

GONPA GAZETTE



Mahabodhi temple, the hallmark of Bodhgaya.

Buddhists believe ‘life is but a dream’. When we wake up in the morning, we awaken from the night dream; when we die, we awaken from the life dream. I have dreamt the Bodhgaya dream since 2006, and this year I awaken from that dream, awaiting its replacement.

It has been an amazing fifteen year dream of incredible experiences and people; a perfect mix of sacred and profane; mundane and sublime.

Now I am dreaming the ‘visiting-friends-in-Australia’ dream, as I did this time last year. The joys of family life, speaking English in paragraphs (not just broken sentences), motor bike rides, eating Western cuisine with the Aussie touch; and seeing koalas and ‘roos in person for the first time.

I have met such wonderful people and made such wonderful friends while at the monastery, and when in Bodhgaya; friends who have invited me to ‘live their lives’ when I am required to leave India every year. Not only do I have the best friends, I have the best friends living in some of the best places in the world!



The ‘flying’ (on-the-back-of-a motor-bike) nun!

The Indian government requires all foreigners with tourist visas to leave India every 180 days. We can go where we want for as long as we want, but we must leave...on time!

“Ani outside; full boring” my Muslim family reminds me. The easiest translation is: “We miss you!” So, following their cultural tradition, I ‘halt’ a few nights at their home going to and coming from the airport; they cook special food; feed me until I can’t eat any more; and send me off with more food in case I get hungry before the next meal!

It’s the thought that counts, right? And their concern that I am never for want of my fave foods is endearing!



Subed Khan relaxing at home.

While I am away, Noorulla Khan is recovering from a medical procedure and re-thinking the future of his business; Raziya Sulthana is learning to manage a chronic health condition without my help; Suhail Khan is continuing on with four more months of pilgrimage; Subed Khan is consistently working at the monastery canteen; and Kashif Khan is preparing for annual exams at school.

As with everyone I know, full and busy lives that go on without me. I am glad to get a break, yet miss the daily contact.



Raziya Sulthana cooking a batch of sweet poori.

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