
Linnea's India Blog I: Walking in Delhi

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Linnea and David leaving in snow!



Tales of our Courageous Journey to India begin thus:

I woke up curled in a nervous ball in the hotel bed in New Delhi. Wrapped against the damp January chill in long johns and a sweater, with the meeping of cars and the clattering of kiosks shutting down outside our window, I was replaying the 33 hours that had brought us here: The flight from Kelowna to Vancouver. The Vancouver-Shanghai flight before which we were actually bawled out by China East staff for not having our boarding passes printed a second time. The hazy pre-dawn arrival in Shanghai and shivering shuttle bus ride into the airport. The repeated checkpoint-charlie-like security line-ups that suddenly opened into the airport mall of boarding lounges and their grand display of capitalist opulence. The arrival in Delhi, the cruise through a completely unstaffed Customs section (ending our worst fear of not getting into the country with ukuleles) and the ride under a pinkish night sky to our hotel in Pahar Ganj neighbourhood.

Every hour that you wake in a new place, jet-lagged and electric with the effort of staying alert for so long, brings with it a new fear. 3am: Can we make our way in the city? 3:30am: Is it safe here? 4am: Do we have too much baggage? 4:30am: Is it safe here? 5am: Can we get the ukuleles to their temporary storage place? 5:30am: Is it safe here?? 6am: Have we taken on too much..?

Making our way into the narrow street outside the Golden Gate Hotel Deluxe by breakfast time, we search for chai. We are persons of interest; people comment on my wearing the salwar camise and I'm both happy and yet wishing to shrink into the street colours. I feel foreign. I am naked.

There comes a moment
when you stop feeling assaulted
by newness,
swaddled in emotional bullet-proof gear,
you look back up
and you know yourself to be truly alive somewhere else.

Suddenly the streets teem with auto-rickshaws and small white cars, bicycle rickshaws slowly pedal along pocked concrete, their drivers wrapped in head scarves, working men wend their way along the street, around parked cars or single munching cows, groups stand outside open barber shops, laminate displays, hanging plastic stands along the walkway. I am in the middle of the universe that is India, its constellations of colour, sound and living beings a kind of dusty, sacred chaos I re-recognize but will never know. Something lifts off the

top of my head. A group of guys smiles broadly as they debate the way to the place we have asked them about. "No, no! Ninety-nine percent certain! It is this way!" points one of them, ending the debate, and as we head off, they beam at us: "Beautiful India, yes?"

And that is how I know we are walking in the entirely wrong direction, for dead sure.

And I don't care.

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Linnea Good

"Enlivening Faith through Story and Song"



Our morning chai



Colourful blankets!



Delhi street cow and automobile



Alley in Delhi



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