest, one can get a remarkable view of both Dhaulagiri and the entire Annapurna Range. Major Poon of Sikha first discovered and popularized this hill, named for him. He and his family were very active in the sixties in Sikha and Ghorapani, improving living conditions for the villagers. Mrs. Hoge discovered that Major Poon now lived with his family almost directly across the street from her house in Pokhara. She invited Raji and myself to help entertain him at dinner one night and he entertained us with wonderful stories of his activities with the people of Sikha. We were so impressed with what he had done to provide schools, make low-interest loans, improve farming practices, and numerous other projects, that Mrs. Hoge decided that her Nepali boss should meet him.

We had another dinner party a week or two later, but unfortunately Major Poon had a mental breakdown and went mad just about that time. The conversation became confused and Mrs. Hoge’s boss was not amused. In fact he was quite annoyed with her for having wasted his time. The next morning Major Poon was shouting from his upstairs window against certain Nepali ethnic groups, and his wife had to send for help from the British Pension Camp. They took him to the army hospital in
Bhairawa, where he was cured. Several years later, Major Poon was set upon by thieves and murdered. The people of Sikha still benefit from the social services he began.

At one time a display of children's art from Pokhara schools was shown at the Normal School Campus and Mrs. Hoge and I were asked to be two of the three judges. The third was a children's art specialist from UNICEF or UNESCO as I remember. There was disappointment in our selections for awards because we picked out typical children's art rather than more realistic drawings that showed the help of the teacher. I was a little disappointed that the other judges did not even want to display the latter, as I thought that it was good that some teachers had ability and wanted to help their pupils. It was also possible that one or two of the more realistic pictures represented the work of an especially talented pupil who had done it without his teacher's help.

Mrs. Hoge's daughter died in a motor accident in Norway and, not long afterwards, her mother also died. She returned briefly to Norway after each of these sad events. We went on a number of small excursions and one long trek toward Jomson to visit schools and check on the percentage of girls attending, and whether there might be any who might be interested in teacher training with the Access to Education for Women Program. She kept her spirits up, as well as her lively sense of humor, despite her tragedies. We had some good laughs on our treks together, some from reading old "Readers' Digests" in our tent.

"Oh dear," we'd say, after reading about training for the Olympic teams. "We've peaked too soon and can't get up the hill." Or, after reading an article about the aging of the brain, we'd say "another day, and now we have another 50,000 brain cells gone!"

On one short trek, we got so warm that we swam in a river in our clothes. As we continued to walk in our wet clothes,
we discovered a school that seemed to be deserted and falling apart. As we walked around the rooms making comments about the ruins, a voice from the next room invited us in for a cup of tea with the school’s principal. We sat drinking our tea attempting to make excuses for our rude remarks which, we assumed, were overheard. When we got up to leave, our chairs were wet from our clothes.

Although Mrs. Högë had many good ideas and suggestions about Primary Education from her experience in Norway, the local people were resentful and jealous over her salary. Because she was paid by UNESCO, she was paid ten times as much as a Nepali who could communicate and often understand more clearly. After her two-year contract ended, we had a bittersweet farewell party at the expensive Fishtail Lodge in Pokhara.

When the next experts came from the Philippines and Bangladesh, they had a hard time measuring up to the standard set by Mrs. Högë, and offered few new ideas. Durga Sharma, a Home Science expert herself, served as their Nepali counterpart, and became the leader in talking and decision-making at meetings. It disturbed her also that her salary was one-tenth that of the foreigners. Later, she was able to serve as a foreign expert for UNICEF in Bhutan, and that helped make up for the salary she couldn’t get in Nepal, her own country.

The object of the Access to Education for Women program was to get enough girls educated to be teachers, and to return to their villages and demonstrate by example that education opens doors of opportunity to teach and earn money. Families might be more likely to send their girls to school if the primary school teacher were a local woman. The value of education for women had to be demonstrated to the villagers.

In the beginning it was difficult to find enough girls for the program who had completed even eight years of school. Special classes had to be arranged for some younger girls to
complete their high school education before being admitted to the campus. It was feared that once the girls lived in Pokhara, they would not wish to return to the hardship of the village.

The program must have been a success, because there are now almost as many girls as there are boys in many schools. For the past number of years, the university has had no trouble in finding girls with high school diplomas. The Education Wing of Prithwi Narayan Campus was upgraded and is now a part of the university. The Access to Education for Women program seemed to have succeeded in its purpose and was discontinued in 1992.

Nepal television is doing much to influence people who have access to it. One influential program gives glimpses of Nepali women doing all kinds of jobs and shows that education is not wasted on girls. Many village women still prefer to have their daughters remain at home in traditional roles. Short programs on television show how educated girls save their illiterate parents from being cheated by shopkeepers and money-lenders. As electricity becomes available in more villages, the influence of television will become more apparent.
Views along Modi river on way to SIklis (Erosion and forest)
Waterfall at Ghundruk

A tree nursery at Luang
Trip to health post for pre-natal check
Ghandruk

Day care center at Ghandruk
St. Mary's school for girls

Girls at Gorkha English Boarding School
More girls now attend schools in the hills

College girls at Rangashala playing field
Chapter 7

THE TIBETANS AMONG US

In 1959 the Chinese army shelled the capital of Tibet, and the Dalai Lama escaped from Lhasa and took refuge in India. A number of Tibetans left with him at this time, but with later Chinese army occupation of Tibet, and aggressive incidents in 1962, large numbers of Tibetans left the country and became refugees in Nepal, Bhutan, and India. This was the same year that I joined the Peace Corps and came to Nepal. By the mid-1960’s over 100,000 Tibetans had become refugees.

From ancient times there has been trade between Tibet and Nepal. Caravans of sheep and goats carried salt from Tibet and returned with wheat, barley, or rice from Nepal in their packs. Now the Chinese closed the border and deprived the merchants of their trade and the herdsmen of their summer pastures. Instead of traders, refugees and Khampas of the Tibetan army headed for the border, and were sometimes intercepted and killed by Chinese guards.

A group of Tibetans from near the sacred Mt. Kailash region brought their herds and entered Nepal through Dolpa. The barren pastures of Dolpa couldn’t support so many extra yaks and sheep, so starvation followed overgrazing. Warlike Khampas killed many of the animals in order to survive, and the local villagers provided food at inflated prices. It was a long, severe winter with plenty of snow so there was heavy loss of local animals as well as those of the refugees. In Tsarka village only 96 out of 500 yaks survived. The Tibetans had been relatively well-to-do when they arrived, but in one winter they became poor. The Swiss Red Cross encouraged this group to settle in

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1 see "Himalayan Traders" by Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf
Dhorpatan, south of Dhaulagiri. From here they entered the salt trade again, this time bringing in Indian salt from the Terai with donkeys and mules.

In 1963, they came to the Pokhara valley and were settled on land at Hyangia. Coming from a cold, dry climate and entering a hot, rainy area had been hard on the health of many. Dysentery and smallpox had caused many deaths in the beginning, and later TB developed as a killer. They were in need of immediate shelter, and many wore frayed clothing. Food was provided by the Red Cross, USAID, and CARE. Leaky temporary shelters of bamboo mats were put up in a hurry. As people around the world, as well as in Nepal, gradually became aware of their plight clothes, medicines, and other necessities were provided.

I used to meet large groups of Tibetans carrying flour and cooking oil with “Donated by the people of USA” written on the sacks and cans, on days when it was delivered to the airport in Pokhara. It took them about half a day to get it to Hyangia, now a distance of ten kms. by road. They were very cheerful, and thanked me personally as a donor from USA!

The first young Swiss who came to look after the new Tibetan Camp was very interested in snakes and made a collection of all the interesting ones he could find. He kept them alive in cages and hoped to turn this into a scientific study. Unfortunately he found a beautiful but deadly coral snake and, as he held it by the neck, it managed to bite his hand. He knew that there was no antivenom for this snake and he had only about an hour to live. He carefully put the snake back into its cage, sent a Tibetan to Shining Hospital with a note, and wrote his will before he died. He had no family and so left what money he had to a little Tibetan orphan boy he had been looking after. The Tibetans at the camp were very upset at what had happened and threw the snake collection into the Seti River.
About this time Fred Barker, an Anglo-Peruvian, entered Nepal from India in the back of an open truck. He was wearing an Indian dhoti, and had been trying his hand at being a Hindu religious pilgrim. When he learned what had happened at the Tibetan Refugee Camp, he quickly changed his outfit and applied for the vacant position. It was not long before he was wearing the traditional garb of the Tibetans and had acquired a horse. The Swiss were assisting in getting a rug industry started. Fred pursued various other leads to get the Tibetans back on their feet again, earning money. I remember watching silversmiths taking old silver coins from Tibet and turning them into silver spoons to sell to tourists.

The walk to Hyangia from the campus was a pleasant one along the Seti River with wonderful views of the Annapurnas, so I went there often and enjoyed the people at the end of my walk. When I went for a trek I was encouraged to take Tibetans from Hyangia as porters and so learned to know more of these very kind and generous people and enjoyed their good-natured jokes. Later a Swiss-German couple got involved in establishing a school and health post as well as building more permanent houses for the Tibetans to live in.

My first house on the campus was torn down to make way for a new Science Building and a second, larger one was built for me on the edge of the river terrace overlooking the Seti, with a full view of the Annapurnas. The new house was not finished when I moved in, but Thanksgiving was coming and I wanted to entertain my friends. It was a very mixed group consisting of Peace Corps volunteers, campus faculty, Shining Hospital founding members, and Fred Barker, who came with a friend from the Tibetan Camp. It was pot luck. I furnished a chicken dish and the volunteers made a pumpkin pie. Fred and his friend brought Tibetan mo-mos and produced a gallon of local beer, or chang, after the missionaries left. The cold wind blew right through my house as I didn’t have glass in the windows yet,
but we had a good time together, although only the Americans knew about Thanksgiving.

At a later time I went with friends to spend Christmas night at the Tibetan camp in Hyangia. The Swiss-German couple supplied a real Christmas tree with lighted candles. In Nepal I
generally had to teach on Christmas Day, and be content with a few cards which might get through the mail, for Nepal was a country that didn’t celebrate Christmas, so December 25 wasn’t a holiday.

After dinner we were invited to observe a psychic Tibetan go into a trance, and make predictions for the new year of 1967. We walked home from the sleeping camp, now starting to look neat and prosperous, along the road following the river in the moonlight. The spirit of Christmas stayed with us all the way as we climbed over the tricky bamboo bridge and continued, a cool wind at our backs.

A few years after the first wave of Tibetans had come to Pokhara there were more incidents in Tibet, and a second, larger group of refugees arrived, poorer than the first, and suffering from sickness and starvation. There was no room for them in Hyangia, and they came from a different part of Tibet, so a new refugee camp had to be started at the lower end of Pokhara.

About this time an Irish girl, Dervla Murphy, appeared on the scene. She had previously ridden her bicycle through Europe and the Middle East into India and written a book about her adventures, *Full Tilt*. Then she had spent about a year in Dharmsala in north India, where the Dalai Lama had been given refuge. There she worked with the Tibetan orphans gathered in a school run by the Dalai Lama’s sister. She wrote *Tibetan Foothold* about this experience. She volunteered to take on the job of getting the new group of Tibetan refugees settled in the camp at Pokhara.

Dervla rented a very uncomfortable room near the airport and traveled all around Pokhara on her bicycle wearing a man’s shirt and shorts. She was very energetic and fun to talk to but the missionaries had some doubts.

"Why, you can’t tell if she is a man or a woman!" exclaimed one.
“If you can’t tell, what difference does it make?” responded Mr. John reasonably.

Dervla and I sometimes discussed what policy would be best for these Tibetans. She felt that this new group should never have left Tibet, because they were poor and the Chinese would take care of them. I felt that the Dalai Lama and their religion were more important to them than any material benefits the Chinese might offer.

Since she thought they should be encouraged to return to Tibet, she was not in favor of building the permanent buildings recommended by the Red Cross. There was a rumor that some Nepali government officials favored stone houses for the Tibetans on good land because they thought that the Tibetans would soon leave and the Nepalis would benefit from these houses, built by foreign aid. After a while, Dervla had collected enough material for another of her interesting books, *The Waiting Land*, and left the Tibetans in the hands of two students who had come from England.

Under the direction of these young men, and with the help of the Tibetans themselves, a permanent camp was built. It had a handicraft center, school, and health post. An SOS Children’s Village for Orphans was later established nearby.

Toni Hagen, a popular geologist, authority on Nepal and development, had recommended that the Tibetans should make carpet production their source of income, since farming was not their traditional way of life, and land was scarce in Nepal. The carpet industry became the great contribution of the Tibetans to the economy of Nepal. Carpets are now the leading export of the country. Within a remarkably short time the Tibetans at both camps had become self-sufficient with their crafts, trading, rug industry, and restaurants. As Tibetan rugs became a major export, the demand was greater than the number of Tibetans available to make them, so young women from poor villages of other ethnic groups have been attracted to come to work in the
rug factories, mostly located in Kathmandu. A few Newars and Gurungs are also making Tibetan rugs in Pokhara.

The martial Khampas from eastern Tibet brought another problem with them when they crossed the border into Nepal. Because governments did not want to get involved with Communist China, they agreed with China that the invasion of Tibet was its internal affair. At the same time there was a lot of sympathy for the Tibetans. Because of the presence of the Khampas and their activities, trekkers were forbidden to enter the area north and east of the Annapurnas. After a complaint from China, there was a brief, secret military action along the border by Nepali military forces. The leader of the Khampas and a number of others were killed as they attempted to escape to India. In the late 1970s I saw some of the Khampas, who had given themselves up being led to Pokhara in chains. After the Khampa surrender, it was once again possible to trek around Annapurna. The Tibetans of Hyangia were glad to be freed from the domination of the Khampa military, for the latter had collected fees from them whenever they passed through the area.

Since Fred Barker had ridden his horse into the region controlled by the Khampas, and was suspected of having helped them, the Nepali Government felt they could not offend the Chinese by keeping him at the camp. He changed his image again, ran the luxurious Fishtail Lodge at the lake, and married a former airline stewardess now with the Dooley Foundation. (We must not get this Fred Barker confused with another man in Kathmandu by the same name. The other Fred Barker ran the “Pink Mushroom” restaurant where hashish was put in the cakes).

I first got to know the Tibetans when I hired some as porters on my treks. They needed the work, and were cheerful and willing. In 1971, when the campus was closed by strikes, I decided to walk to the far west and around Dhaulagiri. I was encouraged by Christian Kleinert, author of a German guide.
book to trekking in Nepal, to go with just one Tibetan porter-guide as a companion.

Since Christian had taken the pictures which the Austrian Dhaulagiri II expedition would use as guides to climb this highest, as yet unclimbed, peak in the Himalayas, he asked them as a favor to let me go with them over the high passes on the northwest side of the mountain range. From there I would continue west to Jumla and Rara Lake in western Nepal, while the Austrians climbed their peak. Christian assured me that if I had his Tibetan friend, Lobsang, as a porter-guide, I would need no other companion for my two-month 500 mile walk around the Dhaulagiri Range.

The Austrians were visibly annoyed at being saddled with a middle-aged American woman at the start of their important expedition. The leader told me that if I were not in Pokhara when they were ready to go, they would start without me. If I could catch up they would let me go over the high passes with them, but I should not expect to get shelter from storms in their tents, as their Sherpas were more important to them and would be protected first.

When I arrived at the Pokhara Airport from Kathmandu, I found that the Austrians had left the day before. They had taken Lobsang with them, and left a dejected Sherpa, Pemba, who had wanted to join his brothers as a high-altitude porter on the expedition. He was happy to see me, and said he would take Lobsang’s place until we caught up with the expedition. He still hoped they would take him on as a high altitude porter in place of Lobsang. He brought his climbing gear and came to my house on the campus, where he put all his equipment into my knapsack. Consequently, there was no room for provisions or my camping equipment in it.

“I will get a Tibetan porter for you,” he said, “I only guide and cook. I don’t carry.” Soon he appeared with Tun Din, a very big Tibetan from the lower refugee camp, and a large
basket to carry our provisions. There was no room for a tent, so we counted on staying in caves or villages along the way. Since Sherpas and Tibetans are closely related in language and customs with the people of northern Nepal, my companions easily established a good rapport with the villagers, and we had no trouble finding shelter, and even food, in food-deficit areas.

We were two days behind the Austrian expedition, but since their group included over 70 porters, we thought we would be able to travel faster and catch up before the high passes. As we started walking north toward Hyangia, Pemba said we would need another porter, as we were going into a food deficit region and should bring extra provisions. Just then we met Atam, a Tibetan who had been with me on other treks. He agreed to join us after leaving word with his wife and getting his large pack. Atam’s merry sense of humor kept us in good spirits.

When we caught up with the Austrian expedition several days later, they refused to exchange Lobsang for Pemba as they had enough high altitude Sherpas and Lobsang was going to be their mail runner.

Pemba agreed to go with me on terms equal to the two Tibetans, and the four of us made a very congenial party. When we had a snow storm at the base of the pass, they wove a shelter for me with willows and tall grass. Atam proved invaluable to the Austrians as well as myself when he revealed that he had gone over the pass as a Tibetan refugee. A wrong turn had trapped the expedition in a cul-de-sac, and none of the Sherpas or 70 porters knew the way. After we arrived at the northwest side of the mountain range, our little group spent a month traveling to the west and back to get pictures of mountain flowers, while the Austrians climbed their peak. Tun Din had trained as a Buddhist lama. He had a gentle reverence for life, and an ability to chant prayers. Atam and Pemba were both impressed that this older Tibetan could read and write, as they had never had the chance to learn to do so.
After our trek to the west, we arrived at the Austrian base camp the day before they descended from successfully climbing Dhaulagiri II. We continued, however, without the Austrians, over a 19,000 ft. pass and down to the Kali Gandaki Valley between the Dhaulagiri and Annapurna Ranges. We followed the river and took the main trail back to Pokhara. We were welcomed as celebrities at the Hyangia Tibetan Camp.

This camp at Hyangia now has a monastery and very beautiful Buddhist temple. The road through there is now paved, and buses make the trip. The walk is no longer as attractive, although it is better than it was when the road was very dusty. Many of the Tibetans from both camps can be found at shops along the lake. Others carry their wares to places along the trekking routes. I have often been invited to attend Tibetan New Year’s celebrations since my Dhaulagiri trek, and I am happy to see that it is now possible for the children to attend school and also retain their Tibetan culture.
Tibetan boys with flute
Early camps for Tibetan refugees

Tibetan refugee children in 1960s
Tibetan with donkeys

1970s Refugees at lower camp prepare to make rugs
Hyengia now has a rug factory and well built houses as well as a beautiful Buddhist monastery.
Festival tent to celebrate Tibetan New Year
Little boys get to ride back to camp after races
Pokhara was the winter home of the Thakalis. In the fall after the Festival of Lights, when the rains have stopped and nights are starting to be chilly, tea shops used to appear like mushrooms all along the trade routes and in Pokhara. They were hastily constructed of bamboo mats with red clay stoves and shelves for the shining copper plates and vessels. There were often benches covered with attractive hand-woven rugs where travelers could sit to have their tea or food. Sometimes there were no benches, and we would sit on rugs placed on mats on the floor. The food would be placed on the floor in front of us. Most teashops now have tables and chairs, and signs in English to attract the tourists. Travelers still expect that a Thakali tea shop or hotel will be neat and clean, and serve good food. The hostess is generally attractive and friendly, and has come from their cold but dry summer home in the upper Kali Gandaki Valley behind the Annapurnas. This valley leads to Tibet in the north and, was the chief route for the salt trade in the past.

When I first came to Pokhara in 1963, I got addicted to drinking sweet Nepali milky tea. When on long walks or treks it gave us a rest, and we could start out again refreshed, especially when the tea shop was a neat and clean one run by a Thakali. We joked about how we walked from teashop to teashop. The ancient trade routes have become today’s trekking routes. Temporary mat shelters serving as teashops have often become permanent hotels, as more business has brought prosperous times.

The Thakalis have a tradition that they originally came from the Kingdom of Jumla to the west, and were of royal stock. Many intermarried with Tibetans, and have similar clothing and
customs. Like the Tibetans, they use donkey and mule trains to carry their goods north to their homes. Their location on the Kali Gandaki gave them advantages, because they could collect taxes on goods in transit between India and Tibet, especially salt. They paid the Nepal government in Kathmandu for the right to collect taxes and, because they were isolated with a monopoly on the salt trade passing through their area, they were able to become prosperous.

When the Tibetan border was closed by the Chinese in 1959 trade stopped and many of the Thakalis left their homes and settled in Pokhara. Some family members usually stayed behind, or a family from even colder Dolpa came to live in, and protect, their houses and farms. This had also been the custom, when they had set up the winter tea shops along the trade route to Pokhara and the Indian border.

At Marpha the government has encouraged horticulture and fruit orchards. The Thakalis learned how to start a wine and brandy industry, since it is very expensive to export bulky ripe fruit. The orchards have been bearing fruit for some years now and apples can be found in Pokhara that were grown in Marpha and flown in from Jomsom or carried down by donkey train.

In the future, the road to Baglung may be extended up the Kali Gandaki and even through Mustang to the Chinese (Tibetan) border. Many local people along the route are very enthusiastic about the prospect, but trekkers are distressed at the thought that a favorite trekking route might become a dusty highway with trucks instead of mules. Tourists would be happy to be able to take a bus to Jomsom and even Mustang and Tibet. It would not be an easy road to build, and to maintain it in this region of frequent landslides would be even more difficult than keeping the Pokhara-to-Kathmandu road in condition. Perhaps the era of leisurely treks to or from Jomsom will come to an end and a period of shorter hikes out from a few large settlements will take its place. Some of us are already nostalgic
for the old days, when Dr. Mangal Singh used to stop the expeditions and occasional travelers in Tukche, to show them the Buddhist temple he was keeping in condition. After getting acquainted, he would ask for any extra pills and other western medicines that he could make available to the local people. Some thought he was dishonest because he charged the local people for medicines, but they would not have been able to have them at all if he had not asked for them.

The Thakalis who settled in Pokhara had the capital to invest in permanent hotels and restaurants. They were the first to start fruit orchards and vegetable gardens there. They have since diversified into chicken farms, and are experimenting with producing gobar gas from buffalo manure. With the expansion of trekking, many have moved back along the trekking routes to the north, and opened permanent restaurants and hotels during the winter season. By nature extroverts, the Thakalis have become successful because they are not afraid to try new things.
People from Mustang and Thak Khola may weave rugs in Pokhara during winter season.
Thakali mule train transport goods with style

Simple Thakali teashop
GURUNGS AND GURKHAS

In the hills around Pokhara on the slopes of the Annapurnas are many picturesque villages. The majority of the people living between 5,000 and 7,000 feet are Gurungs. Their main villages include Siklis, Tanting, Ghandruk, Landrung, Armala, Kaski, Dhamphus, Ghachok, Chomrong, Barpak, and Lamjung. Sometimes there are mostly women, children, and old people in these villages, as the young men have left to join the army. Now many of the young men go to work in the factories or hotels of Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Brunei, Arabia, Thailand, or Malaysia.

When the Annapurnas became a popular trekking destination and people began to realize that measures would have to be taken to protect the magnificent environment in this area, the Gurungs became the center of the conservation movement. The office of the Annapurna Conservation Area Project was first located at Ghandruk, two days’ walk from Pokhara. Later projects were centered in Siklis and Chomrong. The Gurungs have their own language, and have kept most of their traditional customs in spite of long periods of service away from Nepal in the British or Indian armies. Their houses are generally oblong, and built of stone with thatched or slate roofs, and stone threshing floors in front, where they store their maize on bamboo poles. The people are generally good looking, hard working, brave, and honest. Trails to the villages are often paved with large flat stones, and include steps that go up a thousand feet or more. Building these trails takes a lot of hard work, and it takes a great deal of energy and lung power to get to the villages. This effort keeps the local people extremely fit, as they farm on the terraced slopes and make trips to Pokhara to get provisions.
In the early days they bought cloth goods, kitchen equipment, salt, and farm tools. Later, as the Gurungs could afford more, they began to buy kerosene, lamps, flashlights, batteries, and sugar. They even brought heavy items such as corrugated iron for roofs, glass for windows, and bathroom equipment to their villages. Many also buy radios, tape recorders, cameras and, if electricity is available, TV sets up the steep trails. To earn cash, they export woolen blankets, bamboo mats, ghee (clarified butter) from their water buffaloes, and sometimes sheep, goats, and black working oxen.

The traditional costume for the women is a maroon velvet blouse, and a large cloth which is fastened over one shoulder. A wrap-around skirt, and evidence of wealth in the form of valuable jewelry of coral, turquoise, amber, gold, and silver, plus many yards of narrower cloth wrapped around the waist, complete the picture. Money, keys and various useful items, even eggs, may be wrapped into the waist cloth, so a slender waist is hidden under the clothing. A cotton cloth is usually tied around the head. Shoes have become common now, but in the early days most went barefoot, and those who had shoes carried them so they would not get worn out on the trail, and just put them on when they arrived in Pokhara.

Men and boys wear a white wrap-around skirt, held on by a money belt. A shirt and Nepali cap are sufficient in warm weather. A cloth woven from nettle fibers, crossed over the shoulders and tied, makes it possible to carry things in the resulting large pouches on each side. Every man and boy needs a felted rain cape made of goat wool to keep himself dry in the monsoon rains and warm in the winter. This cape is like an envelope sewed on two sides which can be hung over the head in the rain, and lets the arms be free. More and more men are wearing western-style jackets and trousers, and girls may wear a full skirt and carry a shoulder bag instead of wrapping yards of cloth around their waists.
The men who joined the army used to retire after 15-20 years of service and continue their old traditional ways in the village, without running water or sanitation. Those within the influence of the Annapurna Conservation Area Project now make a special effort to get running water and latrines in their villages.

Now that communication and prospects in Pokhara have improved, it is possible to save enough money to build a house there and also invest in a business if one serves with the Gurkhas. Because of their contacts with the western world while serving in the army, Gurungs have become aware of the value of education and learning English. Most send their daughters, as well as their sons, to school. Many now have built new modern houses in Pokhara to take advantage of the English-medium schools for their children.

When the Rana Prime Minister, Jang Bahadur, offered the services of Gurkha soldiers to Queen Victoria’s government, he could not have realized how important this source of income and contact with the outer world would become to the hill people of Nepal. The name Gurkha originally referred to the soldiers of Prithwi Narayan Shah’s army, which united the small kingdoms of Nepal. They came from the hill kingdom of Gorkha (Gurkha). Later, the British began to call all Nepalis Gurkhas, and even the Nepali language was known as Gorkhali. Today Gurkha refers to professional soldiers from Nepal, regardless of ethnic backgrounds, who serve in the British or Indian armies.

Gurkhas fought bravely in both world wars, and many lost their lives for causes not their own. With the independence of India the Gurkha regiments were divided, and some became fighting units for India. The British Gurkhas were for some years based in Malaya, and later in Hong Kong, from where they served in England, Brunei, and the Falkland Islands. Many thousands have served but, in 1997, when Hong Kong ceases to be a colony, the British Gurkhas will be reduced to some 2500, based mainly in England.
The Indian army has helped with the welfare of their ex-servicemen and their dependents living in Nepal in many ways. Such projects include The Soldier's Board High School in Pokhara, as well as the original hospital in Pokhara which has since been expanded by the Nepal government and is now the regional hospital. The British have also helped look after the welfare of those who have served them so well.

Since those who have served in the British Gurkhas are still quite young when they retire from the service, it has been necessary to retrain them for civilian life, and help those who were incapacitated in the military to make a living. Lumle Agricultural Center, just north of Pokhara, for many years helped the Gurkhas to get back into farming with the best seeds and animal breeds.

In 1968 the philanthropic Kadoorie family of Hong Kong agreed to allow Gurkhas to attend agricultural courses while still serving in Hong Kong. Over 6,000 Gurkhas have benefited from courses at the Kadoorie farm in Hong Kong, and more receive added benefits from the help given by the Kadoories in Nepal. The Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association (KAAA), which was founded to help destitute refugees in Hong Kong in 1951, has assisted those in need all over the world. After 1983 Lt. Col. Langlands, well known in Pokhara for his work in Lumle, became a full-time representative for channeling KAAA projects to British Gurkhas in Nepal. Their policy has been to help those who are prepared to help themselves. The projects include about twelve bridges and twenty water systems a year, plus irrigation channels, schools, and dispensaries. There have been many other organizations providing aid for similar things in the Annapurna Region, but the amount provided by the Kadoorie brothers to the Gurkhas is exceptional. By 1994 over £7,000,000 had been donated to help their communities.

In the spring of 1967, when we all thought I was leaving Nepal for good, I was given a Gurung costume as a parting gift.
Before an assembled faculty and student body, I told them in my imperfect Nepali that I was now a Gurung, little realizing at that time how often I would return, and how close my ties would grow with my Nepali family and friends, especially the Gurungs.

My closer experience with the Gurungs began with Chandra Prasad Gurung, my former Geography student and later College Librarian, and his sister Laxmi, who started living at my house on the P.N. Campus in the fall of 1973. The next year, at the end of my third term with the Peace Corps, I took Chandra to the United States, where he spent six months studying at Colorado College and traveling around the United States. He then spent another six months traveling overland back to Nepal via Europe and the Middle East. When Chandra returned to Pokhara in May of 1975, he moved in with my neighbor, Shayam, then College Librarian. When I went with Chandra and Laxmi for a visit to their village of Siklis, his family, and all the inhabitants welcomed me as his godmother. In that way Chandra became my son, and heir. Among the Gurungs, women lacking children often adopt a son from a family that has several boys, as it is not considered good to be without a son.

On Christmas of that same year I gained a daughter too, because Laxmi told me she had decided to give herself to me. “I will never marry, but will devote my life to taking care of you”, she said.

I was amazed and assured her that she didn’t need to avoid marriage. Then I thought about what I would do if she were truly my daughter. She had been having trouble with her hearing, so I took her to an ear specialist. He found that she had an 80% hearing loss due to ruptured eardrums from childhood infections. It would be possible to restore, or at least improve her hearing, if she could have operations to give her new eardrums. My old neighbors, Mik and John, now back in England, volunteered to see that she got the operations in England, if I
would get her there. In the summer of 1976 I took Laxmi to England, where we were met by Mik and John.

They persuaded the British socialized medicine authorities that Laxmi represented the Gurungs, who had been fighting as British Gurkhas, and thus she deserved this treatment. It took a year and about five operations, but Laxmi regained perfect hearing in one ear. She was able to stay with a missionary family in London at the time of her operations. Between operations, she stayed with Sandra, a British volunteer who had lived with me in Pokhara, and took classes in English with other foreign students. When she returned to Nepal, she was able to speak excellent English.

Laxmi had been inspired by her experience in England to become a nurse or “barefoot doctor” so she could do something for her village. The barefoot doctor program was for those who had only a little education in high school, and Laxmi had already completed a year of college work, so she was advised to take nurses’ training instead.

She and a good friend decided to start training together, but they were separated and placed in different hospitals. Laxmi was assigned to the Government Hospital where classes were in Nepali, while her friend was placed in the hospital established by the missionaries where instruction was in English. Chandra and I tried in vain to get the two girls in the same hospital, where they could study and be together. Laxmi’s friend soon dropped out because she had trouble understanding English. Laxmi stuck with her studies and, in her second year, was assigned to work on the floor because the Government Hospital was short of trained nurses. Shortly after that, she complained of a cough, and of not being able to gain weight. She was told that she just had a cold. Chandra was concerned, and asked the US Embassy doctor to examine her. He found that she had tuberculosis. They immediately admitted her to the Mission Hospital, but she died of a hemorrhage within two weeks of being diagnosed.
Weaving mat in Mirsa

Siklis villagers come to shotput contest
Cooking rice for housewarming

Many gurungs bought land in Chitwan when malaria was controlled
Traditional gurung kitchen, no chimney so smoke preserves meat and timbers but harms the eyes

ACAP type stove with chimney in Ghandruk
Celebrating 84th birthday of a grandmother in Garchok
Celebrating 84th birthday of a grandmother in Garchok

Chautara built and trees planted in her honour
Barley harvest.
Triumphant entry of Chandra to his village of Siklis with his Doctor's degree in Geography.
Triumphant entry of Chandra to his village of Siklis with his Doctor’s degree in Geography
Dr. Chandra and his parents in Siklis
MUSICIANS, BEGGARS, AND OUTCASTES

Before there were newspapers and magazines to tell about events, the wandering minstrel or bard went from place to place singing about battles and acts of bravery. Almost every culture has had these singing newscasters from earliest times until the newspapers and radio slowly replaced them.

Tradition tells us that in the period of the 24 Kingdoms of ancient Nepal, each ruler had his own bards attached to his court. In this way events were remembered in song, and brave men given credit. The bards, although untouchable Gaines, were nevertheless greatly valued and honored. Occasionally a Brahmin or a Chhetri who had been cast into the untouchable group became a bard or troubadour. In Pokhara, they followed the court when the Kaski ruler moved from his summer residence on Kaski Ridge at Sarangkot to his winter residence in Batulechaur. The Gaines were given enough land for a house and kitchen garden near the king’s winter residence in exchange for their
songs, which often praised the ruler, immortalizing him and his deeds.

The Rajput family which came from north India to rule from Kaski Ridge later moved to Gorkha Hill where Prithwi Narayan Shah was born. When this leader set out from Gorkha to conquer the independent kingdoms to form a united Nepal, he was probably followed by the best of his Gaines troubadours. Descendants of the Gaines who had settled in Batulechaur are still living there today near the ruins of the winter palace. Here they have stayed, where they had built their picturesque red houses with thatched roofs. They make a living by singing ballads and fishing, and when they cannot earn enough to support their families, begging is too often their lot. Even today we find them making and selling their little violins, and singing “Frere Jacques” or “Tenzing Conquers Mt. Everest” to tourists for whatever they can get.

Composing songs and singing extemporaneous verses have long been a tradition among Nepalis in general. Those who are working together in the rice paddies amuse themselves by singing as they work, making joking remarks or rude comments about each other in song. Singing songs makes many kinds of work go faster, and not seem so hard. Many a laugh can also be had at the expense of some passer-by or member of the work crew.

Among Gurungs and Tamangs especially, there is a tradition of boy-girl flirtation songs. Usually one group helps the boy sing a verse praising the girl, while another helps the girl reply. Sometimes this leads to marriage when the girl’s group is unable to, or decides not to, continue verses to refuse the boy’s suit.

But these singers do not try to earn their livings from music. Other musicians earn their livings as tailors. When there is a wedding or special event they bring out their horns and drums to lead the processions with haunting flourishes and commanding
marches. How can people who play such haunting tunes and sing such clever songs be called untouchable?

Others who are classed with the untouchables are sweepers, butchers, shoemakers, or anyone who works with leather. That the dirty jobs have been assigned to a certain group of people, who are told that this is hereditary and that they must do the work they were born to do, is one of the unfair tricks of history. In the Middle Ages in Europe, the eldest son often had to follow his father’s trade, but most countries have grown away from this, as education has become available to all and job mobility has become possible.

Slavery kept people in disagreeable jobs, with little or nothing to call their own. in many parts of the world. It was abolished by law in Nepal in the 1930s. I, as an American am distressed with the idea that any human being is considered untouchable. We tend to forget that our country, founded on the noble ideal, “all men are created equal,” had slavery for almost a hundred years after its beginning. It took a bloody civil war which almost destroyed our country to abolish slavery. Today we are still fighting to end discrimination on the basis of race, religion, and sex.

The many changes I have seen in over thirty years in Pohkara include government legislation to outlaw class distinctions. The Nepalis have achieved this without a war. Traditions are hard to change, but the first step has been taken.
Damai (tailors) lead the wedding processions with a flourish of trumpets.

The bride being carried to groom's house.
Porters on way to Siklis
Carrying straw up from thrasing floor

Weaving mat with straw
Studying on porch above buffalo
Transplanting rice

Rice harvest
Ploughing for winter wheat

Brahmin farming community in Pokhara valley
Electricity in villages bring TV often

There are still some Brahmin round houses
Celebrating brother's day during Dashara festival

Brahmin and Chhetri boys in sacred thread ceremony
Signs urge family planning
Newari Bel fruit marriage

Newari marriage to the sun
Wedding band led by Damai (tailors)

Damai (tailors) at work
When we first came to Nepal in the Peace Corps we Americans couldn’t tell the castes apart. Volunteers often hired an “untouchable” as a cook, sometimes deliberately, to show that we considered everyone to be equal. Then we found that our high-caste friends didn’t care to eat with us. The missionaries, US Embassy, and USAID families were usually more careful not to hire an “untouchable” cook. Brahmins, being the top priestly caste, could cook for everyone, but according to their caste rules, strict Brahmins shouldn’t eat buffalo, chicken, pork, or eggs, and should avoid alcohol. Eating beef is taboo in Nepal, as the cow is sacred.

The “twice-born” high castes who wear the sacred thread include Brahmins and Chhetris. The Chhetris, the second-highest caste, are traditional warriors. The Rana prime ministers and king would traditionally be considered part of this caste, although called Thakuris rather than Chhetris to show that they were the ruling caste. Although Brahmins are the priests and gurus, or religious teachers, many around Pokhara are simple farmers, as are over 80% of Nepal’s population regardless of caste or ethnic group. Many from both groups became landowners, money-lenders, and government officials.

Brahmins and Chhetris are an Aryan people. These two high castes come from the south and west and speak Nepali, a Sansritic language related to Hindi of India. It is an Indo-European language which shows a common origin of peoples and cultures from Europe, through the Middle East to India. Many of the low castes, called “untouchables”, the blacksmiths, shoemakers, and tailors, also have Aryan features but often darker skins. Skin color does not indicate caste, so there is often
only the name to show a person’s origin or trade, and that can be changed to “Nepali” these days, if one wishes to get away from the caste label.

Brahmin religious teachers have been educated in Sanskrit schools, and are well-versed in the most ancient religious literature in the world. Priests have been trained to conduct religious ceremonies which are important at birth, marriage, and death, as well as on many other occasions. These give stability, meaning, and continuity to life. Minor ceremonies and Hindu holidays can be taken care of by the women, or the head of the household, without calling a priest in.

Boys are initiated into Brahmin or Chhetri society when they come of age. From that time on, they wear a sacred thread over the left shoulder which reminds them, and others, of their position in society. This initiation used to require years of serving as an apprentice to a Guru in order to learn the sacred teachings. Now the past tradition is condensed into a single ceremony. The head is shaved except for a single lock, and the initiate wears the white or yellow garb of a religious follower. He then carries a staff and begging bowl, in which he receives symbolic offerings from friends and family. The guru whispers sacred words from the ancient holy books to each boy. From then on the boy wears the sacred thread next to his body, and never removes it except to replace it with a new one. The initiation is over in a few hours, instead of years.

If the lists of teachers and professors at the campuses and university are studied with a critical eye, we will find that Brahmins, Chhetris, and Newars are in the majority. This is not surprising, as these are the groups with a tradition of learning. Others are gradually entering the ranks as they earn higher degrees.

Brahmin girls used to be married as children, not sent to school. It was felt that, since girls enter their husband’s homes as children, it should be up to the mother-in-law to train them. Child
marriages are now illegal, although still found in isolated communities. Since, in the 1990s, there is more of a demand for educated wives who can earn money and help support the family, more Brahmin and Chhetri girls are now getting higher education, as has been the tradition with Newars for some time.

Newars are the traditional businessmen as well as artisans of the cities in Nepal. As they generally live by the joint family system and have large households, they help each other to start new branches of their businesses in other towns. They were the original inhabitants of Kathmandu Valley. Their origin is obscure, but they seem to combine the best features of the Mongol and Aryan races. There have been some very talented artists and craftsmen in this group who carried their skills, such as building pagodas, into Tibet, China, and Japan. Metalwork, woodcarving, and scholastic achievement have been in evidence wherever the Newars have settled, and Pokhara is no exception.

When I first came to Pokhara there were a number of home metal-working factories using the lost wax method to cast bronze vessels. Most of these have now given up, as they could not compete with the inexpensive plastic and aluminum containers imported from India and now also made in Nepal. Most of the businesses in Pokhara are still run by Newars, although Thakalis, Gurungs, and Indians are competing.

Many Newars are Hindus, so numerous occupational castes are represented within their ethnic group. They have their own priests, or may use the Brahmin priests. Both Buddhist and Hindu Newars worship at the same temples. Newars enjoy living together in towns; and even the farmers prefer to live in small villages. However, relatively few Newars are farmers, except in the Kathmandu Valley.

The Newars would have preferred Newari to be the national language of Nepal, but the Gurkha invaders in the eighteenth century spoke Nepali. This Indo-European language is easier to learn than Newari, a Tibeto-Burmese language. Many of
the conquered ethnic groups lost their traditional languages as they became part of Nepal. However, the Newars, like many other groups, prefer to speak their own language in their homes.

One of their interesting traditions comes from the days of the Moslem invasions. Since their daughters were very pretty, they were likely to be snatched as concubines by the ruling invaders. The Newaris made their daughters less desirable by having them be already married to the Bel fruit, representing the God Narayan. In this way, because they were still married to the god, the girls would never become widows, and need not burn to death as a sati on a mortal husband’s funeral pyre. Many other traditions are practiced which hold the Newars together. In Pokhara, they make an important contribution to the life of the town as well as the campus.
Mountain-climbing expeditions first called the world's attention to Nepal. The reading public knew about Pokhara's Annapurna mountain before any tourists had been allowed to visit Nepal, because they read Maurice Herzog's book about the 1950 French Expedition to the top of this first 8,000 meter peak to be climbed. Nepal was barely out from under the rule of the Rana Prime Ministers, and was just beginning to open its doors to visitors, and permit a few of its own citizens to travel and study abroad, when the British Expedition put Tenzing and Hillary on top of Mt. Everest in 1953. This event has been followed by an ever-increasing number of expeditions to the Himalayas by groups from many different countries. In the spring of 1992, 32 climbers reached the summit of Everest in a single day, and 55 reached the top in a single week, with 12 expeditions waiting at base camp. The first Nepali woman, Pasang Lhamu Sherpa, successfully reached the summit in that same week, but died during the descent. Many other mountaineers and their Sherpa helpers have lost their lives on the peaks of Nepal. Unpredictable storms and avalanches make mountaineering dangerous.

Expeditions to the Annapurnas or Dhaulagiris have usually used Pokhara as a starting point. In the early days the founders of Shining Hospital always had the latest information about these climbs. Expeditions kept in touch and often arranged for mail or additional porters through the hospital or the Himalayan Hotel at the airport. As many as 200 to 700 porters might be required for a major expedition, and this meant that porters from other parts of Nepal, as well as the high-altitude
Sherpas, entered the Pokhara area to get these jobs, which might last two or three months.

Trekking through the mountains has also increased gradually, until today it is a major part of the Tourist Industry, a very important part of Nepal’s economy. Most of the more popular treks start from Pokhara, since the high mountains are reached quickly and there is a variety of beautiful scenery within a week of walking. By the late 1980s over 40,000 trekkers were coming from all over the world to the Annapurna region each year. Porters, tents, hotels, and restaurants are needed for trekking, so it has brought jobs and opportunities for many Nepalis.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, before tourism and trekking had grown so important, economy travelers discovered Nepal. Because it was a poor country, prices were very low. At that time eggs were 30 paise each; a rice meal was two or three rupees; oranges were five or more for a rupee; and a porter could be hired for ten rupees a day. (a rupee equaled ten cents). There were very few restaurants and hotels, but many of the local people were willing to keep paying guests in their homes. If the travelers brought their own sleeping bags they were charged only for meals, and slept on mats placed on the floor after everyone had eaten. A few householders, with a practical eye for business, added beds in a separate room or dormitory, and even supplied soft mattresses as foam pads became available. With these improvements, they could charge for sleeping as well as for meals.

Travelers and tourists created a demand for a variety of vegetables, and introduced the restaurant owners to many popular foreign recipes. Around the lake in Pokhara where local people had always enjoyed picnicking, the visitors formed partnerships with local Nepalis, and some remarkable restaurants were built, so that the offerings became quite cosmopolitan.
Once the charm of living near the lake had been discovered, hotels of various price ranges began to proliferate. The simple dugout boats were gradually replaced by more modern wooden ones constructed at the fisheries with Australian assistance. Fortunately, motor boats are not yet used on Fewa Lake.

During the late 60s and early 70s, many young people, disenchanted with materialistic life-styles and the Vietnam War, began traveling as “hippies” to the beauty spots of the world, especially Nepal. Young Americans were joined by hundreds from Western Europe, Japan, Canada, and Australia in the search for meaning in life. Drugs were readily available in Nepal, and so were ashrams where they could study Hinduism and Buddhism to expand the mind and drop out of materialistic western society. Nepal and Goa, India, became major hippie centers of the world. During the 70s foreigners would often be stopped by Nepalis around the lake and offered drugs for sale. Crime, which had not been much in evidence before, became more commonplace and solitary trekking became dangerous.

In Nepal drugs are no longer sold openly, and most of the hard drug users and hippies have disappeared. Drugs have become a problem for the educated unemployed among the Nepalis, however, as their culture is slowly being eroded by contact with outsiders.

In Pokhara, a prosperous middle class is evident today, which was not possible before Pokhara was discovered by travelers from other countries. In fact, Pokhara has become the trekking and tourist center of Nepal. Now, in the 1990s, almost 300,000 tourists are coming every year, with about a third of this number from neighboring India. After India, the United States, Great Britain, Germany, France, and Japan have provided the most tourists. Italy, Australia, Spain, the Netherlands, and Switzerland follow in numbers, and groups are also coming from Israel, Hong Kong, Poland, and Singapore. Pokhara has become
truly cosmopolitan at Fewa Lake and along the trekking trails, but it is still possible to get away from the main tourist centers and discover the beauty and serenity of the countryside, and the villages where people still live as they have lived for generations.

(above) First man to rent boats on Fewa lake in 1960s.
(below) Early dugouts and empty shore of Fewa lake.
Usual view of Fishtail from Pokhara

The Fishtail shows when it is seen from the west
Often teashop provides welcome rest
Two views of Annapurna IV and II
Some trails are ledges overhanging rivers
Rhododendrons and heavily trimmed Oak tree at Ghorepani

ACAP office at Ghorepani pass
Rhododendron in full bloom

Small hotel in Rhododendron forest
Nilgiri Peak as seen from Tatopani

Decorated lead mule
When I tell someone that I came to Pokhara in 1963 and have spent most of the last thirty years here, nine times out of ten they say; “You must have seen a lot of changes.”

Then I have to recite all the things I can think of, keeping in mind what it says on the ACAP T-shirts:

“Nepal is here to change you - not for you to change it”

Fortunately the magnificent mountain views remain the same from Pokhara! The weather patterns are unchanged, but there is enough variety in the weather to keep it as a good topic of conversation, and the change in the seasons is stimulating. There is the cold, dry winter without freezing. At the end of winter in February rain makes the mountains white with snow. Then comes the warm spring, when rhododendrons bloom in the hills. Pokhara gets progressively warmer until it is uncomfortable. Flowering trees drop their leaves and produce flowers in February and March. By April and May it is almost unbearably hot on many days, and the heat haze often mars the view of the mountains, although the weather may be perfect higher up. At this time pre-monsoon rains come, sometimes with violent winds and billowing clouds.

In late May or June, by the time the rains settle into the monsoon pattern of milder, more steady showers afternoons and nights, the brown hills and dry fields have turned a brilliant green. At first the monsoon weather is a welcome change but, as the season wears on, mold and mosquitoes wear one down and floods, landslides, and slippery trails make trekking difficult, if not downright dangerous.
Dasain Holidays in October mark the end of the rains and the start of the clear, pleasantly cool, dry season. Then, trekkers arrive like migrating birds. Some flowers are blooming in Pokhara in every month of the year, and there is always a variety of birds.

The seasons vary but remain predictable so, what changes have I seen?

In general, the changes that have become evident all over the world with the pressure of population increases have also affected Pokhara. These changes in Pokhara have brought improvement in living standards, making life easier for many Nepalis, but there have also been some unfortunate side-effects.

In the 1970s roads were built to the Indian border and to Kathmandu. Restful grassy lanes with shady trees were often replaced with paved streets bringing traffic with noise, heat, and exhaust fumes. Tin roofs gradually replaced the picturesque but inflammable thatch. These in turn are being replaced by flat cement roofs, especially if a building is going up another story.

Earlier, in the 1960s, malaria control made it safer for more people to live in Pokhara. People then began to build houses in the lower end of the valley, where the road comes in from Kathmandu.

New schools, public offices, modern houses, and simple factories are going up all over, on former fields and pastures. Cows and other grazing animals have less public land to graze in, and many join the pigs and dogs in the streets, where paper and cardboard are eaten along with less savory things.

At first, modern houses were built with the idea that they could be rented to rich foreigners associated with aid projects. Now, the many English-medium schools have attracted villagers to build second houses in Pokhara so their children can get good educations and learn English.

Forests on the hills above Batulechaur and Hyangia have been cut to provide lumber, firewood, and fodder. Continued
grazing in the cutover forests, repeated burning and quarrying, have combined to keep the hill bare just before the Tibetan Camp in Hyangia, but fencing has protected the hill closer to Pokhara. A number of agencies have also helped villagers around Batulechaur and on Sarangkot Ridge to make new plantings from nursery stocks of fast-growing trees, useful for fodder and firewood.

Oranges, which had been abundant and extremely cheap, disappeared for almost 20 years. A virus disease, accidentally brought in with trees introduced to improve the stock, killed almost all the orange trees in the valley. Many more had to be destroyed to get rid of the disease. Most oranges on sale still come from India or outside the valley, but local oranges are becoming available again, at last.

Signs were not in use when over 90% of the people were illiterate and people did not earn enough to buy many things. Now, with better education possibilities, more job opportunities with new government offices, and the building boom, signs and billboards are everywhere. Loudspeakers on cars announce the latest movies or political events, and singing commercials praise different soaps, toothpastes, noodles, cigarettes, and beer. By the 1980s video came, followed by live TV from local stations and now, in the 1990s, satellites and cables bring in stations from India, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and BBC from England, complete with advertising, sex and violence. People who used to be considered quite poor now suddenly have enough money to invest in television sets. They still prefer the Nepali-language programs, and some very fine educational and entertainment films have been produced by the police department and various other government offices as well as by a new film industry, with some very attractive and talented stars and singers.

When the road to Kathmandu was finished, air fares became ten times as expensive, and people who used to get there
in less than an hour now take the better part of a day going by bus for almost as much as they used to pay to fly.

It used to be difficult to find a hotel or restaurant if one wished to dine out, but the advent of the tourist and economy-minded world traveler changed that. Now inexpensive and middle class hotels and restaurants compete for customers at Fewa Lake. The variety of food offered amazes anyone who had lived in Pokhara during the 1960s.

Long walks to the airport or lake used to be interesting but tiring. Now buses and taxis are available and, if shared, relatively reasonable.

When electricity became available in the late 1970s, street lights came in, and a number of new movie houses replaced the single old building. We used to wait a long time to get our color prints, because they had to be sent out of the country to be developed. Now color prints can be made cheaper and faster in Pokhara than at many places in the western world.

Education and travel tend to break down caste barriers faster than laws. Foreign assistance has made it easier for Nepalis to be educated overseas. When students return, they no longer adhere to the strict caste regulations. New job opportunities make it possible for people of the less privileged castes to move up and make money. Anyone can change their last name to "Nepali" and so rid themselves of their caste label and be free from the old restrictions of birth. Society is becoming more mobile, with education and ability being recognized as well as birth and family connections.

It is still especially difficult for the humbler castes to get the travel and education which would give them upward mobility. One way to gain opportunities has been contacts with tourists. When a tourist is favorably impressed with a Nepali s/he sometimes pays for further travel or education.

As in many places in the world, waste collects faster than it can be disposed of. One of the signs of a prosperous society is
many stores with many kinds of things for sale. Unfortunately, these goods are packaged in many wrappers and, unless people have proper places to dispose of the wrappers, they are thrown on the ground to collect. Clean drinking water in plastic bottles can be bought along the trails, as well as in the cities. This relieves travelers of the necessity of boiling water, or using chemicals to make it safe to drink. However, the same plastic bottles add to the debris along the trails and lakeshore.

An international agency is studying the deterioration of Fewa Lake, as hotels and shops proliferate along the shore. We took the beauty of the lake for granted when I first arrived in 1963. It was a place to go for picnics, boating, swimming, and bathing. There were no hotels at that time, just a camping place and the winter palace of the royal family. The King and Queen usually came for extended stays in the winters, when Pokhara was at its best and Kathmandu was enshrouded in morning fog. Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip were entertained at the royal residence by the lake in 1960. A steamroller was flown in to fix the road to the lake for this royal visit. It could still be seen at the airport when I came in 1963. We looked forward to the King’s visits, as they meant that roads would be repaired, and the people might get to view of the royal family.

In the early 1970s the dam to raise the level of Fewa Lake broke. Much of the water drained out, and there was no regular electricity in Pokhara for over a year. When the water level was low, interesting limestone formations were revealed and we were able to walk on them to the island in the middle of the lake. Several years later a new dam was built, raising the water level again and making it possible to generate electricity at the powerhouse below the dam.

Pokhara has been growing at an unbelievably fast rate since I first saw it in 1962. The population was then about 10,000 for the entire valley. By 1971 it had doubled in size, and by 1981, according to the National Planning Commission, the population
was 46,642. It is one of the fastest-growing cities in Nepal and, by 1991, had close on 90,000 people.

The necessity for conservation is finally being recognized. The importance of preserving the bio-diversity of virgin forests as well as making new plantations growing trees as crops, are now major concerns. Under the aegis of the Annapurna Conservation Project, schoolchildren are cleaning up the trails. Efforts by ACAP are also being extended into Pokhara via education and example to encourage the residents to keep their city clean. The natural beauty of its mountain setting, and its beautiful flowering trees and gardens, have long made Pokhara a sought-after destination for visitors.

*Kathmandu - Pokhara bridge fall into karst gorge.*
Winter teashop for nepali travellers of 60s

Restaurants are now made for trekkers
Building a new house in Pokhara
New style houses in Pokhara
Old Pokhara - no cars, signs or electricity

People now can read books and signs
Pokhara street in 1960s

Same street in 1990 - paved for traffic
Bagh bazaar street in 1960s

Same street 20 years later
Banyan tree at Fewa lake

Ducks raised at Fewa fishery
Early hotel at Fewa lake

Sail boats and washing
Large modern hotel at Fewa lake

Boating remains popular
Fruit juices is popular with tourist at lakeside

Oranges are again grown in Pokhara Valley
Early shops at Fewa lake

Signs direct tourists at lake
Airport teashops were moved to the bus depo

Open air restaurant at lake
Pokhara valley farm house with bamboo

Mountain views add charm to Pokhara
Old Pokhara still lives in the country side
Annapurna South

Water ouzel in rushing river
PEACE CORPS
Washington 25, D. C.
April 12, 1962

Miss Dorothy Mierow
1511 West Kiowa Street
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Dear Miss Mierow:

I am happy to inform you that you have been chosen to participate in the training program for the Peace Corps Project described in the enclosed brochure.

Please reply to this invitation as soon as possible, and in any case within two weeks, so that if you are not available we may extend a similar invitation to another well-qualified Peace Corps applicant. An Invitation Acceptance Form and a prepaid envelope are enclosed, as are other forms which should be completed and returned if you accept the invitation. I am sure you will do well in training; however, I must remind you that no one is finally selected for Peace Corps service overseas until the successful completion of training.

Sincerely,
Robert Sargent Shriver, Jr.
Director
October 29, 1962      Kathmandu, Nepal

Tonight little oil lamps are burning in all the windows and on some of the door-steps and roofs. The shops are open and lighted as they display special cakes and candies. Cows and bulls have been walking around the streets with flower leis and pink spots or tikas on their foreheads. Yesterday the dogs had the leis and tikas, as they and the crows were being honored. Today, however, honored Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, and the cow. This festival of lights is quite Christmas-like in effect. Little bands play music and children go around shooting fireworks and singing at houses for coins.

Three of us, living together, have been very fortunate in having Bina, the 15 year-old daughter of Madan Tapalia, our Nepali language teacher who was in Washington and Colorado, living with us to help us shop and cook. We in turn give her time for school and studies and helped her to learn English. This afternoon, we walked around the Siva Temple area by the river in the quiet woods full of monkeys. Afterwards, we sat on the floor at Madan’s house and ate rice, vegetables, and fruit in yogurt with our fingers. Shoes are left outside the door and the cooking is usually done on the top floor. (Only the poorest families use the first floor because it gets so cold and damp). Hands are washed with warm water and soap in a brass dish before and after eating. The windows usually have bars and blinds, but no screens or glass, and people sleep under mosquito-nets during the rainy season.

Our house is sort of a mixture, for it looks like a broken-down Georgian mansion. Our fellow apartment-dwellers include Indians, Tibetans, and Nepalis as well as the owner’s mother, son, and daughter. The owner was a former cabinet Minister whose politics did not agree with the king, so he has been in jail with the other cabinet members for over a year. We have a large room and two small ones (one labeled, “waiting room”). There is
also a real flush-toilet that doesn’t work, and a faucet with running water. We cook on two little kerosene stoves set on boxes on the side porch (which we hope to get screened eventually) and have access to a large walled-in flower garden. All houses are protected against snakes by little pictures of them above the doors. Also connected with the house are a bakery, laundry, and vegetable garden. Cows graze on the front lawn and children put little offerings of flower-petals and rice on the front steps. From 6:30 A.M. we hear the boys reciting their lessons aloud at the corner school.

Bina and I get up about then and walk to the Swiss Dairy for milk and butter. We shop for kerosene, vegetables, fruit, rice, spices and eggs on the way home. The meat has seemed too full of flies and a startling sight at the butcher’s, with the animal’s head and hooves placed beside it (usually goat or water buffalo), so we have been vegetarians. On our return, we find breakfast prepared by either Lulu or Barbara, and the other does the dishes. We cook in a big brass pot and keep our boiled water in an earthen vessel. No ice box, so we shop every day.

When we are not celebrating some holiday or the other, we teach school. So far there have been more holidays than teaching days, but perhaps that will change.

The students rise when the teacher enters or leaves the room and when their name or number is pronounced at roll call, at which time they say “yes, sir”. At other times they have been reluctant to speak much, so it is difficult to discover how much of our lectures are understood. Since most cannot afford text-books (one of mine cost me 70 rupees) and those in the College Library are locked up in glass cases mainly for faculty use, (my Economic Geography texts are 20 years old), I hope I can get enough across to them to make it possible for them to pass their Cambridge-style two-year examinations. (Over 50% usually flunk). The books I airfreighted from Colorado would bring some of the facts more up to date, but have not arrived yet.
There are lovely, distressing, and amusing things to be seen every time we go out. Children run after us calling “bye-bye” as we go down various narrow streets. We must walk in the middle and watch our step, for pans of water and garbage come down from above. Men, women, children, dogs, and cows are completely uninhibited in the street, so we must watch what we step on. On the other hand, the snowy Himalayas on the Tibetan border sometimes stand out in clear detail, or the foothills may barely show above the mists of the valley. A window may be pushed open in the early morning and a Moslem hold his hands out in prayer. Temple bells are rung and people usually meet us with smiles and gentleness. Tibetan herders are now shearing sturdy, longhaired goats in the streets, and the hill people are bringing their baskets of lichen, wood, or wool to trade in the bazaars for cloth or rice. They may camp around the temples.

November 1, 1962    Kathmandu, Nepal

The day before yesterday was brother’s day so all sisters, dressed in red with flowers in their hair, put red and yellow tikas on their brother’s foreheads and gave them sweets. Men of all ages wore leis and had the day free to play games.

A group of us were able to take a trip on narrow roads (over rice spread out to dry on the road in the sun) beyond Bhatgaon. From there, we climbed the 8,000 ft. Nagarkot to get a good view of the Himalayas, from Annapurna to the Everest area. Kathmandu is only a little over 4,000 ft., and the surrounding foothills hide most of the high mountains. The hills are all terraced for rice, and little villages are found on the highest ridges (to escape the malaria according to some--like the hill towns of Italy). High on the ridge we found a little four-seat, wooden ferris wheel being pushed around and ridden by brothers of all ages. They invited us to join them, so we had a great time. The daughter of the owner of the Royal Hotel said that she was glad that the Peace Corps had finally found its “little niche”. After
leaving this group we found girls swinging, then took a little dip in a mountain stream. Arriving after dark at Bhatgaon, we found that the bus back to Kathmandu was an open truck.

As a result of some indiscreet eating, yesterday was spent recovering at home while a painter worked on the walls like the Sorcerer’s Apprentice. Once started, our Nepali was not good enough to direct or stop him, so he came back today and will return tomorrow to whitewash not just one room, but all our walls. Since he gets paid only 4 or 5 rupees for a day’s work, and must work very hard grinding up the lime with mortar and pestle and boiling up a flour paste to mix with it, we don’t begrudge him the complete job. He has now turned into a carpenter-cum-bricklayer and is working hard at screening in our side porch. (There are between 7 and 8 rupees to the dollar and we are paid 350 rupees a month plus our house rent). The four of us can live on ten rupees’ worth of food a day, but a meal for one at a hotel costs at least 11 rupees. The American Ambassador and his wife have invited all the Peace Corps members located in the Kathmandu area for Thanksgiving dinner. We use a different calendar, which puts us in the month of Kartik in the 21st century and Saturday, not Sunday, is our free day; but the people are basically the same as us and delightful to get to know better.

For the New Year, I wish you all the peace and serenity of the Nepalese and hope that perhaps the Nepalese will gain a little of our dissatisfaction, which leads to progress. For a better understanding of Hinduism and the spirit of these people I recommend reading the Ramayana, by C. Rajagopalachari, published in India as a paperback by Bhavan’s Book University, Bombay 400 007, India.

I am sorry not to add a personal wish in each letter, but the difficulty of mailing from Kathmandu prevents this. Perhaps, in time, I can answer a few of the most pressing questions with postcards. Mail here is a luxury like heat, books, bathrooms, pure water and so on.
March 4, 1963   Kathmandu, Nepal

So much has been going on since I last wrote, that I can't even remember when I last wrote. (The fuses blew twice since I started but now, an hour and a half later, the lights are on again). One really shouldn't plan to do anything except go to bed in the evenings here. The days are another thing, however, and I seem to keep very busy in spite of having festivals and closed schools half the time. My most active period of teaching came during the two winter months when the schools closed because of lack of heating. At that time USAID and the College of Education sponsored a winter workshop for the teachers and I was asked to help with intensive training for the General Science teachers. The government is gradually changing all the schools into "multipurpose schools" to give vocational and Science training, and so is gradually training teachers for the new schools, which will also help break the caste system down by encouraging everyone to do all kinds of work with their hands. They searched the country and found eight teachers who would be teaching General Science in converted schools, and then three Nepali teachers and I taught them six days a week from ten to four, with lectures and laboratory work. Since the mornings were cold and foggy until 10:30 or 11:00 our classes were late in starting but, by the end of the two months, the group had quite an interesting group of models and laboratory equipment, which they had prepared in class, to show government officials. They had also prepared a curriculum (table of contents for textbooks) for general science as they thought it should be taught in the 6th, 7th and 8th grades. I got quite involved in this textbook-writing project and haven't gotten unwound yet. Naturally I think that I know best what should be taught the children about General Science in Nepal but, being an unimpressive foreigner, I will probably be completely ignored in the final opus. I would like the children to know something about public health, conservation
(the trees are going fast and so is the soil), and learn the names of some of their common birds, trees, and flowers. They are more impressed with electricity, airplanes, and cell structure.

Before starting my Geography teaching at Tri-Chandra College again, three of us spent a week at Pokhara, where we got a beautiful view of the Annapurna range and were warmed in the slightly warmer weather found a thousand feet lower than Kathmandu’s 4,000 foot elevation. We ate in a Tibetan restaurant, visited a Tibetan Refugee camp, and took a three day “trek” along a ridge where we saw interesting oval houses and got good views of the high mountains. The UN Red Cross is moving out of Nepal, so we are all hoping that Switzerland will continue to run the camps for the Tibetan refugees. Nepal cannot officially recognize the fact that there are refugees because it would annoy Red China. India is very suspicious of its Tibetan population and refugees because there may be Red Chinese spies in the group. In fact, India has cut down on shipments of kerosene, iron and so on to Nepal because they are afraid they might be shipped on to Tibet and used against them. This affects everyone and makes people pretty mad at India, and want to open trade with Pakistan or Red China, so that these scarce items can be obtained and work continued. Packages which come to Nepal through India are being opened and stolen from. One Fulbright family here had their trunks opened after passing through the Indian customs and $3,000 worth of clothes stolen. Goodness knows why they brought so much valuable stuff with them! (All our things came through in good shape).

August 1, 1963  Kathmandu, Nepal

This is a very discouraging season in Nepal. There are weevils in the macaroni, flour, and beans, mold on the books, shoes, and clothes, and I am covered with bites; flea, mosquito, and bedbug. Besides this the rain has turned our streets into vast mud-holes so we have more than the usual dirt and sickness.
During the summer there are always outbreaks of smallpox, cholera, and dysentery among the Nepalis while the European community may get infectious hepatitis and the usual occasional worms and weekly diarrhea. Willie Unsoeld, besides having to wait for his frozen toes to drop off (from his Everest climb), now also has hepatitis, and so has used up all of his leave and sickness allowance (as our Peace Corps Director). Now that I have gotten these cheerful little earfuls out of the way, I will tell you what I’ve been doing.

In the middle of June, Lulu moved into a room in the middle of the Bazaar area so that she wouldn’t have to wade through our muddy street to the college, and would have more reliable water and electricity for next year. Several boys came into Kathmandu from the hot Terai region for the monsoon and needed places to stay, so Nick Cibrario and his artistic Nepali friend, Lal moved into Lulu’s room and have been having their meals with me. Nick and Lal have been working mornings and evenings at the orphanage, where there are 50 boys who need this little extra attention. Lal attends art school during the day, since we were lucky enough to discover the school and get him admitted with prospects of a four-year scholarship. Nick, Bernie Snoeyer, and I have a workshop at the house during the day and make school charts and write chapters for General Science for the schools, if they will have them.

I teach Geography in my spare time. The whole Department of Geography, second and fourth year students, went on a trek for six days at the beginning of July. We carried our own sleeping equipment, but had porters to carry the food; rice, *dal*, potatoes, eggplant, onions, tomatoes, tea, and spices. There were 50 of us in all, so it was an impressive group. The system of meals here is different, so we generally had tea and arrowroot biscuits when we got up. We would walk until 10:00 a.m. and then have a big rice and spicy vegetable meal. They eat much bigger portions than we are accustomed to at home, since the
food is not as rich. By noon, we would start on again, perhaps stop for tea around 4:00 p.m., and have another big rice and vegetable meal in the evening between 8 and 10 p.m., whenever it was cooked.

Except for the evening meal, all others may be shifted around or left out entirely if convenient.

We climbed from 4,000’ above sea level in Kathmandu to the top of the foothills to the north (over 8,000’), then went down into the valley on the other side, which is around 2,000’ and quite warm. We didn’t spend the night in the valley, but at a village just above the malaria mosquito level. People were very hospitable to us, and let us sleep in houses, a school, a shop, or deserted buildings each night, which was good, since it usually rains at night. It was not as rainy during those days, so we got very few leeches. It was the bedbugs that got us a couple of nights! I had 40 bites on one foot and ankle alone. Professor Malla would stop and talk about the regions as we went along. The boys would often help myself and the seven girls with our loads. In the evenings, they would sometimes sing or dance. Just the boys would do the Nepali dances. Sometimes we would tell stories after we were settled for the night. One night they asked me:

“Tell us some of the myths of your religion. Tell us about Helen of Troy.”

So I told them about Helen of Troy.

I had not become accustomed to eating curry as hot as they served it, so they often left all flavoring out of my food and then it was too bland.

In order to keep my slides from getting moldy, I have been having frequent shows at home and at the American Library. It is also my last chance before I leave Kathmandu for Pokhara, where there is no electricity. I showed them all in eight mornings to both my Geography class and the orphans. The orphans also came here two nights, as did the children from
Barbara’s “Happy Free School”. Barbara started about three different little schools in various places before being transferred to Dhankuta in eastern Nepal last week. There, she is taking the place of one of the married Peace Corps girls, who is expecting a baby and, consequently, shouldn’t be so isolated.

I spent this past week-end at the Mission to the Lepers. The Indian doctor drove me out Thursday afternoon. The only Westerner on the staff is a nurse from Australia with whom I stayed. I spent all day Friday with the women (about 15) helping them make designs on pillowcases and table covers for embroidery. Saturday I spent with the men, sketching and water-coloring in the morning, and clay modeling in the afternoon. In the evening I showed my color slides in a crowded bedroom, since the rain drove us in from the porch. We returned on Sunday on the regular Kansas-type mud roads, made more interesting by landslides. The lack of fingers and toes didn’t bother me at all after seeing Willie Unsoeld’s frozen toes. One man who had walked into the clinic with a hand swollen to three times its normal size with gangrene really looked bad. Three men were dismissed to go home and started out to walk the 13 miles on Saturday afternoon about 5:00 p.m. on their just-healed feet. Most of the patients live at home (some several days journey by foot) and come in every three months or so for a supply of medicine. One woman was carried in by the grandmother, accompanied by the little daughter and son, all lepers. I asked for a stuffed animal for my services, and gave it to the little girl, who was so worried about her mother that she could hardly keep from crying. Her fingers were too bad to sew.

We are now planning a trek with a couple here from Kansas on a Fulbright to Gosaikund Lake at 17,000’, so I must pack. Hope we can make it. This is just between my jobs, as I am also packing for my move to Pokhara.
October 18, 1963  Prithwi Narayan College  Pokhara, Nepal

The monsoon rains are finally ending in a series of violent thunderstorms. The mountains stand out clear and beautiful again mornings and evenings, and rice is being harvested. A few months ago, the dirty, muddy streets, rowdy "dead-end kids" of the big city, biting bugs, and mold creeping over everything, plus chronic stomach complaints, made me feel I couldn’t take this life any longer, but now I live in the little town of Pokhara and teach in Pokhara College.

Pokhara is a town of almost 5,000 people, strung for several miles along one of the main routes to Tibet. It is only a little over 3,000’ high and so is quite tropical in its aspect, which is made beautiful by the proximity of the Annapurna Range, which rises to around 25,000’. Since we are in a fertile valley surrounded by foothills, a walk in almost any direction can be delightful. A two-day walk would take us to the snows. There is a small Mission Hospital here where I have been eating once or twice a day. There is also a Leper Hospital and Tibetan Refugee Camp started by the Red Cross, and now run by the Swiss. With winter approaching, more Tibetans are appearing in town, often with pack horses or donkeys. Some have been carrying large boxes of powdered milk, donated by the people of the USA, to the camp from the airport.

We are about a ten-day walk from Kathmandu, five days walk from a road near the Indian border, and about nine days walk from Mustang and the Tibetan border. Since Pokhara has an airport and planes can land on clear days, we are not really as isolated as this sounds. Several jeeps were even brought in by plane, so important officials are jolted over the cobble-stone streets in style! There is no electricity, and the transportation problems make many items scarce and expensive. The bazaar is small and, aside from cotton cloth, brass pots, (cast locally) and miscellaneous small Variety Store types of things, there isn’t
much to buy. Kathmandu was rich in foods and vegetables compared with Pokhara. The main foods on the market are rice, cornmeal, split peas or beans, squash, eggplant, tiny tomatoes, potatoes, onions, and I think the cauliflower season is coming. I eat bananas almost every day and have enjoyed ripe pineapples. They are about finished now, so I am looking forward to the tangerines for which Pokhara is famous. My diet is more varied since I started eating at the hospital, so food is interesting and February 6, 1996 no longer a problem. I eat a Nepali meal with some of the faculty of the college twice a week and can eat one at home, prepared by my landlord’s family, when I don’t feel like going out.

I live in an apartment house in the upper bazaar about a mile and a half from the other five Peace Corps members located in Pokhara. This is very convenient for me, however, as it is close to the college and hospital. My room is on the third floor and has a small balcony with a fine view of the mountains. There is a little Nepali-style stove in a fireplace with which I can cook, although I have been using a little kerosene pressure stove since it is quicker. My floor and walls are neatly prepared from mud and cowdung. The fibers in the dung keep the dust down.

The Peace Corps provided me with a water filter from India, and this has attracted great attention all around. Even the Domestic Science class from the MultiPurpose High School came over to see how it works. I gave them a little demonstration on how to make pineapple-coconut jam while they were here, and sealed it with melted candle-wax. I no longer have any plumbing problems. We have an outhouse in the backyard, and water is carried from the public pump. My district is also named the laundry district, so my wash is collected and done practically across the street.

I am really a sort of a museum. The landlord brings all kinds of people in to see how I live and count my shoes and dresses. They express amazement at my books, pictures, tin oven,
Nepali dolls from Kathmandu (children here have no dolls and practically no other toys except kites), screened food shelves and curtained closet. When I entertain, we sit on the floor and eat rice, \textit{dal}, and hot curry Nepali style with our right hands, washing before and after the meal. We sit on little throw rugs provided by the landlord along with the meal, which is served on many little plates placed on a tablecloth, set on the floor.

I teach Geography and English at P.N. College in Pokhara. This is a struggling little private college established a few years ago, when some of the local businessmen decided that the teachers from the surrounding schools should have an opportunity to earn college degrees while teaching. They invited an Indian Christian from Kerala Province in India, who had been teaching in Kathmandu, to serve as Principal and develop the College. Classes are held between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in thatched bamboo huts with mud floors. The students are thus free to walk, often several miles, to their own schools where they teach during the day. A stone classroom building is gradually rising on the campus, and students and faculty have been planting trees and building the stone walls up to keep the cows, horses, and water buffaloes out, which graze on the campus and eat the thatch off the huts.

Since one of the rooms in the new building is to be a museum and there is a desire to start a Biology Department as well as continue with Geography, I have been asked to stay for two more years to get these things started and better established. I have agreed to do this since I think this college is developing with very fine prospects and ideals. First, however, I hope to spend next summer and fall in Colorado sharing what I have learned and collecting useful things for the college in Pokhara.

\textbf{November 3, 1963 \quad Pokhara, Nepal}

I have just returned from a two-week trek to Muktinath, a famous pilgrimage spot 13,000' up on the north side of
Annapurna. Here blue flames of natural gas rise by some springs of water and Tibetan shrines have been built, which are visited every year at this time by hundreds of bare-foot pilgrims from all over Nepal. Mr. John, the Principal of the college, and I took the Geography class as far as Tato Pani (hot springs) for their Geography field trip, and then we continued with the pilgrims to the sacred place in the dry and windy high country which resembles Colorado and Death Valley, California, except for its Tibetan inhabitants. The flat-roofed villages resemble southwestern American Indian villages and their inhabitants live mainly on the Tibetan salt trade. We met many flocks of goats carrying bags of salt on their backs. We carried our own packs and ate at the houses where we stayed along the way. (When one pays for an evening meal, he has the right to spend the night on the floor in the sleeping bag or bedding he has brought, at no extra cost). Nepali custom is to have two rice meals a day, and drink tea with much milk and sugar upon rising and whenever one gets tired and comes upon a tea house during the day. A small vegetable dish with lots of red pepper makes one eat much rice and drink lots of water to calm the mouth. Sometimes we even found red pepper in the tea!

Wherever we went, Mr. John asked the children we met whether they went to school and who their teacher was. The teacher or headmaster was frequently a former student from Pokhara College. Six days to the north, two different villages had former students from the college in charge of their schools. Seven days north, there were no schools for the predominantly Tibetan population of six or more medieval-looking villages. Armed Khampa tribesmen from Tibet were much in evidence among the yaks and yellow-leafed cottonwood trees of autumn. Thin ice was on the pools of water, but the pilgrims bathed bravely in the sacred waters. We returned slightly flea- and bedbug-bitten, but full of new discoveries. The Geography students are now writing up the reports of their trip - in English.
I have been able to send my reports of Nepal to you because Dorothy Wing and Marjorie Davis volunteered to get copies of my letters duplicated, and have been mailing them from Colorado for me. Postage from here would have been prohibitive, although I am sorry to deprive you of a Nepalese stamp and personal message.

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year!

Christmas, 1965

Prithwi Narayan College
Pokhara, Nepal

This year, as the Christmas season approaches, peace and goodwill are not, perhaps, as evident in this troubled world. Perhaps that is more the way it was on that first Christmas night, when a new hope was born into the world.

Whatever I say about political conditions and wars in this area will be changed by the time you receive this Christmas letter, so let’s pretend that I live in an isolated “Shangri La” and try to ignore world affairs and their real or imagined effects on us. This has not been hard to do so far, because we lack television and daily papers, and the radio news is vague and conflicting. On the other hand, we are totally immersed in our education and building program and it is hard not to feel happy and optimistic about the future. Luckily, I was able to enjoy a month’s vacation looking at animals in East Africa before travel in or out of Nepal became difficult, so I am healthy, well-fed, and content to be where I am.

I have 20 Geography students in the first year class and six in the second year, preparing for their IA Examination. The college has increased to about 125 students in all, and the foundation for a new Science building is now being dug all around my house. Since I am being encircled by Science, I must obviously move from my lovely little red house. Fortunately, the college is making provision for me by building a slightly larger house with a guest room and two porches, with views toward the mountains and Seti Gorge respectively. The house will not be as
picturesque, since the roof will be tin instead of thatch, but there should be less danger from fire and rats. The location is very lovely, however, and out of the way of future college expansion threats.

I am again able to have one meal a day at the hospital, so I get some western type food as well as my curry and rice with the three Peace Corps boys, now living near the college, or Tibetan mo-mos and potato curry in the bazaar. I have plenty of spare time to read or paint, so life is leisurely and relatively uncluttered.

But the greatest joy and satisfaction I have had since my return to Nepal has been from the building of a museum-library in memory of my parents. Here, where a little will go a long way, it has been possible to feel like a wealthy benefactor with the money saved by father for the family’s education and now available for the education of others. I think father would be quite pleased with this use of his money because he loved books, felt the urge of the pioneer spirit, and desired to make education possible for others in this world. He would have loved to be in on the founding of a new college, and to be able to plan a library. Several hundred of the books to be in the museum-library came from his collection and were carefully selected to be of use for students in Nepal. Many other books have been donated by his friends for this library, so it is now almost half as large as father’s personal library was. The museum part is to satisfy my own inclinations, and was thought of when I found how little diversion there was for the people of Pokhara, and how very interested those who visited my room were in looking at everything I had there. It is part of the University requirements for the college, too, that it should have a Geography and Biology museum.

The museum building is small but, I believe, adequate for some time ahead. I have tried to design it in harmony with Nepali architecture and decorate it with some of the art of the best artists or woodcarvers so as to encourage them and inspire others. Posts
holding up the porch roof were carved to represent the various peoples of Nepal in typical costume. The door was carved by a local wood-carver and has typical birds of Nepal around it. Inside are ten roof-support carvings (too nice to be used as roof supports) designed by an artist and retired director of the National Museum in Kathmandu, Mr. C. M. Maskey. They represent the four great living religions, and “Great Moralists” in wood. They were carved very skillfully by the best wood carvers in Patan. The building has three rooms: the library, facing south to get winter warmth and light; the exhibition room with high windows except on the north, where there are large windows for the view of the magnificent Annapurna range, and a smaller workroom which can be used by our newly-formed Woman’s Club, as well as other groups or classes who like to do more artistic or handicraft activities. Perhaps schoolteachers can prepare teaching aids here that would be useful in their classes.

Building construction in a place like Nepal can be very interesting and educational. We went to the woods to see the contractor felling the trees, then watched the logs sawed by hand into beams and boards. We also visited the nearby spot where lime is dug and prepared in open fires. The floor stones are flat-cut slabs of granite, gneiss, and shist from the river bed. The walls are of field stones, some white with fair-sized tourmaline crystals, and the roof is of mica slate, some imbedded with small garnets. Depending on the work, the number of day laborers for the different jobs changes. At one time there were 60 or 70 working at once, but now there is just the roof, plastering of the inside walls, and putting glass in the windows to complete. The workers have often stopped at my house for mercurochrome and aspirins, or to rest and look at stereoscope pictures and postcards during their tea break, and so many have had a preview of the doll collection to go on exhibit when the museum is completed in November or December.
So you see what pleasure I have had, and many of you can feel that this is a part of you, too, represented in the Pokhara Valley of Nepal for, without your help and encouragement, this might never have come about.

Thank you - Merry Christmas to all - and may the New Year prove a happy one.

Christmas, 1966 Prithwi Narayan College Pokhara, Nepal

Merry Christmas from Nepal again, but for the last time as a Peace Corps Volunteer. I am not sure where I will be after my term is over in late January, but anything addressed in care of Colorado College, Colorado Springs, will be forwarded to me. I do plan to spend the summer at my cabin in Crystola, Colorado.

We are gradually getting the Pokhara Museum in shape for its official opening sometime before I leave. Spare funds went toward building a few simple cases and to place wire along the walls to make it easy to hang various types of exhibits at different levels. For the opening, we plan to show the paintings of a prominent Nepali artist, depicting traditional scenes of Nepal. We are trying to get an appropriate government official to do the honors. A young Englishman teaching in the new Mission Boarding School near Pokhara has made a fine collection of local butterflies which can be protected and displayed in ten glass-topped drawers built in one of the cases. Dr. Bob Flemming of the Mission Hospital in Kathmandu donated some local bird skins. I hope to sketch some Nepali animals on the walls (it's easier than stuffing them, cheaper, and kinder to the animals). One of the faculty wives is making dolls in Nepali costumes, and the Ladies Club has been working on marionettes, puppets, and a simple stage for small plays, both new for Pokhara. A visiting UNESCO representative was interested in the possibilities of using the museum to supplement the teaching of Science in
Western Nepal, and indicated that they might support its development.

Meanwhile, I have continued my work in Geography. All of my second class managed to pass their Geography in the final examinations held in Kathmandu, and we are now hoping that the third group will be as fortunate. During the summer, I had thought that I was going to be sent to Germany for an operation, but I had improved so much by then that we gave up the whole idea and I spent my time in Kathmandu working on a Geography project instead. This involved planning a workshop for high school teachers of Geography, with a committee of geographers from the University and Teachers’ College. We became quite inspired and decided that the teachers would be great assets if they toured quite a bit of Nepal during their workshop and this would also be beneficial to their collecting materials for a more detailed Geography text on Nepal. I then planned my two-week Dasain vacation of October to cover the Everest region of our projected Geography tour. Several other Peace Corps Volunteers and I chartered the ten-passenger Twin Pioneer Plane with another party and flew to Lukla, 9,000 ft. up in the vicinity of Namche Bazaar. From here we walked to Namche Bazaar, Thangboche, and various summer yak grazing pastures, finally reaching the Base Camp on Mt. Everest at almost 18,000 ft. on the Khumjung Glacier. The skies were clear most of the time and there were autumn leaves and lovely fall flowers; monkshood, everlasting, gentians and edelweiss. We ate potatoes and a great deal of yak milk, butter, and cheese. Our guide was Pemba Tensing, who has been on many expeditions, and reached 27,000 ft. on the American Everest Expedition. He and his wife entertained us at their home in Khumjung, where we visited the schools and hospital being built by the legendary mountaineer, Edmund Hillary. At Thangboche Monastery another Sherpa of climbing fame, Dawa Tensing, entertained us at his house and told us stories of the Abominable Snowman while the large
prayer-wheel revolved and the monks blew horns at the monastery across the field of grazing yaks. As soon as the sun went behind the mountains it became very cold, so I realized that if we sent the Geography teachers here on trek without proper warm clothing they might easily became “frozen assets.” Since the Geography Workshop will not take place this year, there is time to revise plans.

This trek fulfilled, at long last, my dreams of getting closer to Everest with its Sherpas, yaks, and yetis. We slept at 12,000’ or above for ten nights, and I was pleased to find many rocks, trees, and flowers similar to those found in Colorado, as well as the new exotic types more common at lower altitudes. Instead of sacrificing goats and buffaloes, as in much of the rest of Nepal around Dasain, the Buddhist Sherpas added prayer flags to the high places, made rice models of stupas, and celebrated by dancing and drinking chang with the neighbors. We joined the dance but couldn’t keep up with the chang drinking. At 9 PM, boys with lit torches led groups to their homes. We had the floor to sleep on, almost three hours after our regular bedtime. One goes to bed very early when it is cold. We purchased small Tibetan Apso puppies and carried them along the trail, for four days, to the small airport. Our three porters fed them chewed boiled potatoes as they do with their own babies, and my puppy is now a member of the Peace Corps Doctor’s family, perhaps eating meat, a rare thing for a dog in Nepal.

Kathmandu seemed like a very busy place after our stay in the mountains. Even Pokhara has electric poles going up, and the Indians have almost finished the road to India. Soon the Chinese will start work on the road from here to Kathmandu. Another couple of years should show great changes here. Perhaps I can come back for a visit then. Want to join a tour?

With best of wishes for the New Year.

Christmas Greetings! 1971 Pokhara, Nepal
You haven’t heard the last from Nepal yet. Last spring, when my teaching was finished at the college, I stayed on to prepare maps on cows and goats and make plans for the future of the museum. I was interested in teaching natural history and promoting conservation through museum exhibits, and was encouraged to submit my plans to USAID for possible support. With visions of earnings as much as $700 a month, I became quite enthusiastic and visited practically all of the various aid missions and government offices in Kathmandu.

I finally realized that I was still basically Peace Corps material and would be lucky to earn even $70 a month. Sure enough, the Peace Corps was willing to take me back, so now I may not be rich in money, but am free to develop my own museum for the next two years in Pokhara.

Since there was no need to travel around the world now to look for a suitable job, I took April and May to trek around Dhaulagiri and travelled west to Jumla and Rara Lake in order to learn more about the natural history of Nepal. Two Tibetans, a Sherpa, and I were able to join the Austrian Dhaulagiri II Expedition and so went over the passes to the north and northwest with their 70 porters. Once in the dry valley between Dhaulagiri and the Tibetan Plateau, we left the large party to get their peak climbed and spent a month walking to isolated Jumla and Rara Lake to get pictures of the flowers, people and house types. We met many yaks, and sheep and goats carrying packs with grain or salt for trade; and the rhododendrons and primroses were in full bloom. I felt like a very grand one-woman expedition as I was extremely well-cared for by my companions. They carried the loads, cooked the meals, and made arrangements for spending the nights at various houses along the way. We lived on local foods, largely millet, barley, corn, or tsampa gruel, or pancakes with eggs or potatoes and salt tea. Honey, brown sugar, walnuts, and chicken, goat, or yak meat were occasional luxuries.
We had to give up an 18,000 ft. pass in a blizzard, but otherwise met with remarkably good weather in a year when an early monsoon caused most mountain-climbing expeditions to turn back without attaining their goals. We crossed and recrossed 13,000 ft. and 14,000 ft. passes ten times. On our return we met two Japanese with their Sherpa guide and porters. Since they offered to share their tent with us, we were all able to get back around Dhaulagiri over a 19,000 ft. pass and spent two nights at a height of about 17,000 ft. in freezing cold. Most of our other nights were spent in people’s houses, so I learned much about the life of the people in this largely Tibetan-speaking part of Nepal.

Incidentally the languages used as we continued back to Pokhara together were interesting. The Japanese spoke to each other in Japanese and to me and their Sherpa in bad English or Nepali. I also spoke bad Nepali to everyone when the English got too bad. When my Nepali got too bad, my Sherpa would translate to the others in Tibetan. I did learn a few good Tibetan words and phrases, which generally got a laugh.

This walking and eating simple “health foods” is great for those who would like to reduce. I came back to Colorado 25 lbs. lighter than when I left a year and a half ago. (Of course a spell of colitis helped, too). I have now gained 15 lbs. and am in great shape to return and walk another 400 miles or so to learn more about Nepal’s natural history.

May the New Year bring peace and understanding.

January 7, 1972  Pokhara, Nepal

Now I am back in Pokhara, just in time for student elections and the confusion that comes with them. The museum got through the monsoon rains in good shape. A gardener has been hired, and there is now a formal garden behind the museum. I get to plan the other sides for next spring.

Aside from being a little moldy and damp, my house is in good shape too. The back yard is a mass of zinnias and banana
trees. The former are past their prime unfortunately. The jackals howled outside my window the first night and, just now, one trotted past my front steps as if he owned the place. I am eating with the Johns for the first month at least, then I plan to add a kitchen to my house. (It will cost $150 to $200) I am to get $65 a month and all the benefits of the Peace Corps; so I will do this instead of paying rent. The Johns now have a small car, an Austin.

I have seen many of my friends and things seem much as I left them. The new plans for education are quite a change and include making the colleges a little more like those in America. The road to Kathmandu is still closed and they are working on the electricity, so it’s more like the “old days”

November 15, 1973   Tribhuvan University, P.N. Campus, Pokhara, Nepal

Another Merry Christmas from Nepal!

I really did not expect to be here again, eleven years after I first came with the Peace Corps, but I was given a final extension of six months beyond my third two-year term. (That will make a total of 8 years in Nepal.) Next May I really will come back, so if you will just solve all those Watergate, Viet Nam and Middle East problems, I will leave my “Hippie Haven” in Nepal and get back to work.

By May I should see the completion of at least two or three maps to identify Nepali mammals, trees, and birds, and even have one or two small books in print.

When I come, I hope to bring Chandra Prasad Gurung, the College Librarian who has just passed his BA, so that he can visit a few places in America and hopefully be able to get a scholarship to study anthropology. There are more foreign anthropologists in Nepal than almost anywhere in the world, so we decided that a Gurung with training could study the Gurungs better than the foreigners, and might be better able to help them
as well. We would like to travel across the US visiting places along the way in May and June, and will bring slides. Then we will spend the summer in Colorado and perhaps he could do some summer school courses. After this? I also must locate a job, so things may be a bit tight for a while.

Since last Christmas I have remained in Nepal, taking treks when not working in Pokhara or Kathmandu. I went into eastern Nepal in the spring and saw a magnificent variety of rhododendrons in flower, also visiting the upper Arun Valley Wildlife Expedition Headquarters. I had a very pleasant monsoon month in the Solu Khumbu region, south of Mt. Everest, with Barbara and her Sherpa family. Although July is quite dismal in Pokhara, the rain at 8,000' in Solu is not so depressing, and the evergreen forests quite delightful. Summer may not be so bad a time to visit Nepal after all. One just has to be patient about plane travel. We waited a week to get out, while others trekked out in the same time. I designed a Sherpa hotel while there, and painted pictures in the Gompa room. Phaphlu is the place to stay when you come for a trek to see Mt. Everest. It’s only a week’s walk away!

This past month has been one for visitors. I have rarely had a night in my house alone. The American School in Kathmandu sent several of their classes to Pokhara for one-or two-week treks. Barbara and the little fourth graders spent their week camped in my yard and I went with them on daily hikes and swims. All went well until we ran into leeches on a moist hill trail—such tears and cries!

This week the King is in Pokhara, so the college is feverishly preparing for a “surprise” visit. Mr. John, our first Principal, was transferred to a smaller college in Baglung and we now have three Campus Chiefs for Commerce, Arts, and Science. I have been busy drawing plans for a new reading room, stacks, and offices or classrooms to be added to the museum-
library which I had designed previously. It is good to be here during this period and be able to take part in the expansion plans. Here's wishing you the best of New Years!

May, 1979  Namche Bazaar, Nepal

With luck, this may reach you by Midsummer's Eve. My book was supposed to be sort of a Christmas greeting, but I fear it got delayed and missed Christmas and the entire trekking season in Nepal. My past year has been spent waiting in uncertainty. But I have been busy and have had some interesting times. The UNICEF maps I did for the schools of Nepal went out of print, so I have redone the three pictorial maps of Nepal's people, animals and birds. I am now working on two new maps to replace the old one on trees, one for the tropical trees of Nepal and the other for the temperate trees of Nepal's mountains.

For the tropical one I spent about ten days in Chitwan, at the Smithsonian Tiger Project and Tiger Tops. It was hot in April but not as bad as I feared and, at last, I saw a tiger in the jungle! The co-author of my book *Wild Animals of Nepal*, Hemanta Mishra, is studying the spotted deer for the Tiger Project, so I stayed with the project members as we went out daily on three elephants to check on the animals (and vegetation for me). We were each dropped off in a tree from the elephant's back and waited there as the beaters and elephants tried to drive spotted deer to be caught in a net, tranquilized, and fitted with a radio transmitter in a collar. Later, all animals with radio collars could be located with a receiving set, so their movements could be followed even if they couldn't be seen.

One day I was sitting in a very flimsy old tree, and a rhino came and looked up at me. Luckily it walked away instead of knocking down the tree. I got a picture on Hemanta's camera, and he filled the frame with an ordinary lens.

On the last day, Hemanta's wife Shushma and I were in neighboring trees close to the net. Soon the beaters started
shouting *bagh* (tiger!), and stopped beating. The elephants trumpeted and rumbled as we climbed higher in our trees and sat very still. Then, suddenly, there was a huge tiger sniffing the net below us. It gave a mighty roar, jumped, and was gone. That night we went to dinner at the Gaida Camp on elephant-back. It’s safer than walking, and we did see a rhino by torchlight, practically in the camp. (Earlier, two were fighting and ran right through our camp, making a great deal of noise.)

In the morning the cars still weren’t running, so I was taken to the bus on an elephant, dismounting like royalty when the elephant arrived an hour later and lay down beside the bus. Now I am in the cold region, wearing my down jacket night and day. I am working on my tree maps in the newly-constructed workroom of the Mt. Everest National Park Visitors’ Centre. If there is time in the next month or two, I may paint some spring flowers and birds for the Centre, as well as complete my maps. The monsoon may make it necessary for me to walk out in late June or early July, hopefully over the 19,000’ Tashi Lapcha Pass.

Anyway, I hope to return to Colorado via Portland, Oregon, in August and would like to stay long enough to rediscover America and work. If I can’t find a job, I still have several possibilities in Nepal.

With lots of love,

**February 5, 1991 Pokhara, Nepal**

Best Wishes for the Easter Season--

I returned to Nepal in the first week of November with a two-year contract with the Annapurna Conservation Area. I am again curator for “my” museum and get to plan and prepare displays as before. There is now a staff of eight all the time at the museum, plus porters and others who work for the project and come or go to Kathmandu, Siklis, Ghandruk, and Luang, as well as one studying the Snow Leopard on the north side of Annapurna on a World Wildlife Fund grant. The Smithsonian
Tiger Project site is now part of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation. Since the museum is also part of that Trust we feel that we are involved in relocating rhinos that have become a problem, and doing some conservation work in the Terai.

A Peace Corps Volunteer has offered to help prepare material that will help teachers explain museum exhibits to school classes. Another nice lady on a grant brought a simple, inexpensive solar cooker and demonstrated how it can be made and used so the villagers can save fuel. Gas, kerosene, and even sugar are in short supply due to world conditions and politics.

Since my return, there have been visitors who signed the book in the museum from Australia, Belgium, Canada, Israel, Ireland, Korea, India, Italy, Germany, Greece, Malaysia, Mexico, Sweden, Holland, Japan, Norway, France, Hong Kong, Great Britain, and the United States. Nepal is no longer as isolated since the advent of TV and, in Kathmandu, the Gulf War invades the screens live and in color. The Pokhara museum is also getting connections. The other day, a radio transmitter was placed in the office and messages were being sent and received from villages in the Annapurna region (Siklis, Ghandruk) almost immediately. Unfortunately, it was on the table near the relatively new phone, so there wasn’t perfect quiet when my “grandson”, Hitman, called to speak to his mother from the Gulf War. Anyway we were all able to get a word in, and he reassured us and told his mother not to worry.

I have just completed a chart describing the more common and dangerous snakes of Nepal. The Library is now furnished and only lacks books. The Video Room is being prepared. Any offers of good Natural History and Conservation books or video tapes will be received gratefully.

I hope that, by the time you receive this, peace will be restored to the world.
There are now 8,000 students studying at the campus, and most are eager to influence the new elections coming up in April.

Christmas 1993 ACAP Box 183, Pokhara, Nepal

Best wishes for the Christmas Season!

During World War II we used to sing: “When the lights come on again all over the world.” Now those words come back to me in Pokhara since the electricity is shut off every other night between 6 and 8 PM. On the other nights it goes off at 8, until 9 PM. This is because of the damage done to the various dams by last summer’s floods. Kathmandu, now on the same grid, shares this problem. Perhaps it will be fixed by the new year, but I suspect they have sold more electric power than they make. Business is good for the candle makers.

I celebrated my birthday with my “grandchildren” by walking up to the Japanese Buddhist temple across the lake. This proved to be more strenuous than I had anticipated, as the downward trail to the lake shore gave out half way, and we had to push our way through dense vegetation around steep cliff-like slopes. I got four leeches on one foot, otherwise no harm done. We got a ride in a boat with a couple of actors making a film for TV on the island and then another boat ride to the shore, where we all ate ice cream cones (21 flavors now!).

I celebrated Tihar, the festival of lights with my family in Pokhara. It is actually a festival of death. The crow, messenger of death is worshipped the first day, followed by the dog, guardian of the underworld of Yama, the god of death, on the second day. On the third day the cow, which will pull the soul across the river in the underworld, is worshipped. Cows and dogs are garlanded. Sisters worship their brothers on the fourth day because the sisters can have power over the god of death, and so prolong life. Flower garlands and a tray of special foods are given to the brothers who give their sisters money or cloth. Worship on the
fifth day is to gain power to meet life’s problems. God is to be found within everyone.

Every house and shop is lighted with candles for three nights to show the way to Laxmi, the goddess of wealth. Groups go from house to house singing to collect money for causes or just for the singers. Some fireworks jar the stillness and take away the Christmas-like atmosphere. This festival comes at the end of the monsoon, at harvest time when cooler weather is starting.

Our Christmas comes just after the shortest day of the year when light and warmth of the sun is returning to northern latitudes. The message of birth and hope, complete with Christmas trees and Santa Claus, means a lot even though there doesn’t seem to be much “peace on earth”

Here’s wishing for more goodwill in the New Year,

Love,

Dorothy
THIRTY YEARS IN POKHARA

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DOROTHY MIEROW - Artist and Author
BA - Carleton College in Natural History
MS - University of Pittsburgh - Biology
MA - University of Minnesota - Geography
Taught geography and curator of museum at Colorado College for seven years before coming to Nepal with group 1 Peace Corps where she has taken long treks over high passes and watched birds and animals as told in this and other books.

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