

This is the log of a trip to India, Nepal and Thailand made in September and October of 1994 by Dennis Gallagher and Sharon Ronsse; husband and wife.

This logbook was transcribed into an electronic version in December of 2025 and the transcription was placed onto my website at: <https://samadhisoft.com/travel-logs/> Where websites could be located. They have been added into the text here. Any text added in 2025 will be italicized to differentiate it from 1994.

---

**1994-09-16 @ 1120 – Leh, Ladakh, India**

Sharon and I arrived here in Leh at 0815 today on a flight from Delhi; India's capital. My original intent was to keep this log daily as we went along; but I've already begun two or three days behind. I'll go back in a moment and begin to catch up.

(see: <https://www.aai.aero/en/airports/leh>) (*Highest commercial airport in India*)

We are at hotel "Kang-La-Chen". We should rest and, other than a short walk, we have been. Our host here at the hotel is "Sonam". We are waiting now for lunch at 1300.

(see: <https://www.hotelkanglhachen.com/index.html>)

Sonam and a Ladakhi woman met us at the Leh airport and, after getting our checked luggage, they drove us to the hotel here. We went through Leh's main street and it looked like it will be fun!

The sign at the airport says it takes 36 hours to adapt to the altitude (10,000+ feet). We both were affected by the change. I was worried about Sharon's heart because it was pulling and fluttering on her, but it seems to have settled down now.

As I sit here, Sharon is on the bed meditating and I can look out the window and see a large white Stupa and a monastery upon the hillside.

Gertraude is not with us. We were supposed to join up with her in Bangkok but we found out that her Thai airline flight from Los Angeles had a problem and was canceled. She hopefully caught a later flight and will catch up to us here in Leh. The current information is that she will arrive tomorrow morning. Sonam says we can move our scheduled activities from the morning to the afternoon and maybe, if she's not too tired, she can join us. She may, however, be very tired and also will not have had time to adjust to the altitude.

So, let's go back now and catch up.

**1994-09-14 @ 1100 – Seattle, Washington USA**

Our trip began on Wednesday morning on the 14th. Our house sitter, Doug, drove us to Seattle's SeaTac Airport where we caught an 1100 flight to Portland. We flew on Delta. In Portland, we boarded

a MD 10 or MD 11 plane (again Delta) and departed at 1300.

Our flight took us to Seoul, Korea. Taipei, Taiwan. And then to Bangkok, Thailand. Then we changed to a Thai Airline flight and flew to Delhi arriving at approximately 0230 on September 15. If I calculated correctly, our flying time from Seattle to Delhi was 23 hours and 30 minutes.

At both both Seoul and in Taipei, we had to leave the plane, take all of our luggage and sit and transit lounges for an hour each time. On the Seoul to Taipei and the Taipei to Bangkok legs, the plane had very few passengers and we were able to stretch out and sleep. So we may have gotten 2 to 4 hours sleep on those flights. The longest flight was 10 hours and it had two movies. “Scam” which was bad and “The Ghost and Mrs. Muir”, which was good.

### **1994-09-15 @ 0230 – New Delhi, India**

The arrival at Delhi was messed up because there was a misunderstanding between Bina Murt at JourneyWorld and her Delhi agent, Rishi Kapoor. This was due to Gertraude's flight being canceled. Because of this, our Delhi airport pick up had also been canceled.

Sharon, in her usual 'get things sorted out' manner, got it sorted out and soon we had a cab ride through 0300 Delhi to **Claridge's Hotel**. Rishi Kapoor was there to meet us and apologized for the error.

We got our room and it was OK. Air-conditioned and a ceiling fan. We tried Sharon's sleep machine on a plug Marked 110 V and it fried the voltage converter. She was *most* unhappy. Between the fan new noise and the toilet that ran all night, she still managed to get some sleep. Indeed, we both slept in until noon.

Claridge's is an English colonial hotel and is fairly nice. It has three or four restaurants and some shops and a bookstore where we bought three books. They were a Berlitz travel guide in Nepal, Ajanta and Ellora and Sikkim and Darjeeling.

(see: <https://www.claridges.com/the-claridges-new-delhi/>)

We ate lunch at the 24 hour “Pickwick” Restaurant in the hotel. The food was OK. I had French onion soup and some roll rolls and coffee.

Between 1300 and 1400, we got an electrician to take Sharon's power converter off to test it and see if it really was fried and we got the toilet repaired.

At 1400 we met our guide and we went off to see a number of things here in Delhi. Our guide has been doing guide work since 1950. He spoke good English and he was a good guide.

We did four things with our guide:

1. We saw the “Kingsway” of New Delhi, where the English established their colonial headquarters. A huge and impressive place.

2. We saw the 16th century garden/mausoleum of the **Mughal Emperor, Humayun**. Quite impressive and we acquired an impromptu guide here for this particular building.  
(see: <https://asi.nic.in/pages/WorldHeritageHumayunTomb>)  
(see: <https://www.htmuseum.org/>)
3. Our guide took us to a stop, not on the itinerary, but which we enjoyed nonetheless. It was a Kashmiri rug outlet "Cottage Industries Exposition Limited." and we were shown some beautiful carpets and some first class salesmanship. We loved one rug and got them down to \$2500 for it. We may go back.
4. And we saw the 13th century **Qutb Minar Tower**, which is 234 feet tall and there was an associated 21 foot high **pure iron pillar**. I think this was my favorite. Almost every stone here has been taken from older Hindu temples.  
(see: <https://www.incredibleindia.gov.in/en/delhi/delhi/qutub-minar>)  
(see: <https://www.istockphoto.com/photos/the-iron-pillar-delhi-india>)

We flew the next morning to Leh and arrived at 0815 on the 16th.

#### **1994-09-17 @ 1120 – Leh, Ladakh, India**

At 1300 we went off to a lunch here in Leh and we were the only diners and they fixed a vegetarian meal for us which was quite good.

In the afternoon of the 17th, Sharon and I walked into town. We probably should've just laid down due to the altitude and adjusted but we were too antsy to do that. Sharon found a large singing bowl and then we really got into it and bought four bowls; in spite of having decided to wait until Nepal.

In the evening of the 17th, we had a buffet style meal here at the hotel; which was excellent. There were a group of 16 rather boisterous English, who ate with us. We went to bed fairly early and then woke at 3 AM or so.

#### **1994-09-18 @ 0600 – Leh, Ladakh, India**

The Muslim called to prayer happens every four hours so we get them at 0200 and 0600. They're beautiful to listen to; though they do wake you up.

On the morning of the 18th, Sunday, I went up to the hotel roof and sat with the camera and binoculars and waited for the sunrise and looked around. Every peak around here seems to have a prayer flag on it. I also saw some little cave buildings that reminded me of a show or a book which described how monks will voluntarily go into one of these caves and be walled up for a specific number of years or for life.

After a while, Sharon came up and we looked around together and walked the edge of the roof and found a large garden with huge cabbages on the east side.

We had a breakfast of tea and coffee and toast with some wonderful cherry jam. I've never had a cherry

jam as good as that.

There was still no information on Gertraude, but Sonam was going to meet the morning flight into Leh which we hoped that she'd be on.

We decided to just sit around and read and etc. until we saw if she came. We had talked to Sonam and rearranged the morning schedule into the afternoon.

I reread the history of Leh and then read some more of **A Journey to Ladakh**. We sat out in the chairs under our window for the last part of the morning waiting for Gertraude to arrive.

(see: [https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/61113.A\\_Journey\\_in\\_Ladakh](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/61113.A_Journey_in_Ladakh))

Just about the time we had given up on Gertraude arriving, because an hour and a half it passed since the flight from Delhi had landed in Leh, she arrived.

There had been a mixup at the airport and she had been left standing while Sonam dealt with the 16 departing English people.

She was rescued by a man with a shop just in front of our hotel.

When we greeted her in the lobby, she was in tears from the long trip and the many frustrations.

She had had her second flight of the trip, from LA to Bangkok, forced to return to Los Angeles with an emergency landing. Once there, again, she was delayed for a day. Then she had to change her routing and went from Bangkok to Bombay to Delhi so that she could make the Delhi to Leh flight.

She managed to do all of this. But her luggage, with most of her stuff, is apparently still in Delhi.

Gertraude was really tired And we got her to lay down for an hour. After that we had tea together and she told us about the trials of her trip. Then we had lunch and then we took off on our first tour. Our guides name was Tashi and he's a 25 year-old Ladakhi; and he's very nice.

We visited two monasteries; **Spituk** and **Phyang** . We were also going to visit a monastery here in Leh but we were so slow visiting the first two that we skipped the last one.

(see: <https://www.tourmyindia.com/states/ladakh/spituk-monsatery.html>)

(see: <https://drikung.org/phyang/>)

Gertraude, of course, had had no sleep and had not adjusted to the altitude and at the first monastery she almost passed out.

All of us found climbing the many steps to be quickly tiring. Sharon's heart is a big worry to me. Of the two monasteries, I found both beautiful but Sharon liked **Spituk** best as it had a special dias that the Dalai Lama sits on when he visits. And when she touched it, she said it had a tremendous amount of energy.

We returned to the hotel after an hour or so of shopping; with Tashi along. During that time, Sharon bought yet another large singing bowl (the second we have now) and Gertraude got a sweater and some gloves.

Dinner was a Chinese buffet by candlelight. The local power was off. Dinner was excellent and the cooks are from southern India and they are good.

We turned in early since there was no light. We both woke up at 0300 and didn't sleep much after that. Sharon's neck was really bothering her.

### **1994-09-19 @ 1920 – Leh, Ladakh, India**

This morning we had breakfast which was really good and then we met Toshi at 0800 in the lobby.

Today was an all day excursion and we went to the **Shey Palace**, to **Hemis Monastery** and then to the **Thiksa Monastery**.

(see: <https://www.lehladakhtourism.com/monasteries-in-ladakh/shey-monastery.html>)

(see: <https://discoverlehladakh.in/hemis-monastery.htm>)

(see: <https://www.lehladakhtourism.com/monasteries-in-ladakh/thiksey-monastery.html>)

We stopped and ate after Hemis. We had packed lunches with us and they were excellent.

I had an interesting talk with Tashi about arranged marriages, and divorces in both our cultures. Also, when he and I were alone, I explained what I do in meditation in response to a question from him.

In the afternoon at **Thiksa**, we did a 20 minute meditation in the main meditation hall. Tashi joined us and a monk, pattered it around in the area as well.

It was for me an intense meditation; after the first 10 minutes. I felt as if I picked up on the local energy a lot. I did the meditation where, after getting the mind quiet, you pour spiritual energy and being through yourself and out into existence. Afterwards, I stayed high for a long time.

Once we were back to the hotel, it was dinner, reading and then bed. I slept well, but Sharon and Gertraude did not.

### **1994-09-20 @ 2145 – Leh, Ladakh, India**

Sharon and I were up by 0600 talking. We meditated from 0645 to 0715. My meditation was really more of a fantasy in which I was imagining that Klaus Hebben (German millionaire I'd met earlier this year) had bankrolled an effort to back up all the monastery books and documents onto CDs. Sharon and I talked about this for a while afterwards.

We met Gertraude for breakfast at 0800 and then we were off for the morning's adventures with Tashi and our driver.

First, we went to the **Stok Palace** Museum which was moderately interesting, but we were not allowed to take photographs.

(see: <https://www.stokpalaceheritage.com/>)

Then we went to the Tibetan refugee camp. We saw some Tibetan women weaving rugs, which cost \$80 and were 3 foot wide. And which sell for almost \$1000 in the US. I gave the women a pack of gum. We were going to see their showroom, but Tashi said that the guy that had the key was gone.

We left and went looking for a steel box into which Sharon and I could stash the loot which we've been buying. We went several places, but then we had to head back to get to the bank and then lunch.

The bank was a major ordeal for Sharon as she encountered two Hindu women in the foreign exchange department who decided, apparently, to make her wait while they gossip and laughed. Sharon thinks they had it in for Caucasian women.

It was decided that Tashi and the driver would return at 1500 for a second run at getting a steel box. I begged off this journey because I wanted to do the climb to the **Leh Gompa** above town.

I did the Leh Gompa climb and it was spectacular and a bit scary at times. I took lots of photos so Sharon could see it all later.

(see: <https://www.thrillophilia.com/attractions/namgyal-tsemo-monastery>)

I found the Gompa was unmanned by monks. There were two groups of tourists there. One German and the other French, I think. The Gompa had two or three locked rooms and the rest of it was falling apart. I climbed to about 3/4 of the Gompa's height, but I couldn't work out how to climb the rest.

Then I worked my way over a saddle to a peak that had two or three poles with prayer flags on the summit. And I sat there and had some water and trail mix and I read [A Journey to Lahdakh](#) for a while.

Then I worked my way down the switchbacks to the **Leh Palace** complex.

(see: <https://www.incredibleindia.gov.in/en/ladakh/leh/leh-palace>)

I'd come up to the Gompa originally on the northwest side of the mountain.

The palace and it's environment were pretty rundown. I paid five rupees to see the Buddha statue and the Sanskrit Books room. But it wasn't nearly as nice as what we've seen in the monasteries.

I climbed around in the palace, and then near the Stupa, and then I began to work my way down into the town.

I came out into the weirdest neighborhood of alleys, tunnels and shops.

I stopped at a Ladakhi store and bought a Shiva statue for 180 rs. And then I bought two yin-yang pendants for 50 rs each. And I got it all for 250 rs.

Then I went into another shop and bought two necklaces and six little Yin-Yang containers. The containers cost 210 rs. And I got the two necklaces in exchange for my gray sweatshirt (\$8), a bag of eight American Saving pens and 100 rs.

Then I went back to the hotel and sat out front until Sharon and Gertraude came back.

Sharon was excited. She and Gertraude had gone to the shop of the Kashmiri who had rescued us at the airport. And there she found a silk rug for \$1200 USD that she wanted.

We went over to look at it and I thought it was nice too. But I wasn't sure of the economics of its affordability or of the logistics of carrying it. We decided to talk about it over dinner.

Also, when they were out, they ordered a steel box to be made with two lock hasps. It would be made of heavy gauge metal and be 37 inches long. It will cost 500 rs. And at 30 rs per US dollar, that means it'll cost us about \$17 USD - not bad.

After dinner, we told the rug man that we'd come over at 0615 in the morning and see if I likes the color of the rug in the daylight.

Then we came back to our rooms and repacked for the next two days because we're going to go to the Lamayuru monastery (127km east of Leh) and camp overnight tomorrow.

And then I sat down and caught these notes up.

### **1994-09-24 @ 1230 – Claridge's Hotel – Delhi, India**

*(There's a gap of three days (21, 22 and 23) at this point in the logbook. We went off to see the Lamayuru Monastery and I recall that it was quite impressive but I didn't seem to make any notes of those events)*

I'm recovering from about a food poisoning that got me last night. Apparently, the result of something I ate on the Leh to Delhi Air India flight.

I was sick twice last night with chills. I ate breakfast with Sharon and Gertraude this morning and I feel better now; just a bit bleached out and tentative.

As a side issue (since I'm on illness as a subject), the plague has struck in its pneumonic form near Bombay. So we have to think about that.

When Sharon and Gertraude went out this morning, they got some Tetracycline from the local pharmacy. This is the appropriate treatment of choice for the plague. So we can dose ourselves with it when we're in the western India area.

I went off to lunch with Gertraude while Sharon stayed in the room. Then Sharon & Gertraude went to the “**Red Fort**”. Sharon said it wasn't very enjoyable with all the people crowding around like vultures. But Gertraude seemed to like it better.

(see: <https://www.incredibleindia.gov.in/en/delhi/delhi/red-fort>)

They returned with the supply of Tetracycline and then Sharon called the US Embassy and talked to a doctor there regarding the **Serrat Plague**. He said the chances of infection for us were extremely slim so we should not take the Tetracycline, but rather just take it along; in case we needed it.

(see: <https://www.montana.edu/historybug/yersiniaessays/godshen.html>)

Sharon has taken a lie down. She says she's feeling a bit queasy now. So far, Gertraude is fine. I've recovered to the point where I'm feeling hunger again.

I'm going to go back now and recount the last three days to catch this log up. So, let's turn back to the past:

### 1994-09-21 – Leh, Ladakh, India

The big question, as we arose today, had to deal with the carpet that Sharon had shown me at the Kashmiri shop just in front of the hotel. I.e., should we buy it or not?

I lobbied that we should not unless our fortunes changed and she agreed. So we went over and photographed the rug and got the dealers address. We told him, and it was true, that if we had an increase in our fortunes in the next few months, we would have him ship the rug to us COD.

That would cost about \$200 USD so the total cost to us would be about \$400 USD.

After we visited the shop, we had breakfast and then Tashi and the driver met us and we took off.

This next two days we will drive as far as the **Lamayuru Monastery** to the west and visit a number of other monasteries in between. In the evening, we are to stay at the **Uletopko Tent Camp**.

(see: <https://www.eladakhtourism.com/camp-in-uleytokpo.html>)

On the first day of our trip out, the 21st, we are slow. So we only actually see two of the three monasteries. They were **Likir** and **Alchi**.

(see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Likir\\_Monastery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Likir_Monastery))

(see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alchi\\_Monastery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alchi_Monastery))

**Likir** matched with Alicia saw on her vision when talking to Sharon. It was here that we gave most of our school supplies away and then we sat in the monastery's kitchen and talked to three monks while Tashi ate with them.

Then we drove to **Alchi** where the monastery is on the flat. We had box lunches at an outside restaurant and then walked to the monastery.

Tashi told us a story about a monk who stuck a dry walking stick into the ground, and it grew into a tree of a type that no one recognized.

We saw the monastery, which was very old, and then went to the tent camp.

At the camp, Sharon wanted some time alone, so Gertraude and I walked down by the river and talked for more than an hour about religious symbolism and Buddhism and her deceased husband, Urbain.

After dinner, when everyone had gone to bed, Sharon and I took the binoculars down to the river and sat watching the stars and the nearly full moon and hoping a UFO would grace us.

### 1994-09-22 – West of Leh, Ladakh, India

Up for breakfast and then off to the **Lamayuru Monastery**. These were some of the wildest mountain roads I've ever been on. Lamayuru was a spectacular place. Very large, scenic, old and isolated.

(see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lamayuru\\_Monastery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lamayuru_Monastery))

Sharon took the camera and shot most of our pictures of the monastery.

We met two Belgian's working on a contract for the German government. They had been there 3 1/2 months mapping the Gompa from top to bottom.

I gave a half a bag of trail mix to a monk and he took us into the kitchen and gave us some of the famous butter tea. Sharon and I both took a sip and then poured ours into Tashi and Gertraude's cups.

On our way out, we met an old man who is 84. He wanted to race Gertraude to show us how strong he was. He was really funny and spry.

Then we drove back to the monastery just just before our tent camp. Its name was **Rizhong Monastery**.

(see: <https://www.lehladakhindia.com/rizong-gompa/>)

It was a 2 km climb to get up to it so Gertraude stayed behind with the driver while Tasha went ahead of us. Sharon and I proceeded slowly. I recall that she held onto my belt as we slowly ascended.

Rizhong was at the upper part of the valley facing south. They had quite a few solar cell panels there charging batteries connected to the lights. Someone had gifted them, apparently.

We walked back down and drove back to the tented camp for a late lunch.

And then we then drove back in Leh where we stopped to pick up our newly made 500 rs iron box

before returning to the hotel. We had dinner then and went to sleep.

**1994-09-23 – Leh, Ladakh, India → Delhi, India**

We were up early this morning, packed and prepared for the airport.

We had paid Toshi \$65 and the driver \$25 the night before. At breakfast, we tipped our waiter \$9.

There were a was a lot of questions as to whether we would be able to get on the Leh to Delhi flight because we were waitlisted. But, in the end, we did fly out about noon.

Security delay was overwhelming. Two body searches and a long standing in line. All luggage was checked and then identified prior to boarding.

Tashi was at the airport for something and came over and talked with me for over an hour while I stood in the line to go into the waiting lounge. I really like him.

The flight was uneventful, except that I ate an Air India airline sandwich, which made me sick that evening.

When we landed in Delhi, we waited almost 40 minutes to get our luggage. And then the Sita representative met us, and we drove over to the international terminal to try to reclaim Gertraude's lost bag. And that took another hour until we did.

And then we left for Claridge's hotel. Just about the time we arrived at the hotel. I began to feel quite weird. And that night I was sick twice and had strong chills.

**1994-09-24 – 1930 – Claridge's Hotel, Delhi, India**

We had two planned excursions today. I stayed here for both of them.

Sharon and Gertraude went to the "Red Fort" in the morning.

In the afternoon, Sharon began to feel weird just as I was recovering. So Gertraude did the afternoon trip by herself.

I spent most of the day reading and watching CNN international, the BBC and the Asian Star network. This evening, we've packed up for 0400 departure tomorrow.

**1994-09-25 – 1035 - Aurangabad, India**

(see: <https://aurangabadtourism.in/>)

(note: Aurangabad was renamed as Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar in 2023)

We are at the **Ambassador Hotel** here in Aurangabad. Quite nice!

(see: <https://ambassadorindia.com/ambassador-ajanta-aurangabad/>)

The flight was long with two intermediate stops. We were met on arrival and all of our luggage came through.

Sharon was still ill so the trip wasn't much fun for her. For me, I was just sleepy.

We have free time today until 1400 when we go to see **Ellora**. And tomorrow we go to a **Ajanta**.

Sharon is lying around trying to recover. And I'm going to read or take a nap.

### **1994-09-28 – 2120 – Darjeeling, West Bengal, India**

Once again, I'm several days behind on this logbook.

The last three days were quite tough and I'm glad they're over. This place, Darjeeling, however, is wonderful - so things are definitely looking up.

I'm going to go back now and come forward in time and catch up this logbook.

### **1994-09-25 – Aurangabad, India**

In the afternoon, we went to **Ellora**.

And tomorrow we go to a Ajanta, which is about 30 minutes from our hotel in Aurangabad.

Our guides name is Mustafa and he's a Muslim. He's been a guide for 15 years in this area and he's married with two girls; 10 and six.

**Ellora** is a complex of caves created from the sixth to the ninth or 10th century A.D. First the Buddhist were involved and then the Hindus - they overlapped quite a bit. And then the Jains.

(see: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/243/>)

(see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellora\\_Caves](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellora_Caves))

The most impressive was the Kailasa Temple, which was different from the others in that it was not a cave cut into the cliff face, but rather an entire temple which stands alone and which was revealed when the builders cut straight down from the cliff top. It is the largest of its kind in the world.

On the way back, we visited a small copy of the Taj Mahal. And then in another place we saw something called the water wheel, which was an engineering project designed by a Sufi.

It carries water 8 miles to a place where the water then drives a millstone and then pours into a pond so the people had both a source of food and water.

Forgot to mention earlier that **Ellora** has been in continuous use since the caves were created. This is in

contrast to **Ajanta** where the caves were Buddhist only and were lost in the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. for 1200 years until an English tiger hunter discovered them in 1819.

Sharon and I were both feeling a bit off today.

### 1994-09-26 – Aurangabad, India

We got a fairly early start today to go to the **Ajanta Caves**. It is a 2 hour drive out there. Another two hours plus for the visit and then a 2 hour drive back.

(see: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/242/>)

(see: <https://maharashtratourism.gov.in/tourist-intrests/caves/>)

We left early to beat the heat which was promised to be 90°F with high humidity.

As we took off for **Ajanta**, I wondered at the wisdom of going as I had a peculiar “lead brick” feeling in my stomach, but I went.

The drive began with a moderate temperature, but it climbed rapidly and it was in the 90s and quite humid by the time we arrived.

On the drive, we did get to see a lot of the local rural India. Almost all the landscape from the Aurangabad to **Ajanta** is lava covered by a surface veneer of soil of a varying depths. Some land appear to be unusable and others to be quite productive.

The countryside physically seems to be a mix of flat top masses sloping down to the flats between them with the odd stream here and there. Trees were thinly present. Greenery was everywhere.

We passed fields in villages and open country in alternating rounds as we drove.

When we reached to **Ajanta**, it was a scene of small shops with shopkeepers whispering. “I’m Abdul my shop is there come and take a look I have the best prices.” These were insistent and repetitive pleas.

Another group wanted to sell rides up to the caves and back for 200 rs. Four of them would carry you in an airborne chair if you accepted.

The climb to the caves took about three minutes and certainly didn't warrant being carried; which we were not.

Once there, most of the U-shaped arc of caves were visible. These caves were carved earlier than **Ellora** and in two passes.

The first pass was from 200 BC to 200 A.D. The second pass was around 500 to 600 A.D..

The caves are, unlike **Ellora**, all Buddhist. And, as Buddhism here went into decline around 600 to

700 A.D., the caves were deserted then and then forgotten for the next 1200 years.

In 1819 a British soldier out hunting tigers saw a tiger going into a cave from his observation post high above the valley. The caves were then covered in dense brush. When he went to investigate, the caves were rediscovered.

The **Ajanta Caves** are interesting, but not as much so as the **Ellora** group.

For the most part, they were carved into the mountain side and each had an alcove with Buddha in the back center. Mustafa explained that Buddhism had gone through three different transformations.

Phase one which was quite austere and had no images. Phase two did have images. And and by phase three, when the decline began, the images included women as well.

This last part, I believe he said, was the result of a blending between Buddhism and other outside religious influences.

In one cave from phase one, we saw a long arch room with something like a stupor at one end. In this cave there were no images or auxiliary rooms. In a cave from phase 3, we saw a statue of a woman meditating in the inner room. This room, as the others, had a large image of Buddha as a central piece. The woman's statue had attributes that indicated she was, or would become, enlightened.

The walk around **Ajanta** was hard for Sharon and I as both of us had recently been sick and we're not yet right. I found the heat, the light and the humidity to be very draining. And, and once inside the caves, the smells and the closeness were problematic.

Whenever Mustafa showed us some painted image on the ceiling and I had to tilt my head back. I felt on the edge of becoming sick. Sharon told me later that it was the same with her, but for her the smells were even more of an issue.

I doubted, in the first few caves, if I would be able to finish the tour, but I did.

The drive back was much like the drive there except that we stopped twice; once for a soda at a roadside restaurant and then at a place selling agate and other handicrafts. Sharon bought several stones and crystals here.

At the hotel we paid Mustafa and the driver (\$21 and \$5) and had dinner and then repacked for tomorrow's traveling.

**1994-09-27 – Aurangabad, India → Bombay, India → Calcutta, India**

Today is to fly from Aurangabad to Bombay. Then we will take a city tour.

Then we'll fly from Bombay to Calcutta and stay the night there. All of this is necessary to get us on our way to Darjeeling and Sikkim.

Aurangabad Airport is small and fairly organized so our departure went well. At Bombay, Sita staff meet us; as they have at each stop. A very short drive took us to a hotel adjacent to the airport and we left our luggage there with the bell captain for 50 rs. Our guide for the city tour met us there. She was a Hindu woman from the Government of India Tourist Office who spoke excellent English.

### 1994-09-27 – Bombay, India

Bombay didn't seem too much different from Delhi - perhaps maybe a bit more organized and British in influence. We saw a number of things.

*(Bombay was officially renamed Mumbai in 1995)*

Our guide took us to the “**washer colony**” and, from a bridge railing, we looked over a vast area of people all washing clothes in large concrete sink enclosures.

*(see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dhobi\\_Ghat\\_\(Mumbai\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dhobi_Ghat_(Mumbai)))*

She said that they do a good job and never lose clothes and that they pick them up, wash and dry them, iron them and then deliver them back to your door.

We saw a huge train station built by the British.

We saw what she called “**The Gateway of India**” down by the ocean. That was my first sight of the Indian Ocean.

*(see: <https://www.incredibleindia.gov.in/en/maharashtra/mumbai/the-gateway-of-india>)*

*(see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gateway\\_of\\_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gateway_of_India))*

The British apparently erected the gate to celebrate their entry into India. Later a British king came on the Queen Mary and passed through it. And then, when India gained its independence, they made their official exit through it.

The most notable part of the Bombay tour for me was the visit to **Mahatma Gandhi's residence**.

*(see: <https://www.gandhi-manibhavan.org/>)*

*(see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mani\\_Bhavan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mani_Bhavan))*

He lived here from 1917 to 1934, I believe, and much of his important work was done here.

The building is now as shrine to his memory as well as a library organized around him, as a topic, and as a place where his thought is studied.

I was entranced as we saw his room and looked at the high points of his life as recaptured in 28 miniature sets..

I remembered quite a lot of it from the movie “Gandhi” and from his autobiography.

In the end, Sharon had to drag me out of the place.

We were supposed to go back and see a city museum as well, but our timeframes got too short so we left for the airport.

**1994-09-27 – Bombay, India → Calcutta, India**

*(Calcutta was renamed in 2001 to Kolkata)*

This trip was harrowing for Sharon as she was on the brink of vomiting from the smells during the entire ride. In the end, she held on, we recovered our bags, got to the airport and checked in for Calcutta.

It was a two hour flight to Calcutta. We arrived after dark and we met by Calcutta's Sita representative.

He got our luggage and then we left for the hotel; which was 25 km distant.

That drive completely amazed the three of us.

I have never seen such a horrible place as Calcutta. The smog was so thick, it was like a fog as we drove through it.

Everywhere, cars and trucks, people and trash were rising and fading in the smog constantly as we drove. On the sidewalks, people were sleeping in rags next to drifting piles of garbage.

The three of us were looking at each other in amazement by the time we arrived at the hotel.

The man from Sita, who was with us, got offended when Sharon made some comments about how bad it all seemed.

To me, he's a man living in some sort of a serious delusion if he cannot see what an utter pigsty Calcutta is.

Later, on on the way back to the airport, we passed **Mother Teresa's Hospital** and I tried to imagine the faith that would take to drop yourself, body and soul, into Calcutta to do work like that. And it was all quite beyond me.

(see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalighat\\_Home\\_for\\_the\\_Dying](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalighat_Home_for_the_Dying))

The hotel on Calcutta was quite nice. An extreme change from what surrounds it.

*(I failed to capture the name of this hotel)*

Sharon and Gertraude were so vocal at dinner about their impressions of Calcutta and the drive that I was afraid they were going to offend the restaurant staff.

After dinner, we turned in because we had to fly to Bagdogra in the morning. I had some pretty strange dreams that night.

**1994-09-28 – Calcutta, India → Bagdogra, India**

The Sita man picked us up in the morning and we had another drive-through Calcutta. It looked better but it is still amazingly bad.

At the airport, we found our flight delayed from 0930 to 1030; so we departed an hour late. The flight to Bagdogra was 50 minutes and I read the Indian English newspapers and caught up on the plague.

Cases are now being reported in widespread areas across India and people are fleeing from Surat. Bombay, New Delhi and Calcutta have all reported cases.

I'm glad we stocked up on Tetracycline at the first news.

Bagdogra is about 200,000 people, or as they say in India, 2 Lakh.

(see: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bagdogra>)

And it has an Indian Air Force Base that shares the airport. Just after we landed and we're walking across the tarmac, four or five jets took off in rapid succession each with afterburners full on. It was very noisy.

It is amazing to me that a government which can't seem find the money for even the most basic public sanitation services can afford to waste expensive jet fuel like that.

The Sita representative met us, and then things got confusing because he immediately collected our luggage tags and passports and told us to sit in the lobby and he would collect the luggage.

This was quite a different procedure than we have followed at any of our other stops.

Sharon went to look and saw our checked luggage being unloaded and moved around and noted that the Sita man was nowhere to be seen and she became concerned.

The entire procedure was a mess and by the time we got to the Sita car with everything, I was irritated. So, I took the Sita guy, Deep, aside and gave him a short lecture about sharing more information about what the plan when he greets arriving people.

He took my comments well - so that was a good sign. Later, I decided I really like the guy.

The drive from **Bagdogra** to **Darjeeling** was three hours. So, once the iron box was tied on, we left. **Bagdogra** is on the flat and was much cleaner than Calcutta, but basically on interesting. After driving for 40 minutes or so did the North, we began to climb, and then things became much more interesting.

1994-09-30 – 0625 – Hotel Windamere, Darjeeling, West Bengal, India

Jumped ahead again. I'll continue, below, with the 28<sup>th</sup>.

What's the road began climbing, it was quite beautiful. The road was narrow and quite dangerous and the drivers have to honk on a blind curve to warn traffic from the other direction. Often there is barely room for two vehicles to pass at a dead crawl. Many sections have obviously been washed out and repaired over the years.

The road just climbed continuously for two hours or more. Along the way, were small clusters of buildings just perched on the mountain side.

A narrow gauge railway runs beside the road all the way to Darjeeling. Apparently, it was built by the British at the close of the 1800s. It's called the “**Toy Train**”. And Hollywood even made a movie about it which was Lowe Thomas's “Seven Wonders of the World”.

*(see: <https://darjeeling.gov.in/tourist-place/joy-ride-in-darjeeling-himalayan-railway-popularly-known-as-toy-train-from-darjeeling-to-darjeeling-via-batasia-loop-ghoom/>)*

It takes eight hours to make the ascent on the train. We drove it in three.

**Darjeeling** is a town of 200,000 perched on a high Ridge top. We're staying at the **Windemere Hotel** in suite, number eight.. It goes for approximately 100 USD per night.

*(see: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darjeeling>)*

*(see: <https://www.windamerehotel.com/our-story>)*

The hotel is the best in town. The views and the service are excellent though the rooms are a bit rustic.

The buildings were originally a boarding house for bachelor tea growers beginning in the 1800s. Just before World War II, it was made into a hotel.

They light a fireplace in your room each night. They have a quartet that plays in the Bearpark room each evening from 1900 to 2100. In the restaurant, a pianist plays during the evening meal to candlelight.

Outside there are chairs where you can sit and look off into the clouds and hope that they might clear so you can see the high Himalayas in the distance. This hotel is extremely well run.

We arrived here about 1530 and checked in and then had afternoon tea with our Sita representative and our guide, Deep.

Sharon and I took a walk to go shopping while Gertraude stayed at the hotel. She wasn't feeling to well.

From the hotel, it's only a short walk to a large square with many shops. We found an excellent

bookstore and next to it a curio shop with many Tibetan items. Sharon picked out a number of these things that she wanted to get. We walked on to other shops. And, at dusk, our guide Deep found us.

He wanted to tell us that schedules had to be changed because tomorrow, the 29<sup>th</sup>, was going to be a general strike and taxis would not run and all shops would be closed.

He stayed with us as we went to visit several more shops. After shopping, we said good night to Deep and went back to the Windermere for dinner with Gertraude.

### 1994-09-29 – Darjeeling, West Bengal, India

Around 0600 this morning and went down to the bar room, where there was a good table for writing and I worked on catching up this log. I asked the kitchen for coffee, and I had an excellent pot as I wrote.

Because of the general strike, our schedule has been much simplified today. Deep came and met us at 1100 and took all of us on a walk to the **Darjeeling Botanical Gardens**. It was a lot of downhill as we went and Sharon and I were both worried if Gertraude might have trouble making it back up. But she did fine. Apparently she's regret regaining her strength, though her cold sounds worse to me.

(see: <https://darjeeling.gov.in/tourist-place/lloyd-botanical-garden/>)

The gardens were nice; though simple. We looked at various species of trees that are native to the Himalayas. One of the trees I saw I'd like to get and plant at home. The climates are very similar.

After viewing the gardens, Deep took us to his sisters house where we looked at some Tibetan carpets. None of them suited us, however.

Then we climbed back up and it was lunchtime. We gave Deep our passports at this point so he could arrange for our entry into Sikkim; which is a closed area of India for foreigners.

After lunch, it was quite lazy. We sat outside, read, scanned the opposite mountain side with binoculars and looked at the houses and clouds and tea fields.

Then we had afternoon tea and more of the same.

Around 1530, Sharon suggested a walk and we discovered that there is a virtually level **promenade** (called *Chowrasta*) walk around the ridge top that the Windermere hotel sits upon. It is a beautiful walk and many people were strolling it. No one here tries to sell you things. The people had various reactions to us. The men and women both stare at Sharon a lot. But just when I think people are being unfriendly, someone will give me a big warm smile. Groups of children love to follow us and say, "Hello, Hello".

(see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chowrasta\\_\(Darjeeling\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chowrasta_(Darjeeling)))

The common language spoken here is Nepalese on the street. Back to the hotel we had the evening

meal and then we sat reading with Gertraude while the Quartet played. And then we were off to bed.

**1994-09-30 – 0745 - Darjeeling, West Bengal, India**

Just finished catching up these notes over excellent coffee. Got up again at 0600 and wrote postcards to Klaus, Chris, LA and Gillian and The Purple Heron. Going to join Sharon for breakfast now.

**1994-10-01 – 1920 – Hotel Nor-Khill, Gangtok, Sikkim, India**

Dinner is at 2000. I'm going to try to do another quick catch up here.

**1994-09-30 – Darjeeling, West Bengal, India → Gangtok, Sikkim, India**

After breakfast, we went to the **Darjeeling Tibetan Refugee Center**. Looked at rugs, but none caught our fancy. Took a picture of a Tibetan lady and her baby and she gave me her address so I could send the photo.

(see: <https://tibetancentredarjeeling.com/about-us/>)

Then we drove back to Darjeeling to do some shopping. The shop we picked stuff out before was closed so we had to quickly go to others. We're pressed for time. We got an excellent large set of 10 Tinchas, two large horns and a large bowl.

Lunch was at 1300. We ate, packed, said our goodbyes and we're off by 1400.

We drove North to the **Kalimpong Durpin Monastery**, where it was dusk when we arrived. Excellent. Nice photos.

(see: <https://www.incredibleindia.gov.in/en/west-bengal/kalimpong/durpin-monastery>)

I took a picture of a monk who wanted to copy; so I took another address.

It was dark when we left Kalimpong and we drove to a local hotel owned by the same guy who owns Nor-Khill. Had some tea.

It was a four hour plus drive to **Gangtok, Sikkim** and it was dark all the way. I was wired from the tea so I spent time on computer app thoughts, spirituality, and ideas about Claus and protecting the Tibetan secret texts.

(see: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sikkim>)

(see: <https://sikkimtourism.gov.in/Public/PlacesToGo/popularattractiondetails/PA20A002>)

At 2200 we arrived and after a hasty meal of sandwiches, we turned in.

My first impressions of Gangtok, Sikkim, and the **Nor-Khill Hotel** were quite good.

(see: <https://www.elginhotels.com/hotels-in-gangtok-elgin-nor-khill-spa-resort-since-1934/>)

### 1994-10-01 – Gangtok, Sikkim, India

Breakfast was at 0800 and then we departed for the **Rumtek Monastery** which is in two parts; old and new. I like the old monastery. The new one, with its 400 monks, was less attractive.

At the monastery, we could look across the valley to Gangtok on the mountain Ridge, opposite.

(see: <https://www.karmapa.org/karma-kagyurumtek-monastery/>)

Next, we drove back to Gangtok to the **Namgyal Institute of Tibetology** where I talked to a man who gave me clear information and we exchanged addresses. Gertraude was a little upset at my delaying us by my re-asking my book related questions repeatedly.

(see: <https://namgyalinstitutesikkim.org/>)

We drove back to the hotel for an Indian style lunch at 1400.

After lunch, we were to drive to another monastery very close to Gangtok and, on the way, we dropped into the Indian airline office to confirm our tickets.

Nasty surprise! Our flight from Bagdogra to Calcutta was canceled, which threw our schedule out of whack.

The new bottom line, after several hours of adjusting, is that Deep will drive us across the border into Nepal to a town where we can catch an Inter-Nepal flight to Kathmandu.

We are to leave at 0500 in the morning for a 5 to 6 hour drive.

We're not unhappy to skip Calcutta. And the plague is just getting worse. And the sooner we exit India the better.

### 1994-10-02 – 1750 - Sherpa Hotel, Kathmandu, Nepal

I stopped writing last night (94-10-01) for dinner so I'll pick back up now.

Dinner last night was fun. Deep had organized a Sikkim style meal for us complete with large mugs of fermented millet, I believe, into which hot water is poured to make **Chang**; which is the native form of beer. We all tried it, and Sharon said it tasted like the homemade beer brother Gregg had made.

(see: <https://bambooretreat.in/sikkim-traditional-millet-beer-chang/>)

Dinner was quite a variety of things; only some of which I liked.

After dinner, we paid our bill and changed some dollars into rupees so we could pay Deep and the

driver in rupees tomorrow.

We agreed to a 0430 wake up call and turned in.

During the night, it rained very hard two or three times which woke me and made me wonder if we'd make it in the morning. Once, while I was sleeping, the volume of the rain increased as a large shower passed over. In my dream, I was dreaming about our hotel, and as the rain volume climbed, I saw the hotel begin to crackle with light and shimmer and hum. It was such an image that I woke up and got up to look out at the soccer field outside through the downpour.

The alarm went off at 0430 and we pulled our stuff together and we're downstairs by 0500. It was so humid. The driver and Deep were there.

We loaded up and got the news that our little Ambassador car did not have working windshield wipers.

So, we set off with visions of torrential downpours, steep cliffs, and washed out roads in our minds. It was still dark and drizzling. The hotel had packed us boxes for both breakfast and lunch.

Our routing was to go from Gangtok to the Sikkim/West Bengal border and cross back into West Bengal. And then drive down to Bagdogra and then go west to a Nepal border crossing. Once into Nepal, we would drive to a town called **Bhadrapur** where we would catch a inter-Nepal flight to Kathmandu.

(see: <https://nepaltraveller.com/travel/cities/bhadrapur>)

We actually seemed to be staying fairly well on schedule, in spite of the fiddling around around at the Sikkim/West Bengal border, when we had a flat tire near near Bagdogra.

It took 15 minutes, on the side of the road, to change the tire. And then 20 minutes later, we stopped again and had the flat tire, that had been removed, fixed.

I gave the driver his tip money at this point because Deep had told us he was getting low on cash.

Originally, we had decided to give deep \$60 and the driver \$25 but later we moved \$10 from deep's money to the driver as we felt the driver was doing an awful lot of the work; while Deep just cracked fairly shallow jokes.

After the tire repair, there was a general feeling that we were behind schedule. The roads were slow and bad and at the Indian/Nepal border we had to make three different stops to deal with all the bureaucracy.

Also, once within Nepal, there were two more places where we had to stop and sign something because, I suppose, we were in a non-Nepalese car.

When we finally approached the Bhadrapur Airport for the 1330 flight, it was obvious it was gonna be close; and it was.

The check-in, luggage inspection, personal inspection, getting Deep's address and giving him his money were all accomplished in a sweaty high-pressure blur.

But at last all three of us were on the plane with less than five minutes to spare.

We didn't get to say much of a good bye to Deep and none to the driver; who had been excellent.

The flight from Bhadrapur to Kathmandu was uneventful.

There was no one to meet us on arrival; in spite of Sharon's fax last night, so we hired a cab to the hotel.

There are open issues remaining like (1) do we get refunded for the cancelled flight from Bagdogra to Calcutta and Calcutta to Kathmandu and (2) will we be reimbursed for the \$77 US each of us spent for the Inter-Nepal flight and (3) will the night we paid for in Calcutta to be transferred here to the Sherpa Hotel in Kathmandu.

Sharon is starting to get a dose of the throat problem that has been bugging Gertraude.

1830 now. All notes are all caught up now and we're going to dinner at 1900.

### **1994-10-09 – 1245 – Kathmandu Airport, Nepal**

I've fallen very far behind in these notes. I'm going to do some catch-up now. Currently, we're waiting our flight from Kathmandu to Bangkok.

### **1994-10-03 – Kathmandu, Nepal**

We met our guide for the next three days. His name is quite long and complicated so we'll just call him Raj.

We went to the main Square in Patan, which is one of the three cities which united into the greater Kathmandu. The square was very interesting and there was a lot to look out and to buy.

Then we went to several craft centers. Tibetan carpets, metalwork and wood carvers. At the Tibetan refugee carpet place, we bought a lot of carpets. I even picked one out.

Then we returned for lunch and our afternoon was free.

Sharon and I caught a cab back to Patan Square and went back to a vendor with lots of singing bowls. He then took us five blocks into a room down a narrow alley. In that room were *hundreds* of bowls. It took about two hours, but we finally walked out with the pile of bowls after spending \$175 US.

### **1994-10-04 – Kathmandu, Nepal**

In the morning, Gertraude and I went with Raj to a temple where they sacrifice animals to a Hindu god every Tuesday and Saturday. It was quite interesting - though it was hard on the animals. We took lots of photos. We also stopped by the side of the road and looked at some ripe rice.

Then we went back to the hotel and Sharon came late to lunch. She'd been shopping.

After lunch, the three of us went back with Raj to a large Stupa on top of the hill. It was interesting, though there were too many vendors there for my taste. While I was there, I bought Mani Stone from a Tibetan vendor with an interesting face. I took a photo of him.

In the morning, Raj and I had talked. He used to be a lecturer on geography and history before going into tourism. Now he's about to switch to import/export with his brother. We agreed to exchange addresses.

After the Stupa, we wandered through the various markets in Kathmandu with Raj. Sharon bought a Tibetan carpet seat cover with the dragon pattern and I got two jars of honey; one Indian and the other Nepali.

In the evening for dinner I ordered fish Beekti Almondine. It was a mistake.

#### 1994-10-05 – Kathmandu, Nepal

By breakfast time the next day I knew that I was feeling a bit unwell. By the end of breakfast, Sharon was not feeling too well either. So we gave Gertraude the tip for Raj and she went off on the morning excursion with Raj alone.

I never got sick enough to puke - but I felt like I had a greasy brick in my stomach and a little bit of diarrhea.

I ate a little at lunch and then laid down again for an hour. By 1430, I felt pretty good and Sharon did too so we caught a cab to the **Boudhanath Stupa**; which Gertraude had seen in the morning and she said it was excellent.

(see: <https://ntb.gov.np/boudha>)

We were not disappointed. It is the largest Stupa in the world. There's a wide walkway around its circular base and pilgrims from far and wide come to walk around it and pray and spin the 108 prayer wheels.

There are shops all around the base - many with interesting wares. There are no street vendors here to hassle you. They must've been banned from the area by the merchants.

We bought a wood block for printing prayer flags here.

I found a good place with the sun was on the faces of the pilgrims walking around the Stupa and I must've shot 15 or 20 photos of their faces. Excellent stuff.

In the evening, Sharon packed us up for our departure to Pokhara and Sarangkot tomorrow.

**1994-10-06 – Kathmandu, Nepal → Pokhara, Nepal → Sarangkot, Nepal**

We packed all of our things and put what we don't need now into storage and are only taking what we need for Pokhara and Sarangkot.

We're off to the airport in Kathmandu for a domestic flight to **Pokhara**. The flight was scheduled for 0900 but it didn't go until 1000.

(see: <https://ntb.gov.np/pokhara>)

At Pokhara, we are met by our guide for this section. His name is Astrid; or something similar. A small fellow in his 20s, he's from mountainous country in the east part of Nepal. He looks strong and fit and has a nice way about him.

We drive through Pokhara and up a ridge side for a while; and then we are on foot.

Astrid and the cook take one each of our extra bags, and Gertraude's, and we carry our small packs and we're off. We climb a dirt road that goes ever up, just steep enough to be moderately hard work.

It took from about noon till 1600 to make it to **Sarangkot** on the ridge top northwest above Pokhara.

(see: <https://www.thelongestwayhome.com/travel-guides/nepal/sarangkot-pokhara-nepal.html>)

Along the way, we met our two porters who had gone on ahead. They laid out a tarp for us and proceeded to cook us lunch. It was quite a nice lunch too. Then they packed all their gear up and we continued to the top.

At Sarangkot, there is a very small village. The camp itself has room for perhaps 10 to 15 tents. Above the camp, is a flat table and from it, you can look north into the Himalayas.

In the afternoon when we arrived, the mountains were lost in the mist.

The evening meal was a very nice production.

When everyone began to turn in, Sharon and I dressed warm and took the binoculars and went up on a table top hill for some UFO and stargazing. It was quite pretty for 20 minutes or so. The Milky Way stretched almost from horizon horizon, And then the mists formed and the stars faded, so we went down.

**1994-10-07 – Sarangkot, Nepal – Pokhara, Nepal**

That night it rained cats and dogs at least three times - but we were snug in our tent.

The next morning, we had another excellent meal and, at 0910, we started down the mountain towards Pokhara.

Our route down was different from how we came up. The up version was a gradual path while the down was steep stone stairs virtually all the way. Also, coming up, the car took us part of the way whereas is going down, we hiked all the way to a lake level. It was a long, hard and hot descent. And all of our legs were shaking by the time we got down. It was a very pretty trip though.

Once back in the outskirts to Pokhara, we got a cab to **Fishtail Lodge** and took a shower and had lunch.

(see: <https://www.fishtail-lodge.com/>)

In the afternoon, Gertraude went off on a boat trip on Phent Lake and we took a bus tour, with a guide, into Pokhara. We saw another Tibetan refugee center and a small Buddhist monastery. Also, we saw where the lake exited the valley. It travels almost 2 km underground. And we saw the older section of Pokhara.

That night Sharon and Gertraude went to a Nepalese dance show and I stayed in and watched TV. Then we all went to dinner.

### **1994-10-08 – Pokhara, Nepal → Kathmandu, Nepal**

The next morning we got up and had breakfast and met our driver who came to drive us to Kathmandu in a nice year old Nissan Pathfinder.

The trip was excellent for the first 120 km of the 200 km. But then we came to an accident where we had to sit for an hour in a massive traffic jam. Once that cleared, it was a wild jarring ride into Kathmandu.

Upon arrival, we showered, and then Sharon and I went off to the excellent bookstore just around the corner from our hotel.

That evening, Sharon repacked us for our departure to Bangkok and we turned in.

### **1994-10-09 – Kathmandu, Nepal**

At this point, in this log, we are now on descent into Bangkok and I am once again, all caught up writing this logbook.

### **1994-10-12 – 1255 – Portland, Oregon, USA**

Just arrived here after 22 hours from Bangkok. A long and tiring flight.

I had a runny nose, so I took some antihistamines Gertraude gave me - so I was a bit dopey. I also have a bad cough for which I have nothing to take.

Now, I'm going to go back and catch up with the parts I missed beginning on 1994-10-09.

### 1994-10-09 – Bangkok, Thailand

We were put in a **Menam Hotel** in Bangkok in room 1107. Very nice hotel but the staff's English was very poor. We arrived after dark so we couldn't see much. It is a long way from the airport to the hotel. The hotel sits on the river so it's quite scenic.

(see: <https://www.ramadaplazabangkokriverside.com/>)  
(this was formerly known as the Menam Riverside Hotel)

### 1994-10-10 – Bangkok, Thailand

Our guide is a chubby Thai girl who's only been a guide for three months. I forgot her name.

We went to the **Palace of the King of Thailand**. Very interesting buildings. The Buddhist temples are quite ornate, but they felt bad to me - unspiritual. I took a lot of good photos.

(see: <https://www.royalgrandpalace.th/en/home>)

It's rainy season now and, at one of our stops, it started raining. We went out to find our driver and Van and the traffic was gridlocked and he was nowhere to be seen. So, we stood under some trees for 30 minutes or so while it rained. Gertraude didn't like it but I did because it was a warm tropical rain.

Because of the rain, Gertraude didn't want to go into a restaurant for fear of getting chilled from the air conditioning and then getting pneumonia. So, we skipped lunch.

Then we had a misunderstanding with our guide about the Gem Center.

We said we didn't want to go to the Gem Center because it sounded like a tourist trap. We said we preferred to go to the crafts market. Somehow, our guide made it sound like both were at the same place. So, we went and discovered was *just* Gems.. It was a big tourist trap and we were pissed at her. **No tip today!**

The Menam's Restaurant had both Thai food (Pad Thai) and sushi - so we ate well.

### 1994-10-11 – Bangkok, Thailand

I had my doubts about going out today, but I did.

Our guide showed up on time. Told us we would make a 1 hour drive north from Bangkok. The traffic was light, but it still took almost 2 hours.

The **Old Imperial City** is what we saw. the Burmese invaders had burnt it to the ground about 400 years ago. So today only the stone and brick parts are still standing. Basically, the stuff we saw today

was inferior to yesterday.

(see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayutthaya\\_Historical\\_Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayutthaya_Historical_Park))

In the afternoon, we had a ride back to Bangkok on a tourist boat that serves lunch. Sharon told me it cost the two of us \$80 US for the ride.

The food we didn't trust and the crowding onboard was intense. So, Sharon and I went up on the deck and ate snacks that we had brought along.

It was about a four hour ride back in the hot sun. We neglected to bring sunscreen, but we were OK. The river stuff was interesting to look at for a while.

Once back in Bangkok, a 20 minute ride, took us back to the Menam Hotel. We met Gertraude for our last dinner and then we packed for a 0400 ride to the airport.

### **1994-10-12 – Bangkok, Thailand**

Up at 4 AM, paid our hotel bill, loaded our bags and then took a 30 minute ride to the airport through the dark Bangkok streets.

At the airport, our local travel guy is confused about our stuff in custom bond so he wastes time going there before he determines that we have to check in first.

At this point we have to separate from Gertraude, who then goes off to Thai Airlines while we go to Delta.

At Delta, we find that they've changed our seats to a middle pair next to the only baby on the plane. This is a problem, but we get it sorted out after making a big stink about writing a complaint letter.

Once we're airborne, the flight goes smoothly until we get to Seoul, Korea, where we find that our trans Pacific flight is delayed for two hours.

This messes up our Portland to Seattle link. But those flights go every 30 minutes; so it's not a big problem.

This seemed to be a very long flight back because I'm sick with a bad cough, a head cold and a runny nose.

About 1500, Seattle time, we arrive and Doug meets us at the airport and our trip is done.

*(The End)*