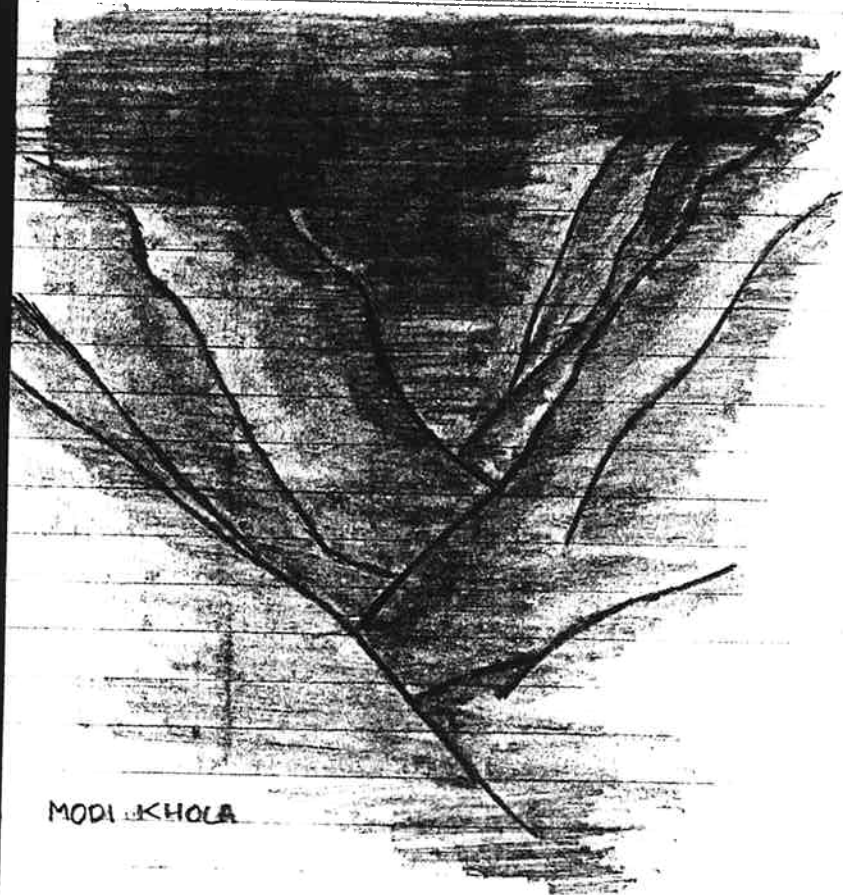


[Faint, mostly illegible handwritten notes on lined paper]

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MODI KHOLA

20/4/96 (cont'd) sitting at the Sincua lodge
and restaurant ("From here looks a
nice view") looking up a cloud laden Modi

Khola valley, at what I think they call the middle
hills, green and treey and full of walking paths
and bamboo farms and porters and and and a lot of
Nepalese, somehow. (I can't lie both at explaining)
The cook at the lodge just came up to have a look
at my little sketch. "same, same. little bit. Yes
I'm still pretty bad but I keep going on the basis of
this is how I see it." quite a useful sketch and
to some extent true (little bit).

There is a chook living here, white with blue
paint marks all over it which brings to mind all
sorts of funny scenarios, of chicken footprints
across freshly painted furniture, of frontier Nepalese
chasing, clucking, flapping chook around the yard,
over walls and under tables as dust and down
fly up everywhere, of blue handed Nepali farmer
trying to coax chook into freshly prepared chook
house, trying to get his egg producing facility up
and running. Chook to pull together his (or her)
dignity after all the flap and strut around forever
more bearing the marks as a reminder to all of
the Kapuffle of the day.

Up to Machhapuchhre and Annapurna base
camps in the next couple of days and then back
to Pokhara and Kathmandu, onto Tibet, to
Iran and China and then across to Europe and
London again, and then somewhere after all
of that Melbourne (again)

21/4/96 Dewali (3150m)

Day 18 - One day away from the base camps!
We are sitting at a table with a kerosene
heater underneath it, trimmed by a blanket to keep in the
warmth. There is Tom who we met on the way up,
a couple of Germans (always two Germans it seems),
a guy with whom we shared a rickshaw with in
India (up to the Monsoon Palace in Udaipur) must be
two or three months ago has just got up to go for a
lie down, and there is also three Nepali guys
playing something similar to five hundred. It is
hailing like hell outside, big hailstones pelted down
bouncing off each other on the ground creating jumping
hailstones everywhere, a bit like atoms trying to

escape from some sort of primordial soup or something!
Nice to be inside!

We had the same hail come through last at the end
of dinner, all sitting up in the raised dining room,
panoramic views (of a dark valley!), and a tin roof
making it like a huge lightning conductor stuck out on
the hillside, hummm... Anyway conversations of
the lake district and Hardknott pass, of dead bodies
dropped from planes into the lake leading to Wardale
Head, were interrupted by this hail unshaking onto the
roof, so loud that we all ended up going off to bed
(only to have it stop as soon as we were zipped up in
our sleeping bags!) Was a nice place last night,
ten or twelve people staying there, a good number
makes things a bit cosier and friendlier.

The coming of the storm was also quite impressive.
Black valley with lightning and heavy air and
believe it or not, fireflies buzzing around the
place.

And today... today was not the best of days!
Got up on the wrong side of bed and kept it all
under my hat for the first hour or so while I woke

up enough to do it full justice it seems. That's the thing about walking, lots of time for small things to stew upon the mind and turn into big things.

First it was paying 10 Rs. more for lunch than I should have on account of Ange quickly giving me her share + then leaving me to sort out the bill, which is prone to do. (Item 1 giving me material evidence with which to turn against Ange!), then it was the disappearance of my sewing (Item 2 - not a problem in itself really, in fact almost welcome!) and the straw that broke the camels back was realising an hour into the walk that I had left my gaiters somewhere in the past two or three (or four or five!) days (Item 3 giving me the required looming onset of hardship and loss of monetary value)

I started by pulling out all of my clothes looking for them, then hitching my sleeping bag followed quickly by a hurled backpack down the side of the hill. After retrieving both of the aforesaid (always a humiliating experience which just makes things worse!) more kicks were delivered to the backpack. Then the sit down and

be frustrated bit, going over where you could have left it, how bad it will be without them, how you can replace them. Faced of course with no answers and only the continued absence of the gaiters you spring into all sorts of tangents, bringing up the smallest of annoyances from days back, it's always me, the martyr to your fellow man bit. And then broadening your field of view you're forced to confront the trough, leading in and out of your little world of tantrums and hardship: 'you go on I'll catch up', 'should we give it all up now' etc etc - how embarrassing!

Anyway, anger still not dispelled you continue on cutting off your nose to spite your face. Kicking stones, seething under your breath, the odd shot at Ange. I jumped in a stream to over my ankles at one stage and then trudged along in discomfort, water squelching out of the seams. But there is an upper level, sort of, fearing my boots would fall apart I took them off and trudged in bare feet!

The whole episode ended (I forgot to mention a thrown cup of lemon tea at Bamboo and then

a drink of water just to show I did want it!) when after following a group of four porters for a while (in bare feet) I swapped loads with one of them.

Fucking heavy, maybe 1 1/2 to 2 times heavier than my pack and all taken through a stoop on the head down through your neck. I don't know if it is because I have a long thin neck, or whether it is because I didn't get the proper balance but it was bad. I managed about ten minutes (with some steep uphill mind you) by which time Anqi saw me, bare feet, cone basket strapped over my back with a bouncing porter wearing my pack in tow. Finally catch up with her. And that was what was in essence needed, some expenditure of energy, something to grunt and groan my frustrations out on a bit.

Into bed early tonight and get some sleep that had something to do with it also me thinkst.

As for as the days walking went, more middle hills, some more rhododendrons here and there, lots of waterfalls down the sides of the hills and some nice glaciers some snow patches even towards the end. Actually the last hills

were really nice, jagged rocky peaks with dark rainclouds swirling around them obscuring the tops for all but a few minutes at a time when patches of bright white sky show through from behind.

Tomorrow should be good, particularly if I'm in a better mood although I'm a bit worried about the snow, there must have been a bit given all of the rain and hail we've been getting down at this level.

22/4/96 Anguna Base Camp (4095m)

Day 19 - Fell like a long day today. I'm not feeling 100% but I'm not sure if it's not just me getting a bit sick of all of this trekking (not another hill), it is still a bit in the shadow of 'the other side' which was so good.

I woke this morning about four o'clock after having a dream about clearing out the bank of three toilets that were just stuck a block with shit (everywhere). Toilet dreams! Anyway I lay there for a good half hour trying to ignore the food sitting as a big pile of

shit in my large intestine. I finally brewed the cold and went through the motions, from solid, through peanut butter, through satay, sauce and finally muddy brown Yarra water. I had cramp in my legs by the time I left that toilet! And anyway a fragile stomach all this morning which didn't help things.

I've just checked that I've lost my NZ necklace, the one that was uncle Brown's and I've been wearing ever

since I started travelling (no wonder I haven't been feeling well!?) Agghhh I can't believe it. Minute of minute chances I might find it on the way down - very doubtful. Not much I can do except live with it. People lose wedding rings and things and people are more than just possessions. Hmmm...

So, four hours of walking today, two and a half up to Machhapuchhvre Base Camp, up through what is apparently a classic glacial valley - steep rocky sides. Mini glaciers in places and the Annapurnas bechoning at the end of it all. MBC wasn't much, in fact none of the villages on the way

up have been much, all just a collection of three or four hotels, or less - Bazar wasn't anything more than stone ruins and Hindu cave, just a dog stone wall under a large overhanging rock (the rock patterns made it look a bit like a huge jaw when you were sitting inside of it which was a little bit of interest), both of these places were marked as having accommodation on our ACAP map!

The one and a half hours up to Annapurna Base Camp was along the snow at the base of the dog leg to the valley for most of the way. It started snowing lightly on the way up so the cloud covered everything but the rocky bones of all of the mountains. Tomorrow morning! ABC has a little more atmosphere being the end of the trek, it's been snowing pretty heavily since we've been here so it's been the heated table in the dining room for most of the afternoon (apart from an hours nap! - it's going to be cold in bed tonight).

It feels as though I'm being slowly stripped of possessions! I think I place too much of myself in them, in my possessions and also in the future I think, not enough in me in the present.

Just back from a walk a bit further up the valley, there is a ridge formed from plate that runs the whole way up from MBL to ABC and beyond and I just followed that up. The valley on the other side opens up in front of you with a floor of small hills of scree and snow and ponds covered in brown grey ice. The whole of the scenery was covered in cloud on the way up and I just sat for a bit in contemplation of things, of my lost knee brace and of the quiet. There are lots of birds up here and one that looked a bit like a robin with a down jacket on come up to forage around me, some within a couple of metres, people who come up here obviously don't worry the wildlife at all. We saw some beautiful blue: purple, violet? - black birds on the way up. One of the most beautiful colours in a bird I have ever seen, so deep it was almost surreal.

Anyway after an hour or so the cloud had all but cleared and some awesome views, late light on Machhapuchhare - some awesome photos as well I hope. So nice for it all to open up like that, breathed a bit of warmth back into me, and I felt like I needed it. A rize come up for the first bit and was getting hoaxed by a

couple of the local dogs (ploeying), big black furry things, quite funny!

There is a Russian (Kazakhstan??) climbing expedition up here at the moment also, will be good to have a look to see if I can see their camps on the way up. Also came across a chorten in remembrance of two two British climbers lost (but not forgotten) here in 1987. Nice to get away from ABC and into the quiet and feel the mountains and the climbers and the history. People shedding down on plastic bags etc around base camp - make a bit of a mockery of it it seems, come trekking up here for six or seven days into this awesome and beautiful countryside to do things you would do on play slopes in the resorts back home, surely they must want something else out of it!? - They do I guess. It's just me getting all over the top romantic and ending up stuck in the mud about it! Each to their own I guess.

Anyway good and bad the last couple of days, I feel like it's all just washing in waves over me and I'm not really coping with it all. I think that's why the walking has been or felt a bit hard, because I'm on the

back foot and that's the hard reality I have to cope with.
Quite looking forward to a couple of days of baking
breakfasts in Kathmandu to help me find my feet again!

23/4/96 Bamboo (2190 ~ ?)

Day 20 - Down 1400m in a day (or so - the sign out-
side says - dubious) our map, also of dubious quality
mind you says more like 2500m which is a bit more
believable.

Today started out in Annapurna Base Camp, not
the Annapurna base camp of Maurice Herzog I know.
find out which one the other side (the north side). This,
the south side, is glorious up to what appears to be sheer
walls which must be bloody hard to get up and
consequently this is now 'the side to climb'.

It is amazing the books that get read by travellers,
very well read it has to be said, travellers, but like
good hotels and good spots to visit, good books must
also get recommended, and in the same way places
become trendy, so do books. John Irving, Tom

Robbins, etc. there is a definite beaten book track just
alongside the beaten tourist track. I think that the
backpacking pick up and go travel experience is not quite
as wide + varied for different people as one might expect.
Mind you it's a lot more wide and varied than reading the
same books and seeing the same things on other people back
home!

Anyway we got up about 5:45 this morning, it
was going to be earlier but it was bloody cold (the
toothpaste on the windowsill almost froze in the tube!) and
we'd both spent large sections of last night awake, the
altitude I guess although no one else seems to have
these problems (as soon as everybody else zips up their
sleeping bags it's dead silence - it's unusual, I seem to be
there rustling for ages turning this way and that -
very embarrassing and at times I just lie there in discomfort
not wanting to wake everybody! and toilet breaks in
the middle of the night! my God I'm scared to drink at
night now!), anyway we were tired as well. Even
at 6:00 we were the first ones up, it was overcast,
albeit thin cloud, so maybe others had been up and
crawled back to bed. Encouraged however by a couple

of 45 Rs mas bars carried from Chomrong that we had in my camera bag (the other two had been eaten as a reward for making it to base camp yesterday) we went for a walk up the ridge, the same one I had walked yesterday only we went up further - this time almost to the end of the valley. The early morning sun was just hitting the top of Annapurna South as we started out but was just a haze of gold up in the clouds, you couldn't see the top of Annapurna I at all. Luckily (I would have been very disappointed otherwise) by the time we reached the end it had started to clear and after another ten or twenty minutes we were sitting in sunshine with the sanctity in all its glory around us.

Three hundred and sixty degree views and some really light snow coming from I don't know where which looked like silver sparkle floating around the place when you looked towards the sun, a bit of a wonderful feeling. It has to be said! Good views of Annapurna I and South etc., Machhapuchhore and Gangapurna were silhouetted by the sun a bit. Hard to say if the views were better than the circuit, I don't think so but we've seen a lot of mountains now so they've lost their first

charm a bit. The glaciers were good. The small hills of scree and snow that I'd thought were where the glacier had been turned out to be the glacier! You could see big pits in it in places where the snow and ice underneath were exposed - big!! The main thing that was nice about the other side was the villages and the high valleys, the whole gradual changing of culture and geography.

Anyway now it's back down, six hours of walking today broken up by some really good macaroni cheese at Devali for lunch. A couple of hours spent in the rain (it's raining outside now - another heated blanket table, this one with some new people on the way up to base camp which is a nice change, and a couple of guides or porters playing a hundred and one different card games over a cigarette and a split flask bottle of - of I don't know what!), the rain was actually nice in the forest bringing out all the smells and giving that forest canopy feeling. We left ABC late, about 4:15 spending our time there whilst it was still clear. That was the point after all wasn't it? so we got in here late, our legs tired and in automatic motion, it

lucky it was all downhill. - few big hills tomorrow -
Also missed the track down for a bit and ended up
doing some interesting rock hopping around the rivers.
Feeling tired actually, it has been twenty days with-
out much rest! We met up with ^{two} English & Canadian girls
who were walking with us on and off on the other side of
the pass (they were a couple of days behind and heading
up to the sanctuary). I got the comment, your looking a
bit scruffier! - Twenty day growth.

Also just heard there was a bomb in the Main
Bazaar area of Dehli killing something like 11 or
8 people or tourists (heresay?). Not very nice at
all, better after we were there than before or during
I guess. Something to do with the elections they
think.

24/4/96 Thine Danda (1600m approx)

Day 21 - stopped early today, around five hours
of walking, a bit of up and down and arrived here,
it's a nice place, there's hot springs about 10-15 mins

walk down to the river and there are dark rumbling
thunderclouds rolling around the valleys threatening.
Quite an atmosphere sitting here on the side of the hill.
heavily greened steep slopes all around the valley. I just
lay down for half an hour or so feeling the weight of
things, the weight of the clouds and the forest and even
the air (at those lower altitudes?), the weight of the stone
walls in the guesthouse and of my legs, heavy on the bed
warm against the feel of the mattress.

Still not feeling a hundred percent, spent ten minutes
in a crouched squat on the toilet this morning thinking I had
flushed three times before I could finally walk away.
I could smell the cheese and tomato of the slightly
undercooked pizza I'd had for dinner last night. Not a
pleasant sensation at all, very sickly!

Didn't find my necklace, I think it is gone. Makes
me want to get rid of all the stuff I only half like
back in Pokhara and buy some stuff I really do like.
Getting a bit materialistic and I think I will give in to
some extent. I need a bit of good feeling at the moment,
feel like I'm a bit dog on the inside.

The hills around here really are nice

not quite tropical but very heavy if you know what I mean, a lot of cane in places, a lot of tangled roots and vines and undergrowth; and moss covered corky trees, the middle hills.

I feel like a little bit of a change in me is coming on, a little bit of shedding of some old bits that have become a bit too familiar, of thoughts that have been rethought a few too many times, a time to end their mulling and remulling and to move on. Give myself a bit more space.

Just been down to the hot springs, four or five days of grime and sweat and filth off in one go and floating in a big slick down the Modi Khola bank for an unsuspecting Pokhara! ☺

I hate get again to jump into the same old some old bat down through the enchanted forest (more moss covered boulders and vines and even a troop of monkeys) and to the river and the springs. A steep little valley line trees and jungle (forest has graduated to jungle at this point), birds calling and a couple of steaming concrete (can't all be magical + mystical)

pools of hot spring water. What felt damp + chilly on the way down was like a paradise on the way back up. There was a light rain that felt like it was just permanently a part of the forest (sorry, jungle). Really good.

As I speak (write ok!) a big bank of cloud has come up the hillside and blanketed everything, wiping out the view of the seriously terraced hillside on the other side of the valley. It's taken over a week but I'm really starting to get into this part of the trek (the middle hills!). A rope + Bira in the mist!

26/4/96 Pokhara (again) - 700m approx.

Back in the Marco Polo, set simple buckles and pots of Dargiching tea and milk coffee on the way, some kneecaps up and down the stairs and a good feeling about. Pink Floyd and legs with muscles of wound steel! ☺

Day 22 - yesterday was our last day and it pissed down on us as a farewell. Took the short way following the river (the Modi Khola)

including one small wrong turn at New Bridge that led to a bit of scrambling through bush for fifteen minutes or so (glad we turned back when we did).

The rain was quite good actually, see the forest in a different state. We also walked through quite a bit of terracing, traditional style houses, orange and white walled in against the rain, the cows watching you pass from the dry and the hay of their stables, people under their verandahs weaving cane baskets or carving bits of wood into tools or whatever, chickens standing with ruffled feathers under tables and chairs keeping dry. And it's warm and humid and mist rises to cloud from various bits of hillside around, really nice.

And then there is the up a bit early didn't sleep that well last night bit, a lot of walking on the final stretch and everything getting wet.

A few beers last night and then up early this morning to hire a bike for 10Rs and ride along by the lake for a bit to have a look at the view, surprisingly good view from Pokhara of the mountains! And now some time to sit, and write,

and enjoy the feeling of having done something good, and just let it keep washing over us :-

25/4/96 PM

OWC ANAC 25 x 14 = (35)

US TRHQ 1110 x 14 = 1554

US CASH 100 x 14 = 140

NRs 6550 / 42 = 156

A\$ 1815

INC PERMIT 830 Rs

	SINCE START	LAST PERIOD	SINCE NEPAL	INCL OTHER
	(143)	(9)	(35)	(9)
A\$	23.6	14.5	28.5	16.6
NRs	991	606	1199	698
	(5187)		(2814)	

27/4/96 Kathmandu (900-1100 - again!)

I can't hear a ~~rooster~~ rooster (even!) crow these days without immediately breaking into the start of 'Good Morning' by the Beatles. It's getting so that it's almost haunting me, there is no escape, and there is a lot of roosters! Help!!

Well, back in Kathmandu (What to do?)
actually a million and one things to do! I like
Kathmandu. Travellers need Thamel, fresh bread,
laid back and lots of trekking shops, and some
might say, not exactly Nepalese or full of culture
but, am I listening?

You know how you have those inklings about
lost things popping back up again. (When they're
stolen they're usually gone for good but it's
amazing how honest the rest of the population are)

So anyway at Sinuwa on the way down from
ABC I was asking about my kiwi necklace and we
happened to catch up with Tony + Hugo who we
trekked with (well stayed at the same places anyway)
for a few days. We only saw each other for five
minutes but despite someone else (Tom) remembering
seeing it on me I gave them a sketch + my address
in case they come across it at Tadapani or
Chorepani as they were going back to do the
Tomson Trek. So they see my necklace hanging

around the neck of a girl at the lodge in Chorepani +
ask about it (unclaimed + so appropriated), the
weather then turned bad and so they headed back to
Pokhara. Richard a guy we walked with for the
last few days changed hotels due to bed bugs +
ended up at the same hotel as Tony + Hugo and as
we'd all crossed paths at some time, they knew each
other + were able to tell where we were (we'd organised
to see Richard for dinner!).

So last night see Brendon back necklace (a
few inches shorter, adjusted for a Nepalese neck!) in
hand hardly able to believe his luck.

It was quite sad to see a goat die by degrees at
our hotel in Pokhara. severe stomach trouble after
eating too much rice apparently. Nothing to be done
apparently but watch his life ebb away (life always
ebbs doesn't it for some reason). On the other hand
five little puppies, or was it four?, had been born
a couple of weeks earlier and were still stretching
eyelids + muscles and learning to walk and sniff
inbetween severe sleeping sessions plagued by

muffles brought on by puppy dreams. That was quite nice.

Hotel life between the comings and goings of trekkers & rafting expeditions in Pokhara!

28/4/96 Met up with a lot of people from rafting and trekking, too many in fact, started to get in the way of all my browsing through trekking shops and book shops! Gavin had left for Tibet which was a bit disappointing but perhaps we will catch up with him there. We have decided that doing (well, trying!) it on our own, is the better option. The organized bus trip is not the best value and sounds a bit too tame, I think it would be botching out with wet feet and we would always regret it if we didn't at least give it a go. The dangers are always less imposing and more controllable when you're actually there, although a flat refusal of entry at the border will be pretty hard to overcome. A return trip to Kathmandu, a few days in Chitwan and a tow or flight into China proper is an ok plan B to resort to in any case.

Not much else happening except that we found a 35 rupee 'Yeti' map of Tibet which has filled us full of confidence, and the scenes at the Brezal bakery have made the first signs of improvement in my cheese burrito excrement ☺!

30/4/96 This room we are in is not helping things, it's hot and stuffy, there are mosquitoes but worst of all the noise from the street seems to echo up the buildings and arrive amplified and distorted at our third floor windows keeping us in a disturbed half sleep for the first couple of hours at night and in the morning. Last night I wandered up to the roof having dreamt that we had started our journey into Tibet and this haunting suspicion, hope!, that after such a hard days travelling we might be in the small village at the top of the pass, or near to it that we were trying to reach. We'd arrived that afternoon in a bit of a daze it seemed and had just crashed out in the room. So anyway I was up on the top floor balcony in my boxer shorts + shirt, I could hear voices and catch glimpses of some people sitting around in the

room up there having a late night session (what time was it?) and was vaguely aware of the fact that I was up there in my underwear and tried to stay out of view although I sensed that they knew I was there. I also however in the sub-conscious of my unconscious mind (my consciousness?) had a feeling that this was only a dream and not to be too concerned about any potential embarrassments. I leaned over the balcony and spent a few minutes trying to focus on different signs trying to pick out the name of the town but couldn't get my eyes to wobble on any but the larger letters. I did realize however that this wasn't small enough to be 'the small town near the top of the pass'. By the time I got back down to the room I was still half asleep but it had clicked that this was Kathmandu and that we hadn't even left yet. And as for as the rooftop goes I saw a sign this morning for the 'Golden Cafe' or something that I definitely remember from last night.

As a footnote, I got up early this morning and went downstairs in search of (unsuccessfully) ~~some~~ apple strudel and did get some strange stares

from the staff around the place (the people up in the room last night?) although at that time in the morning being 6'6" and having probably another four or five inches on top of that from pillow styled hair, a few stares wouldn't be out of place!

Visited Pashupatinath yesterday (hired out bikes for the day - 80 Rs for good, too small of course, mountain bikes). Was very interesting, like the Nepalese equivalent of Naonassi. The river was however really small and stank to high heaven. It had been sandlogged up to give it a bit of reasonable flow so that the ashes from the cremations could be washed away, but god the water downstream must rate as some of the worst in the world! There was one body, that of a woman I think judging by the size, lying covered in gold and white wetted material, sloping feet facing downwards towards the river. There were people standing around, not it seemed paying much attention to her and it all seemed very unnatural. Maybe the fact that this area was in the middle of, or not too far out of anyway inner-suburban Kathmandu had something to do with it also, the fact that this river would continue down

and pass through the back yards of fortresses and houses maybe.

Back in the Buzjed bakery once again. scones and butter and milk tea. It's shameful and I'm disgusted with myself! :-)

2/5/96 Zhangmu (Tibet!) - (2300~).

Into Tibet!, to all of those travellers and others who said it was too hard, impossible, lots of bribes etc, fuck you!! A lot of rumours started by Kathmandu travel agents wanting people on group tours I think, and propagated by people who believed them and the lack of information coming the other way (out of Tibet - as it is generally recognized that there are no problems travelling from China into Tibet).

Anyway, to finish off Nepal list: Pashupatinath, good looking temples ~~so~~ but only Hindus are allowed in so we tourists wander up to the gate and peep through to the courtyard and the giant trident, and be back side

of a huge brass Nandi (the bull that is the vehicle of one of the gods - Shiva) and the sight that none of the guide books mention, the vastly underrated brass balls of Nandi which sit serenely behind him like a couple of big watermelons. You get a strange perspective sometimes as a tourist.

We then went onto Bodnath, a huge stupa with the eyes! What is described as a nice walk was a smog killed half hour ride through some pretty ordinary areas.



Up until ~~then~~ ^{then} I'd always been of the opinion that Kathmandu isn't as smoggy as everybody says it is - who are all of these people with face masks one way! Wrong - it was really bad. I also went a sweaty stretch further to see Swayambunath? - the monkey temple (only one or two monkeys looking pretty disinterested), another set of those eyes, this time on brass backing and veiled in red. Got there at sunset so the colours were beautiful (damn that black and white film) - nice views over town as well.

I must admit, the culture is great and you do absorb a lot of it learning bits here and there and just watching

but I'm more into the imagery of it all (which includes all of this culture on the surface also), I'm not one for needing to know more than your next man about all the history and the theory behind it, after all your average Indian or Nepali doesn't! I'm happy just to see (and experience from time to time) the life side of it. Too much learning + feels like your wading through tangled nets all of the time and not enjoying it for what it really is...

Also went and paid a visit to the prison where we chatted with Jimmy, a scot who is 35 days away from the end of a two-year stint for trying to take 14 kg of hashish out of the country (I'll see you Jimmy!) - had a little bit of Rab. (A) eshitt in him! really nice guy, told us this and that about the jail, the prisoners run it themselves and dish out their own punishment etc, not too bad for your average prisoner, food, + work (making little bonds for 2Rs each) and even star TV. Apparently the wrestling is a big drawcard! Telling us about the disgusting water supply and solitary etc etc. Talked a bit about travelling + getting home - A short half hour of time + some bread + bregel scones and it felt really good to be interacting a bit more with things. Might do that in

some other places we go, must be a rough time just waiting it out in another country, three books a week and no one to talk english to the majority of the time.

And eight hours on a bus, some nice green gorges along the Bhoti Khosi I think, towards the end and that was Nepal. Two border posts with a rough switchback road and 530m of elevation between them and the people turn to Chinese (mostly) and the roads to mud! Zhongmu is a border town, Chinese + Nepali, quite a few (supermarket) shops and not a lot else to see, a kick off place for hiring jeeps and setting out routes and paying permits etc, all of which I'm not really looking forward to.

				UNOLS 230
				PEASING 400
				FIRM 1600
				NEGRUAL 200
				MALE 1100
				ANAL (1000?)
2/5/96	USANCE	25 x 14 = (35)		
	US TCHQ	1610 x 14 = 2254		
	US CASH	95 x 14 = 133		
	NRs	0	0	

			<u>AP 2352</u>	
	SINCE START (149)	CASH PERIOD (6)	SINCE NEPAL (41)	INCLUDING OTHER (6)
AP	237	27.2	283	17.1
NRs	497	1141	1190	720
	(5889)		(3514)	
	TOTAL BRSU... = 5199 + 506 x 1.4 = 5989			

2/5/96 How to go? As of April 1st the government set up a new tourist office with set rates that ends up around 230 USD per person for four people on a six day trip to Lhasa by jeep with a licensed (but set by gov itinerary) - 5500Y for 5 days to Lhasa, 1000Y extra for trip to Rongbuk monastery + base camp, 500Y extra per day over 5 days. The other option is to try and sneak past the checkpoints by hitching lifts the whole way which involves the uncertainty of lifts, maybe not seeing anything along the way (sitting in the back of a truck and staying to the main road) and the possibility of fines for you and the driver that picks you up. One large group of people who wanted to trek to base camp went under cover at darkness last night, won't see much on the road but I guess they're going to see it trekking.

I'd like to do the hitching thing but it's going to limit the trip, maybe not even be much cheaper, but will be more in the spirit of things. If we get another couple of people then the cost comes down to 160 USD and I think it's probably worthwhile.

Yesterday was spent trying (unsuccessfully) to

negotiate with the tourist office, the travel permits only (only issued once you have booked a tour!) and a lower price. Hmm... A few games of pool and a nice cheap dinner (and a couple of beers) helped smooth over a few of the frustrations last night. Actually I'm not too worried about the whole thing and would go either way, Skadi & Jeff are a bit frustrated though, it's just how it is and we've got to make a decision one way or the other.

3/5/96 Nyalam (3750m)

The decision went to the CITS, six of us in a jeep (we recruited two Dutch women, Ali+Ali - different iterations) at USD 145 each which for six and a half days is pretty good. Two cyclists we met paid ~~65~~ 40 each for a jeep to Shigatse and then left before the jeep with a permit, and another group of ten paid 65 each to Tingri where they will stop + do some trekking and take it from there. All a bit stupid, half these people rolling their eyes back and ranting and raving have all this trendy gear worth thousands of dollars (too much) anyway and I bet they didn't blink twice for some of that. All most like a group mentality thing

rage against the Chinese machine because they're so bad! I don't think government set prices in the states would be under so much scrutiny, or permits costing 700 US for Mustang in Nepal, no one screams communication restriction of freedom at them.

Anyway, the drive up was great, feels so good to be on our way, up a steep gorge for the whole way (the Bhoté Kosi / Po Chu) passing lots of waterfalls and the odd recent landslide. At one point our driver was a bit concerned watching the slopes above for falling rocks more than he was the road. The countryside is already very barren, must be as this side is shielded by the Nepalese Himalayas, patches of snow and some really impressive jagged peaks (you know the story!).

The towns (Zhongmu + Nyalam! so far) have been pretty uninspiring. No shanti areas at all, and no beggars (but apparently someone saying hello + then not following it up with a request for money or something else), just reinforced concrete frame buildings, drab and cold looking. This is I think unfortunately a sign of affluence and in fact Zhongmu had pool tables, an 'electric amusement centre', (conspires up all sorts of

images where the Chinese are involved!) and wait for it... a disastrophe < spelling! ? even! I prefer the mud houses and farm animals myself however I'm sure the locals think differently. I think that both these towns must be trading towns as it is hard to see how they make money any other way, especially Nyalam which is quite large for the barren landscape. There is also a fair mix of Nepalese, Zhongmu more so than here.

Not really getting into diary writing at the moment, this trip will be more a photo trip methinks. How many different ways can you say a mountain looks great! Which reminds me, my camera lens broke refusing to zoom - some heavy handed repairs + now it does but not how it's supposed to! Aghhh - I hope the photos come out! So on towards the forbidden city! ...

4/15/96 Tigri (4342m)

Tibet proper, stark, barren landscape, brown and yellow and ochre hills, shale slopes and blue blue skies, snowy peaks behind, dry cold dusty, visit to the monastery at Milangpa's Cave, child monks - money-pens-

no-1. Dutch ladies giving balloons. Temples, thokas and the Dalai Lama, oil lamps and the cave, light through a bright window with flapping veil, photos of Patagonia on the road (no money!). Follow the river, dry villages, up the hills, patches of pinky snow, more dry yellows with traversed roads, and the blue! Lalong Leh pass (5200 or 5050 m?) lots of prayer flags, lots of colours, dry colours in the wind, lots of small stone piles, lots of snowy mountains in a long thin vista. definitely the most spectacular scenery yet, maybe, high barren plains, a landover in space with a trail of dust, everything in wide angle. the Nien Chu now flowing with us, light blue trucks with trays and tibetans, road grading with a branch and a stone, more villages, white wash houses with red and black stripes. A stop at a village with a ruined monastery (Gampa), up on a feathered hill, villages down below yabbing the fields, villages up above looking through a camera, photos here, photos there, not really happy, lunch of fried bread + jam. Off again, more plains and yellow hills, ruins and dust storms, Everest (Quotadarqma) and others in more mountains approaching, hot springs bubbling out of red rocks (mineral deposits?) in a tibetan compound, and Tingqi, Potola

Palace architecture, women spinning wool, ponies feeding and trucks and tibetans and green uniformed Chinese. Two Hangarian climbers on their way back to the rest of the party, the group of 10, still bechering about fifty cents here and there, for gods sake feel something other than money and organization. A pink lined dorm and a room with couches, tables, wood stove and tibetans! Breathtaking country, a bit too quick, cycling would be nice. Tibet, the photos in the books come to life.

5/5/46 Not a good sleep last night, tossing and turning with the cold and the altitude (real or imagined I'm not sure), the dry air doesn't help either. Anyway got up early and went for a walk which was really nice. Yellows and blues and shadows, trucks and telegraph poles, an old fort on top of the hill in red stone, a moon and a sun both low in the sky, cold hands and a bit of time to myself.

The toilet at the hotel we are staying in is set right up above the receptacle rooms for want of a better description. You climb the stairs to a waist height wall and a fine view (have you ever noticed how often it seems the toilet ends up with some of the best views in the place - the palace at

Orkha and Collins towers for instance) of the town and the plains. Perched up there in the light of a full moon dropping four days worth of constipation into the dark hole below was quite ... sniff ... beautiful ... sniff. I even had a guy come up and ask me if I minded if he took a photo, set up his tripod on the wall and everything, forgive me if I don't share this moment with you.

So lie back after my walk, everyone is still in bed (in our little party on way!) and so I'm sitting here in the kitchen cum lounge cum dining room writing. (I wish everyone would get up + give me some company).

People washing this way and that, driven by little internal eccentric spinning weights, erratic little eggs spinning on a table, busying into each and off each other.

a very + uncomfortable view of the world but help but think

I wonder if they (we) know what drives them?



5/5/96 in Rongbuk Monastery (5020m)



Tibet - land of goats horns, and of goats horns and cow horns, horns everywhere, sitting on walls like the one above or lying amongst the rocks waiting to be ground into dust, or curvately curved on piles of the curved stones (prayer-horns?). They seem to be like an indestructible component, the number of which just steadily grows as generation after generation of animal dies, their flesh and bones decaying to dust while their horns live on to endure the ages.

7/6/96 The drive to Rongbuk was fantastic. Bit of tiring +
fraying with the ~~two~~ checkpost guards at Chay about fees
on the way into the park, ended up paying 520 ¥ which is less than the
600 LITS wanted to charge us anyway. Probably the best view I have
ever seen in my life (he says!) from the top of the Pang La pass.
The north face of Everest, Mahalu, Lhotse and Cho Oyu and the
whole rest of the range sitting up there in icy black and white
and blue above the red brown mountains stretching up to them.
Clear as, and so dry and earthy. Prayer flags, a small
reclined chowrie, the mountain, a dead eagle, the road, us, and
the sky stretched out in all directions a clean thin blue and
a shortness of breath and sense of the altitude (5200 - again).

8/6/96 Not having much luck in making time for the diary,
travelling quite quickly so there's not much quiet time at
the moment. We've called a rest day today (Shigatse) so I'll try
+ catch up. Want to do some reading also (all go!).

So the drive to Rongbuk was beautiful, if not a little rough and
a little longer than we had expected, four hours or so from the main
road. The older of the two Dutch ladies was not impressed however
seemed in a better mood the next morning. She's one step off being a
litter old lady that one! "India was just horrible, filthy etc. etc..."

Anyway I'm not in the mood for a talk on group dynamics! Once we
were over the pass it was along a valley floor for most of the way
which must have been just under 5000 m. ~~low~~ A few villages, the
white houses with little dabs of black and red again, and the
prayer flags and black roofs making them look a little like the villages
of Lake Shywalbes home planet in Star Wars (from a distance)!
Each village also has a little bunch of trees that is kept irrigated,
for birds or aesthetics? I think it must be the start of the crop season +
everyone is out in the fields ploughing and sowing and digging, men,
women, children and yaks, a real village community atmosphere, and
early in the morning till late at night also, in the sun and the wind and
the dust storms. Even with their dark skin a lot of them have bad
sunburn problems. You pass a few people whose jobs must involve them
being outside all year round ~~with~~ driving tractors or donkey carts etc
who have chi goggles etc, looks quite funny. One guy had goggles
that looked like they come (and probably did) from the first attempts
on Everest! ~~no~~ After the panoramic views from the pass it
was in and out of the villages and fields and odd ruins with the
mountains only peering over the hills here and there, like snowy giants
sitting quietly in their domain keeping an eye on us as we approached.



Rongbuk monastery
itself is really nice.

pretty basic little village on the side of a hill with a small monastery and impressive stupa, gumpa? and the sheer north face of everest up the valley a bit in all its splendour. An amazing view, the whole of the mountain from 5000 m up sitting there uninterrupted in front of you. This side of the mountain is a lot drier than the Nepal side and the weather has been clear for most of the day (today it's actually cloudy!) and so the views have been brilliant. (brilliant, fantastic, great... Hmmm...!) The place was deserted when we arrived, a fact demonstrated further by the non-appearance of anyone even after the excessive horn blowing of our driver, Gesong, to attract some attention. We managed to stop him going to town on the horn (seemed to kill the sanctity of the place somehow!) and settled ourselves in a room that was open, stone beds with cushions, that turned out to be really comfy, a little stove on which we managed to boil some water and eat some two minute noodles later that night, and a Romanian climber with cicilia and bronchitis who hobbled up to base camp the next morning much to our amazement, he had a terrible night - really heavy breathing and continually up & down in pain with his leg.

After a couple of hours of settling in and finding survey spots and generally trying to come to grips with the atmosphere of the

place, the monks (or were they just the villagers, or both?) started arriving en masse with bundles of wood + supplies etc on their backs. We started talking to some of them the most memorable a young boy with a flute who looked after the shops + the dorms, they were really nice people, uninhibited and warm and easier to talk (not quite the stone throwing monks the book mentions!). The fetched an old lady (nun) who opened up the monastery for us to have a look at, she was quite quiet and obviously a bit sick of being at the beck and call of tourists who want to see the monastery! We gave her a pair of the maroon mittens that Anqi had knitted (were since leaving them behind accidentally before trekking) which cheered her up a bit, hopefully that will make up for all the calling tourists a bit! Quite nice thinking that little pair of mittens will live out their days up at 5000 m in a little monastery village near the base of everest (what more could a pair of mittens wish for!). The monastery itself was small but nice, some fairly recent murals, the monks robes sitting looking like the monks within them had recently vapourized, a pile of prayer books and even a Roman hat (I call them that because I don't know what they're called) or two. It was a surprisingly warm night's sleep but I was plagued a bit by heavy breathing and headaches which I hadn't felt at all up until then. Sleep at 5020 m, a bit on + off, I did

finally manage a deep sleep about five or six in the morning, only to be dragged (kicking + screaming) - well sleepy eyed + in slow motion) out of it for our walk up to base camp. 7:00 in the morning, keen!

The walk up to base camp was nice, a couple of small temples / shrines / gompas / stupas - chortens along the way, one full of inch high coverings of deities, must have been hundreds of them, saw a rabbit (doesn't sound like much but in this barren country!) and even a pack of deer, but above all else, above the deer and the chortens + the temple it was cold - fucking cold! The whole of the valley was still in shadow - only the tops of the peaks lit up in orange + white on the west side. The river was half frozen over and covered in snow in parts (not much other snow apart from that), bits of ice tumbling down in the water - must have been cold!

Anyway after thoughts of the Ales back at Rongbuk wanting to get under way and of our heavy breathing + tired eyes + of potential headaches and still having to walk back we resisted (I took a diamox which actually helped ~~with~~ headaches from the night before) the urge to turn back and rounded a corner into the sunshine to a view of multicoloured tents and a central building and satellite dish amongst the scree landscape

everest brilliant in the background to it all. Fourteen terms from every notion you could think of (almost!) appropriate. Stayed for half an hour or so soaking up the sun + sitting amongst it all, made it. Felt really good, and in fact really differed to trekking in Nepal, different country, different scenery, no lodges, which I hadn't expected. Maybe we will have to trek to the base camp on the Nepal side just to see what it is like one day - maybe!

It was then a slightly easier walk back in the sunshine and a long drive - left at 10:00 arrived at 9:30 am - to Sahya, too long actually with only one stop for lunch at a restaurant at cross roads in the middle of nowhere, I'm not sure if it had a name but I'd be willing to bet it would place of dust and expensive food in tibet or if it did! We probably should have split it up into two days but we were all keen to get where we were going.

Sahya (4280 ~)

Got into Sahya and it was late, it was dark, and we were tired. Feeling a little better after having our stuff in the room, a kind of tired, placated feeling we had blown up a couple of

Balloons, pulled out the red wine (50¢ a bottle!) we'd been saving especially for this moment and trundled down to the local restaurant, disco-lights + Christmas tree lights and everything! to celebrate Skadran 21st birthday. Was a good time, nice and relaxed. Ali complained about her tomato soup when the bill came even though it was red + wet which is about all you can hope for a lot of the time 'yes I ordered tomato soup, but that is not what I got!' head back eyes staring upwards demanding god knows what - retribution, attention? Slept like the proverbial and needed it.

Woke up the next morning (the 7th) to Saheya, grey buildings with dots of red and white for a bit of colour and Saheya Monastery, a huge place with big fortresses like watch towers, and the monastery itself, one of the most amazing places I have ever seen! Totally awesome.

We stood around the outside for a bit wondering whether or not to pay the exorbitant 20¢ entry fee (which included a colour-printed ticket ... to a monastery...!) Incredible murals everywhere, beautiful colours and form, storey height upon storey height of buddhas in all the different positions, huge evil spirits (will have to read up on Tibetan Buddhism a bit!) all arms and teeth + claws and goofy

lobble eyes amongst skulls and flames. By far the best part was the main hall at the back where the monks were having a prayer session, three or four storeys height worth of murals and huge gold idols, hanging banners made of lots of individual dots of gold and silk material, just amazing colour and imagery coming at you from every direction. I've heard it said about things but until this have never felt myself assaulted by a scene, so much beauty and grandeur projecting itself from every space to reach into you and impress. And the monks sitting amongst it all in prayer, such an imposing impressive scene brought down to earth by and overruled by glances of acknowledgement and smiles. Once they had finished prayer they came out and talked and played, again beautiful uninhibited warm people. Laughing at my height and my face - interesting to a Tibetan (ugly they call it elsewhere!), had an arm-wrestle with one who beat me + let me win the next. Was sad to say goodbye to them and leave all that beauty. They had a big sand mandala? in one corner and on the top floor a smaller very dark room arrived at through black corridors lined with flame and blue tinted heads hanging upside down with streaks of blood in places, there is a negative side to Tibetan Buddhism somewhere (a la the hell scenes in the mural at the monastery at Sorkhot) will have to read more.

After a long (seemed long but only 4 hours) drive to Shigatse a town that looks remarkably like Boise Springs or some central Australian mining town - broad avenues, relentless light blue sky and real hills in the surrounds. The scenery becomes really dry and harsh without the snow covered peaks behind it all to break it up a bit.

Shigatse (3900 m).

Lots of markets to look around, shoes, yak butter & cheese, karaoke stereo systems like you would believe, material, shoes - lots of shoes for some reason, bikes, paved streets, a choice of restaurants, a ruined fort on the hill at the back, a loudspeaker system also on the hill (blaring in the morning god knows what, news, propaganda, weather?), the Tashilhunpo monastery (yet to be visited), and the rooftop of the Tenzin Tibeton hotel, and some (a little) much needed time to myself!

9/6/96 Tashilhunpo was ok. A huge bust of buddha and lots of little chapels to see but all just a bit spread out and not quite hitting the mark. Lots of tourists, load Americans with guides 'What is that thing up there on buddha, what do you

call that in Tibeton, what is that thing' - restrain me! Very nice buildings though and the monks were as friendly as ever. Some of them even had Panchen Lama watches (Panchen Lama written in Tibetan on them) - gift from the Chinese?

Good food in Shigatse - Tenthousand year old eggs, fish tasting eggplant and acid and banana for brekky! ☺

The drive to Gyantse was pretty ordinary, straight stretch of stony bumpy road through scenery a bit wanting after the stretches earlier around Tingre etc. Stopped off at a small monastery at Zhaha on the way thinking it might have some of that Sahya atmosphere, disappointed - the monks wanted 30¢ for entrance + went down to 5¢. Bargaining with a monk! and the rest of the experience was tainted. We did take a couple of photos inside however but the only one that will be nice had Jeff standing in the background! Still not at ease and happy with the photos on the trip. Hopefully Rongbuk + Everest will turn out nicely.

Gyantse (3850 m)

Gyantse started with the older Ali sitting in the middle of our hotel room and declaring 'can we go on to the next town. What we are here to see is at Gyantse Ali, and besides there is




no rest town. The room wasn't
ever so bad, definitely no worse than
the previous rooms we'd stayed at
(and better in fact than some). I think
it was a declaration to let us know
she wasn't enjoying it and to wish
a little trouble, a bit like a Western,
childish and something I can do
when I'm tired + crabby. I think
however she might be tired and
wally of life and its ingrained
within her skin now, the wrinkly, liver spotted, pursed ^{including the} mouth,
hairs of crabby old age. I hope I can grow up a little more
relaxed, real, and down to earth. My memories of Nana
Goparth are good, will have to make it to NZ when we get
back! So peaceful and nice and happy, reading shopping for
Buddhas she struck me as a toothhattera, one of the many who
have got it together and have unselfishly decided to come back +
spend another life on earth helping others to attain their enlightenment!
Maybe... if I fully believed in all of that stuff... :-)

Reminds me, there are a lot of dogs around the
monastries, must get fed by the monks, and the story goes that

they are reincarnates of monks who didn't learn their prayers properly.
Skali also tells us mosquitos are jealous reincarnates of meditators
who never reached enlightenment or who were never able to meditate
and who have come back to annoy those who are trying. All the little
stories that get made up along the way and make it into love!

11/5/96 Gyantse Monastery (Pelkor Chöde) was pretty nice.
Not as together as Sahya still, but then again, what can
you expect from a place that use to house 15 monastries and now
has just a couple remaining. Did have some stuff that knocked the
senses reeling and left you in a sense of awe like Sahya though.
These, eight metre high they must have been, statues in gold standing
side by side in the darkness picking up reflected light around the
circumference of this hall from the main figure in the centre. A sense
of mass and of quietness that really beholds you.

Off to the left as you come in you could follow some
dark corridors to the sound of a monk praying and beating a drum
bringing in symbols every now + then, base + rhythmic, the room in
which he sat murmuring away had paintings of that darker side
again, of body parts  of peoples corpses being picked
apart by vultures, being held aloft by the vultures
looking deities with the hot snarls + googly eyes, sheered on

sticks, I wish I had time to sketch some of these scenes. I wonder if books with paintings exist? A lot of the murals have captions in Tibetan and so this is probably how they are, the books being mainly text of on Buddhism + prayer etc. without all of the illustration which is reserved for the walls + public display.

The other impressive sight was the Kumbum, a big stupa complete with Buddha eyes and all atop of four stories or so of rooms, each containing a deity. You spiral your way up past all of these rooms. Apparently at the very tippy tippy top is a small room with a monk praying. I was content to sit in the courtyard and rest watching the monks (both those present and their heiled reincarnate brothers) and letting bits seep in.

Perhaps even more impressive than all else in Gyantse was the Tibetan Yak restaurant. Place with a great atmosphere, big comfy sofas (typical of most Tibetan restaurants), painted tables and a beer TV with crappy soap playing, locals coming in and out to all hours and the eight auspicious symbols and a big yak's head painted around the walls. Good food and a comedy of errors getting it, forgotten orders, omelette pancakes with honey, power cuts + candles, kids peering in through the windows, a real little place unto itself. Was a good night, nice and relaxed. Later that night I got up in a dream to go to the toilet

(as usual), wandered in my boxers in a bit of a daze along the balcony past swarming locals and maroon robed monks still up talking around a candle (was about 1:30), had a dash by moonlight in the ten foot long opening that was the toilet and wandered back. And I noticed that above the dusty courtyard with all the trucks and jeeps and over the white washed buildings reading another coat on the other side, and all of the electrical wiring strung this way and that from the ugly off vertical twisted and tortured telegraph poles and out past the fields of green trees and lighter strips of dry bone earth showing up under the light of the quarter moon + stars and also the ploughed fields echoing of villages of people out there working them with such care + effort that their ghosts seemed to continue the work for them through the night and finally over the back of mountain black against the line of the night sky there was this flashing of light. I ^{imagined} a big electrical storm was raging ~~forth~~ out of view, contained to the heights of the highest mountains in the distance. Thunder + lightning of which we in our peaceful valley with clear skies overhead and dogs barking in the monasteries (at the storm?) only saw the bright flashes lighting up the horizon. And it was quite frequent as well, ~~to~~ a flickering glow. Tube, I must really have been going for it, if I'd had the energy or the inclination I would have liked to have somehow

(impossible in the time even if I had) gotten over to the top of the distant mountains I could see + have a look over at the clouds lit up by the lightning swirling (I imagine) around those peaks. Must have been an amazing sight, is fighting amongst the gods... if that's what it was. I couldn't imagine what else it could be...

Anyway as it happened I went and rustled back into my sleeping bag and drifted back to sleep amongst the smell of yak butter (which is exactly that of old vomit) which seemed to have arisen in our room late that afternoon when wind came back after the door had been closed for a bit. Perhaps Ali was right after all...

We were up for an early start the next morning for the big drive (that didn't turn out to be all that big) to Lhasa. The drive wasn't that special, a couple of nice ice flows down some mountains at the passes and we drove by Yombok Sa lake which was a turquoise colour when the sun hit it which was nice, was a bit cloudy so I think it would have been nicer on a clearer day. Coming into Lhasa there were lots of rain clouds about (only a little scattered rain) and a strong wind with lots of dust storms blowing

across the valley floor which was quite atmospheric and gave a sense of looming greatness.

Lhasa (3650m)

As expected in the back of my mind all of this atmosphere gave way to the odd scattered building and finally the ugly Chinese buildings and those tortured telegraph poles that their wiring of the outskirts of Lhasa, very uninspiring. Chinese planning seems to consist of wide open spaces across which winds blow and dogs howl (at the barrenness) broken up by reinforced concrete buildings, most often square or rectangular and of minimum corrugated iron roof cost, or the odd one with round edges and a bit of slope covered in tiles or peach painted render like lone monuments to failed architecture, ugly in themselves + not blending in with anything.

The main road brought the Patrols and the hotels but still this some picture of Lhasa, an ugly Chinese city full of loose wires (I'm obsessed with telegraph poles + their wires cluttering up scenery everywhere!) of wires collecting dust, discarded rubbish and of

reinforced concrete and enamel tiles taking over and strangling like a vine the local architecture.

Went for a walk to Barkhor square and around the Jokhang with all of the pilgrims circumambulating for spiritual points which raised my impressions a bit. Little lanes, markets everywhere. Tibetans! and culture, a bit more of the flavour, the anything! I'd expected. In fact it was all really impressive, will be back there today I think, would like to shop + walk + sit + look.

10/5/96 PM

ONE RMB	25 x 14 = (35)	MUN	2
US TRHQ	1210 x 14 = 1694	TIBET	50
US CASH	45 x 14 = 133	SHOES	35
¥	14 x (1045/831) = 1476	WAZARA	20
	<u>A\$ 1988</u>		

	SIGEE STREET (158)	LAST RMB (9)	SOLE TIBET (9)	WALL MOUNTAIN (9)
AD	248	427	427	409
¥	1486 (5889)	252 (235?)	252	240

12/5/96 Looks like at the moment we will probably be flying out of Lhasa to Chengde which is

a real bummer as its expensive and up until now the whole trip has been overland and it would be nice to keep it that way. Will try a few other avenues, small dodgy travel agents and going directly to the foreign office of the PSB before we give up totally.

Spent a large portion of yesterday loitering around in bed, writing in my diary, sleeping, reading, the other major portion was spent gazing on food in restaurants! It's nice to have good food again.

But we did manage to make it back to Barkhor and the Jokhang. Such a great part of town, you wander (or my circumambulate) around with all of the pilgrims etc in a big loop around the monastery for spiritual benefit. The whole route is lined with market stalls and you move at the same pace as everybody else so you really feel part of it all and people come up + say hello, a really good atmosphere, akin to a path of people all making their way to the MCC for a grand final and all with tickets, no one has lost yet and there is a great game, a great experience awaiting ahead.

The Jokhang is great as well, people prostrating themselves in front of it in Barkhor square and inside the main courtyard gradually wearing the stone smooth so that sitting up on the roof and watching the goings on in the courtyard (which we did

for the most part of our visit) all you can hear is the clicking of the pecks they use to protect their hands punctuated by odd drumming + eyeballing of the couple of monks given the task of keeping the prayers going. The building itself is really nice with brass roofs and ornamentation, dragons Chinese style and the Khorma wheel and deer. I wonder how much it longed as most of it was rebuilt after damage done during the cultural revolution apparently (by the red guards as CP is fond of saying). Sitting up amongst it watching the courtyard below was fantastic, people coming in and out to do a circuit + spin the prayer wheels in the corridor around the main building itself, an old man spinning a prayer wheel, the porticoes is a really accessible place and creates a nice mix of monastery and public, and no groups of tourists crawling around the place deadening the atmosphere + purpose (only us -) + we tried to be inconspicuous + respectful.

There are wonderful murals around the perimeter corridor also that must be over a hundred metres long. An old lady with her head pressed against the wall in deep prayer or just deeply overcome by it all in one corner where there was a gap in the protective chicken wire and you could get through to touch them.

After a while a few monks come up to sit with us + practice English etc (here in the middle of Chasa where you might expect otherwise they are all really nice, in fact contrary to CP we found most of the monks were not to be really nice, I think it's largely a matter of appearing appropriately humble + letting them feel you respect them and know that you are there in their place, not just brushing them aside to examine the physical beauties of it all.) Anyway a small gong was rung for a while which signalled the start of a (must be daily) debating session which was quite funny. They waited until a disinterested elder monk arrived (an overseer to make sure things were proper I imagine) and started all the pacing back and forth and hand stopping to the group of uninterested disinterested monks as an audience in front of them. Definitely lacked vigour + energy. A kind of low level doing your maths exercises I think, each awaiting his turn to go through the motions, all in preparation for joining the real debating that must go on somewhere between the 'monks that matter', the older ones a bit more responsible for the spiritual well being of the monastery.

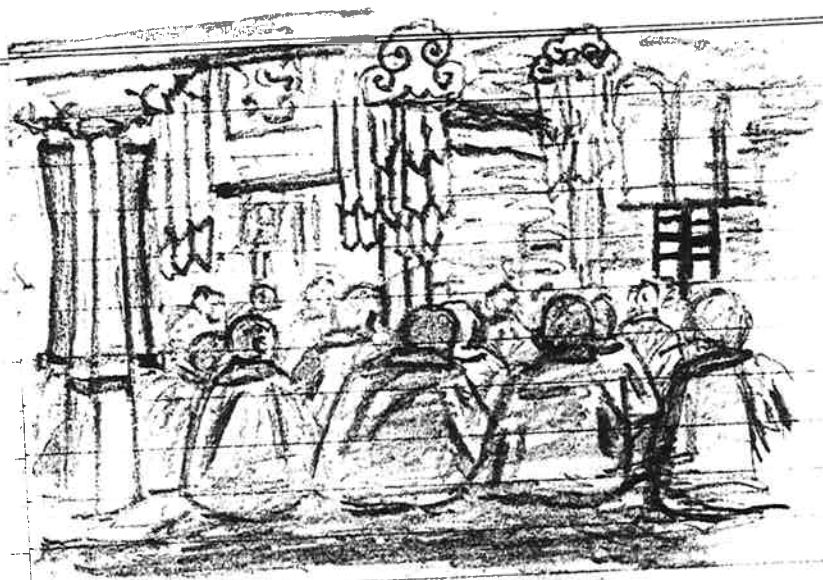
And I like it because it is free + open all of the time and that is how a monastery should be.

The wind is blowing all the trees about outside and I'm feeling -

a little homesick for 7 Frenchman drive, the wind and grey sky and blowing papers out the window, me and some baked beans on toast with butter, a warm pair of socks and some half night show on television. May have something to do with the fact I've just called home as well. Anyway...

... anyway the start of this morning was a chocolate pancake with real melted chocolate at the Kailash restaurant at our hotel. Food, getting more indulgent by the day, in anticipation of China? I don't know. I think China will be a case of get to a few places and spend more time in those places looking around rather than on the move a lot like India, too expensive travel wise otherwise + it's hard to know where to go, must find a bookshop, pick a few places + then some smaller ones inbetween.

The chocolate pancake led onto the Barkhor circuit once again (it's hard to do anything without at least a partial circuit of the Barkhor to aid your spiritual well being for the day) and then we found ourselves in Ani Songkheng Dunsery, not far off the circuit. Today is apparently the 25th day of the current Lhasa month and special in some way so that the nuns were in residence reciting scriptures for the full day. At first we just sat outside content to listen to the chanting and cymbals and drums etc in the sun without paying the 6¢ to go in. After a few minutes one of the nuns indicated that we could go in anyway on account of she thought we mustn't



have much money, which was really nice. It seemed like such an atmosphere inside that we didn't really want to go in + disturb it in anyway so we sat just outside + ended up talking to one of the other ~~nuns~~ in a little room to one side, being led to the dismay of our tasteless butter-tea with hospitality impossible to refuse.

She disappeared after a bit + went inside to serve tea etc to the nuns and in the end we followed and sat as inconspicuously as possible in a corner watching and listening, great atmosphere, did the little sketch above. After I don't know how long we crept back outside smiling + nodding to the nuns to try + let them know we

appreciated it. You always get smiles + nods back which is nice, such a relaxed real atmosphere compared to the harshness of authoritarian religions like christianity. You can't help but be affected by something like that. something to calm you down and put you at ease, slow the pace a bit.

On the way out we were invited downstairs where some more monks were printing prayers, rolling them up around sticks of incense to about two or three inches diameter, and then wrapping them in the silk scarves. They then apparently take them to the Sakhang where the monks put them inside statues. We were helping them a bit with their english and talking with the ones who could speak a little more. Nice place.

Then went for a walk down to the Hologyan - horrible place - passed the Potala on the way, pretty impressive, a few ice creams + back to gorge ourselves on dinner - chips - veg lasagne - apple pie and custard, well it never stops!

12/5/96 Most of today was spent out at Sera monastery (a little in the morning was getting depressed in tourist agency offices!). Sera ended up being quite an experience, walking up through the main alleyway, we didn't come across any ticket collectors or anything just the odd monk who



watched us pass. The place had a really strange atmosphere. 'Down at heel' as LP describes it and a bit diverted, with the whole buildings and small trees looking a little like olive

Trees gave it the appearance of a deserted great town, the few monks about a little bemused and wary at suddenly finding themselves in this foreign place. They would smile back at your smiles etc and Tashi Delays your Tashi Delays but seemed a bit removed from it all on first sight.

We made our way up to the roof of the main hall (some really good murals on the front of the main hall including the heaven hell type scenes surrounded by a life story? that we saw on front of the monastery in Tashhat) (- the guy on the previous page was a part of one of the murals). Intense to just sit in the sun for a bit, the main hall doors being closed. We sat for a while, nice view over the valley if not a little hazy - valley seems to be really dusty this time of year - anyway started talking to a monk + practicing Tibetan + English etc. and got all the goss.

Apparently the Chinese police had been through the place the night before and taken all of the pictures of the Dabai Lama and hence all of the temples were closed. They had also been through Chanden monastery out to the east and two monks had been shot! No wonder the travel agencies were saying it was very difficult to get out there at the moment - lots of police around.

Really drove home the living breathing aspect to all of these monasteries, they can become a bit 'another town another monastery to see', especially when you come across tour groups. We gave him a little picture of the Dabai Lama we had with us which he really appreciated and we sat up there for a while longer looking through LP Tibet + joking with another little 9 year old monk about the pictures who had joined us. Sit anywhere in one of those places long enough and people will come over to say hello + see what's going on.

He then volunteered to show us around the nursery over the hill which was OK, not much to see. An old lady 80 if a day in a small room spinning two huge prayer wheels. What a sight, she could spin them fast enough to make the bell ring as they went around which probably didn't matter as she was ^{most likely} ~~probably~~ deaf! She was all mouth and only one or two odd teeth when she spoke, eyes all crunched up. She could only see (barely) through one eye, we gave her a photo of HH also and our monk guide had to explain what it was - beautiful old lady, best over-double, old as the hills + showing it. Full of spirit and full of faith. A few other small temples and figures of

Lamas to be seen. Quiet place and small considering over 200 nuns are supposed to be there.

Back at Sera we sat outside the main hall doing some sketching and waiting for Jeff who was feeling ill but said he'd come over about 3:30 to see some of the debating that was supposed to go on in the afternoon (cancelled). Anyway our friendly monk invited us inside the temple albeit supposed to be shut. They were making one of the big figurines (an Amaitayya?), timber shaped out with bushes + twigs and covered in clay then to be filled where it had cracked + painted. Sat around with the guys doing the work and had some butter tea with them discussing the idol making trade! (that butter tea is truly horrible - an acquired taste!) Had the atmosphere of a school hall being done up for the end of year ball at high school, working away with minimum lighting, a fun atmosphere with the whole place to ourselves.

Was really nice to just effectively sit around for the day and see the monastery and its different sides in real time, rather than the in and out two hour scheduled visit that always seems like a passing drop in, distinct beginnings and ends ringing of we will never see you again no matter how sincere and

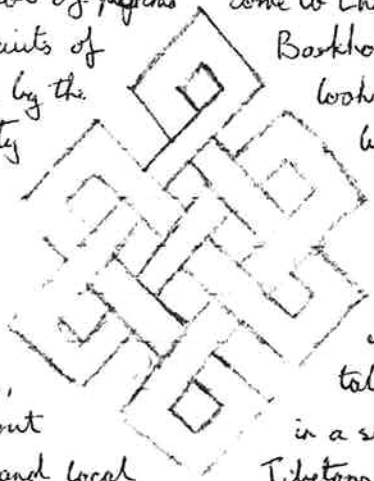
nice your time there has been. Phoo Today like the Tshong was more a sort of wandering in and out of the threads. Got just keep going. no hellos + goodbyes just a sense of drifting in + being.

14/5/96 Around the Barkhor today shopping, bought nothing, a rest on the roof of the Tshong, lunch to a Frodoe (Chon monk, visited the ~~mon~~ nursery to give a picture of the Dalai Lama to the nuns who were so nice the other day and were promptly relieved of all of our photos (all 3!), felt really sad seeing them all went pictures so much when we only had a few, were shown to the meditation cave in a room under the building at the back, very quiet + warm + intimate but I think if anyone ever goes down into the actual cave anyway it would spur off feelings of Christophobia rather than peace + tranquility!, found the bookshop were been looking for for the past few days, great book on Tibetan medicine, describes stages of pregnancy + anatomy + herbal remedies etc., hate to think how they got all the information on internal anatomy, all those shay lama's perhaps, no different to how western medicine advanced, probably better in fact I'd guess, rest of the day a bit of a disappointment, early morning walk to views of the Potala, not really worthwhile.

took some prayer flags to a bridge, spiritual well being coming along in leaps + bounds now, managed to walk past a con game involving fingers + a piece of string on the pavement, and ate an absolute heap again as usual.

Lots of rain last night and snow on the surrounding mountains, which was nice.

15/5/96 A lot of pilgrims come to Lhasa to do the circuits of Barkhor square and see the sights (and by the way to do some pretty work of a lot of creative business) Anyway you see different types of dresses and lots of different types of people. One particularly impressive type are these huge men, tall and thick set features standing out in a severe contrast to the small Chinese and local Tibetans. They all seem to walk with a slight swagger moving their torsos with their legs as in a notion of self importance required to move their bulk around (they're not that bulky). They wear their hair up in plaits with a big bunch of red cord running around it like



an ingrown crown, most of them you have to admit look like they are pretty well off and lead reasonably soft lives although made a little rougher around the edges you could imagine them having just stepped off a tundra full of grazing yaks and his yak hair tent red flag flying in icy wind from the top.

I imagine there are few nomads left these days with Chinese occupation or irrigation making itself felt. Although that's probably not true, there are still nomads (seasonal camps anyway) in the Thor desert in India and there is a hell of a lot of pretty isolated hard land in ~~high~~ Tibet!

The wives wear all their wealth in their hair it seems with string upon string of turquoise and the odd red stone string around their braids which also looks very impressive. At least I think they are the wives, you often see them by themselves and come to think of it selling stuff on the streets etc. so it may be in fact an across the board tradition.

Reaching seven years in Tibet at the moment and apparently your average Tibetan used to wear his/her hair down in plaits, only the ministers of the six or so official levels of standing under the Dalai Lama used to wear their hair up. Perhaps this tradition has now filtered down to the masses, can look very feminine at times especially given the

lack of facial hair. (Had a horror of a shave in Shigatse, an experience of pain. I don't think they are set up for shaving here, my lasting memory is of a few initial steaming hot towels - thank god for small mercies - the straight edge being sharpened on whetstone, and the reflection in the mirror behind me of a woman scraping down a leg of meat with a cleaver into a pot. Hmmm do my own from here on in methinks).

Tibetan architecture isn't too bad, all a la Potala but together it makes a nice impression and very earthy. The monasteries, and now lots of places, have large white sunshades made out of material with blue images of most commonly the knot of eternity or sometimes one of the other auspicious symbols in the middle of them and lined with a blue border and strung up with ropes. Very clean, bright, open feel about them.

Question, do monks eat meat? I didn't think so, I thought it was against all the beliefs, in fact 'its a tragedy if a fly drowns in a bowl of soup at a picnic'. We have however seen meat at some of the monasteries, in the surrounding buildings (a whole lot of these goats that look like skinned quohounds - horrible in fact), are these just for the monks helpers. I have heard that it is allowed as long as the animal hasn't been killed for them. Loopholes in the system? A monk sitting nearby us (the

yard of the Yoh hotel - we moved hotels to save 37 a night - is a trendy, or at least comfy place to hang out) was just munching on a chicken leg that he carried in in what looked like a take away bag & box worthy of KFC back home. Mind you he is also wearing one of those flesh multi pocket waistcoats photographers love under his robes, and his friend also decked out in moroon had a bit of a growth, dark sunnies and a trendy woolen silk jacket - new age monks?

16/5/96 Went to the Jokhang last night and found the doors shut to all but a few monks going in and out with provisions. Was beginning to seem like the inside of the Jokhang just wasn't meant to be. Went to dinner at Tashi I (spend all our mealtimes bouncing between Tashi I, Tashi II & the Kichel with the odd unsatisfying joint to Pink Curries and Lost Horizons) and had a Tibetologist, yes its a word, Eric from Howard, sit next to us which was really interesting. Talked a bit of Tibetan politics, Lamas dying and the and that. Turns out the Jokhang was also raided for Dalai Lama photos and so had shut up. Seems its happening all over (even speaking to Mr Tashi this morning he said the PSB had been in to tell him to take down his photos), monasteries closing

out of protest etc, he was saying that the word on the streets is that things are really bad this time, the worst since the cultural revolution and that they know how to read things pretty well - on previous occasions they have said it was bad but knew that if they kept their heads down it would all blow over. (It all started with the fact that they have now passed an actual law forbidding HM photos - monks imprisoned and even shot out at Ganden - now closed - totally for tourists understandably). This time with Salyama beginning tomorrow (a festival ending with the celebration of the birth, death and enlightenment of Buddha) they think things will get a lot worse as the Tibetans won't be so willing to back down. He reckoned the real fighting would begin when the Chinese (id) started on the Ani Gompas (nunneries), apparently the nuns are the toughest of all, the jails are full of them, old nuns get a lot of respect! Interesting time to be here.

Just when you think everything in Tibet is closing down and the place is about to fall under martial law we walked past the Jokhang around lunch and it was open! One thing Tibet has taught me has been about finding things out for yourself. The rumour mongering and static on the bush telegraph can be amazing. And then when you've seen it

with your own eyes, keep listening and keep an open mind as it costs you nothing + looks can oft be deceptive.

Anyway, the inside of the Jokhang was impressive, a main hall with a couple of levels of rooms for different deities surrounding it (a third level, roof? also which we didn't get to see - next time!) I think the Jokhang along with Salya are definitely my two favourite temples in Tibet.

Been tossing around travel ideas the last couple of days and it seems we will be leaving Skadi + Jeff Laker have decided to try + make it out to Kailash for the full moon festival 1st June this year - sounds great but we don't have the time) and will be heading out for a weeks trekking up around Nam-tro which will also be great - nomads and mountain passes, the lake, the monastery, hermits caves and a bird sanctuary. Camping - little nervous I must admit, I hope we're up to it! Worried about the cold in the afternoons and the weather turning nasty. Hmm-----

17/5/96 Didn't sleep last night for ages. thoughts of the trek and of being cold milling around my head. Stories we have heard of the Trans-mongolian involve 2-3 weeks travel. an extra 500 USD to stop over in Mongolia and a minimum of 150 USD

a night for a hotel room in Moscow! I do hope it's all a bit cheaper than that or we might be flying home no thank! Our tour of China will be a short one, a month or even less, will just make sure we see a few sights + see them well. Looks like being Urumqi 28th → Gulun 29th, 30th → Changde 30th + 1st → Blanning + Stone soldiers 2nd → 5th → Gulin Yangshou 6th → 12th → Shanghai 13th → Island off Shanghai 14th → 17th → Beijing 18th 28th → Moscow 8th → London 12th Would like to be back to spend a weekend with Justin + Rosetta and everyone at the caravan up in Thornum and also to give us a reasonable time - 3 months in Europe.

18/5/96 Jhama Monastery (about 4500m).

Camped out in a dodgy tent lent from Mr Terki (really nice guy at CITS) with a crowd of young goat cum sheep cum yak kids wandering around outside taking a peek in from time to time. No fly on the tent really worried about water coming through as there are lots of black storm clouds all around the mountain and quite a wind blowing (there is also unavoidable ventilation at the top so there goes the advantage of a warm air being kept in - what type of tent

is this anyway for Tibet - its the middle of summer (well almost) here for christ's sake + were in danger of freezing to death! Well, we will see I guess.

Went to the Patala yesterday, laid out the lift 45 ¥ and I reckon it was worth it. You could walk around the top floor where H.H. spent most of his time apparently, a library, a meditation room, bedroom all with superb views over the city out of little windows or the yellow curtained balconies. Was a little bit sad however what it was and that it still in fact is his, felt a bit of an intruder but that's the way it is at the moment I guess. Lots of Tibetan people filing through (they pay 1 ¥!) in awe of the whole thing brushing their scarves etc up against different things for blessings. Imagines

Lots of other rooms also, rooms with different statues of this deity + that, rooms full of glass cabinets containing statues after statue, bronze, gold, whatever of buddha and of bodhisattvas all under six inches high in every possible form + every possible position (one room they were actually photographing + cataloging all of them, they were up to no. 340 with about twenty thousand to go!). Another room had a huge brass palace with hundreds of statues they called a mandala - ?!

thought a mandala was unusual out of period or so - There were also a few of the tombs of HH's past, numbers 8, 10, 3, and the Great 5th in fact! The great fifth's tomb was huge, 3721 kg of gold apparently! A maze of rooms and chambers around a central light well. Kept getting disoriented and coming out to find the sun in a different place than I expected it to be. Lots of yellows + reds and greens on the external timber work and every wall on the inside covered with (painted) mandalas and gods (well the buddhist equivalent) - quite impressive. And then of course there is the white walls and black windows standing in monolithic strength on the outside to which you are jettisoned at the end of the tour (you are directed by arrows the whole way through, from the top down through the corridors + rooms like a huge tangled digestive system until you pop out the end, blinking in the sun reflected off those white walls, wondering what had just happened to you in the depths of that machine.) Little bits of brown + red with gold roofs nestled in amongst the strength at the top. Really good architecture, must have been one of the seven wonders in its day, with the smaller medieval Lhasa of a hundred or so years ago at its feet.

Still such a symbol of the Dalai Lama, you are conscious of it the whole time. In all of his rooms there is a throne (upon which I imagine he sits) with an empty robe, one of the robes that looks like a monk has just evaporated ~~it~~ out of it except that it is golden and much more ornate. Its hard not to picture that face the one you see superimposed above the potala itself in all of the tibetan shops in Nepal + India.

So, huge dinner - last night, Potato + Leek soup, big plate of chips, Veggie - quater, chocolate pancake (with birthday candles on it from Anqi (what a little sweetie!)), chocolate banana crepes, and to top it all off a complimentary chocolate mousse. And Anqi poor thing paid for it all for my birthday - what a little sweetie.

Said to say goodbye to Skadi + Jeff, they've been really good, nice + laid back if not a little slow to organise anything sometimes! Christian + Suzanne are a bit uptight + are rubbing me up the wrong way (that works in vice versa also - I'm sure) but it is the first day + there are a lot of uncertainties so I'll give it time + put in a bit of effort to stay relaxed so that it doesn't come from me.

Was a nice walk today, from Davauxing, plain lit up by the sun (with us on it!) and the mountain with a dusting of

snow and black storm clouds with thunder that seemed to be rolling down the valleys and across to us, real steel roller-door shutting thunder that seemed really clean + distinct - untouched by civilization maybe?

Set down with a goat head for a while around his small yard along here which was nice, space on all sides lots of scrub stretching into a landscape.

19/5/96 PM

US TCHA 810 x 1.4 = 1134

US CASH 95 x 1.6 = 133

¥ 14 (2950/831) = 480

A# 1747

SINCE
SINCE

(166)

A# 250 ~~119~~

¥ 148

(5889)

LAST
PERIOD

(8)

163

(1468)

SINCE
TIBET

(17)

35.6

(2352)

RAVINE 70
MOUSE 70
STONE 70
PHONE 40
MATS 30
FOOD 60
CLOTHING 60

260

INCL
OTHER

(5)

~~119~~ 22.1

~~320/119~~ 131

19/5/96 Meant to mention while in Lhasa we paid a visit to the Mountaineering association. Definitely the place if you want to hire gear, warehouses full of snow boots, tents and groundnats, no small tents but I think they were all out with the expeditors. Met an interpreter, who

organizes all of the everest expeditions permits etc, apparently, a really nice guy and helped us a lot. The second time we went back an older Tibetan guy with half of his fingers missing, from the funny angles they had been cut at presumably from frostbite, also a really nice guy. We only ended up buying groundnats off of them but it was really nice meeting these people and getting a bit more of an insight into the Lhasa away from the Tak and the tourists.

A bit later in the day after dinner (lunch + dinner has been macaroni noodles and a soup mixed into-gether invariably with minced beef + dried fruit along the way - not too bad, the macaroni tends to be a bit undercooked due to fuel worries I think and so is quite heavy + fills you up quickly!), a bit later in the day anyway a couple (the two?) of monks arrived on bicycles and leaving them at the bottom of the valley came over and invited us up for a look at the monastery. Actually one arrived first and stood for a bit in the shadows of the camp watching us, finally explaining he was a monk by lifting his hat to show a bare head! They were both dressed in normal deep chinese street clothes. The monastery was quite nice, small and tucked into the hillside with rooms as they would fit, misty dark atmosphere lit by coal smelting of the yak

Forgot to mention he, then one of the monks came
down with a steamer of hot water - for washing the
rest morning which was nice (if not too late however)

butter lamps, quietly sitting gold statues flickering in the candle
light behind glass covering as usual, a few small windows of
bright white like reverse silhouettes here + there amongst
all the grey timber beams and white washed walls. A SO \neq note
placed in front of the idols ^{to} suggest a donation, & and most probably
their main reason for erecting us up, although I think that they
are glad of the visits. Would be quite interesting to know
the low down of on a little monastery like this, only a couple of
monks maybe, quite young, reasonably isolated from the
nearest town (the monks maybe wide into town every day - and
do what all day?) and from the nearest other monastery, although
I imagine they're not alone. Maybe they are just caretakers of the
monastery which ~~is~~ serves more as a public temple now after the
cultural revolution and the reduction in the number of monks.

Would have only had two or three hours sleep with the
anxiety over cold and wetness and woke up to snow on the sides of the
tent and an inch or so of snow everywhere. And we weren't wet and
not too cold! Got under way a couple of hours later one m.u.
Susanna had had breakfast and organised herself! The snow had
all but melted by this stage, we set off over the hill to the next
valley + headed up it to a small village we could see having to
make a decision in the face of conflicting ridgelines or roads with

the map ... we were wrong! Susanna + Christian didn't want to
cross the river where we had + so we had to walk up further than
them to cross before we could come back. Christian went into
poor mood, quiet and frowned expression on his face, especially
when + perhaps because Susanna insisted on dropping into the locals
house and asking for tea costing us another half hour. ^{is!}

So we finally got under way and into the night valley
about eleven or twelve o'clock. Up along the road past
a meadows with the odd nomad tent and grazing yaks, they
come up here from May to October apparently for the grazing.
Was a long walk up the valley, especially when its along road
with a truck passing you every half hour or hour or so.
Susanna got very tired and was very slow, Christian also
wasn't that quick bursting into a series of short deep breaths
every now + then to replenish his oxygen I suppose, not silly at
all but very comical, especially as everything about him is so
serious! Susanna anyway complained of a headache and
altitude sickness and said she shouldn't go on. We agreed it
was the only thing to do although all three of us wanted to
reach the campsite near the top of the pass which was our
goal for the day. Christian was especially quiet as he has
limited time + the pace we were making ($\frac{1}{2}$ + $\frac{2}{3}$ that of

Sussanna's guide book) meant we might not make Namto. On the next day. So we set up camp & luckily after refusing any Diamox, even half a tablet as the HRA recommends at the onset of mild AMS symptoms, Sussanna's headache disappeared after only five minutes. (Because we had stopped climbing of course!) I don't like missing goals!

The camping spot was quite nice, no protection from the wind but the wind died down, it was just cold. It was a clear night which made it even colder, when we woke in the morning the ground was frozen, the puddles were frozen and the condensation on the inside of the tent was even frozen. I got up in the middle of the night and the milky way was stretched north south along the strip of sky visible from the valley and it was the clearest I have ever seen it. Like a long stretch of cloud with slightly sharper corners and you could see the holes and edges it was beautiful but I could only spare a minute or two as it was so fucking cold! I wasn't cold in the sleeping bag except for my hip & a little on my shoulder where the sleeping mat was obviously a bit thin, so the sleeping bags were worth it.

Angie + I stood on the unfrozen bit of ground that had been under our tent stomping our feet trying to keep them warm

while we waited 30 minutes for Sussanna to finish talking about & get ready! Hmmm... So much for the repeatables who was going to circle the lake etc. soft as!

Clear night, clear day thankfully, so it was a nice walk up to the pass. Larang La pass. 5100-5200m, yaks being herded down the road and the bright red ochre of the mountains edged with a pure white sickle of snow against the blue sky. Colours and views are so vivid up high because of the thin air and harsh light I suppose. The walk down was through meadows and colourful hills, greens and reds and greys with patches of snow about. We stopped for lunch by a big patch of ice overhanging the stream and guess what macaroni again which was nice actually catching the yaks & graze back and forward. Lots of nomad tents about and yaks speckled across the valley below, and so are the days of our lives. We've come across a few nomad tents and they are generally pretty interested us (and vice versa) but we haven't been visited in for tea yet, I'm not sure if they are just a bit shaken about by us and stand there not sure of what to do or whether it's just not the custom. Judging by how people walk into our guest house rooms to have a bit of a look (two guys last night come in & were happy to just stand by the

walk inconspicuously and watch the goings on) maybe we should just walk into the tents and make ourselves at home?

Namsto Qa the town to the east of Nam Tso was pretty uninspiring but the guesthouse (contrary to what we'd heard) made up for it. The couple running it were very nice making an effort for us + looking after us. Fried veges, bread and rice for dinner, veges and noodles for breakfast, pretty good. Slept like the proverbial except to get up for a couple of toilet breaks ^(burned shavers!) wowed by the barking dogs, eyes lit up by the torch at the end of the building we were going behind! Managed to get petrol (by means of an empty beer bottle ~~low~~ lowered by hand into the tank of a truck!) and the place has a couple of decrepit basketball courts so it can't be all that bad!

Woke up to an inch of snow covering everything (it's now the 21st - missed a diary date somewhere!) covering the town, which only slightly improved its appearance, just as desolate under snow as without it!, covering the plains around us and covering all of the mountains we had just come across. Bit slow to get going - Christian wasn't that keen on walking in snow + Susanna was juggling around with Tsompa porridge etc. but by 10 o'clock we were tromping off through the snowy plains the mountains (hills) of Tashi Dorje sitting up in front of us in the distance and Nam Tso off to

our right, the range separating us from Damsburg etc. on the left, pretty scenic! By one or two o'clock the snow had melted on the



plain, we'd passed many remain tents and grazing yaks, we'd argued pointlessly about which bit of the lake we were nearby and about which way to go, and had finally trudged through tundraed ground of dog at first and then wet and marshy led on by Angi who couldn't hear us telling her to stop. I was in a really bad mood, partly because I was so tired, having had to put up with what seemed like the child like bickering behaviour of Christian and Susanna for the past three days and in particular the past couple of hours no one listening to each other views and just being stupid (it seemed to me) and obstinate and wasting time we could have been walking, and finally sick of the walking and I ended up bawling up at Angi, I was really sorry, I just seem to lose it every now + then, things build up + I take it out on her, poor little thing, it's not her fault but she takes it to heart as she should. You are going to have to learn to stay with yourself Brandon. I wonder if I'm not ignoring something I should be within me. I know I have a violent streak, one of anger that needs to be expressed every now + then, I spend a lot of idle thought in me good then bad scenarios

which I guess is my own private holier than thou syndrome or complex or whatever you call it. Anyway, so I blew up at Angei & then said to the others that I didn't like the attitudes & didn't think we were working well as a group, and Angei & I would probably go our separate ways & track it back from Tashi Dorje. Family enough things cleared up. Sussanna & Christon even talked together in their tent at night, now we are at Tashi Dorje it all seems forgotten. Sussanna I think thinks it was just an outburst but I don't take any of it back! I'm not about to stir it all up again for the sake of what she thinks however, I would like to.

27/5/96 After trekking?

26/5/96 PM

USTCHA	810 x 14 =	1134	FOOD (60)	BUS 400
USCASH	95 x 14 =	133	M/M (80)	
¥ 14 (2200/831)	=	370	PLATE (10)	
		A\$ 1637	WATCH 20	

	SINCE START	CASH PERIOD	SINCE TIBET	INCL OTHER	INCL TRAVEL/OTHER
A\$	24.3	12.2	27.5	14.7	7.1
¥	144	73	163	87	43
(588)	(194)	(235)			

Nam Tso Marshland (4700m approx)

So anyway we tramped on over the hillocks and moosh, and on and on... and waiting for the promised inlet of Nam Tso to show itself, so we could camp at the bird sanctuary. We finally come across a nice little river with some grassy bits nearby perfect for camping with a big hill on the other side of them which we were sure we would be able to see the inlet. So this little spot in mind we climbed the hill... nothing... we visited a nomad camp not far away and through some wild gesticulation gathered that the inlet was out there somewhere!... we climbed on the back of the nomad's truck, we climbed up on the railing up on the back of the nomad's truck and scanned with binoculars... nothing... we retreated and camped down by our little river!

And it was nice, there was one moment when about two hundred sheep come ambling up looking like they owned the place & meant to take it back but they stopped short happy to bleat & graze & drink & just be sheep a little further upstream. The nomads, a couple of ponies come down to watch us cook dinner. Fifteen in total, yak boots and jackets, knives, hair hobs, brown vegetable juice on the older women's face (I learnt later - for sun & wind protection), a bit of swapping of puffed wheat (from them) for raisins (from us), all very... interesting, was kind of nice

actually, goes from being interested onlookers (both us + them) to something a bit more together + blended with the country + what it is + what we are in relationship to it (if you know what I mean - the glass pane gets taken down + we are all a part of the scene) when a bit of communication takes place, even just a few swapped smiles as in the case of the old sheep herder nomad on the way up to Kongka pass a couple of days later. Fifteen round painted faces of different sizes + shapes, like a portrait of the family, the old lady and old man with the pitch fork type of thing, the slight hills of the plains all around, real and uncomplicated.

There was also a little spring near by, an eerie swishing + bubbling of sound at the bottom of a pond between the hillocks from which a little stream flowed. Probably very clean being filtered through all that clay + soil but its iodine for us baby! The stuff never seems to satisfy your thirst, you take a sip, it's bearable, even ok in fact but your thirst seems to immediately withdraw to some hidden corner only to creep, suspiciously at first, out again nosing around for real water. The stuff stains the plastic of the water bottles yellow, I can imagine how our insides look!

By far the nicest part of the day was sunset, the clouds over the mountains to the south, I can't remember their name, went gold with the mountains all dark + gloomy in contrast, and

then pink and finally a darker grey than even the mountains. Awesome right these panoramic mountains stretched out along the southern boundary of this huge basin I guess you would call it, sheep + their herd munching over to one side, the nomad families up on the hill and wide space bridged with beautiful colours in the sky.

Of the next morning + walking, we followed the nomad tents which were set up foraging the baggier more tussled bits (as you would expect!) but in the end once we had finally sighted the inlet (an hour or so or more from camp) we hauled across country + hence up + down a bit. The inlet, finally, after two hours of walking from camp! The port day and a bit we had been up on top of every slight rise we came across peering in vain for a glimpse, and here we were sitting tired and worn out at 10 o'clock in the morning in front of our flat stretch of unimpressive water realising that now we had to walk around it and onto the Tashi Dorjes! And that we did long walking along that ground in space. We passed the bird sanctuary at the head of the inlet, a few interesting ducks + ... things? some even puffing out their necks + dancing a bit in courtship, was all right (glad we didn't press on to camp there the night before!) We

crossed the river feeding the inlet taking off our shoes and exposing our feet to the ice cold water. We steamed our way out of the marshes and onto the dry sandy spit out to the Tashis and we walked on, walked on ignoring how slowly everything approached us, walked through the haze we had seen the gates of on the other side & which seemed an age coming; walked past the lizards and the purple flowers, stopping to take interest briefly just to enforce the fact that this seemingly interminable distance wasn't getting to us. Big Tashi got close and we could make out the details of little Tashi, finally the rocks got close and the last little climb got close and then we were sitting there in the middle of it, the two huge sentinel rocks with prayer flags streamed across them, the jeep road coming in, little chertons here & there and the monastery homotage whatever, a collection of white buildings in the cove in little Tashi behind us, oh! and of course Nam Tso sitting there shy blue beautiful, revealed by our slight elevation.

Tashi Dorje Monastery (4750m approx)

Spirits rose immediately, people were chirping & full of enthusiasm we cooked a big lunch as we were all starving, paid our 15 ¥ entrance fee (for the area) and headed on down to the shore of

the lake which had till now eluded us. We washed a couple of bits of clothing, we ~~even~~ washed bits of ourselves and we even bathed, beautifully clear water, I hadn't been that close to the shoreline of so much crystal clear water in ages, it was like being at the beach or amongst the lochs up in Scotland, and upon putting my head under I almost blacked out but it was great. The sun shined and the wind stopped still. Susanna pointed & we all unwound & enjoyed it immensely.

Felt a bit like being at the shores of Jules Verne's great underground sea in 'Journey to the centre of the Earth' it was so surreal. You travel over this mountain pass (oh given its along a road with tracks every now & then!) into this huge basin. The altitude is so high that you can see for miles and distances become hard to judge. Like a huge adventurers playground with a string of mountains covered in snow along its sides. And you get there & its huge, it takes 1 1/2 days to walk from Namto Qu to the Tashis you can see just in front of you, given its not through mushroom forests or ~~anything~~ but peculiar knobbly marshland with some tents and yaks instead, and you arrive at the shore of this huge lake, salt water (lightly salted), brilliant blue, reflecting the sky and little lapping waves and a weather system that seems its own, all still slightly surreal, and quiet, and

yours.

28/5/96 That night we set the tents up in the back of one of the hermitage caves which gave a bit of shelter from the wind which had picked up (and also a bit of atmosphere when you lit a candle or two!), and brought some cloud in with it. Susanna tried out her bivouac, a large waterproof bag for her + her pack to sleep in!, as she intended staying on + we, to give ourselves as much time in China as we wanted to head off the next afternoon. She kept us all awake for the first three hours constantly muttering it felt like! Hmm... strokes me as very nervous particular at times. Very up tight + has to be in strict control of her immediate surroundings for a traveller. She won't for instance sleep in a dorm room if there are other people she doesn't know in it, but she will do trekking (including on shelter in Namad tents) on her own!

The next day, the 23rd ^q HAPPY ^q BIRTHDAY ^q BIRTHDAY ^q BIRTHDAY ^q BIRTHDAY
(got a card, and previously a compass + birthday dinner from Angie and a painting of Dam Tso from Susanna) we spent the morning doing the Kora, the circuit of the smaller Tashi for our spiritual good, and I climbed up on top, spectacular linguistic views

in the lake especially against the dry rocks and brows of the surrounding landscapes. Talked a lot about getting home to London from Moscow, looking forward to seeing London again + coming around Europe.

The afternoon was what seemed like a very long hour-hour walk along the edge of the lake up into the mouth of the valley leading to the Kang 1 passes and back to Danching. Similar sort of thing to the previous days, you could see the lake there stretching around in front of you, you could see the ~~old~~ six foot step in the terrain beyond it that used to be the old shoreline and you could see the valleys between the hills and the one we had to walk up all there laid out in front of you. You just lose the scale after the first few kilometres, the ripples in the lake look into an uninterrupted smooth blue, the terrain into the general form of ridges and peaks and valleys. It's not until you have been walking for a couple of hours past what seems to be the same (exact same) stretch of lake that you realise your minuscule size amongst it all. You look to the sides and see the landscape sweeping past you at a reasonable pace bushes + woods etc. fading in + out of perspective, you look in front of you and it's only (it seems) the first twenty or so metres that are doing anything. The mountains and the road that you have had your eyes fixed upon

For the last twenty minutes seem to just sit there any small changes imperceptible to the human eye. It's only once you sit for a rest every hour or so + contemplate Tanki behind you, you start to realize you can pick out less + less detail and those mountains must be getting closer.

We come across some smaller stretches of water at the southern end of the lake that you couldn't see from a distance, as it was so flat. Luckily they didn't present too much of a difficulty but looking back down at the lake + those 'little' bits of ancillary water you are again reminded of your minuteness in the face of this landscape where everything seems huge - valley of the giants!

Finally set up camp near the river in the north of the valley, the whole river actually disappears into the ground presumably filtering through the topsoil to the stretches of water below by the lake, leaving only a dry river bed which must flow full during high flows. A bit worrying at first when we thought we may have to go a night w/o water, scraped off bits of snow to melt in Anqi's water bottle and everything is, there was no way we were going to walk back to the lake.

We were only fifty metres or so from a small nomad tent in which lived a couple of men who grazed their sheep + a few horses around the valley. We tried through a bit more wild

gesticulation to make sure it was ok to set the tent up ~~at~~ here. We ended up I think with an invite to sleep in their tent and almost unwittingly inviting him to sleep in ours. Still no invitation for tea! The guy was quite nice though and never failed to exchange a smile. He came over later to watch dinner being put together and refused tea we offered him as he had all but one (I can't remember whose now). His friend came in from the hillside with his flock and once again we were surrounded by the bleating of grazing goats + sheep. Most of the nomad camps as did this one erect a circular pen made from yak or sheep wool material (held up by ropes + poles) to which the livestock make their way + shelter from the winds at night.

We weren't so lucky, our little tent stretched and strained for most of the night under the strong winds which swept down the valley. Was worried it was going to rain + we would have been saturated but it turned out to be a clear night thankfully. So clear in fact that I swivelled around and lay for a bit (on the leeward side of the tent) with my head out the door admiring the stars, beautiful, really distinct milky way again. Anqi even got up and joined me for a while - unlike her to miss sleep! - and we looked at Jupiter through the binoculars (appeared as a white disk). Was really nice, probably.

the nicest stars, with the clearest airway, we will ever see,
(with no sign of the comet!)

The next day was a long day, eight hours of walking, over the Kong La pass (5150m) and down the other side to try and get as close as we could to Damslung (without being in Damslung!). Was a beautiful walk. No trail apart from some goat tracks here and there and the odd yak hoof print. The scenery was a lot more rugged than Lagen La.

Started by continuing up the wide valley which turned left and then right again, meadows with yaks and their herders peacefully away from any road or sign of civilization, just munching on the grass (what there is of it) amongst streaks of unmelted snow and shale slopes leading up to jagged peaks. The valley then disappears behind a ridgeline, turning right sharply and narrowing into a gorge where there are only a few scarce grassy patches ^{where} the yaks and their herders rarely go. It would seem. Then left up a very narrow little tributary gorge which must have only been ten metres wide and twenty or so deep, a steep climb (really noticing the altitude on the breathing & strength now) over loose rocks and snow.

Once out of that it was a long climb up a broad summit of rocky ground and snow, a couple of stone cairns? to mark the beginning & end of the summit, flat once you're up there! and a view of our valley down. Took us four hours to reach the summit and it wasn't easy walking, nothing to match Thorung La but still quite an effort.

Felt great at the top, really nice views and the peace to ourselves, away from it and walking! Had lunch fifteen mins or so down the other side out of the wind in the sun. Lots of food (macaroni - what else), sunshine, flat rocks to lie on and nice views, man it was hard to get moving again.

Down the other side was nice as well, lots of other valleys coming in from the left and right with big ridgelines either side, valley floor a mixture of hills of stone and bits of pasture. Some marshy bits with potholes of water with ice six inches under the water on top, must have been really cold up here! A small camp or two and some remains of old stone corrals and bits of river here there & everywhere, four or five valleys come in to meet almost at a point at one stage.

We camped by a little stream that was an offshoot of the main river and put the tents on the only bit of (almost) flat

grass we could find, in the end it looked like the stream had been landscaped around the tents with a little bubbling waterfall just up stream over. Kjell Christian awake most of the night apparently but we slept



well! Was a very rocky gorge with not much flat space for tents. we only saw one nomad tent in this part of the valley and that was on an island in the stream. A little crowd of five or six faces which all looked female I must admit, huddled next to the tent watching us make our way down, no response to smiles or waves or anything - just silent still faces watching.

This time we were visited by yaks which made a nice change from the sheep & goats. The yak herder stayed for a bit to watch dinner as usual, and also as usual politely refused tea.

The next day, the 25th, eight days trekking by this stage, we got up early, climbed out of the valley to good views of the long valley along the range containing the main road and Damsheung etc. The valley continued down through a narrow gorge according to the book &

we weren't sure whether or not we would be able to get through. Three hours of walking and we were in Damsheung eating fried veges & rice. The walk wasn't much. Flat arid land with a compound of buildings here & there and a fence or two to cross.

After an hour or so of trying to get a bus to take us back to Lhasa we jumped on the back of a truck (my initial preference anyway) and for a small token of gratitude - 1/2 the price of the bus - got a lift back. And it wasn't too bad, a bit dusty at times, good views except that they were all in reverse. I stood up for a while with my head poking over the head board of the truck admiring the view in front of us. We stopped halfway at what might have been hot springs. I was a little dubious as there was heaps of water, great concrete tanks full of it steam pouring off into the atmosphere as opposed to the little baths you could squeeze your feet into along the way in from Zhazhazhu. The other worrying factor was the big plant of some sort on the other side of the road, big I forget what they call them, condensers?, coolers? throwing out steam and pipes everywhere. (come over to the pool?) I kind think the Chinese are high on environmental considerations even when it did look like the richer sect. and a lot of Japanese in fact, who were doing the bathing. Our poor old truck drives rather though the 10 ¥



entrance fee was a little much as they weren't of the desired type of people and so we were on our way pretty quickly. Five minutes after the turn off from the main road for the springs we stopped to help someone who had broken down (a lot of broken down trucks on the sides of the roads, usually with a dozen or so Tibetans sitting with their belongings next to it waiting for the repairs so they can get on their way, where do all of these people go - to Lhasa I guess for the festival Sakjamas birth + death on the full moon (I think?). Anyway feeling a little responsible as it was I who had bawled us on there in the first place I jumped down and got back into the back after a few quick words with the driver relaying his message of words to the question Lhasa? and his less confidence giving motions of washing his body in between. A stop at a hot pool of bathing locals was pretty far down on the list of things we were expecting might turn up on the trip.

We also stopped at a roadside stop. Our driver and his couple of companions jumped out and after the driver had washed his feet (perhaps that was why they were turned away from the bath?) got into a couple of beers. We sat in the little tent trying not to think of our boozing driver sitting out on the grass (letting his feet dry and munched on tea day old offered piece of dough thankfully bread and 55 milk tea (no butter!). There are lots of these little roadside stops, small tents

with mud walls to protect against the wind and a woman, or old man in our case selling tea and beer. One guy opened a bottle and before pouring any splashed a bit onto ground, in offering to the Gods (I think, it's nice to see the little bits like the truck stops + things and the real people.

Things went well, the truck dropped us off at the bus station where we miraculously bought tickets on a sleeper bus for Golund for 400 ¥ down from 566 ¥ with a simple 'what is your best price!' a miracle into the Yoh for 5 instead of 6 ¥, rooms available at the Yoh, dropped in on Mr. Tashi and gave him his tent and a small present which he was pretty happy about did come speak shopping around the Barkhor slowed down by meeting people from the group who trekked to base camp (they didn't get lost in a storm as we heard they might of + all had a great time - still happy with our jeep trip for 155,050!) Did a 3/4 reverse lap of the Barkhor looking for a shop that had shut (bad karma on that point) and gorged ourselves at the Kaldash for dinner ending up being the last ones there with the exception of a couple of rats whose footprints we could see (with them + them) and ~~these~~ ^{whose} squeals we could here on the false material sheeting of the ceiling above us.

And so ended Lhasa, a lot busier now with the festival in full swing, a lot of pilgrims doing the larger route around the city.

a lot protesting it, 11 km or 15 km or something! I know: at one time of the year a leg is worth 1000 times that at any other time, and this must be the time.

All up, trucking spent

food we bought	60	dinner at Namtso	12
sleeping mats	80	Wolly "	10
tent (present)	20	room "	13
bus there	30	Tashi entrance	15
trach back	13	Tashi noodles	5
brooker thermo tashi	8	lunch Parsheng*2	22
plate + mugs	10	tea on way back	2

300¥

over eight days 37.5 ¥ a day
 " 5.9 A\$ a day - not bad.
 (1.3)

29/5/96 On yet another train somewhere on the way to Chengde. Given all this time to think, somewhere on the way to a lot of places! Reading 'A Tale of Two Cities' by Charles Dickens at the moment. Really superbly written, fills me with wants to create something like that. unburied, decent quality. I want to get back buy a computer & sit down with times lesson & create, I want to sit down & design with forethought, I want to write

something really nice, I want to put together a library full of quality and civilization, I want to sit down, surround myself with beauty & solidness and produce something of the same, I want to be a part of all of the things that make a civilization great, the culture, the art; the refinement, I want it all around me and I want to be a part of it too; and I want to be able to spread my understanding to all levels of the world, I want it in front of me in a small globe that I can drowse on at will, I want to be able to glide about it at will & know the currents and the highlights and pitfalls

30/5/96 So the decision was made to go overland. To save money and to keep the principle of overland back to Europe, even though extortionate prices (land cruiser + guide only: 22000 ¥) along the Chengde rd. meant we had to go north via Golmud and hence it was going to cost us two or three extra days.

Trip to airport	150 ¥	Lhasa → Golmud sleeper	
Flight	1680 ¥	bus (25 hrs)	400 ¥
Dep. tax	30 ¥	Golmud → Xiayang hard	
	<u>1860 ¥</u>	sleeper train (23 hrs)	110 ¥
		Xiayang → Chengde hard	
		sest/sleeper (34 hrs)	170 ¥
			<u>680 ¥</u>

i) saved 1180 ¥ = 142 USD = 185 A\$ (x1.3)
and cost us around three dogs → worth it.

That is // Lhasa → Colmed via a sleeper bus that took 25 hrs
the other choice was a local bus for 280 ¥, a luxury
bus for 420 ¥ (2x2 non lay back seats) or the sleeper for 560 ¥.
The sleeper however came down to 400 ¥ after Christian's relentless
bargaining ('What is your best price?' - 400, oh, ok) and so very
delicious about what we had just paid for we found ourselves
sitting the next day in astronaut like positions on 3/4 length beds
stretching north along the road to Colmed, Buck Rodgers man! Seen
a few of these sleeper buses around China + they are quite good, 24
people and everyone comfortable, comfortable enough that is it
you're Chinese, slightly shorter than your average westerner and not
abject to chain smokes all around, continually retching of throats out
the windows and on the floor, specks of cigarette ash floating down
from ^{above} amongst the quicker falling food scraps and other
rubbish and your not subject to the standard high countenances of
your fellow Chinese! It was a bit more comfortable than your
average bus anyway. The scenery was pretty nice on the way up,
the whole time along the borders of the Tibetan plateau, dog and
light brown dusty, a few mountain passes that seemed more

like small rugged hills in comparison with the huge spaces all
around. Really gives you a good perspective on just how big
this part of the country is when you head out into it on a bus or
a train and go and go and go, the countryside around you
continuing to spool by, endless reserves of more of the same
in front of you, I gave up long before it did. Other images of the
trip were darkness outside with impossibly hungry sidetrack diversions
lit up in yellow headlights ahead and consideration of the busching of
the bus coming to a screeching halt and a night in the middle of nowhere
going nowhere on the Tibetan plateau, an argument with a small
Chinese woman in a dive of a truck stop collection of buildings
(town is ascribing undeserved dignity) after she had tried, ^{was}
trying to rip us off at twice the price for dinner [all dust, dog
turds and rubbish strewn about the remains of a wrecked car],
and waking up to the bus moving thank god, the windows all
stained up and snow covering the ground outside, really nice

Colmed → Xining a day in Colmed looking around the markets
choosing left water bottles and eating and onto the next leg, 25 hours of
hard sleeper which wasn't that hard and still dog and dusty and rocky
brown outside with the exception of Qinghai Lake for part of it, the
biggest lake in China, stretches of blue water, no turquoise this time, and

big breaks of sand dunes, and people selling fish everywhere. Dried shells of fish for chewing on, big smoked fish sloped down on the window side table and strings of seven or eight fish swung by their mouths down the dishes next to walking legs and flopped to rest under the seats on the floor. Barren dry country side with ugly brick villages that look like they'd been thrown up in the past four or five years in an effort to spread the population a bit. Dugly + uncarved for you could probably date them by reading through the use by dates (if they had any) on the different stratum of rubbish around the place.

The Chinese train are actually very good, lots of staff, lots + lots of staff, staff bringing hot water and food around, cleaning the floors making sure windows aren't open annoying people at night or people haven't got excessively smelly feet annoying people during the day. There are reserved seats + beds, table cloths + sheets + blankets and even a complimentary sight seeing gift of two fan ball kettles hung off some string with bells hung off them + a small red tassel, sorry as I was to part with it I sent it off to Stu as a engagement present. There are staff at the doors looking after you getting on/off at stations, staff with hammers to fix odds + ends, staff with flags + staff that salute as the train pulls

out. at one station, the entire staff were women, workers with tools + yellow caps, salutors, gate people + cleaners, enquiry staff + food sellers, everyone except for one solitary guy who stood inside a painted area of two or three square metres on the platform, to attention, chest out eyes ahead waving a flag as we left. I almost forgot the staff who scrub the sides of the carriage with brooms + water at the stops, there is definitely a shortage of staff, uniforms + people must be cheap in the Chinese railways. And the railways are relatively clean, easy to use and comfortable, and on time as a result maybe.

Xining → Chengde had to spend the night in Xining, slept on a bed that wasn't moving which was a bit of a novelty. What to say about the trip? The scenery changed from flat arid with the odd rugged hills to hilly arid. We travelled down a valley for most of or a lot of the way anyway which was all the same barren light brown stony dusty but with strips of lush green fields terraced around the place, the result of some serious irrigation I imagine. It soon got to the point where every now level surface had lush green grass growing on it, right up to small canyon edges where water had cut through the easily erodable ground. All

20/10/2001

looking very landscaped + picturesque with woodl haystacks
 everywhere and mud-rendered houses with Chinese style roofs,
 the barrel tiles pointing upwards at the ends of the gables. And
 everything looked really clean, no plastic bags or abandoned
 shoes to be seen anywhere! We stopped for an hour in Lanchow
 a city the size of Melbourne and it looked quite nice. Very
 busy + colourful + relatively clean, fast food, a few tall
 buildings and sense of public space + warmth about the
 huge square in front of the railway station, a few cory from
 the grimy blues + greys + dusty streets returned in a jungle
 of concrete that I remember from Guangzhou (Canton).
 Hard not to be slightly impressed especially as I wasn't
 expecting it, I'm not sure why, had first impressions of the Chinese
 from Tibet + Colored I guess. So get another night on the train - I
 enjoy it actually, time to lie down + do stuff + sleep + read + play
 cards for a bit! - and the scenery has changed again, its now
 quite hot + humid, there is a heavy misty rain outside and
 a lot of rocky hills with forest, the valleys are full of fields
 some underwater with bullocks working them, a lot of hay just
 been cut, and power stations here + there emerging through the
 mist with the ridgelines of the mountains. Humm... August,
 in about spent + I'm finally caught up.

BOS Chong → Colored	25 hrs	Days in Colored	11 hrs
Xinan Colored → Xining	23 hrs	Night in Xining	12 hrs
" Xining → Lanchow	4 1/2 hrs	Lunch Lanchow	1 hr
" Lanchow → Chengde	30 hrs		
	82 1/2 hrs		25 hrs
	(3 1/2 days)		(1 day)

2/6/96 Chengde (成都)

Getting a bit sick of this writing in the diary stuff, can't be bothered.

Sichuan Opera, Mr Chen, backstage to the actors, tiny dressing
 room up + down, faces being painted, the exposure brought out to the
 landing, posed + posed + loving it for tourists cameras, the exposure a bit
 following a little disappointed at being second fiddle, the performance,
 some chaos, a room full of older, realer Chinese, tea and peanuts, open
 ventilation + men with blackened bottles refilling the tea, colours and
 costumes + tears, an old man the master of ceremonies in a green
 jacket + cap with red star, a man asleep two rows behind, another
 slapping his knee at dialogue next to me, murmuring at important
 moments, more tears, constant tears, a tragedy, two brothers,
 richness + poison + poison, a white + pink wash beautiful against the

black, lying forlorn and devoid of life upon the stage, incessant commentary from Mr Chen, a warm + relaxed atmosphere, a colourful + impressive sight, a flavour of Sichuan?

Qingcheng Shan, a holy Daoist mountain, unwittingly strayed into a tour on the way out, green green hills, Daoist temples, incense, candles, burning of paper money, joy ride car, high heels and a cheer lift. Misty mountains, steep ravines, up + down like the paintings you don't believe, a fitting place for mystics, rain + thin plastic ponchos on the pilgrims, on the tourists? Marks? religion? souvenir stalls maybe, car plates playing through the hills, advertising, tourism. - A Daoist fortune from cone sticks, number 23, will have to get it translated!

A Sichuan dinner, a small street and a hot pot of chillies, skewers of vegies boiled in the pot + dipped in oil + garlic, salt + MSG. Hot food + relieving beer (2.30 ¥ live star).

A mixed train (2:10 for 2:15), anger + sweat, calm + an afternoon dozing beer + eating egg fried rice watching the goings on in the street, a barber, a travel agent, a karaoke bar, another handdresser, a grocery store and a handful of restaurants.

Chels + waits and awakes in white sheets + bare bellies, smiles and laughs and looking at playbooks. A nice way to spend an afternoon.

A lot of doomed air and love, a lot of reassessment and a lot of a kick up the bum for the lot.

Chengdu - fast, busy, karaoke, malls and department stores, surly homely wives + a high standard of living, China rising to meet Hong Kong? Good food, variety!, the Traffic hotel, good showers + television.



青城山老君閣參觀卷

black: lying prostrate and devoid of life upon the stage, incessant
commentary from Mr Chen, a warm & relaxed atmosphere, a colourful
& impressive sight, a flavour of Sichuan?

Claps + writes and covers
in white sheets & bare
bellies, smiles and laughs
and looking at photo books
A nice way to spend an

...tain unwittingly stayed at...

23 卷

解曰. 此卦手板仙桂之象.
凡事必有贵人

商賈利益, 引致危.

病要訟遂. 尽可施为.

in the street, a barber, a ~~man~~ ~~ap~~,
barber, a grocery store and a handful of restaurants

showers + television



君閣

青城山老君閣參觀卷

3/6/96

16/16 PM
 USTCHQS 810 x 1.4 = 1134
 USCASH 95 x 1.4 = 133
 ¥ 1.4 (420 18.30) 155

OTHER BOOKS 20
 MISSED TRAIN 100

AD 1422

INVESTMENT (183)	LAST PERIOD (8)	STOCK PRICE (8)	INCL EXCHANGE
AS 24.4	26.9	26.9	24.3
¥ 145 (5889)	160 (1637)	160 (1637)	144

Trains and mountains and tunnels, in and out of tunnels and in and out of sleep... and trains and A Tale of Two Cities and mountains and cups of tea and dried fruit, and tunnels and noodles and granary and a Crown Turbid river, and thermoses of hot water and a winding perched road and periods of dozing and periods of waking and young stony unsworn groups of buildings and tiled roofed houses looking a little more generous and walks down the train and up the train and tunnels and mountains and trains + sleeping (3)

It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done, it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known.
 A Tale of Two Cities.

4/6/96 Shilin (the Stone Forest) FM

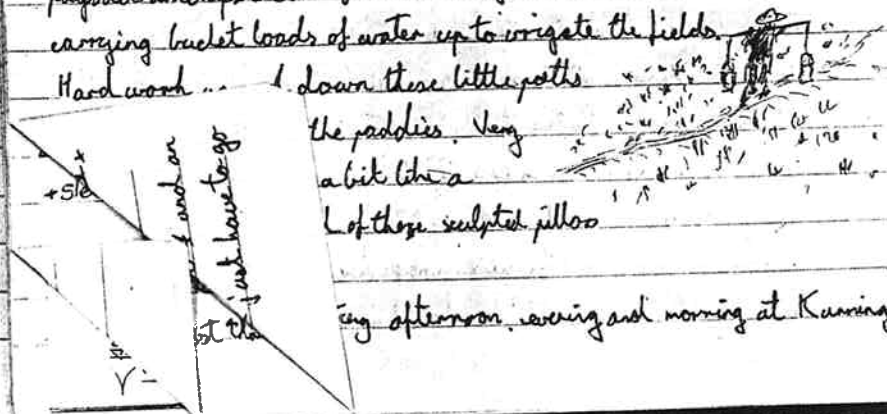
I think you tend to go a little insane when you travel for a long time. You find yourself withdrawing, into yourself, or away from other. I'm not sure which, probably the first I would think. You get overtaken with absorption. Absorbing the scenes and the people around you, a good analogy might be that some sense of occupation in getting lost in putting together a big jigsaw puzzle, a sense a withdrawal into the picture itself. You find yourself no longer looking into other peoples eyes, seemingly distracted a lot of the time your mind traips over other things, small things, organisational things of little consequence. You no longer put together conversations with people, not having any inclination to at all. On the trains from Guilin I found myself talking with Christian about Sweden not because I wanted to but because there was nothing else to do, it was almost a last resort. You can't be bothered with the act of conversation. Something a missed train, a kind of the hum in organisation and a afternoon with a few beers went along way to his. Humon again. Rather than absorption in the country around you it may well be absorption in the myriad of small things to organise & keep your eye on, its probably both.

Tried to extend our travel insurance today, over 200 ¥ and an hour later couldn't receive the box from London. Will just have to go

without for this kind leg. Medical Care in China shouldn't be too bad. I would hope & we're not doing anything extraordinarily dangerous. Fingers crossed & touching wood & all that!

6/6/96 The stone forest wasn't too bad, a maze of weathered limestone pillars with paths and lots of Chinese tourists weaving in, out, under and over them. You could leave the throngs of Chinese posing with thoughtful expressions for photographs behind pretty quickly by walking for a bit, which we did, the rock formations don't get any less interesting (Camels riding elephants, old men walking and rhinoceroses gazing at the moon although I admit we never recognized that particular one!) and we ended up sitting in a yellow roofed concrete (not many traditional old buildings left in China, cement has made it in a big way - a shame) pagoda amongst some fields and of course rocks and locals carrying bucket loads of water up to irrigate the fields.

Hard work ...



down these little paths
the paddies. Very
a bit like a
lot of those sculpted pillars

ing afternoon, evening and morning at Kunming

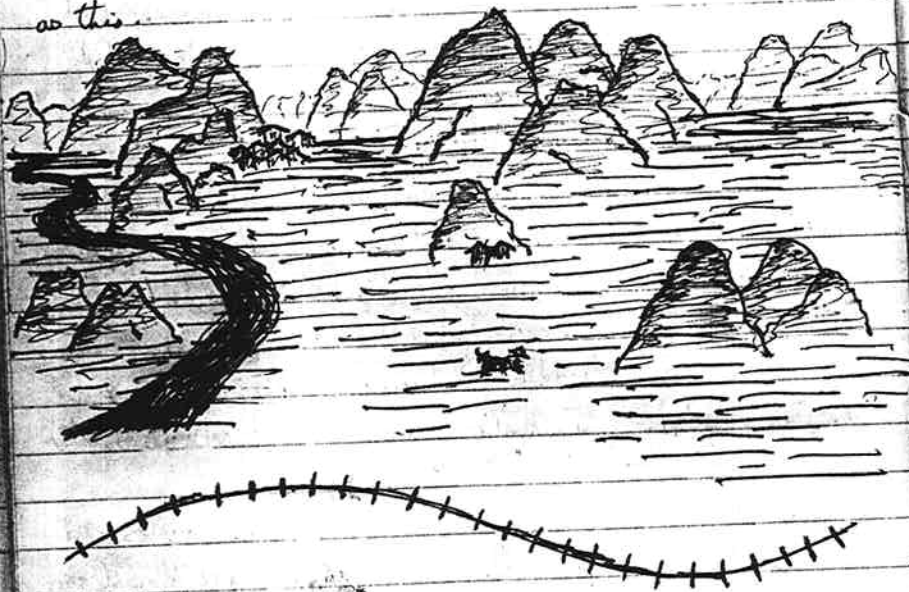
railway station and at the Holiday Inn trying to swap our hard seat tickets for Guilin (purchased on the false assumption under a moment of weakness, panic - five min before the window shut, stupidity, call it what you will, that the trip was 8 hours, not 32!) for or even just to get hard sleeper tickets. After two hours of potting waiting and paranoid thoughts of racism & couldn't care less attitudes we were able to get upgraded this morning on the train which was lucky as another couple could only get the upgrade halfway & look like getting a wake up call around midnight! The Holiday Inn episode was a return of the dreaded travel insurance. Another 130 ¥, missing bits of fox, incompetent secretaries and no replies later we've given it up as not meant to be.

So - the China railway system again, two minute noddles and countryside edging past the window again. So far I must say the sights have been dominated by the travelling. Hopefully three or four days in Yangzhou will help to fix that a bit.

7/6/96

Passing through some beautiful scenery at the moment. Tall mossy hills of stratified rock rising up out of rice paddies. Caves in the hills and little villages at the foot of the hills, would love to do some walking here but I'm not even sure where we are. We just passed a reasonably small station called Ma Wei and I think we must

6 near the Guizhou / Guandong border. I hope Yangzhou is as nice as this.



People doing Tai Chi and other exercises, small flapping of arms or dancing of feet. Nothing too strenuous; just back and forth back forward back forward while their faces wander around the general scene around them, usually lots of other people doing the same thing in parks in the morning around town, or people brushing their teeth + splashing water over themselves in the basin areas at the ends of the carriages on trains. The tai chi practices a bit more

inward, contained in body mind + soul to the slow fluid movements. All very good for you, circulation and peace of mind etc but judging by the stomachs a losing battle in a lot of cases. Bodies it seems tell a lot, soft bodies with swollen stomachs and sweetly creased faces, strong muscular bodies toned by manual labour, in old men with lean stern faces as well as the young, other old bodies, bodies of old grandmother women usually bent over to almost 90° in cases talking tales of a lifetime of heavy loads + hard work.

Not many faces put in at gym to work lives of ease. I would imagine, bodiless purely from the life.

12/6/96

12/6/96 PM
 USDCHE: 510 x 1.4 = 714
 VSCASH 95 x 1.4 = 133
 ¥ 1.4 (170018.31) = 286

A\$ 1133

OTHER
 WANKONG 100
 SNIRT 20
 BOWERS 40
 STAMPS 30
 CHOPSTICKS 25
 INSURANCE 250?
 JACK BATT 30

	SINCE START (192)	LAX PERIOD (9)	SINCE CHINA (17)	INCL OTHER (9)
A\$	24.8	32.1	29.6	25.5
¥	206 (5889)	267 (1422)	246 (1637)	212

Yangzhou (阴朔)

The beautiful scenery continued all of the way to Guilin with only a small break here + there and Yangzhou was beautiful as promised. Could have easily spent two, three hour or more weeks there, exploring the countryside, living in the farmland by the river, climbing the hills for the sunsets and a bit of solitude. As it was we enjoyed the great food and cheap beer and just indulged a bit, a traveller's need as everybody says, but it's not too the stage where it has destroyed the town - get!, there are a few pushy tourists about + no doubt it will get worse.

Went for a ride out to Fuli for market day, overated up by little village + rode back along the back tracks by the river. Took a boat out to watch the Cormorant fishing which was beautiful, the birds diving around the little bamboo skiffs with ties around their neck that wait for fish over a certain size. Went on a boat trip for the day down to crown cave (didn't go in - expensive + touristy - bars + trains + elevators in the caves!), rode out to and climbed Moon hill + meandered back through country lanes. Learned to play Mah-jongg and did a bit of calligraphy, would have liked to do some Tai Chi + learn to play chess also. And finally sweated a lot + ate

about four or five ice creams a day. Really enjoyed it! Ended up with an official Chinese student card declaring us students of Mah Jongg. Rather embarrassing actually!

Have just finished reading Wild Swans by Jung Chang, excellent book, goes through communism in China through three generations of a family, running from Imperial rule right up to the present. The things that come out are that liberal communism isn't such a bad thing, although I would argue that it's not too different to a leftist democracy except that it is more vulnerable to bureaucracy and abuse as there is no changing of Government. Mao's perpetual revolution concepts exist in a small way already in democracy with parties being deposed by voting instead of fighting. A system that keeps the government honest although as with any system it is always open to individual abuse. I think as a bottom line, humanitarianism relies upon humans. A product of your own societies indoctrination Brandon? The worst thing that comes out is shock at how one individual can manipulate so many others, a whole country into his own personal cult and use it for his own power base. It seems as though the atrocities China underwent were all a result, in fact

also a means, to keeping Mao in power. Extraordinary feat of manoeuvring in culture and politics all it seems to me, his. The final and most disturbing thing to come out of it is the surfacing of all the uglier sides of human nature. Torture, personal vendettas showing cruelty and sadism, selling out. It's disturbing as it's there, whether it was brought out by the fear and paranoia all around, or by Himmey's justifications handed down from above, or whatever, it was there, and it came to the surface. It's mostly in us as a people awaiting only the right conditions. Here it seems it occurred en masse, in our present society. I'm sure it operates widespread under limitations provided by our current moral standards and to a small degree outside of those standards. But there is the recognition of this thin flexible constraint upon that can change given the right circumstances, and recognition that in this day and age it is still there. Logic and reason are by no means infallible is what is disturbing.

The other thing I guess I was left with as with next good look is that feeling of inspiration to go and do something + be good at it. All feeling that thirst for recognition? Hmm...

I want to fly, I want to tear
and rip and stand legs astride

limbs clenched, eyes bright, mind clear
in control of myself. I want to exude
energy, I want to stand above and
want recognition.

I think this is quite an ugly piece of writing, I think. I think it comes from a desire to get back + do things, to create + produce, to put down somewhere what I am for other to see, for me to see, for recognition, I think. I think I've been absorbing for a while and I'm full of inspiration and want to get some of it out I think. I think I feel I need to stop + settle for a bit to do it, that this diary is helping store a lot of it but is not helping towards the outlet, maybe this diary is lacking the recognition bit, I think.

The peace of mind and tranquility I used to look for, I used to want; is not so much of a peace as I want more. I'm a bit restless, I want a bit of conflict and struggle. I want a bit of living. The peace of mind and tranquility, I used to look for I have realised, is not all there is to living and being.

There needs to be interaction, if the waves you make
through the world, through the human race, are waves of

peace + tranquility, then so fast, but you must make
waves.

I'm not too sure about that last bit, what I'm trying to say is
that you can't drop out of the human race, the human race is
like healing somewhere and it embraces all of us, and we
all through life contribute to it.

Something you notice around China is that the fields
are always very well kept. Tended and sculptured it
seems to be like a landscape garden sometimes.

The cities seem to be a bit more dense and dirty and
some of the buildings are ugly and industrial
but the fields are the thing and seem to rest of tender
patience and attention.

There are a lot of very unimpressive boring jobs in
China. People have expressions on their faces, heads
cradled in palms, elbows propping them up off of glass
displays, which they sit from morning till night
in department stores - sometimes peering them and forcing
a smile. Their lifeless states of boredom
every now and then. You can almost hear the slower ticking
of the clock when you walk in, see the dust settling on

everything and everybody in an oppressive lounge, what a
nightmare. Train guards standing by the carriage doors at
stops waiting while people get on + off, only the unpleasent time
this year, pouring endless thermoses of hot water and
adjusting the towel on the rack, stuck in a recurring snippet of
time your mind screaming to be free of your body, it must be
There must be a way of sparing people these mental tortures

Sitting by an open window watching the house lights go past. Saw
a big old steam train chuffing along, beautiful grand things, you
still see the odd one in China. Looked slightly unwell, white steam
picking up ambient light and the light at the front proudly respectably
shining forth, incandescent yellow light glowing in the cabin. We
streamed past leaving it to slowly chuff wherever it was going.
I don't like the modern Chinese trains, too new + efficient and lacking
character, remind me of the model train sets at home, the slightly
older Indian trains + the new ones like Eurostar have lines that
suggest strength + power + size, these things have the lines of a
Columbian!

Anyway just finished a cup of coffee + a bit of watermelon
and sitting with my toothbrush + toothpaste next to me - waiting!
The lights outside are re-assuring, lights at that time of night

after dinner and the days work and before bedtime. That time of night when purple time is their own and they have a night deep to look forward to.



Warm lights of comfort + repose.

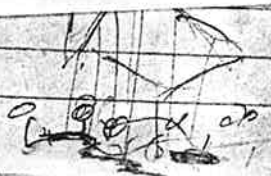
14/6/96 Putoshan (off Shanghai). (卅 BE 卅)

THE FLEA

A little flea fossicked on the sand, on the beach. He would fossick for a bit creeping here and there looking under grains of sand and sniffing this + that, pausing to rub his hind legs together and stopping dead silently still at other times when he sensed a danger coming from where he did not know. And then on impulse he would suddenly up and leave and fly to another bit of sand five or six or seven inches distant and continue to fossick there. Landing on small ridges and little mounds weaving valleys and plains of endless sand in this ocean of a beach. And then one day he landed upon a black thing. A thing

thing of fibrous feel. Lots of little fibrous things woven into a pattern into this black surface upon which he had landed. And he fossicked for a bit noting this strange black surface. It was in fact the nylon strip to a small bag but in his infatigability the little flea only saw the surface itself, a curious strange surface of black fibrous things woven into a regular pattern of up and over + down + under. And then on impulse he up and left ^{on their surface} and behold landed upon a white surface. A white surface of roughness this time, of a rougher waver up + down pattern but also of a fibrous type of mesh not dissimilar to the black surface he had also landed upon the time before. And he fossicked for a bit noting this strange surface and noting that the smells + feels were different as were the smells and feels of the black surface from any of the smells and feels he had come across previously upon the sand. And then on impulse he up and left, making his way in a single motion to a spot five or six or seven inches distant where he again found the sand of the beach. And again he fossicked, turning over grains and wadding up precipitous ridges, up and down valleys, bits of loose sand breaking away at times under his crawling + causing him to fall and slide and still he fossicked. And he continued like this for a bit, fossicking and up and leaving

Highly original. See also T. and J. 1914.



and he came across other strange and interesting surfaces in the sea of sand, khabis surfaces and a boring moist pulsating surface over which he had to struggle while he fossicked. And at the end of his day when he nestled down against the wind and made himself comfortable for the night before the next days fossicking he contemplated his experiences and thought to himself that, as a flea fossicking on a beach he had seen quite a bit of life, more than most. He wasn't quite sure what this meant but it felt right and he was sure it would be of benefit at some time in the future. Perhaps not the near future maybe but at some time, sometime maybe after this life of fossicking even, sometime when his tiny little soul becomes liberated from his tiny little body and flows the world over merge somehow to become more than just a mere flea ... maybe.

The trip out of Shanghai was nice, down the river with the lights of the Shanghai buildings quickly becoming another Hong Kong, part other ferries and barges (the modern day equivalent of the junk) and big container ships with big towering cranes moving slowly about in the night looking a bit like lowering ants slowly picking their prey to pieces, out past the big floating dry docks and ship building yards showings of

spots falling from sky to water and the tide and finally out to sea where a mist enveloped us and the ships horn was blown from time to time and even answered once from ~~the~~ distance far off in the fog.

Putoshan is nice, similar to islands off of Hong Kong, green hills and hazy oceans, to the point of fog banks obscuring some of the smaller islands you could see off the coast for a bit. Haven't done much as yet I must admit other than sit on a beach which is quite nice. Most of the temples etc all have entry fees and are all of the concrete kind you see all over China, not terribly inspiring after Nepal + India + Tibet - a country still growing over the scars of the cultural revolution. A lot of Chinese tourists here also, I don't know that I would come a long way to come here again (in fact I wouldn't!).

Shanghai was quite good based on low expectations. Bustling city streets full of life, some old New Yorkish 50's type buildings along the Bund and some new some horrible some not so horrible tall buildings. Was impressed with the pearls of the orient tower (which I thought looked horrible from the presentation I saw of it in London) and the big bridge across the river - what is the

name of that river? - that you see on the front of all of the
USC protesting brochures, both disappearing into the mist up
high lit up orange, green + red by all of the strong light.

15/6/96

"And still the ship did not pause, any
more than the moon pauses, neither to
look nor catch breath. But the soul
pauses and holds its breath, for wonder,
wonder, which is the very breath of the
soul."

D.H. Lawrence - the sleeping fish (watching up stopping)
(to advise something)

I feel like this sometimes, like my soul is in a quiet moment, pausing
to catch its breath, and the beauty + the wonder like many layers of rings
in a clockwork keep turning around me, and their beauty + wonder is
all the more vivid as it is temporarily out of reach, and I feel like
it is all swirling away like fluid and I want to be able to hold it
in its motion and keep it so that it shouldn't disappear. I think that
is what is beautiful about photography, a moment of fluid beauty, frozen
in an essence that extends to tendrils into the space either side of it and
into your mind in an attempt to capture + hold the moment, and sometimes
it succeeds, and sometimes it doesn't and it's just a photo.

Reading a book of short stories by D.H. Lawrence, beautiful writing
and character, surreal character at times making the writing all the
more distinctive + interesting but the stories seem to thin out into
nothing, like he enjoyed the describing + finished them off in a lung,
not being able to be bothered with the effort once the juice had gone.
Amazing - maybe I'm missing a lot of the significance or something, I
don't know.

16/6/96 Shanghai 上海

Back in Shanghai again, on a rainy day sitting in the tea
house in Mandarin Gardens (Yuyuan Bazaar), a big oriental
style shopping centre, the Darling Harbour of Shanghai I suppose.
It's actually quite an atmosphere, a seat by the window over the
goldfish pond, everybody sitting side on to face the inside where
everyone sits for hours drinking out of clay pots that are refilled
by long streams of boiling hot water coming down old kettles
brought around by men who look like they've been doing it all
their life. China could do with more tea houses, China could do
with a lot of the pre-cultural revolution traditions I would imagine.

There is a basement antique market here with some beautiful
paintings. Paintings of families on paper from the Ching dynasty that

used to be hung outside of temples apparently. Beautiful colours although the detail looks a little bit they must be 6' x 4' and on bigger scrolls and have a great presence. 2000 → 3000 ¥ for the real article and 500 ¥ for the later ones (I'm not sure how old but they have sort of photograph faces so I don't think they are Ching!). One day I hope I'm going to have heaps of money + be able to come back through asia + do some antique buying. Paintings especially. watches and statues and on and on.

17/6/96 I remember an old man, a man with an old face, a man of the people with a beard and stubble on his sunbaked face by the grey tears and pink blossoms of Notre Dame who did a charcoal character of me for free. And I remember the warmth of feeling.

18/6/96 ↑ Hmm... loses the thought a bit which was just the warm feeling from an act of human kindness in a place that I wanted so much to open its heart to me.

20/6/96 uschen's 510 x 1.4 = 714
 19/6/96 am CASH US 95 x 1.4 = 133
 ¥ 1.4(65018.3) = 110 = 957 A\$

OTHER
 MAN SONS 100
 BRUSHES 20
 BOOES 20

(★ ← Putoshan mosquito)

	SINCE START (199)	LAST PERIOD (7)	SINCE CANA (24)	INCL OTHER (7)
A\$	24.8	25.3	28.3	21.4
¥	14.7	14.9	16.8	12.9
	(5889)	(1433)	(1637)	

Trans siberian + flights to be included later:

Flight from London £ 330

Money transfer from London for TS + flight home
 ¥ 13000.84 = 1560 USD
 (INC 4% COMMISSION)

8.4% INCLUDED

Angie's owes	520 USD	(500)
Flight home	338 USD	(329)
Trans Siberian	363 USD	(349)
Russian Visa	52 USD	(50)
Acc St Petersburg	23 USD	(22)
Train to St P	62 USD	(60)
	<u>1358</u>	

Us Cash spending 202020 → (194 USD CASH)

The options for getting home are:

• Direct flight: KLM 662 USD (STRAIGHT HOME)
 Romavia 630 USD

	<small>HONEST BUSINESS</small>		<small>ON OROUAN.</small>
• Trans Siberian:	Train	349	197
(TRANS MANCHURIA 1 DAY IN MOSCOW 2 DAYS IN ST. P.)	Russ Visa	50	50
	Hotel Moscow	⊕	60
	Train → St. P.	60	60
	Hotel St. P.	22	25
	Flight home	325	325
	Transfers	10	20
		<u>816 USD</u>	<u>737 USD</u>

Flight availability not confirmed - less time to see Moscow + St. P. due to organization.

(2 DAY CANON) 2 DAYS HK)	• Hong Kong:	Train - Guangzhou	66 USD	?
		Boat - Hong Kong	50 USD	?
		Acc Hong Kong	50 USD	?
		Flight home	450 USD	?
		Transfers	10 USD	
			<u>626 USD</u>	

Human is the trans-siberian it is → not cheap, the most expensive option but as always the best value for money!

12/6/96 Some thoughts at night on engineering + architecture

- Try to incorporate form + pattern into buildings
- human / natural form
- the stars, constellations
- village form, house form
- historical, palace / tent form
- space form
- religious form - the way, Yin + Yang

Later thinking - via logic - form arising from function
 - via experimentation + post justification
 (function arising from form)



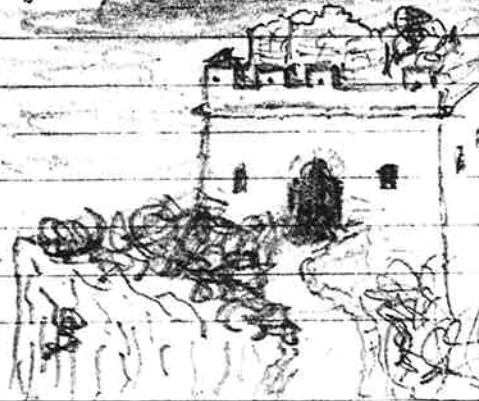
Set up Greenly awards in Melb.

2/9/96

25/6/96 Simatai (The Great Wall)

Thrown caution to the wind a bit and are
camping out in one of the watchtowers along the
wall at Simatai, watchtower number 12 to be
precise. Spent the best couple of hours up here by
ourselves watching the fading light go and just
being alone up here which is a strangely heavy feeling
on its own. I guess although you travel there
are actually very few times you are sleeping anywhere
at night completely on your own. In fact I can't
even remember another time! It is beautiful up
here, just us and the mountains + the haze and
the wall, and it's heavy as thick atmosphere
all around, a little haunting!

I guess you would call
it. Flew our little
goldfish kite much to
the appreciation of
an old lady who
was up here selling
snacks. Was really



(Pitoshon mosquito no. II →)

SIMATAI

rice, all of the tourists had gone home and she was just up here admiring the view by herself for a bit. She ran down the hill when a kite came off the kite and was getting all excited whenever he would dip a little low and come in danger of dropping below the wind which was peeling off the ridge. In the end the string snapped and he went drifting off down the valley flying a long way over a ridge and out of sight. It turned out that the wind must turn a full circle because a couple of watchtowers later we came across him brought back up the valley & set to for away from the wall and were able to retrieve him.

26/6/96 Well the night wasn't too bad or too long as I thought it might have been. Listened to every little noise, an old cigarette carton turning over in the breeze sounding like someone or something was there, plastic bags flopping, that we thought at first was the flopping of bats wings! Imaginations run wild, it was lucky we were tired enough for it not to last long. Got up a few times and had look at the stars one which to my surprise were amazing, the milky way again in all its glory & Jupiter, really beautiful.

27/6/96 Caught a lift back with another tour bus which was

lucky. So that was the great wall - really nice spot although the Chinese have put in a big (empty) coop and an ugly chairlift that peels off to one side and plays music when it is operating! I cannot understand why they don't seem able to appreciate a natural place.

Beijing (北京)

Beijing has been pretty good, relaxed and a lot to do. Flying kites in Tiananmen square with the locals in the afternoon, markets, visits to the Australian embassy, free orange juice & good music at Monkey business organising the Trans-siberian!, watching the lightning and the rain from our hotel room had a few huge downpours, shopping for nothing in particular, bookshops and books, and the bikes. The bikes have been great, just heading out and ambling along with everybody else, people going to work, carrying loads of fruit or boxes or furniture or whatever, kids falling asleep leaning against the back of their seats on the park benches, a nice flow of people that seems to just do that, flow, separate around any obstacle or person coming the other way or intending car or messy intersection, people just casually quietly steer around with the minimum of fuss rarely stopping for anything. The flow has been around

for too long to be scared of or pay any heed to traffic and red lights etc. I had two flat tyres the first two days, one in a torrential downpour and there is always someone at hand to fix it for a couple of ¥ on the side of the road. And as well as that there are people selling ponchos for bikes, seats, bells, tyres, a whole bicycle culture set up along the streets and accumulating especially under the overpasses and bridges where there is a bit of shelter and it seems the bikes have taken over to make it their domain.

Spent a day at the Forbidden Palace with 007 as a tour guide on a walkman tour which was really good. Laid out in huge spaces well proportioned, quite good architecture. Must have been really something in the days when it was used as it was supposed to, secret ministries and eunuchs etc etc, would have been immaculately kept, vast, quiet and holy, a land ordained by god and only a short step to heaven. The straggling flow of tourists cuts that bit away, destroys the vast open expanses of courtyard that would have been made so

imposing by the silence and echoing of any stray sounds from the city around. Most impressive place I've seen.

Beijing strikes me as more of an ex-pat city than a backpacker's city as I'd call Delhi. A bit more ahead maybe than the grass roots of other cities.

Rory Justice & Rosette the other night to see if we could stay with them, they insist on putting off their holiday a couple of days and meeting



THE PALACE MUSEUM

北京

50076

当日有效 只限一人 副券撕下作废

票价 20 元

as up at the airport + taking as up to the caravan which should be great. Really nice of them, such great friends. I look back on London and all the good times quite often, will miss it a lot when it's finally time to go.

28/6/96 An old lady wanders about the front of Vie de France a pastry shop just off Tiananmen square. She arrives around ten o'clock each day and puts a big black plastic bag presumably containing all her stuff down on a nearby step. She then wanders out onto the pavement a bit and stops to have a look at the street and the passing traffic. She moves slowly with small steps, she has hunched shoulders and puts her hands behind her back, and only looks up once she has stopped moving. She is in a different place it seems to everything that moves around her. She might then take a look back at the big plane of shop front glass behind which all the people, more often than not tourists, sit eating their pastry, in contemplation of the day ahead maybe, or the days ahead maybe, or more likely just observing the customers sitting there. She is very small and petite and has long black + grey hair in a plait pigtail, she has a wrinkled brown face and she has the most beautiful eyes. She toddles along back and forward in front of the

glass and out into the pavement, the pavement is quite wide here and back to her bag every now and then, and she stops in front of you and takes her head from the pavement and looks up. And it is a quiet observing face that looks up, her face has no real expression of begging or pleading just of observation and she has a natural beauty of composure that you sense is there as you don't look at her directly, you look over her head to the traffic and the people moving beyond. And you can sense or rather you wonder a little at her observation of the food you are eating and what thoughts are going through her mind. Very little I would suppose, just quiet observation. And then you look down and catch her eyes, beautiful eyes - I can't even remember what colour they are, maybe speckled blue-brown but they are very soft eyes, anyway you catch her eyes and she smiles and holds out her hands a little, maybe taking a few small steps forward asking for pity, asking for generosity. Ten thousand times you have been pleaded to for generosity by beggars in the past months of travelling and you tilt your head and give a wishing look trying to say sorry, and when as with all beggars she keeps on pleading you finally raise your eyes to the traffic beyond and notice from the corner

1 POPOLO
 1 MANGIMIS
 DAMNED - ECCO
 DAMNED
 DAMNED
 OH HISS
 OH HISS
 DAMNED
 @ VAFEN' CULO

MS GUSTA LA COMIDA
 MS GUSTA LA COMIDA



of your size her
 We've seen her
 behind her back
 watching, we've
 enormous in
 the stalk must
 composure.

continued pleading for a minute and then her turning away
 there all three times we have been, standing in the street hands
 dark blue cotton jacket and faded black pants, standing and
 seen her sitting by her black bag on her step with a mug looking
 composure with herself full of hot water and croissants, I think
 give her hot water, and always the same quiet watchfulness +
 Today we bought her a big loaf of bread and she smiled and

From Christian, a French guy - full
 of life & travel & ideas who works putting
 together animated films & comics and who
 has an American girlfriend Dione, who
 seems the total opposite, devoid of humor
 & life and seemingly a bit overtake by it all.
 (Amusement) Sketched one afternoon in
 the restaurant at the end of the street our
 hotel is in, after a morning rain and a
 day of doing not much at all. He
 travelled to southern Chile and took a
 trip on a supply boat around the islands
 and down to Antarctica, sounds
 fantastic!

thanked as looking up into our faces full of gratitude and
 beautiful eyes. And we left, thinking about beggars and
 the rights and wrongs of giving, and of her life and of the
 circumstances that must have brought her here, wondering about
 the cultural revolution and Chairman Mao and red guards +
 gangs of force all of which her course must have passed
 through, and of her youth and her dead husband? and we
 thought about the deformed + mutilated beggars of Tibet
 + India and of the religious beggars and of the aged and
 of the young and of the rights + wrongs of giving and
 come up with no satisfactory answer.



28/6/96 AM
 USCHQ 360 x 1.4 = 504
 USCASH 95 x 1.4 = 133
 ¥ (255/8.3) x 1.4 = 43
 A\$ 680

OTHER 25
 SNACKS 25
 PHONE 800
 IS FOOD 50
 WATER 10
 PAPER 3
 KITE 30
 UNES 3
 SUGARS 10
 256

SIKEXSTART (208)	CASH PERIOD (A)	SIKEXCHAM (33)	w/o OTHER (A)
A\$ 25.0	30.8	29.0	24.5
¥ 148	183	172	146
(5889)	(957)	(637)	

3/7/96 The Trans-Siberian

Day 1 of the trans-siberian. Day 1 was spent getting to
 know everybody and getting used to the train. Day 2 was spent
 worrying about Chinese immigration - our visas were out of date by
 2 days! - no problems however - and watching the goings on
 around the station on the russian side of the border where we stopped
 for four or five hours whilst the logeys were changed (different
 gauge I think). Day 3 was spent in suffering of the night
 drinking on cheap russian beer and free monkey vodka that ended
 day 2! A farewell to the people stopping off at Irkutsk and
 views of a misty Lake Baikal and the surrounding hilly
 forested countryside. Russia (Siberia) is a lot greener and has
 a lot more trees than I would have expected. Still trains are trains
 and scenery just passes past you at a continuous 60 km/hr as it
 does on any train. There are stations and engines + freight trains,
 bridges, hills + fields, houses, brief glimpses of people and telegraph
 poles, what else is there to say. It is an experience I suppose but it's
 not one of those that sits up in front of you hitting you with fresh air
 + inspiration. It's more one that just happens unrememberably and you're

БРЕНДОН СТОАРТ МАКНИВЕН

dragged along with it uncerimoniously!

The Russian people are exactly like I imagined they would be but never expected them to be. Heavy set people with strong thick faces and humourless expressions ~~on the face~~. Not imposing but not soft or gentle either. Quite hard to explain.

There is the short muscles bulging in every direction short blond haired man - ex trader in tight pants and a black short sleeved shirt with gold stripes. The type you would imagine quite at home hauling heavy gear around a fishing trawler or ~~heavy~~ ^{heavy} chairs & tables around a dockside bar in an alien world. A man whose body is his insurance should things turn nasty it looks like ~~you~~ ~~could~~ ~~kill~~ ~~him~~ ~~in~~ ~~an~~ ~~instant~~.

Then there is the man from the dining car who comes around selling yoghurt every now & then. Slightly younger, maybe 30 years old, well over six feet, dark deep set eyes and a stone expressionless face, utility vest over his shirt and a slight hunch from bending down and looking into cabins. Yoghurt is a deep lush like voice; however friendly it seems does not come naturally.

The women all have big figures, heavy set faces

the lips of which come from years of bearing children, doing the heavy household chores and being the matriarch of the family. A lot of blond or red hair, usually short and teased into a tortured unnatural look. Blue eye shadow + red lipstick on stern faces.

Crave people I would call them I suppose, a people who to relax sit around a log of boiled ham cutting off pieces between swilling down vodka and laughing big deep laughs.

Of course they are not all like this but alot of them are. Would be interesting to do typical character studies on different countries + look at the history that has gone into forming them.

Other strange things - A family in spades + lichens sitting sunbathing & playing in a rubber raft in the small dam out the back of their house - summer in Siberia! No one playing on the sound system in the train. Cabbage rock at the train - Siberian -

My heart is just not in working at the moment. Vag very bored + tedious. Let things blow in from London in the past!

7/7/96 London tomorrow! Quite a strange feeling looking forward to the two weeks break of doing

nothing just relaxing + walking + swimming + sitting outside the pub in Throum having a few pints. Thoughts keep returning now to those first few days in Bombay seven months ago, the beginning and the end. Informed by London with all the travel in between being a bit misty + foggy. Will just be content to let the next few days roll past and just make the effort to drag my now very heavy pack through it all, the rest of it I can watch from something that isn't quite reality, something a bit removed.

Moscow (Mokuba)

A day in Moscow - St Basil's by day and by night, beautiful, images of Russia, Red square, the Kremlin, beautiful old buildings and cobbled surfaces, construction work + walking!, golden domes, golden crosses and illuminated red stars. Mak Donalds - queues at pizza hut, ballroom style underground, the aero-plot hotel, Mrs Fisenko, Ruth + Terry, Casires + Lada, private taxis + trolley buses, hard currency against the Ruble, things not as run down as I had expected, strong (ugly?) featured eastern faces. Arbat street and sellers selling shorts, CDs, cats, dogs

cutlery, painting, portraits - food, antiques, souvenirs, people sitting by a graffiti'd wall, russian guys dancing hip hop on the street, sunshine + expensive cafes. Some legs after the trans-siberian !!! A night train to St Petersburg with a big lady conductor trying to charge us extra for linen.

St Petersburg

Oily porridge breakfast + morning sleep. Nevsky Prospect, old buildings + terracotta domed churches. Crowd wrought iron work + canals. Metro not as impressive as Moscow. Trenchier people, slightly + somehow a little more relaxed. More sleep in the afternoon and dinner at a great little cafe by a canal, and an old man sitting in his small yellow van on cobbled streets. Fisherman on a bridge + yellow building in the river. A long long sunset 12:30 + its not dark yet. British Airways tomorrow. Echoes of Bombay.

8/7/96 STP's airport smelling of three different aftershave and weighed down by duty free. alcohol - time to look at finances - not a cheap week I hear!

2/7/96
 USTCHQ: 360 x 1.4 = 504
 USCASH 189 x 1.4 = 265
 A\$ 769

OTHER
 DIFFERENCE US 22
 REASON

	SINCE START (218)	LAST PERIOD (10)	SINCE ROSSIA ←	W/O OTHER	W/O TRAVEL (477 USD)
A\$	28.00	89.4		86.4	19.6
US\$	20.00	63.9		61.7	14.0
	(672) TAKEN	(1163) 5889	FLIGHT (1560 - 338) x 1.4 = -520		6872

FOR WHOLE TRIP INCLUDING FLIGHTS
 Spent 6872 + 330 x 2.0 + 338 x 1.4 - 769
FLIGHT BOMBAY FLIGHT LONDON
 = A\$ 7236 over 218 days
 = A\$ 33.2/day (32.0 with 1.35x change rate)
 = US\$ 23.7/day
 = £ 16.6/day (7 months)

17/6/96 Down at the caravan in Thorium with Justin & Rosetta and of course the dogs. Eating greasy fish & chips and drinking lots of English ale and Belgian lager. The weather is really nice so getting up a bit

of a tan, feeling a little edgy like I'd like to move on, not sure if that comes from the past seven months or if it is spurred by thinking a lot more about work. Come Melbourne I will be glad to settle a bit and put some effort into setting up something a bit more aligned with a long term goal. If I could see it as a long term thing, something I could make money out of and something with which I could make a mark I would travel all my life. It is not however at the moment and I must admit, looking forward though I am to touring around Europe, I am looking forward more to getting home to Melbourne. All a matter of pacing, your mind moves too quickly to the future sometimes and sacrifices the present in doing so.

Justin & Rosetta met us at the airport which was great, it was so good to see them again, it's been a week now and it's like we've never been away. So on so on, so on...

Tim's Jess new bouncing baby boy Willie J is making them both really happy, he looks exactly like Tim without hair and as Jess puts it is more a little Louiser than a cutie, so on, so on, so on...

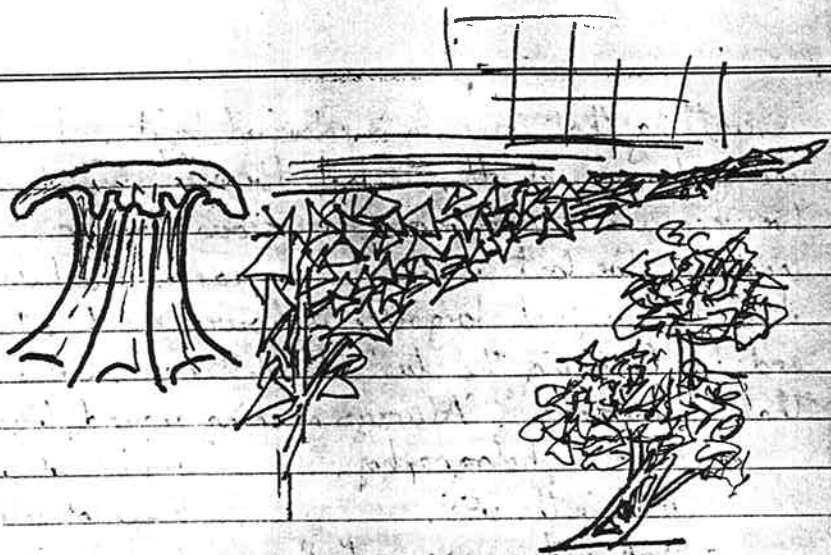
Reflective moods, alot of things looming and
 not much else to do but to let them loom. I'm 29
 now, travelling and heading home to step back into
 life, I think. Is it all kind of surreal? The idea
 of starting some meditation when we get back home
 appeals. I seem to be searching for a door upwards,
 above what is now, into recognition, into achievement,
 into a higher spiritual state? I'm sure this upwards
 searching is something in everybody, it is the progression
 of the human race, it is one part, not of the answer,
 but as a means of achieving whatever lies in the
 answer. But its so vague its hard to slot in to.
 And whatever I do it will only be a tiny tiny
 worthless part.

A bit no lust being the vehicle for reproduction; and
 both good & bad coming of it.

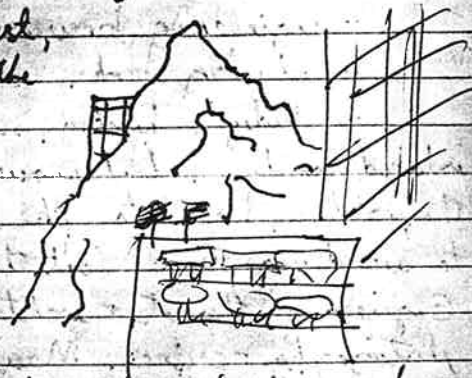
ANGE'S FIRST
 MEGAPHONE
 LAST AT THAT



18/7/96 Would be nice to put some foam + fluid
 into building shapes, some mashed potato
 structure of wave forms.



22/7/96 Maybe a bit of a mid city mountain
 creeping in contrast,
 lurking around corners of the
 other modern blgs.



I dont seem to have
 come very far, I thought
 travel might work out
 which way to go a bit,
 it might alleviate this need for money or for home or for
 idealism. It seems all of that is me, its not the outside
 world or my reaction to it it is me, it is a filter +

everything that comes in is polarised by it. I haven't changed much at all. In fact I've even slipped, I've become a bit more money conscious + career conscious, I've lost a bit of inner peace. Luckily it seems I've just forgotten it however not lost it and I'm brushing the dust off of it now. Or is that backwards?

- Always running around, trying
- work in photography. to find certainty
 - work in the arts. Been collecting
 - MBA and management. Been seeing
 - Law, hard work + \$. been having a
 - engineering forever more. good time. I
 - voluntary work. don't feel all
 - study, history, science. the more

relaxed for it, I don't know. I don't know that's the problem, I need to make a decision, I'm trying to avoid regrets + I don't think I will be able to.

Engineering, the arts + architecture, computers + photography + science. Maybe a holiday in study? I think that that is the way. I can't, don't want to devote my life to a work, to working all hours, I don't enjoy it.

A book of street poetry and photography, proceeds to go to homeless charities.

1/9/96 Where to start? Had a great three weeks in London. Up at Norfolk with J+R. The blubot, the dogs and the sea, flying the kites, walks and trips down the coast, watching shooting stars (and all of the rest) on the beach at night, copious amounts of alcohol! Back in London, lots of time with Tim + Jen + Willy J., dinner with Jaime Maria + Faith, the common, time at home with J+R, visited work, lunch with Tere Worsick, dinner with Stewart + Lucinda, not a free night - I almost forgot, free tickets + hospitality at Brian Adams with Melissa Etheridge, Del. Antoni, pinball, free drinks + dip + minisals both ways - super cool west indian. Cadby, should have been driving a limo - you know that big black guy off of James Bond, the one on the wooden island - anyway! organisation, bank accounts, car, this + that, waves over Angie's beach view and goodbyes.

Was really emotional saying goodbye, love

them both (J+R) a lot! Echoes of three months time when it will be bye for much longer. Rosetta got up and wailed as a sleepy goodbye the morning we left (5:00 or something), one last hug and Rosetta, the dogs, Fresham drive with Justin asleep upstairs, the yellow brick + the side gate + Rosetta waving through the front window in her nightie, it was so good to see them again, retreating + shrinking through the back window of the car. Emotion washing in from all directions, from early morning London ahead, from T+J+W up the road, from the ferry + escape access from Dover, from work + life + so many that it seems I won't recognize them any more, won't recognize them from Ange + Man + Daal + Australia, from money + from opportunity, between a kaleidoscope of washing emotions, no escape, we somehow walked into the position and don't have any control over the emotions, and there are too many to deal with, too many tears + laughs + love + woe + missing. Can't it all come together somehow, won't it all be one; it can't. I have to leave something here, or something in Aur + have to stay with me along the way. I don't know, like I said, it's hard to recognize what is happening.

Rosetta + the dogs + Justin sprawled asleep on the

bed upstairs, chinking in the back window of the car; yellow bricks + morning sky.

Brugge (Belgium)

Brugge is beautiful, medieval town full of old buildings, in fact all old buildings, canals, chocolate, windmills, churches, squares, busking violinists and tourists. Beautiful anyway, walked the streets, visited a nursery + heard them sing in the church while another man rang the bells, enough to inspire me even into awe of the beauty + reverence of the place, seemed to make the paintings of TC on the cross deeper to 3d. beautiful. Spent a day driving round the surrounding villages - not so beautiful - wrong turn took us into the Netherlands! Went + saw some portugese music in the halfway with Thomas + Nina from the north of Germany. Beautiful voice + guitar - the spanish + portugese are some of the best in the world. I seem to remember hearing... beautiful clarity + sound - beautiful! Went to a jazz club after where a group of English staying in our caravan park were

going away at it - the mostest Jazz I have ever heard:
the lady singing, the guitar + the guitarist's voice,
the piano + the bass, the guy serving drinks behind
the bar, right down to the pictures on the wall +
the skeleton hanging over the entrance (sheep or
something probably!) all except maybe the amplification
on the piano - hummmmm... what a fantastic place.

Up this morning - forgot the push ups again and
off through Ahent, around Brussels, Luige
(Luige a couple of times!) and down through the B roads
and off onto the E+D roads? to a little recreation park
+ a river + some space to ourselves near the border with
Germany. Amazing - about those push ups: ...

2/8/96 Mülheim - Moselle Valley - Germany

Well, after that little nostalgic emotional outburst!
It will be sad, very sad, to leave, but we will all get on
with our lives.

Forgot to mention, drove along a little bit of
what must have been the Belgian Grand Prix track yesterday
which was excellent! Past all of the grandstands,

down through the curves, surprisingly hilly, and past
the pit lane, you could see all of the grid markings and
follow the racing line. Down the main straight, across
each side and the meter marker signs down to the
corner, was a great feeling having all those curves
and road to play with, I imagine you have a whole
lot less play doing 100 mph!

Today was Luxembourg for a couple of hours,
nice surrounding countryside and nice city as well, nothing
to write home about but very beautiful if you know what I
mean. Another church/cathedral, beautiful stained glass
windows, no, really impressive - I mean it! squeaking choir
(mine) and more singing. Is a great atmosphere, very
aweing all that space and towering architecture, all the
stained glass and carving, little devils on the organ
believe it or not, or the devils little peto anyway and
the music filling the place. Really beautiful, sombre?
entrancing definitely, you can't help but be impressed +
slightly taken away.

And then it was on to the Mosel valley which
is very nice also. Hillsides covered in vines, little
German towns along the way, lots of cyclists,

lots of church spires. The Mosel river which is quite big and has these huge barges slowly navigating it up + down, complete with their cars + speed boats sitting up on the deck behind the cabins. And finally this little town and a camping spot with the river nearby, a big bridge overhead and the church bells striking the time just across the way.



3/8/96 ... More of the Moselle valley today and still beautiful a couple of really nice castles - (at the wood for tasting - we bought + so finally tasted and bought some wine (isn't that why we're here?). Had lunch on top of one of the hills with a view overlooking the river + the vineyards and a town in the distance. Slept like shit last night so could

have stayed there the whole afternoon easily doing! Explored a few smaller roads + ended up finding another campsite on an island this time a little further away from the roads. Campsites are not that cheap: over 20 DM (about the same as in A/B) per night! Cheaper than hostels I guess.

Speaking of finances: when we left

Aus MC	247	Aus FD	11 433
Aus VC	189	US \$ 360 x 1.35 =	486
UK VC	2106	TCHQ's 189 x 1.35 =	255
UK bank x2 =	1742	£ 35 x 2 =	70
Aus bank	629		

A\$ 17 157

Already spent:

Food etc	20
Camping stuff	20
Ferry tickets	184
AA	75
Green card	15
Travel Ins	157
Car Shift	12

A\$ 483

4/18/96 Visiting Burg Eltz

a ditty ditty long
long castle stuck up in
the woods behind the
Rhine. Beautiful
castle - picture
postcard and a nice
half hour walk up
to it through the
forest. Exposed
beams (tudor?)
and rendered
walls, bare
stone, turrets,
and sheltered
windows,
passageways
and courtyards
and doors and windows

everywhere. Dragons on the downpipes and wind vanes
on the roofs. These castles seem to have a very contained
space about them making them feel very homely. They are not



BURG ELTZ
(A BIT)

huge domineering places just warm, contained, rather
for want of a better word with a breath onto themselves
it seems sometimes as they contain so much character

5/8/96 Camped out somewhere in the East German woods!
Was & poshy man - DDR inside carriers and X-film gear

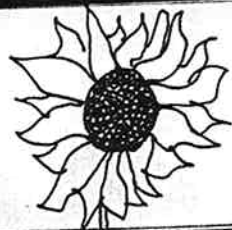
bugs around every corner.
Yesterday went into the Rhine valley, bigger river, bigger
towns and not quite as nice (we think), went down to
Bacharach to check out the youth hostel, an old castle
(an old rebuilt castle I think), up on the hill above town,
pretty legendary as Lonely Planet says. Decided to camp
instead however (26 DM each per night) and settled for
lunch up there overlooking the Rhine. Found a great
campsite in the end, a bit of shore & beach to ourselves
with a big American building & Rott included in the
neighbors a little way down. Tasted our wine again &
did a night tour of Bacharach over an ice cream, great
little town, buildings back to 1638, flower pots & exposed
beams again everywhere. Actually nice at night as the
colours etc get a bit gaudy & unreal in the light of the day.
(we went back this morning for bread & gold). Full on day

watching the barges make their way up the river, always up for some reason, only saw one or two from a hundred heading down. Where do they all go? Got up for a midnight picnic usual + the river was lit up by the moon. Have really enjoyed the Rhine valleys.

So today was motorways broken up by the huge, but slightly unatmospheric due to all the people + lack of singing Dom Cathedral in Köln (Cologne). Pretty impressive. And more motorway, a slightly disappointing Weinigode or something, a lack of campgrounds, a fine track and a spot somewhere in the East German (what used to be) woods. It's amazing how the woods seem to close in upon you when it starts to get dark. Not a good thing to have when you're camping out by yourself, an active imagination, they tend to run wild. What is that discarded shovel down by the creek for - shallowly buried dead? Hmmm... I wonder if they'll be back tonight.

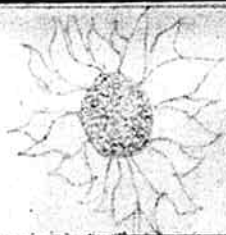
6/8/96 Potsdam (near Berlin)

Well, we survived the night and in fact slept



ANCE'S SUNFLOWER

pretty well, a bit wide eyed to begin with, but woken by my sound (including that of the first morning steam train that turned out to be about 1-200m behind us! We went for a walk up later and saw one go through which was pretty impressive) but once asleep we were pretty much asleep (ie not dozing in + out of consciousness like it can be sometimes. Spent the most of the morning looking around Quebingende (I should really look up how to spell these names, but) nice little town, bit of a castle, nice cobbled streets + exposed beam buildings leaning this way and that, all getting a bit matter of fact now! Had lunch, a picnic lunch in fact, near, under a bridge with a little stream running in front of us and a brilliant red and another brilliant blue dragonfly shimmering about the place, and then another two or three hours of motorway (woken for a short stop to have a look at a huge sunflower field (my first one!), and it was fantastic, everything (I thought it would be) stretching right out to the horizon) and then a nice respite (32.40 DM!) by the lake in Potsdam with a white swan as a garden piece. Off to spend the next couple of days in Berlin.



7/8/96 The wall tour - Checkpoint Charlie, Potsdamer Platz, Brandenburg Gate and the East side Gallery? ← the still standing section painted with murals. You get a sense of modern history

happening around you. Not the such + such that happened in the year such + such of established places but crises and construction happening in the common land now taken, a city replacing itself, rebuilding itself on a huge scale. A whole country assessed just like that, a neighbour's yard and house purchased, a whole country to deal with.

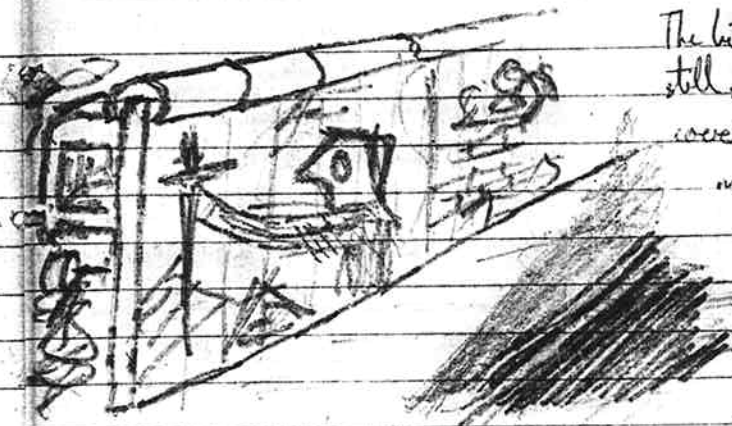
Major planning + happenings now!

Anyway spent the day looking around, a lot of building going on, no real centre to anything, played which side are we in a lot, East or west. One

bridge had a bear on one side (the East German emblem) and the eagle on the other which I thought was quite good. (West German Emblem)

What else - not a lot of street level shops, the odd outdoor

cafe, a lot of graffiti. Will have a look around the more established centres tomorrow maybe.



The bit of wall still standing is covered in murals which are ageing + fading + themselves in turn covered in

graffiti, a lot of cheese + Hong Kong people surprisingly. There are bits where tourists have made use of spalling to chip off as much as they can to take home as souvenirs. It's about three hundred meters long and on the other side are old trailers + discarded trucks and other scrap where some homeless people live I think, and on the other side of that is the river and West Berlin.

"Those who want a world without change
Don't want a world at all"

8/8/96 Czech visit - 33DM on a NZ passport not realising Aus was free! Bebelplatz Square where the books were burnt 10 May 1933, a glass

paving slab in the middle of the square (and here?)
 Looking down into a sealed cavern in white lined
 with empty shelves, more bits of the wall, the
 Topography des Terroirs museum built above the
 Prince Albert Hotel ruins, the building that used to
 house the SS, Angie brought a book, down the
 main shopping district in the west part of the city,
 a little more city like, the remains of the cathedral
 (Kaiser Wilhelm memorial church) with the new
 churches either side, Mac Donalds and home to
 read & relax for the afternoon.

9/8/96 Goodbye to Potsdam
 and good bye to the
 swans who were too busy
 feeding other swans for food
 to get too involved in sentiment.



Three or four hours of driving today but it seemed
 to take the whole day. Stopped off at Colbitz and the
 castle where officers and others needing high security
 were kept during the war. Quite a place, not
 traditional at all but dramatic, high buildings

cobblestone yards and the town around and below. Not
 hard to be taken back by it all, to imagine it with Nazi
 guards, knee high clinking boots, the sidecar motorcycles
 and rain on the cobbles at night. All the best from the
 war movies! Was a nice place to wander around and
 recall what it might have been like. A sign at the door
 said the following

	HOME RUNS	UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS
ENGLAND	11	109
FRANCE	12	12
?	3	17
POLAND	1	17

10/8/96 Talked for a while before falling asleep last
 night, we were on such a slope we were both
 scared of waking up under the neighbors car at the
 bottom of the hill the next morning! Anyway talked for
 a bit about all of the people we had met along the way
 through India, Nepal and China and it struck me that we
 were probably the least interesting of the whole lot! Hmmm...

Spent this morning walking down the Elbe
 river to the small town we are staying just outside of:

Konegstein, close to the border with the Czech Republic and then up to the huge castle/fortress on the tableland behind. The countryside has these big outcrops of sandstone cliffs rising out of wooded hills and the Elbe running through it all, quite nice; and this one big table land had been converted into a fortress with huge near vertical walls the whole way around. Reminded me a little of what you might expect to see in Rajasthan. It was interesting as it had a lot of stuff, a lot of buildings from the recent years 1800s + 1900s, big rendered bldgs similar to Colchity. Gave you a bit of an impression, the feeling it had been used until very recently, old Prussian Barons, Nazi Bunkers etc. It was actually used to store all of the art looted from various countries during the war apparently. Had a 152m deep well the base of which was 88m above the level of the Elbe which gives you an idea of how high it was. Anyway, could describe castles for books or web. Arzi stayed out + read and I paid the 60m to go in + have a look around, do the circumference of those huge walls.

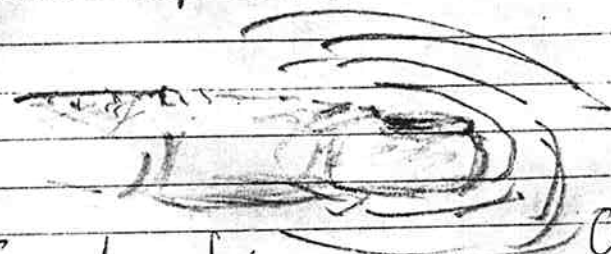
MOVIES

Heat - Val Kilmer, Al Pacino, Robert De Niro	3
Muriel's Wedding	3
Seven - Brad Pitt, Morgan Freeman, Kevin Spacey	3
Franky + Johnny - Al Pacino, Michelle Pfeiffer	2



BOOKS

The Old Man and the Sea - Ernest Hemingway	4
Shopping for Buddhas - Jeff Greenwald	4
Seven Years in Tibet - Heinrich Harrer	4
A Tale of Two Cities - Charles Dickens	4½
After the Funeral - Agatha Christie	4
Wild Swans - Jung Chang	5
Murder on the Links - Agatha Christie	4
The Princess and other Stories - D.H. Lawrence	3
Oliver Twist - Charles Dickens	4½
Pride and Prejudice - Jane Austen	3¾
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer - Mark Twain	2½
Lord Jim - Joseph Conrad	4



Ouch!
 Jammed my finger
 in the car door the other day
 for what I don't know but it feels
 like a slap across the wrists for weeks.

EXCHANGE RATES
 FOR TRAVELLERS CHQS
 + CASH AS NOTED!

	AA	US\$	£	
28/4/96 NRs	43.28	55.20	83.16	TCHQ
2/5/96 ¥	6.52	8.31		
15/5/96 ¥		8.30		
6/6/96 ¥	6.57	8.30		
18/6/96 ¥		8.31	12.8	
24/6/96 ¥	6.552	8.304	12.773	
1/7/96 R		5108/5438		
6/7/96 R		5080/5200		
7/7/96 R		5120		
20/7/96 BeFr			46.08	
31/7/96 BeFr		29.74	46.28	CASH
7/8/96 DM		1.445		TCHQ
" " "	1.07			CASH
10/8/96 G\$		26.0		CASH

BOOKS

ALL A\$ ASSUMING

2.0 A\$ = 1.0 £

1.4 A\$ = 1.0 USD

THE	PLACE	TIME	O/A ALL AVG	COUNTRY AVG	TIME AVG	W/O SHOPPING
Sl	GOA → DHARAMSALA	12.5 WKS	21.8	21.8	21.8	14.4
Se	DHARAMSALA → MANALI	1 WK	21.3	21.3	15.4	12.4
A	SOYANG → DEHLI	1 WK	22.3	22.3	35.9	22.1
AH	VARANASSI → DARJEELING	1 WK	22.0	22.0	17.4	14.0
U	BORDER → KATHMANDU	6 DAYS	24.5	69.5	69.5	23.6
M	POKHARA → POKHARA (RAFTING)	1 WK	25.5	55.0	42.7	38.4
T	POKHARA → GHASA (TREKKING)	13 DAYS	24.2	33.4	11.7	13.4
O	GHASA → POKHARA (")	9 DAYS	23.6	28.5	14.5	16.6
P	POKHARA → ZHANGMU	6 DAYS	23.7	28.3	27.2	17.1
T	ZHANGMU → LHASA (TIBET TOUR)	9 DAYS	24.8	42.9	42.9	40.7
L	LHASA → LHASA	8 DAYS	25.0	35.6	27.6	22.0
	GOLMUD (AND LHASA → NAM TSO → LHASA (TREKKING))	9 DAYS	24.3	27.5	12.2	14.7 / 7.1
	GOLMUD → KUNMING	8 DAYS	24.4	26.9	26.9	24.3
	KUNMING → SHANGHAI	9 DAYS	24.8	29.6	32.1	25.5
	SHANGHAI → BEIJING	7 DAYS	24.8	28.3	25.1	21.8
	BEIJING → BEIJING	9 DAYS	25.0	29.0	30.8	27.5
	BEIJING → ST PETERSBURG	10 DAYS	28.0	89.4	89.4	86.4 / 19.6

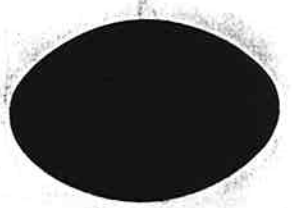
INCLUDING FLIGHTS
TOTAL =

7 MONTHS = 218 DAYS 33.2 (7236 A\$)

of the

... ..

... ..
Monts from Sabaya ↑



Handwritten text in a cursive script, possibly a signature or a short note, located on the right page of the document.

Monsieur de Saboya