

12/28/96 Dharmasala (back again).

A new Hurray diary! - bit soft! We're back in

Dharmasala after three sunny days in Dalhousie (its now overcast here - I think we're destined to see Dharmasala in the next!). The Dalai Lama starts his public Teachings in four days. Time apparently and the place is absolutely packed. We asked around a few hotels which were all full and ended up taking a room about 10-15 minutes walk out in amongst the terraces to the west of McLeod Ganj, which is really nice (and only 60¢ a night!). The landings are carpeted (I think as they were all busy making winter homes for two new monks. They're added on all properly, I visited the quite impressive. The other reason I say that is that the beds are fairly limited off and on). Thin mattresses on solid wood. Should sort out any odd beds in my back over the next couple of nights anyway!

12/3/96 Had a busy day yesterday. Spent the morning

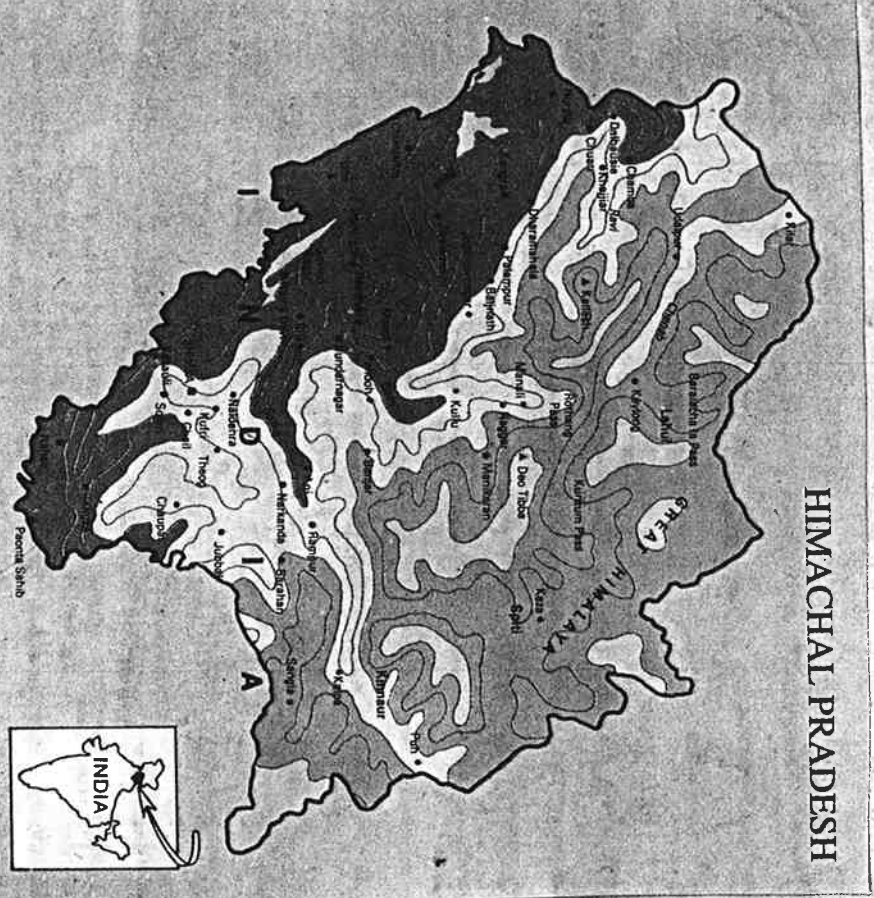
organising money. Shaking out loans etc and requests

for a public audience with the Dalai Lama which should be good (a nice compromise as a personal audience would just be a waste of my time). Went for a rather strenuous walk around the terraces

and up and down goat tracks, and rocky boulder-strewn paths down Bhagswati to have a look at the temple and search

for an elusive german bakery and its famed carrot cake I'd heard about (no luck!). The trip there took over an hour and

the trip back by road, 20 min! Really must stop making things hard for myself but its nice to get off the tracks at times



HIMACHAL PRADESH

also I suppose.

We then went down and had some conversation sessions with some Tibetans who were trying to learn English which was interesting. Really drove home the fact that they were refugees. One guy had only been here for two weeks. The most experienced for three years - Richin, Longang, Gonbor and Tendun. They had walked the trip line sixteen days and across the passes, not a bad effort considering they would have had very little gear. One guy, Longang, was a painter but the others had no job and were learning English as a starting point. I typed questions about jobs and if they would be able to get one in Australia if they went. A lot of a reviving time coming from what is essentially a pretty isolated country. The M'Leod Gang with the Dalai Lama and the monks, the blurries of western travellers and the Indians. A huge world and in it somewhere, who knows where, their futures, all confronting them here on. And they face it all with the same serene conviction all the Tibetans seem to have, they must get a fair amount of support from help groups here I imagine and they are all in it together. Maybe I will do something to help when we get back home.

Met Jan, a Swedish sociologist who is here studying the internal politics of the Tibetans over dinner. A lot of people to govern with not so much governing to do it would seem resulting in a lot of trying + frowning about the organisational set up. Four locations or states, 10 counties all with three representatives each (I think? - politics + all the things + my strong point!) regardless of the number of people in each group and a reform party trying to get a more even spread of power and undermining the power of the system in doing so, attracting power itself and

becoming the sort of what might be a multi-party democratic system. At the moment the reform party is held together by the common ideal of reform but there are many different views on policy within so once reform comes (if it does) it won't be long before it breaks apart into smaller bits. The current representatives of the people realise this potential loss of power and don't want to sit down and talk about reform as far as I can gather. The Dalai Lama (who generally stays out of this internal politicking) was apparently invited to a political session yesterday to throw a bit of oil on the troubled waters. He was advocating the sitting down and talking it through. Jan seems to think that the power will eventually pass to the reform party - all very interesting!

Also talked a bit about trekking etc. Jan had spent quite a bit of time around the Himalayas. We will definitely have to come back and do some proper prepared trekking around here and maybe up to Loh and Ladakh (where the little girl we sponsor lives) even. Another time

After a RS late session of 'Colder Eye' the latest James Bond film (of dubious quality, viewed at the local video hall!) we finally made it to bed about 12, a very late night for us!

(Someone shadow walked across the screen at 01:15:15)

Lips in the little houses and yells around the terraces seems to reverberate around looking after the animals. Women bring huge bundles of feed down from the hills (oak cuttings) on their heads. I think this must be a daily thing as there is

and valley on the other side, and a small timber bridge
 over the river on the way. Clear, fresh, cold greens and
 grapes with traces of turquoise and white bubbles the river are
 something to see in themselves. The turquoise was beautiful as
 always and there were some little kids with big cone cone
 shaped baskets on their backs waving to us from the fields around
 the houses at the top. What a place to live, nature ~~and~~ the hills
 and mountains and air pressing themselves in on you from all
 sides. It can feel almost deafening at times, I think it must be
 the constant silence of the hills or the sound of the river heard
 from below, always there as if you are fighting against it
 with your voice and one phrase stopped it just closes in around
 you again steady and immense and always there.

Anyway we walked back around by the flatter but
 longer track which turned out to be the one that goes by
 Dal Lake that we took mistakenly the last time we were here.
 when everything was shrouded in mist. Well the mist had
 cleared this time and Dal Lake is a muddy little pond just as
 everybody had told us it would be. Being late for english classes
 with the Tibetans we steamed back (I've sunset along the way,
 lit up all of the trees - spruce or pine or birch I don't know? a
 golden colour and turned the snow on the peaks to pink
 along with the clouds) and arrived a bit put out, a bit sweaty
 and more than a bit (30 min) late for school!

As had we went through as us and one other girl were
 the only ones there (apart from the formal teacher) and a
 few people broke away from the class hoping to see us for

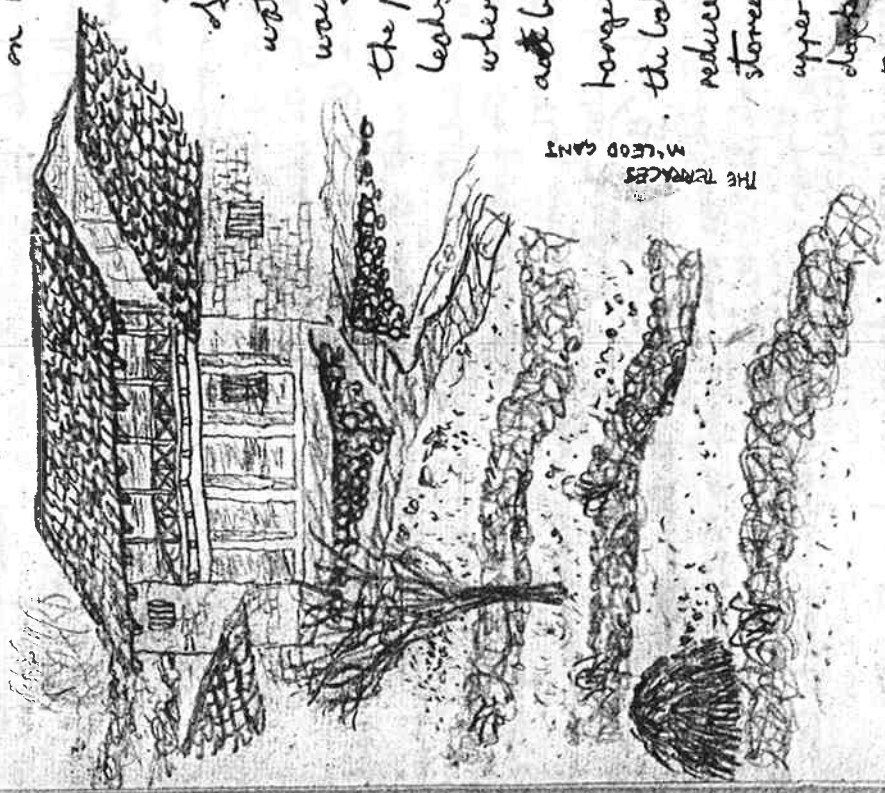
a chance to talk - really nice feeling. Spoke to Lopsang a
 another quiet monk whose name I can't remember and another
 guy, an ex-teacher called Topia! At the end of the visit
 we talked to them a bit about their crossing - really enjoy
 they all come from eastern



Tibet and travelled
 by bus to Lhasa
 and finally
 Shigatse (1st?)
 where they walked
 across the border
 at night, with hands
 over their heads to reduce
 the light and through
 three or four or more
 feet of snow. If they
 are caught by the Chinese
 police or even the Nepalese border police who had them lead to
 the Chinese for a bit of monetary reward I think, they face a
 beating in jail and three years working in a railway gang where
 conditions aren't too good (described by the replacing out of
 checks at night). They arrive at a refuge in Kathmandu and after
 any time in hospital they head (a lot of hostility and even the
 odd fight from the west) they travel to Dharamshala by bus. The
 walk takes 15 cold days from Shigatse to Kathmandu, a pretty
 hard and desperate feat! It's no wonder they all look so happy and
 calm after going through something like that, this must be like heaven
 to them!

An early night - nice to have some free time to ourselves
 (overcast!)

nowhere else really for the cows to graze, all the terrace fields are filled up with the yellow flowers (mustard seed for vegetable oil I think) and the lush grass that must get used for feed later on during the drier months. Typical scenes are cows enjoying the sun in the front courtyards munching on their feed in the mornings, little calves tied up on the path being fed handfuls of the lush grass. Later on the cows in their stables (the lower rooms of the houses) chewing cud or being milled (or both). Little joppy Tibetan terraces standing on high polders



keeping passers-by at bay, girls sweeping courtyards of cows mess, and water pipes bent the way and that along the paths with skilful looks here and there where they've been led and bit for clothes hanging from lines and the balconies of the reduced height upper storeys. The smaller upper storeys with their deep balconies that are typical to the houses

THE TERRACES
M. GOOD 5/23

gave a bit of a mystical feel, like an imagined world sprung out of a Tolkien novel. A garbage slope at the top of the hill just before you get into the main bit of town where the dogs + ~~crowd~~ and odd cow silt through to bid scraps and generally reduce the impact on the environment! And finally, money ped just out of sight behind the brow of the top of the hills and a largely unadorned view out to the valley and the plains on the side which nevertheless seems to sit there stretching out in the corner of your mind's eye.

Another busy afternoon, lunch - meals always seem to be major events these days. I can't believe the volume of food that I'm eating I don't know if it's because I just want to eat as much as possible because I know the food's good and just around the corner may be another Tsubu where I can chop, sip, silver, sip, sip, sip water and then ever so slight variations of obnoxious veges or sulphuric acid curry; or it's because of the amount of energy we are expending in walking and keeping warm, or whether it's just enjoying in the joy of eating and being able to keep it down after the Khajuraho experience! Anyway it's the main cost of living and it gets to the stage of being time consuming and a nuisance even, but on the other hand sitting in a restaurant, sipping warm drinks and watching the world (and a variety of dishes) go by isn't unenjoyable! - anyway back to the afternoon.

We went for a walk up through Dharmahat and over to the terraced hill on the other side of the valley just after the temple straight down and straight up, what looked like a short little traverse to the other side of the valley was really hard work! It was worth it however, good views of the mountains