

# GONPA GAZETTE



*Selby Gardens, Sarasota, FL with Harriet.*

I know everyone thinks *they* have the best friends, but in reality *I* have the VERY best friends!

The Buddha taught that, due to having a body, the suffering of sickness, old age and death is unavoidable. More than enough sickness and aging in the past eighteen months motivated me to visit old friends on the east coast of the US...friends I haven't seen for close to thirty years! None of us are getting any younger, and luckily most of us are still fairly healthy...the best time to visit. How delightful to truly 'pick up where we left off' decades ago!

I spent a week in Florida, a week in North Carolina, and will spend a week in the NYC area before returning to India.

How wonderful to be warmly received after decades of little contact...to be kindly cared for when I was not feeling my best...to remember the days of our young adulthood in NYC, when were we all growing personally and professionally...and to laugh at those memories that are still so clear for some of us and can't be recalled by others!

Is youth wasted on the young? We'll never tell. That was then and this is now...and life is good (in different ways) now. Thanks for the rekindled memories and the new ones we have made!



*Asheville, NC with Rhonda*

“Ani away, full boring!” Boring is an interesting word, used to mean ‘boring’ and so much more: tired, sleepy, unmotivated...and yearning, longing, missing a person. When I am away, Noorulla Khan and Raziya Sulthana say it is ‘full boring’ at the canteen and at their house.

Because it is ‘full tension’ for them when I am away, I do my best to be sure we can contact each other, often daily. Not much we can say on the phone when we don’t speak the same languages, but calling when they want and hearing my voice reassures them I am fine.



*Another holiday, another new dress!*

I am eagerly looking forward to seeing them because it will be Bakra-Eid or ‘second Losar’ (New Year), as Noorulla Khan describes the Muslim holiday. For two years they have invited me to share their festivities with them, and for two years I have been on annual summer rains retreat, where no one can leave the monastery for six weeks. This year, due to the changes in both Muslim and Tibetan lunar calendars, I will arrive on the first night of Bakra-Eid, and stay through the second night, before returning to the monastery. We are all happily anticipating the event!



*The magical jackfruit!*



2020 has been the year by which Anirudh Prasad has always said Chauari Village would be self-sufficient. I thought he was over-optimistic but he knows his village and its villagers best. 2020 is less than six months away so time will tell.

Meanwhile, more Chauari Village ladies are starting businesses, and more ladies in surrounding villages are learning about how to start businesses at their local markets.

Chauari Village Project has always been a grassroots endeavor: Anirudh Prasad feeling the pulse of his village...knowing the needs of the villagers...voicing their concerns...doing his best to get those needs met.

The next few months are an important time to check on goals met, goals still unmet, and how much is possible to do in the time remaining. Most important, progress has been made!



*Sun Rise Public School junior students.*

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