



SOME WEEP, SOME LAUGH

MEMOIRS OF AN AMERICAN FAMILY IN DACCA 1960-1967

MARY FRANCES DUNHAM

~~~~~ III ~~~~~

OUR DIVERSIONS

আমাদের খেলা

SOME WEEP, SOME LAUGH

MEMOIRS OF AN AMERICAN FAMILY IN DACCA 1960-1967

MARY FRANCES DUNHAM

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FRONT PAGE TITLE AND PHOTO

The title of these memoirs comes from the lyrics of a Bengali folk song:

“This world is a market place of pleasures. Some weep, some laugh.”

You can find the full lyrics for this song on page 281 of my book:

Jarigan, Muslim Epic Songs of Bangladesh.

The title photo on the previous page was taken of my husband and me in 1960 soon after we first arrived in Dacca. We are posed in front of a Moghul style painted backdrop provided by the photography studio.

Editing and layout by Katherine Dunham

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**To all my friends with whom I shared
the adventures of these years in
Dacca and especially to my husband,
Daniel C. Dunham, who made this
time so meaningful and memorable
with his humor and common sense.**

SPECIAL THANKS

There are a number of people I want to especially thank for helping me to transform my eight Dacca scrapbooks of letters, photos and souvenirs into this set of printed volumes which are now much easier to share with family, friends and the public. Daisy Aziz, our long time family friend and descendant of our Dacca landlord, devoted many hours helping on a variety of tasks including scanning the original scrapbooks and being on call to transliterate Bengali words. Our friend, Ellen Lohe, spent a good portion of her summer with us patiently proof reading the first drafts and gave valuable editing comments and advice. To Fatima Terin and Adnan Morshed, I am gratefull for their appreciation of my family’s Bengali patois as they helped with the Bangla translations for this latest 2019 edition. I’m also indebted to my daughter, Katherine Dunham, for her work with the organization and layout of the contents and her perseverance in getting this project done over the years that we have worked on this together.

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

Like a stroll through someone’s house, feel free to browse through this book and read any section here or there that catches your eye. There is no need to read the book from one end to the other because I have organized the stories by topics rather than by chronology. By reading bits and pieces of my stories, I hope to provide a glimpse of our daily life and our practical and creative responses to the everyday life challenges we faced.

These memoirs are organized into five volumes. Volume 1 describes how we settled into our life in Dacca and how we set up our house and servants. Volume 2 includes a chapter on each member of the family and what our primary occupations were. Volume 3 talks about our Social and cultural life outside our primary activities and the many projects we did. Volume 4 describes our travels including our outings, our vacations and our home leaves. Volume 5, addresses the large-scale hazards we faced during the 1960’s including cyclones, diseases and wars.

BENGALI WORDS

Much of my use of Bengali words throughout these texts may seem incorrect to a native Bengali speaker. However, this is intentional. I am attempting to represent the playful way Dan and I transformed the language into our own family patois. For example, to express pluralization of a noun we would simply add an ‘s’ or ‘es’ to the end of it as is done in English eventhough this is incorrect in Bengali. Hence, when we wanted to say the plural of cat we said ‘birals’ instead of ‘biral gulo,’ and for ‘things’ we said ‘jinishes’ instead of ‘jinish gulo’. Throughout the texts I have noted with an asterix whenever I use our family patois instead of the correct Bengali form. Furthermore, my transliteration of the Bengali vowel sounds may also seem atypical because I seek to approximate how the vowels sound in English. I omit indicating the nasalization of vowels when this occurs, and the retroflexive quality of certain dental consonants. The “h” following a consonant indicates a concurrent breath sound, as in “bhari” (b-hah-ree).

PLACE NAMES & SPELLINGS

Names of some cities in India or their spelling changed after Indian Independence in 1947; e.g. Bombay to Mumbai, Madras to Chennai, Calcutta to Kolkota and Dacca to Dhaka. In the latter two examples the changes represent a more correct transliteration. Although the British “raj” included outstanding linguists, government practice was more casual. I generally have chosen to use the names and spellings that were used during the time (1960s) that we were living in Dacca.

PEOPLE & ABBREVIATIONS

Throughout these pages you will see many names referring to friends, colleagues, and acquaintances some of which will come up again and again. To learn more about these people, who played a significant role in our Dacca life, you can refer to the Cast of Characters in the Appendix.

To facilitate the writing I have often used initials in place of our family names:

- DCD is Dan Dunham (my husband)
- MFD is Mary Frances Dunham (myself)
- KDD is Katherine Dunham (our daughter)
- CGR is Charles Raphael (my father)

TEXTS, PHOTOS & IMAGE CREDITS

Most of the photos from the 1960s shown in these volumes are taken by my husband, Dan. The sketches sprinkled throughout the volumes were either done by Dan or me. The black ink sketches of Dacca scenes were all done by Dan for the guide book I co-wrote called Living in Dacca. The images of letters, news clippings and other memorabilia were scanned from my archives of documents collected between 1960 and 1968. I have also included in these volumes a number of texts from friends such as Pat Hill, Bob Mayers and Peggy Azbill.

~~~~~ **III** ~~~~~

**OUR DIVERSIONS**

**আমাদের খেলা**

*(AMADER KHELA)*

7. SONG, DANCE, ART & DRAMA

8. INVITATIONS

9. PROJECTS

**SOME WEEP, SOME LAUGH**

MEMOIRS OF AN AMERICAN FAMILY IN DACCA 1960-1967

MARY FRANCES DUNHAM

## SONG, DANCE, ART &amp; DRAMA

গান, নাচ, শিল্প, ও যাত্রা \*  
(GAN, NACH, SHILPO O JATRA)



*An early 19th century Moghul style painting showing a party hosted by a foreigner.*



*\* This Bengali wording is from our personal family patois*



FOREIGN CULTURAL EVENTS

FOREIGN CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

I was pleased to find good foreign cultural institutions in Dacca that provided libraries, language classes and movies. The British Council was, of course, the oldest among them. Nestled in the University area, it offered an ample library and English classes. It also had a theater, which hosted traveling British theatrical and music shows. The Goethe Institute, located in Dhanmandi, was, as to be expected, one of the most modern, efficient, organized and well functioning of the cultural institutes. It had a small auditorium and notably the only grand piano in the country. Also in Dhanmandi, was the nascent Alliance Française (which I helped establish), popular for its rooftop café, art exhibits and weekly French cinema. The United States Information Services (USIS) was appreciated for its resources on American universities and application support services. However, among the Americans, USIS was best known for its Saturday night movies, which came with American-made pop-corn. Dan used to joke about the decadent aftermath of these film events and the sight of the privileged commissary popcorn strewn all over the floor.

**RASIKA RANJANA SABHA (Regd.)**  
10, MAHARAJA NANDA KUMAR ROAD, CALCUTTA-29.

**ANNUAL CARNATIC MUSIC CONFERENCE**  
to celebrate the  
**118th ANNIVERSARY OF SRI THYAGARAJA SWAMI**  
From 6th to 16th March 1965  
AT  
**Sri THYAGARAJA HALL**  
P/330, RAJA BASANTA ROY ROAD, CALCUTTA-29

**Programme**

|            |          |           |                              |     |           |
|------------|----------|-----------|------------------------------|-----|-----------|
| 6. 3. 1965 | Saturday | 5.30 P.M. | Sangheetha Kalanidhi         | ... | Vocal     |
|            |          |           | M/s Alathur Brothers         | ... | Violin    |
|            |          |           | Lalgudi Sri G. Jayaraman     | ... | Mridangam |
|            |          |           | Palghat Sri T. S. Mani Iyer  | ... | Ghatam    |
|            |          |           | Mysore Sri Mani              | ... |           |
| 7. 3. 1965 | Sunday   | 9.00 A.M. | "ARADANA"                    |     |           |
| 7. 3. 1965 | Sunday   | 4.15 P.M. | Sangheetha Kalanidhi         |     |           |
|            |          |           | Chembai Sri V. Natarajan     |     |           |
|            |          |           | Mysore Sri T. V. Subramanyam |     |           |
|            |          |           | Palghat Sri T. S. Mani Iyer  |     |           |
|            |          |           | Mysore Sri Mani              |     |           |
| 8. 3. 1965 | Monday   | 7.00 P.M. | Lalgudi Sri G. Jayaraman     |     |           |
|            |          |           | Umayalpuram S. Venkayya      |     |           |

I went to this conference in Calcutta which inspired me to study Indian classical music myself.



At an Alliance Francaise event.: Mr Rouche talking to Dr. Shahidullah, a linguist who was the first Bengali to study at the Sorbonne in Paris.



PAT'S DESCRIPTION OF STUDENT DEMANDS AT NOTRE DAME HOLLY CROSS COLLEGE [Pat Hill, Moon Bazar, p.138]

The Holy Cross Fathers were the pilots at Notre Dame College, where Father Bill Graham and Father Dick Timm took turns acting as Principal of the College and spiritual Superior of the Order. "Separation of Church and State," they explained. The College was a source of joy and woe to its priests. They loved their work, but they were plagued, as time went on, by student strikes and occasional violence. Perversely enough, the Bengali students coveted the respected Notre Dame degree, and constantly fought to dilute its respectability with their demands. (Eventually one student delegation insisted that all students must receive passing grades, regardless of performance.) The fiercer strikes, they knew, were usually incited by off-campus factions, which made them harder to cope with. Our various doors around the foreign community wore welcome mats for them when they needed to get away from it all, and a white-robed figure strolling with a prayer-book before dinner added a pleasantly monastic touch to the garden.

The Sisters at Holy Cross College had much less trouble with their student body, but they also had less mobility, so we didn't often see them unless we made visits there.

*The Alliance Francaise*  
cordially invites you to attend a lecture  
delivered by Mr. Haron at Rashid Institute  
Department of Philosophy Dacca University  
on "Descartes' philosophy"

*To celebrate the National Day of France*  
The Consul General for France in East Pakistan  
and Mrs. Frank Biesel  
request the pleasure of the company  
of Mr. & Mrs. DUNIFAN  
at a reception on Thursday...

**THE GERMAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE DACCA**  
has the honour to invite you to a lecture  
under the title  
"The Ethics of Immanuel Kant"  
to be delivered by  
**Dr. G. C. Dev**  
Professor at...

The Dacca Museum Committee request the pleasure of your Company  
at the 53rd Foundation Anniversary of Dacca Museum to be held on  
7th August 1966 at 5.30 P.M. in the Museum's premises. Mr. Muntaz  
Hassan, President of the Pakistan Museums Association, has kindly consented  
to be the Chief Guest on the occasion and inaugurate an exhibition of  
Recent Acquisitions.

**THE GERMAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE DACCA**  
has the honour to invite you to a lecture  
with slides and selected musical examples  
under the title  
"Classical Sound Rhythm"

**EXPOSITION**  
AMAL DAGHER  
  
ALLIANCE FRANCAISE DACCA  
10 MAI - 22 MAI 1963

*The Bul Bul Academy of Fine Arts*  
cordially invites you to attend  
a cultural function in honour of Dr. Theodore  
Allen Heinrich, Director of The Royal  
Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada, on  
Tuesday, February 5, 1963 at 7, Wisnaghat,  
Dacca at 7 p.m.  
R. S. V. P.  
Selina Choudhury  
Asst. Secretary, BAFA  
Phone : 5129

*To Meet - Duke Ellington and Orchestra*  
The Director of the  
U. S. Information Service in East Pakistan  
and Mrs. Donald H. Taylor  
request the pleasure of the company of  
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Vanham  
for a reception  
on Monday, October 28th  
at 9-10<sup>30</sup> pm  
1963  
R. S. V. P.  
Tel. 3172  
Bequests Only  
Hatan House  
Road Number 8  
537, Dhanmandi  
(near Mirpur Road)

We were invited to meet Duke Ellington when he came with his orchestra to play a concert in Dacca in 1963.

*The Munich Sonett in Dacca*

**Renowned American Concert Pianist To Visit Dacca**  
The renowned American concert pianist Miss Lucy Ishkanian will visit Dacca from November 10 to 14. During her visit here she will give two piano concerts on November 11 and 13 at 8 p.m. at the USIS auditorium and one lecture-concert at 6.30 p.m. at Bulbul Academy on November 12.  
Miss Ishkanian is Presently on a concert tour of eight countries in the Middle East and South-East Asia as part of the Cultural Presentation Programme of the United States Department of State. Her concerts in Dacca will be sponsored by the U.S. Information Service in co-operation with Pakistan Arts Council. Free tickets for the November 11 and November 13 concerts will be available at either the U.S. Information Centre Library, 14, Topkhana Road or at the Pakistan Arts Council from



FOREIGN CULTURAL EVENTS cont.

FOREIGN THEATRICALS

During our time in Dacca there were a number of amateur productions of western musicals such as “Down in the Valley” and “Annie Get Your Gun”. These productions were usually performed in the auditoriums of the various cultural institutions. They were often quite ambitious with elaborate sets and costumes thanks to the availability of so much cheap labor and materials.

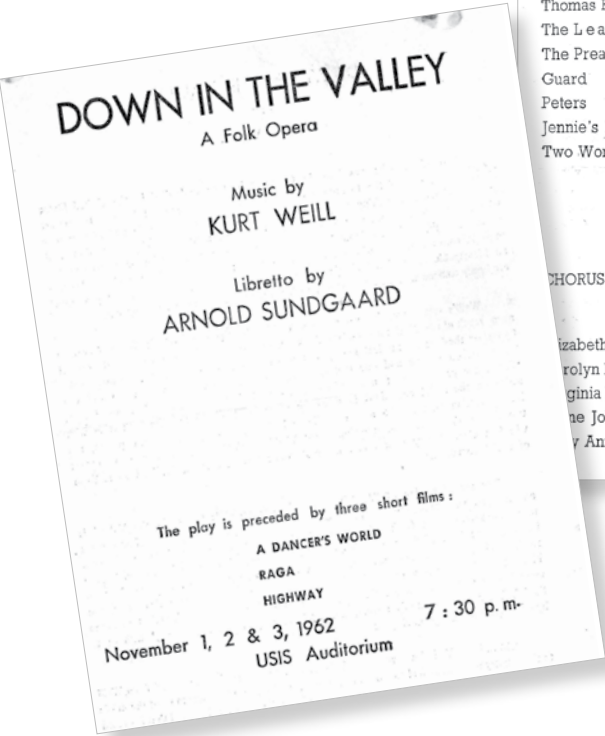
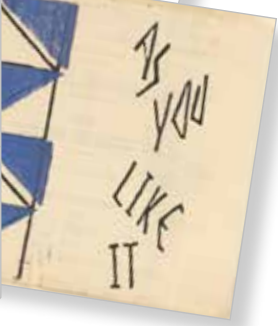
*My letters describing the many foreign traveling shows that came through Dacca of concerts and theater. [MFD letter to Stephen 05/25/1963]*

heater. We had quite a cultural season with a good chamber orchestra brought over by the Germanic Institute, three plays produced by the Bristol Old Vic, a very good company of young actors who did Hamlet, A Man for All Seasons, and ~~the~~ the Man. When she left it seemed as if she had been here only a week. I went as far as Bangkok with her where I had a nice holiday. to have time to practice my own pieces.

Last summer we divided our time between New York and Florida. While I was in St. James I took over the decoration of the new house in a high handed manner and failed to get anything into the house before I left, one reason why I stayed two months longer than I had planned. I did get a lot of useless things thrown out, the cellar and attic organized into expandable storage spaces, and Daddy's Japanese cook to varying his menus and caring a little more for the place up.

We have been out almost every night since our arrival. An English company of actors were here a week with the "Tempest", "The taming of the Shrew" and "Richard II", the last being the best play. They brought lavish costumes and a large cast and acted with spirit although conventionally and not always clearly. They complained in the papers about the Shahbagh hotel which put the British Council in an awkward position. Anyway, it was good to see so much Shakespeare. The Germans also brought an acting company of which we saw one play which was quite clear even to us who don't understand German. To-night we go to the U.A.R. dancers who are on tour. The new U.S. consul has arrived and also a new Mr. Taylor of the USIS and receptions. One of the many contem-

*[MFD letter to CGR 11/03/1964]*

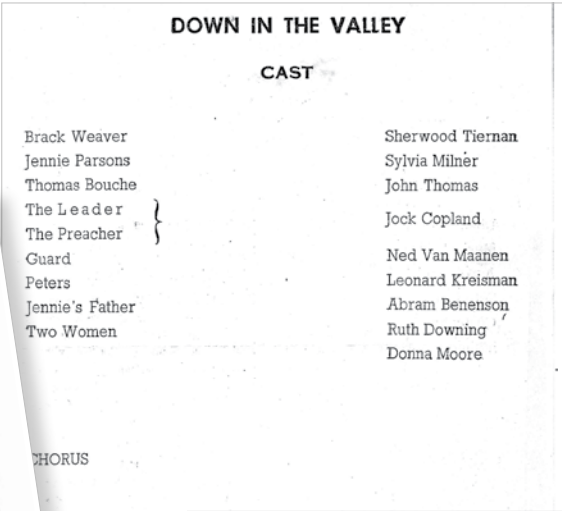


“DOWN IN THE VALLEY”

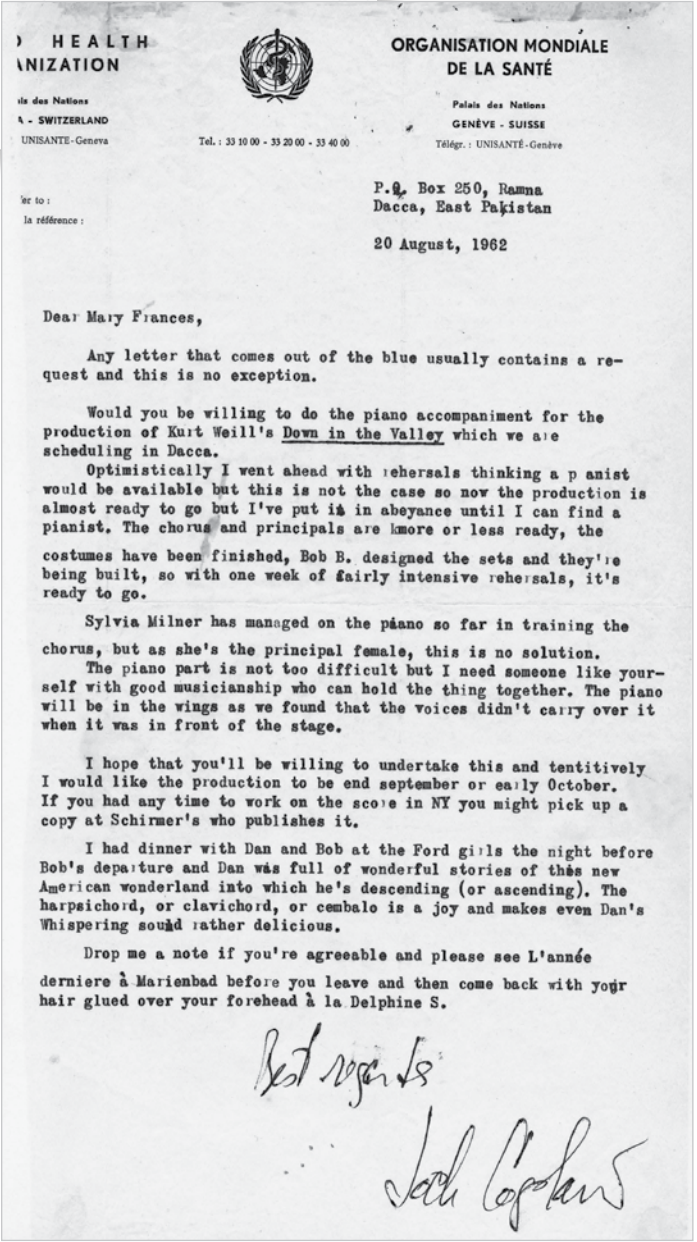
& THE STICKY STOOLS

On one of my trips to New York, I received a letter from Jock Copland (our close friend who worked with W.H.O.) saying that he and other friends were hoping to stage Kurt Weil’s “Down in the Valley” and would I be able to bring back the score. Knowing I had the spinet in Dacca, he also asked if I would be the “orchestra” for the show. I agreed and started rehearsals with them as soon as I got back to Dacca.

All went smoothly in our final performance until it was time for the male chorus to rise from their stools to sing. When they stood up, their seats came up with them. Unbeknownst to the performers someone in the Bengali staff had thought it might be nice to have the stools freshly painted for the show. They had not accounted, however, for the monsoon humidity, which prevents anything from drying, hence the stools were all quite sticky. The sight of the stools hanging from the pants of the chorus added an amusing moment to an otherwise tragic play.



*Jock's letter asking me to be the piano accompanist for his production of “Down in the Valley” [08/20/1962]*





LOCAL CULTURAL EVENTS

Over the seven years we lived in Dacca, I became especially familiar with two local cultural institutions: The Bangla Academy, a venue primarily for scholarly gatherings, and The Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts (BAFA), where I took dance classes once a week (see Chapter 5).



SHYAMALA MATIR DHARA TALE



BAFA was the premier Bengali cultural institution that sponsored local cultural performances regularly.

A number of these shows were directed by Salina Chowdhury. I met her at BAFA when I was taking dance classes there and she became one of my closest Bengali friends.

Casting :

**Urbashi :** Laila Nargis  
**Nandini :** Nasrin Choudhury  
**Man :** Dulal Talukdar

**Baul :** Tajen Choudhury

**Companions of Urbashi :** Dalia Nilufar, Laily Choudhury, Dalia Salahuddin, Jhula Rashid.

**Playmates of Nandini :** Jhula Rashid, Dalia Salahuddin, Gulshen Akhtar.

**Village Girls :** Naila Zaman, Lubra Zaman, Laicka Rafiq.

**Peasant Children :** Afroz Zilani, Kazi Mahmood. A

LOCAL VILLAGE THEATRICS

PAT HILL'S AMUSING DESCRIPTION OF A VILLAGE THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE OF A CHRISTIAN 'CRUCIFIXION' STORY. [P. Hill, Moon Bazar p.203]

"The drama lasted until midnight. Like the other guests, we ate, drank, talked, and took naps ..."

When we seemed to have wandered halfway across eternity, we heard the sound of drums through the mute night, and presently we saw the light of Regina's compound. A young man with a lantern came to meet us and lead us to the party.

Regina had built a new hut for her guests, a sturdy mud-walled room with windows on three sides to catch the breeze. Pat and the children were seated in chairs on its porch. Under the big square shamiana, a canopy, the Passion Play was in progress, surrounded by a sea of Bengali spectators. Regina's smile was radiant in her round face; gold hoops glistened in her ears.

Saileshwar found a place happily among the audience on the ground, and Christopher and I joined the group on the porch. So did Ganesh. He attached himself to a chair, and whenever one of his hosts tried quietly to persuade him to move into the tourist section, he bellowed that he was as good as anybody. The women who crouched in the cook hut, beaming and sweating, sent plates of food to us, and Regina's brother Joseph, who was a cook-bearer in Dacca, fixed drinks for us from Pat's supply kit.

The drama lasted until midnight. Like the other guests, we ate, drank, talked, and took naps. The children fell asleep. The performance was imaginative and moving. There was the Christ, his face painted white, wearing his crown of thorns, carrying his cross, suffering the Temptation and Crucifixion. There were winged angels and prancing devils; and in the midst of the tragedy one of the demons, in a gray wool Catholic Relief skirt, twitched his tail wickedly and pulled faces at the audience over his shoulder. Mary knelt in her sari and wept. Tablas beat the background rhythm and a violin wailed.

Watching the whole scene, actors and spectators, I thought, "So they are really like this, too, this is how they could be. If...."

Pat and I were enchanted. Later we asked one of the American priests why they had never mentioned this custom to us.

"It never occurred to us you'd want to know," he said, scratching his head. "Usually we have to sit through 'em in a hot school room and they start the story with the creation of the world, and it lasts for about eight hours." We could see how the weight of his reverend status could have crushed the charm of the presentation.

## LOCAL CULTURAL EVENTS cont.

### A VILLAGE JATRA

This is my description of a typical local jatra which could often last days. I didn't attend more than a couple of these but they were memorable for their imaginative story telling and use of simple props and costumes.  
[MFD diary entry, 12/30/1966]

Dec. 30

I made it to the "Jatra" last night. It was one of those rare experiences such as I felt seeing the village races for the first time, a breathtaking mixture of sophistication and almost pre-historic primitivism. The art of putting on this kind of play is a thing in itself. The actors are like loud speakers for the prompter who reads every word and ejaculation quietly but audibly. The actors pick up the lines immediately and give them expression and gestures. The stage is a large square platform with only two armchairs with a cloth thrown over them to represent thrones. These were on our side with their backs to us. The audience sits on all four sides. A canopy covers the entire "theatre". In this case the canopy was a patchwork of Bulgur wheat bags. The actors entered the stage from a path through the audience which ran from one corner of the stage to a house about 12 yds. away. Someone blew a whistle every time an actor was to arrive. No one was late for their cues. The entrances and exits through the audience are dramatic this way and add reality to otherwise scenery-less stage. Dances at certain intervals were supplied by a chorus of young girls, the smallest being about 8 years old to the eldest and tallest who

velvet sleeves or saddle shoes beneath a king's baggy silks. Women, of course, were acted by men and their costumes aside, they made no attempt to be feminine. Even the audience, always quick to respond vocally, let out loud shouts when a "princess" made "her" first entrance with a rather large ridge high under his costume on the chest to represent a bosom. The "women's" faces would be whitened. All wore lipstick and the eyes are always outlined in black. The little chorus girls had the elaborate designs on their faces such as brides here

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resistant because he does not wish to be thought a weak man because he "hankers after woman" (in the words of Robert, our interpreter throughout). It took about 2 1/2 hrs. to get this far.

There are some comic scenes of the Brahman with his wife. One in which he praises his hubbububul and tobacco in a long amusing song. We also meet a Brahman who seems to do nothing but prophecies in a unique form of quavering singing. We meet the new Brahman who was hired to replace the benighted one. He is an idiot and clown with a bag of jewels with which he has been bribed to promote the marriage. He wears a funny wig of short grey hair with a flower sticking out the top.

The father of Shona wears a wig of long corkscum curls. All the headpieces are partly rich and elegant, partly grotesque.

The plot moves towards a war which we didn't stay for. We are told the fighting with swords took place on stage. It must have been something to see. The play ended at about 2 AM. (About 6 hrs. of steady entertainment)



LOCAL CULTURAL EVENTS cont.

A LOCAL MUSIC PERFORMANCE AT  
WOHAB’S VILLAGE

On one of my visits to Wohab’s, village I got to attend a performance of singing and dancing.

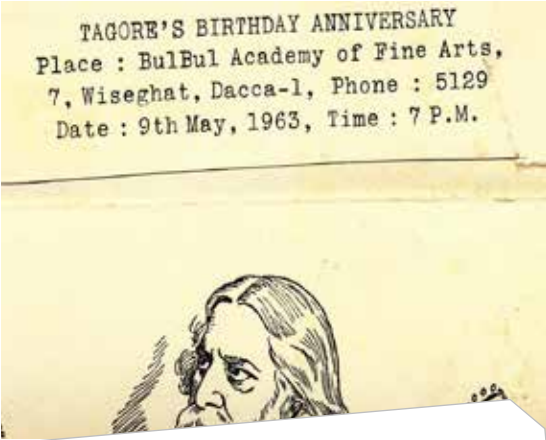
A teenage boy dressed in a woman’s sari sang and danced.  
[MFD diary entry , 1962]

During supper a tabla player and a harmonium player had arrived and mats had been put down which we turned to face while they arranged their instruments for playing. This was a most pleasant surprise for me to be going to hear real music. Some young boys appeared in strange costumes improvised from saris and large colorful scarfs mostly held on them by tucking around the waist. They were busy strapping bells to their ankles and I went over to help one boy tie his strings. Six boys from the ages of ten to about sixteen line up in two symmetrical rows facing us. The music started and singing at the same time they went through a little dance story much like what we see at Bulbul. They did several of these and then the cook’s little nephew, the same stocky build, intelligent face, did a solo, acting out a story while ~~the~~ the others sang with him. He wasn’t shy but he was good and looked like he might be the top pupil in other subjects in his class as well. A tall lanky teen aged dressed in liberty silk scarfs did a solo, a woman’s dance which he was somewhat angular in executing and yet charming and graceful to watch. The harmonium player was asked to sing which he felt shy about doing and didn’t do for long seeming to have forgotten the words. He played a piece on the flute. The tall boy who had danced played the tabla for awhile excellently. I asked to have a try at the harmonium but found I couldn’t play a scale especially as one or two notes didn’t play at all and one low note would play a higher pitch. The concert broke up and people started to go home.

“The Shalik bird dances on the palm tree,  
The owl spinning about dances,  
The fellow wearing women’s clothing, nodding his head,  
Struts about swishing the hem of his skirt.”  
[My translation of a Jarigan song refrain from my book, Jarigan. p.236]

ITINERANT PERFORMERS

We could find plenty of informal entertainment for hire on the streets such as puppeteers, snake charmers, performing monkeys, Baul singers, and transvestite dancers. The puppeteers providing *putal natch* (“doll dance”) were especially popular for Dhanmandi parties. They brought several large marionettes, costumed elaborately, although showing considerable wear and tear. The puppet plays usually included stories of romance and fighting, royal weddings and fights between wicked and good kings from Mughal times, or encounters between village heroes and wild beasts. They also like to add weddings between royal families.



[MFD letter 1967]  
“Since my acquaintance with the Bahar family and BAFA, I was in touch with the “dance dramas” that the school attempted to stage in spite of the expectation that the Pakistan government would ban them. Performances of Tagore songs were ubiquitous throughout Bengal. I can’t remember a social or state function without their performance. But “dance-dramas” were another matter which the government could control. Nevertheless, some managed to be staged for a short time and provided the city with refreshing music and dance”



Book cover of  
Jasimuddin’s epic  
poem “Rakhali”

UBIQUITOUS TAGORE

Any time a Tagore dance drama was put on, it was soon closed down by the Central Government. Tagore’s works were seen as part of the resistance to the national government policy to impose Urdu language and culture on the Bengalis. Productions of Tagore were seen as a conspicuous affront to the government. Dan and I were always amused to see in the papers yet another announcement of an aborted Tagore play. However, we didn’t suffer from a lack of Tagore exposure since almost every public function (official, diplomatic, academic etc.) always started and ended with Tagore songs. Ironically, while Bengali’s were angered by the suppression of Bengali language and literature they were happy to shout “*Pakistan Zindabad*” (“Long Live Pakistan”) for parades and other public events.

“Performances of Tagore songs were ubiquitous throughout Bengal. I can’t remember a social or state function without their performance.



SUPPRESSION OF BENGALI CULTURE

Although Dacca was an ancient capital with a rich heritage, its cultural life during the 1960s was suffering because of government constraints and lack of financing. As part of its effort to keep the West and East wings of the country united, the Pakistan government imposed restrictions on East Pakistani (Bengali) expressions of culture in hopes to align East Pakistan with the more puritanical Islamic orientation of West Pakistan. Throughout our time in Dacca in the 1960's, we saw incidences of Bengali dramas, concerts, movies, dances and other art forms shut down by the government.

Tagore performances were especially targeted because of their Bengali-ness. Although Tagore songs were tolerated and sung ubiquitously at any state or social function, Tagore “dance dramas” were strictly forbidden. Since my acquaintance with the Bahar family, which lead to my classical Indian dance classes at BAFA (see chapter 05), I was keenly aware of how difficult the government prohibitions made it for the school to put on dance performances. In spite of the government bans, some Tagore dance performances managed to be staged “below the radar,” giving Dacca locals a refreshing dose of music and dance in their otherwise culturally restricted lives.

My letter to the editor protesting the ban on music, 06/27/1966:

“When I read that there is any thought of discontinuing the study of music and dance among the young of this country, I see the loss of some of the world’s finest examples of classical folk and modern music and dance.”

“Let These Arts Be Not Lost”

In reference to the letters concerning ban on music and dance I should like to add some ideas that have not been mentioned in the otherwise excellent letters of pro and con.

It seems to me that each country has not only a responsibility to maintain its own artistic traditions for its own sake, but also has a responsibility to share its treasures with the world. When I read that there is any thought of discontinuing the study of music and dance in this country, I see the loss of some of the world's finest examples of classical, folk, and modern music and dance. It is only recently that the world has had the opportunity to appreciate these treasures and the world has much to learn from the music of this particular region, both past and present.

It seems to me that the manner in which the music and dance of this region are transmitted has not been seriously considered. The music and dance of Pakistan depend to

Ban On Dancing

(Continued from page 1)

in consonance with the principles of the Holy Quran and Sunnah".

Moulana Abdul Mannan, a Parliamentary Secretary, seemingly put on a cloak of a martyr he stood up to reveal the truth" on the issue. With a pathetic look towards his colleagues quoted from the holy scriptures saying that God had ended upon man to tell the truth even if he was burnt or killed.

When he embarked on a five-minute long non-stop speech by way of a point of order establishing with the help of number of quotations from Holy Quran that dancing and singing by girls were, without doubt un-Islamic".

Moulana Abdul Mannan's crucial speech by the leader of the House who had led to the Opposition to the reasonable amendment to the resolution. His remark that Islam had suffered back immediately after actual "research into the interpretation of the Holy Quran" had been stopped by the sack of Bagdad, was the main reason for Moulana's speech. Moulana's speech was greeted with a roar of approval from all the Opposition members. Even the leader of the Opposition joined in the debate had continued for over one and a half hours and as the deputy leader of Opposition persisted in his insistence on the amended resolution the Islamic Ideology Commission, the leader of the House and accepted the position of the four women members of the Assembly was present in the Assembly during the discussion on the resolution.

Y.O.ta

MOH-HI

What Shall We Leave Behind ?

When cultures mix they necessarily influence changes in each other. As the members of one society adapt to another, they adopt new ways; they also give. What shall we leave behind of our culture?

Visible in Pakistan are the influence of the ancient, invading Muslims on Buddhist-Brahmin Bengal, of the Christian Portuguese in the seventeenth century, of the French traders, the Dutch industrialists, the Armenians, the Greeks, and the English. Each of these has contributed to the culture and society of Pakistan today—whether they came in the seventeenth or the twentieth century.

The Americans, too, will leave their mark. We shall leave roads and buildings, medicine and planned families, improved crops and more farmland, means to trade and trade items; material advantages. We shall take with us material gains, too, along with the adopted customs of Sunday curry, summer siestas, and silvered saris for dress. Perhaps our Western monuments will stand, perhaps they will be improved upon, perhaps they will fall prey to time. One day the curry may lose its flavor, or time will preclude a siesta, and the silver tarnish. Man lasts but his inventions are destructible.

May it be that we should leave a less perishable influence if we were to leave more of our selves with our talents? From Bengal we take silks and brass, pearls and curry, but that is not all we are offered. When these things are gone the intangibles remain. From Bengal remains a different consciousness of nature that we have in our Western culture, from the Muslim a rekindled family reverence, from the Buddhist the Noble Eightfold Path. Each of us may have more that we have incorporated into our own lives, through personal contact and indelible experiences. Shall we leave, behind then, merely the fruits of our talents or shall we essay to leave, through example and intercourse, the worthy parts of ourselves which may last as man does. What will you leave behind ?

Maris Langford

MOH-HEE-LAH

Volume 1 Number 4

Club in Dacca

ABOUT BENGALI

Mary Frances Dunham

Bengali would make a worthy candidate for an international language. Through its parentage with an indigenous speech of North India, and through its assimilation of Sanskrit it has numerous cousins all over the world, both to the East and to the West of Bengal.

Bengali, along with the other languages closely related to Sanskrit, has a well organized alphabet. The letters (*varna*, colours) are numerous, but they represent a wide variety of sounds systematically and with precision. Once the letters have been learned, spelling is far easier than in English. The script too is intricate, especially to Western eyes, but the letter formations can be reduced to about twelve simple patterns. Bengali letters can be written in space-saving vertical combinations as well as horizontal.

Bengali grammar is systematic. It is inflected and conjugated with relatively few exceptions and irregularities. Only a couple of endings need to be learned for substantives, and there are only three conjugational types.

Bengali lends itself to poetry, philosophy, and science. Such abstract concepts as love, peace, freedom, etc., which can become vague and sentimental words in the European languages, are, in Bengali, closely related to concrete images or common terms of everyday life. The uneducated as well as the educated man can understand the words of an intellectual, if not their full implications. The tendency of the vocabulary to be concrete lends itself to metaphor and imagery. Bengali stirs the imagination.

Bengali is musical to hear and systematic to read. It may never become an international language, but it will always be an example of linguistic economy, adaptability, and beauty.

Maris Langford’s essay on the significance of all the cultures that have influenced Bengal.

I write in praise of the Bengali language in this introduction I wrote for the Bengali flash cards I made for learning Bengali and English.

“The tendency of the vocabulary to be concrete lends itself to metaphor and imagery. Bengali stirs the imagination.”



FESTIVALS & HOLIDAYS

Although the vast majority of Bengalis in East Pakistan in the 1960s were Muslim there were significant communities of Buddhists, Hindus and Christians. As a result, almost everyday there was a religious festival of some sort somewhere.



“The sun laughs in the embrace of the clouds, Badal has gone for a holiday.

Today is also our holiday, Oh, Brother! Today is my holiday!”

[Kachi Kotha, Vol. 2., Dacca, 1961]

MUSLIM HOLIDAYS

KORBANI EID

My memories of *Korbani Eid*, the sacrifice festival in memory of Abraham, are mostly associated with Katherine and her reactions to seeing the slaughter of the sacrificed goats in our neighborhood. The day before the ritual slaughter, impromptu markets would pop up all over the city to sell live goats brought in from the countryside. The streets would be filled with goats being brought into the markets by truck and on foot. On the day of *Korbani Eid*, the goats are slaughtered and the meat is distributed to family members and guests. Sometimes this is the only meat that a family enjoys in a year.



My descriptions of Eid celebrations [MFD diary 04/29/1961 about trip to Rajshahi.]

This week-end has been another Eid celebration, when they kill cattle, and eat. I went to the cattle fair on Thursday to get some pictures and all that day and the day before we could watch them being lead along our road all garlanded and looking happy and festive. Saturday we could see families sorting out the meat, mincing some, cutting some in cubes, entrails in another pile, skins in another. You are supposed to give a third to the poor, a third to your relatives, and keep a third for the family. We don't know how it all gets eaten. I got a long letter from Christopher...

RAMADAN

I noticed that our household staff, although mostly Muslim did not observe the Ramadan fasting schedule very diligently. By contrast, Dan noticed a significant decline in work efficiency at his office during this month long holiday. Rather than complain, he tried to fast himself to understand better what his staff was experiencing. As a result, he did indeed learn to empathize with the hardships of his staff to get through a full workday without any food or drink and more significantly without smoking.

“... Ramadan began about five days ago, which means that the orthodox Mohamadans don't eat anything between sunrise and sunset - don't eat, drink or smoke anything. All the laborers and office boys seem to be keeping the fast strictly, but the driver has broken his and it seems the white-collar class are not strict either. The day before yesterday Ali's brother came over around five and wouldn't take any tea when I offered it, but as soon as the siren went off at six, he brought out a lot of Pakistani goodies and we had tea. "The old man" does not start work until after tea because he sleeps now after eating at four in the morning. Dan needs more help than ever at the office for the Rahshahi project and fears a drop in energy of his already frail workers. "

[MFD diary entry, fall 1961]



Fig 9. Self-flagellation exercises and alams representing June 10, 1995.

“ ‘Ali! Ali! Ali !’ they cry; They strike their wooden staves end on end.”

[Jasimuddin: *The Field of the Embroidered Quilt*, p.45]

MUHARRAM

The Muharram festival celebrates the martyrdom of the Prophet's grandson Hossein and his family at the battle of Karbala near Damascus (630 AD). When Dan and I heard about the colorful processions in the Old City, we were curious to see them. We were fully aware of the American consulate warnings about the potential for riots, which usually involved tensions between Sunnis and Shia's, but we went anyway. We joined the crowds near Hosseini Dalan, a handsome Grecian looking building, where the parade *tazia* (symbolic floats) are kept and from where the procession starts out and terminates. The floats and banners were extraordinary to us – we could see that they were depicting events, but we did not know the story behind them.

Dan tried to take as many photos as possible, but the spectators were so many and so packed together that this was difficult. During the procession I was fascinated by the periodic pauses for “*lati khela*” (stick play) dances. During these moments a group of men would stop, gather into a circle, and symbolically attack each other with bamboo poles in a very mannered and choreographed style. Throughout the procession there were bands of men with bare chests and backs, flagellating themselves with metal-tipped thongs. It was a bloody sight, but all part of the pageantry. All along the length of the procession drinking water was distributed as a symbolic reminder of the thirst endured by the heroes of the battle being commemorated. Although I attended the Muharram festival only once, it made such an impression upon me that it later became an important part of my master thesis on Jarigan at Columbia University.



Photos of the Muharram festival in Dacca from my book, Jarigan.

মহরমের মাস আসিল, শিমুলতলীর গায়ের সবে.  
জারীর গানে লাঠির খেলায় মাতলো আবার মহোৎসবে।

মধ্যে তাহার জারীগানের চলছে তুফান কণ্ঠ চিরে  
কারবারি করুণ কাঁদন ডেউ খেলিছে নয়ন নীরে।

“The month of Muharram has come, throughout the village of Shimultoli, In large crowds everyone is drunk with song and play of sticks.”

“Today circling about we will all dance to the mad beat of the drum, We will stretch out the sad tale from Karbala in song...”

[Jasimuddin : *Sojan Badiyar Ghat*. Lines translated by M. F. Dunham, pp.21-22]



The Airplane Mosque  
near New Market in  
Dacca



MUSLIM CALL TO PRAYER

Wohab, Mohan and Mali seemed to be relatively inconspicuous about their Muslim daily prayer obligations. They may have prayed, but I was never aware of it. Cook, on the other hand, being Christian was totally unaffected by the daily calls to prayer. The call to prayer was faint due to the distance of the nearest mosque, but in the late afternoon, when it could be heard clearly, and in the early morning, the call reached our garden embalming it with its wistful music, ending predictably with an abrupt spurt of guttural cadenza.

HINDU PUJAS

An old Hindu temple was at the end of our street. Although I never attended the *pujas* at the temple, I enjoyed hearing the faint sound of their conch shell calls at sunset or their chants.

“Too many holy men  
spoil the holy place”

[Common Bengali proverb]

HOLI

Holi is a Hindu festival honoring the coming of spring. Although it is a Hindu celebration, every one of all faiths in Dacca seemed to join in the fun of dousing each other with colored water, grownups as well as children. Siddheswari Road would become awash of colors on this day. We learned to save old clothes specifically for this occasion.



SARASWATI PUJA

Saraswati *Puja* was the annual Hindu festival to celebrate the goddess of learning. This was the one festival I could truly associate with. I liked the ritual of exchanging books during this holiday.

JUGGERNAUT OF “JAGGERNATHS”

Once we were invited to see the Jaggernath festival at Dhamrai, a busy Hindu town not far from Dacca. The town was known for having the largest *jaggar* (“God’s carriage”). It was as big as a seven story high temple on wheels. It was carved of wood and housed a statue of Krishna. On the festival day, people came from all over in crowds to watch the “*jaggar*” be pulled through the main street to the river where an effigy of Krishna was thrown into the water. I was very impressed by the size of the “*jaggar*” and amazed at how such a heavy structure was pushed and pulled along the street. Sam Lanford, one of the American architects teaching with Dan at EPUET, vividly describes the festival in his novel, “*Bengal, Bengal.*”



“BAICH” - MONSOON BOAT RACES

Wohab, our bearer, invited me to come see the popular “*baich*” boat racing event near his village during the monsoon season of 1963. These boat races happen every year during monsoon season when the waters are high. It was a memorable experience for me to see the dance and song that went along with the race – something you would never see at a Thames regatta. As the crowd gathered on the shore, expectations hung in the air and until the signal was given to start the first race at which time two or three long boats took off. Each boat had about twelve rowers in bright colored turbans, sitting in pairs as they feverishly paddled. They stroked in unison lead by their captain who danced and sung a rhythmic song with a rapid beat. The captain would sing a stanza in solo and the rowers would repeat back the refrain. Sight and sound combined to enthrall the watchers who became as excited as the participants in the race. These races have been well documented, but were new to me at the time so I made recordings, sketches and notes to remember the details of that event.

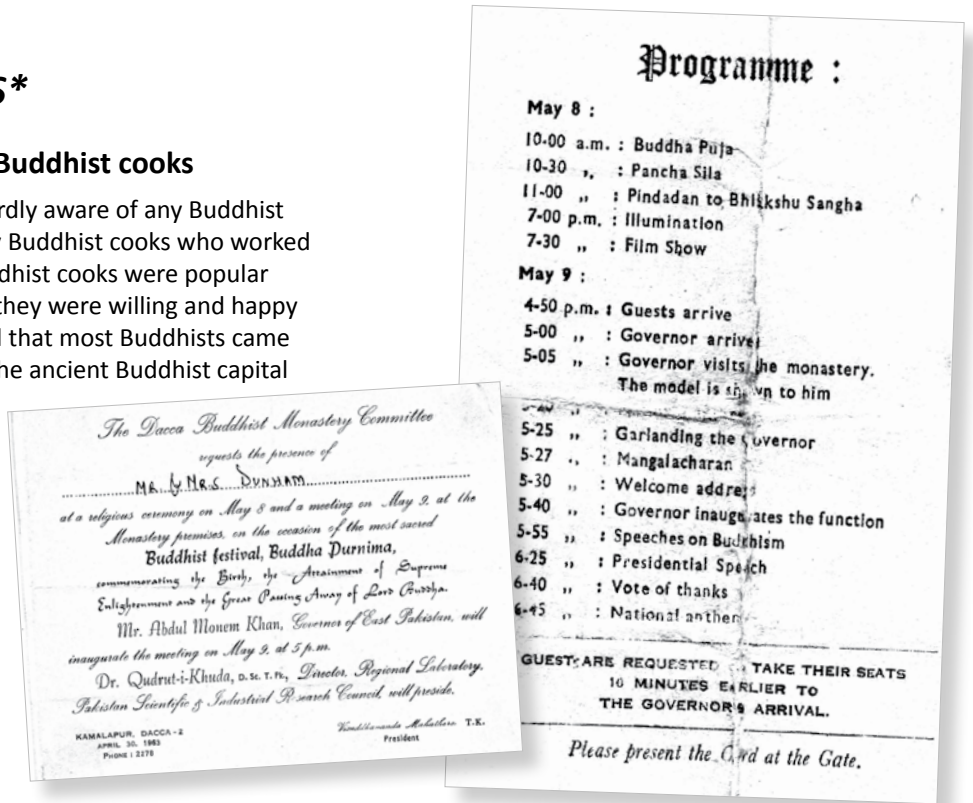




BUDDHIST PUJAS\*

Barua Holiday for the Buddhist cooks

Living in Dacca, one was hardly aware of any Buddhist culture except for the many Buddhist cooks who worked in foreign households. Buddhist cooks were popular among foreigners because they were willing and happy to cook pork. We were told that most Buddhists came from the Chittagong area, the ancient Buddhist capital of Bengal.



CHRISTIAN PUJAS\*

PAT'S AMUSING DESCRIPTION OF A CHRISTMAS PAGEANT STAGED BY THEIR HOUSEHOLD STAFF  
[P. Hill, Moon Bazar p.203]

year that open house started at 3:00 in the afternoon. But they looked at everything, and took their presents, and the next year they came back at 9:00. Then I discovered that they knew they mustn't be there when the other guests came, on account of their harijan caste. So now we just put some food out in the morning and let them come."

In Dhanmandi, we always had Stanley and his carollers. Stanley was a Christian Bengali who worked in Maintenance at EFWAPDA, and on Christmas Eve he brought a troop of boys and girls from his village, painted and costumed. Some time after dark, we would hear the shouts and the drums in the garden, and our household would stream out into the keen evening air to watch. They danced in a circle, singing and stomping and clapping, while Stanley played the harmonium. One couple stood very still in the center; the girl was small, and her face painted white. They were Mary and Joseph, and a tall angel with enormous paper wings stood guard behind them. When it was all over, we applauded, and Ralph gave Stanley our donation. Stanley always counted the money at once and announced the sum to his group, to assure everyone that he was not cheating with the funds, which he said were to be spent on an annual party for the participants.

\* This Bengali wording is from our personal family patois

ARTS & CRAFTS



RICKSHAW ART

In the 1960's, there was very little art with a capital 'A' in Dacca and no art museums or galleries. But Dan and I developed a love of the local arts especially artwork on the rickshaws. On every rickshaw you could see a painting displayed on the back below the seat. The paintings most typically depicted war scenes, village landscapes or popular movie stars of the time. Dan and I loved the rickshaw art so much that I thought to hire one of these artists on concession to do a number of personalized paintings of our family life. To this day these rickshaw paintings are amongst our most prized art possessions. [See chapter 9 for more on these paintings.]





# INVITATIONS

নিমন্ত্রণ \*  
(NIMONTRON)

8.1 OUR ENTERTAINMENTS

8.2 OUR GUESTS



\* This Bengali wording is from our personal family patois



8.1 OUR ENTERTAINMENTS



OUR SOCIAL LIFE

Social life was important for foreigners in Dacca. Because there was not much to do after work hours (no sports, no theater, no movies, no restaurants, etc.), we often resorted to parties and improvising our own entertainments. Among the Dhanmandi foreign community, dinner parties were part of the weekly routine. I am sure most families attended at least one dinner engagement a week out of the numerous invitations they might have received. Dan and I, on the other hand, preferred to stay home most nights with neighborhood friends and did not miss being part of the busy Dhanmandi social scene. However, we did like to host celebrations (such as birthdays, holidays, welcome and farewell parties), which would give us an excuse to come up with unique and amusing decorations and entertainments. We also liked occasionally attending formal receptions because it gave Dan an excuse to improvise *haute couture* outfits for me.



AMUSEMENTS AT HOME

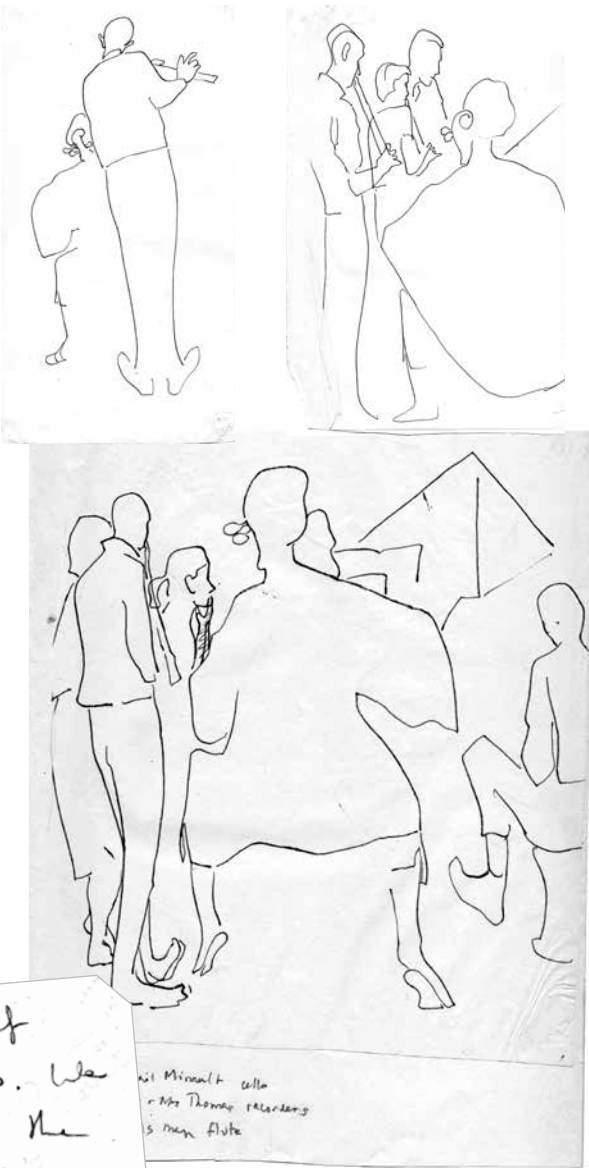
MUSICAL SOIREES

Around our second year in Dacca I was pleased to discover that a number of my friends could play instruments and we gathered regularly, usually once a week to play together. Our group of five included: two USIS staff, Gail Minault on her Calcutta-rented cello, and her colleague on flute; Bucky Greenough from the Cholera Lab with his wife both on recorders, and me on my spinet harpsichord. We were always short on music and had to rely on friends in the US and Calcutta to send us Telemann, Purcell and Bach music scores. Although we were all amateurs, the sound of our music in the quiet of the Dacca night must have been enchanting: like hearing the delicate melodies of a distant flute when staying in the countryside.

Dan would enjoy entertaining guests while we were playing. Kay Donaldson (Dan's recruit to teach art history at EPUET) came often to our musical soirées and enjoyed sketching us while we played.

Setting up our trio:  
harpsichord, flute and recorder  
[MFD letter to CGR, 04/16/1963]

We now have a small group of recorder, flute, and harpsichord fans. We will give our first "demonstration" at the U.S. school next week if we can get together once more before then. The harpsi. is certainly getting well-used. We have



Sketches by Kay Donaldson

LISTENING TO LPs OF BROADWAY MUSICALS

On the home front, when we were not entertaining guests or having musical soirees (see Chapter 07) we often entertained ourselves by listening to music. Reading wasn't really an option given how low and sporadic our electric lighting was. We had fortuitously inherited a large record collection when Dan learned that USIS was throwing out their old LPs. Being mostly Broadway musicals which he loved, Dan was quick to grab them. Hence we passed many an evening listening to "Hello Dolly", "Guys and Dolls", "Candide", "West Side Story" to name only a few.

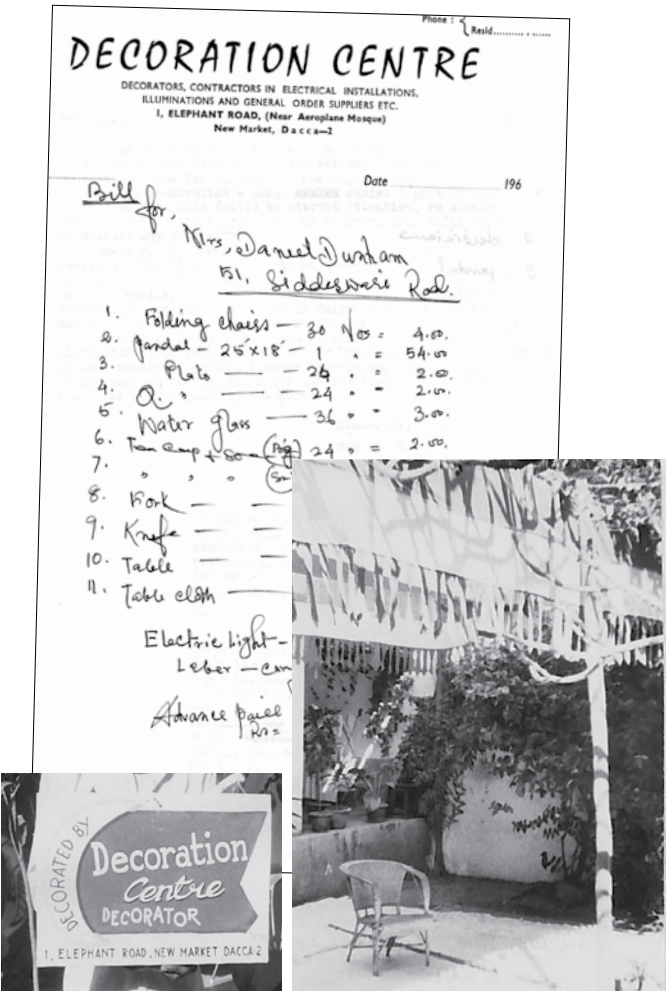


NO SHORTAGE OF PARTIES

Parties in Dacca, both formal and informal, supplied the main source of entertainment for the foreign community. Most foreigners in Dacca found that having a household staff made it much easier to receive guests and host large events than in their home countries, so they were happy to do it quite often. Parties were also a chance for servants to intermingle with colleagues from different households. They got to see other households and meet other servants and to enjoy, a parallel party of their own.

Since phones were almost non existent and printing services were so cheap, we all resorted to personally delivering invitations to each guest's home as was done in the Victorian times. For delivery service we used what we called the 'camel express,' which meant we grabbed at anyone who might be traveling a route where they could conveniently drop off invitations for us on their way. We liked getting creative with our invitation designs both in their graphics and in their text.

Party decorating was also easier and cheaper in Dacca than in our homelands. There were many professional decorating companies who would bring their *mistris* on the morning of a party, set up a *shamiana* (tent) in the garden and provide whatever interior decorations one asked for. Although they were cheap and quick, Dan and I usually preferred to do our decorations ourselves with the help and resourcefulness of our own staff.



Once Dan's fence was built we had fewer drop-in guests [MFD letter to Small, 09/01/1960]

... he seems to have cut down on the Pakistani visitors since Dan designed and built his front fence-wall with gate. They used to come at all hours of the day, unannounced, and stay for ever until it got quite a strain. My vocabulary is still too small for conversation with any interest and our guests are no help. We prefer the uneducated Pakistanis to the educated ones, nevertheless, as the educated ones are real snobs generally and not interesting. There are good exceptions, of course.

Too many party invitations [MFD letter to CGR, 02/02/1963]

"... Dan is even thinking of having "Regrets" cards printed..." to turn down party invitations.... There is a growing group like ourselves who have decided that the social life in Dacca is too taxing and they too are fighting as much as they can."

OUR DINNERS AT BENGALI HOUSEHOLDS

Dan and I learned early on, to have different expectations when dining with Bengali's at their homes than with other foreigners. During our first week in Dacca, when Sheik, one of Dan's Berger bosses, invited us to dinner at his house, we thought something was terribly wrong because in spite of all our efforts to make pleasant conversation, he and his wife seemed totally unresponsive. They were very gracious about offering food, but they never showed any desire to chat. Dan and I learned later that in Bengali homes – mealtime was devoted solely to eating. The idea of eating and talking at the same time, as is the norm among

westerners, was not customary and perhaps considered rude. For our hosts, eating was the important thing to do during a meal and conversation came before or after the meal (not during). We also learned from that first dinner invitation that Bengali's tend to eat dinner very late. Over time, Dan and I knew that if we were invited to a Bengali household for dinner at 7PM we might not be eating before 11PM. We typically made it a point to eat something before going. Once dinners were served, we were usually overwhelmed by the amounts of food. In my efforts to speak Bengali I was frustrated that there was no Bengali expression I could use to say "Thank you, but I have had enough."



Banquet held in the Durbar Hall, Laxmi Vilas Palace, Baroda on the occasion of a state visit of Maharaja Ganga Singh of Bikaner, 1934

THEATRICAL PARTIES IN THE TIME OF THE BRITISH RAJ

Our social life of parties and home productions of music and theater in many ways resembled that of the British colonialists of the 19th century.



"...we had our French play in the evening. We dined early, and drove after dinner, and then dressed for the play. I never saw a prettier theatre than we had, with scenes, and a place for the orchestra, and a dressing-room on each side, and beautifully lighted up, because one of the great lusters of the ball-room happened to hang right in the middle of the stage. We had L’Affaire d’Honneur and Vatel, which last was acted quite as well as I ever saw it in Paris or London. Nothing could go off better, and it is the first attempt we have made at amusing others which has amused us. I take it more than half the audience did not understand French, but those that did, laughed a little more in consequence, to show their superiority ..."

[Eden Sisters', letters mid 19th century, 72/199-73/100]



HAFIZ VILLA GATHERINGS

HOME THEATER:

“Pyramus and Thisbe” for my father

As the highlight of a celebration for my father’s birthday, I organized “our gang” to stage a performance of “Pyramus and Thisbe,” the play within a play of Shakespeare’s “A Midsummer Night’s Dream.” The front portico of our house served as a stage with the audience seated below on the lawn in front. The two rooms on either side (living and bedroom) served as “the wings” and our dining room in the center provided the backstage.

Instead of a script for the play, I simply told Wohab the tragic story of Pyramus and Thisbe and let him and the rest of “our gang” improvise their own rendition of the story with their own costumes and props. Theresa, Katherine’s ayah, played the part of Thisbe, Wohab played Pyramus and Mali played the lion (the character of Moon was omitted). They did a splendid job of retelling the story in Bengali with their own interpretation of the plot in a Bengali village setting.



Our “Gang’s” production of “Pyramus and Thisbe” to honor my father’s birthday



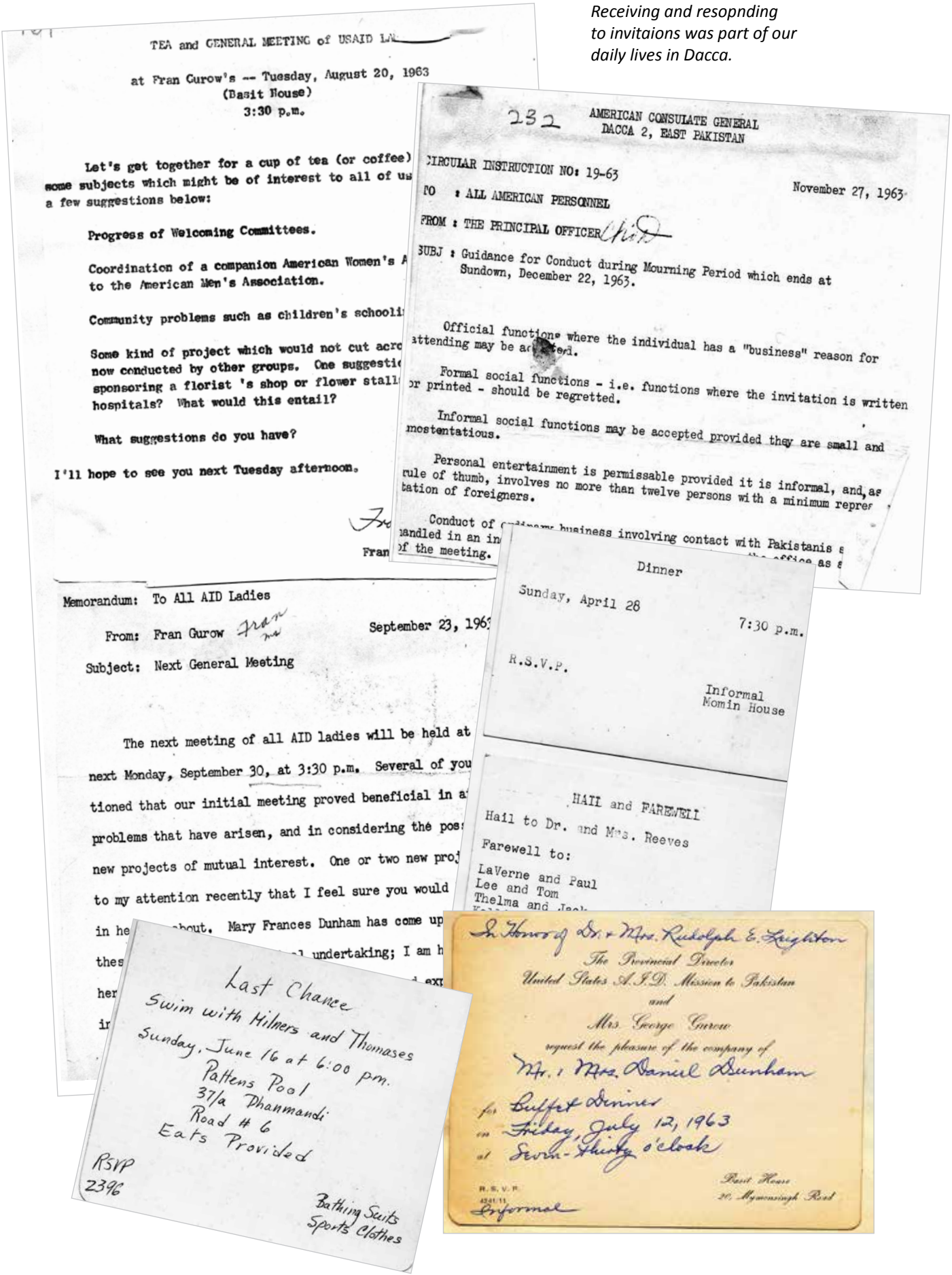
“Down in the Village” performed by our “Gang” under Jock’s direction

Down in the Village  
(Drama in 5 Acts)  
Performed at Hafiz Villa  
in honour of Jock Copland  
April 11, 1964

PARTIES WITH JOCK

Jock Copland, our friend from the UN World Health Organization, entertained us with his witty parodies of western and eastern culture. After having performed “Down in the Valley” under Jock’s direction, we staged our own version of it at Hafiz Villa which we called “Down in the Village.” We especially loved how Jock’s lyrics mimicked the style of Noel Coward and satirized our lives in Dacca. One of my favorites was a song making fun of the type of English used in the Dacca English language newspaper. The song started:

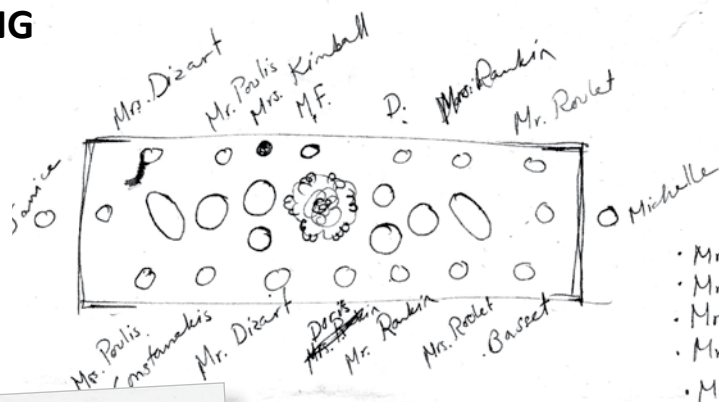
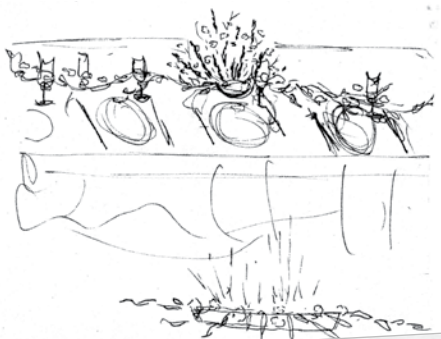
“You’re a girl, isn’t it?  
I’m a boy, isn’t it?  
Etc.”



Receiving and resopnding to invitaions was part of our daily lives in Dacca.



ELABORATE PARTY PLANNING



- Mr. Rowlet
- Mrs. Rowlet
- Mrs. Rankin
- Mr. Rankin
- Mr. Dizant

Wednesday June 21<sup>st</sup>

make dahl balls  
make large tin bread crumbs.  
get Michelle's china, silverware, glasses, cups, tiquers, sugar(2), sugar bowl, tea pot  
stove, pyrex bowls, chairs, cheese grater, records  
dish towels, pie dish.

make chowder  
make chili sauce  
get table + chairs

Thursday June 22<sup>nd</sup>

Market

- 3 shares beef
- 2 bunch mint
- dahl balls
- 1 share milk
- 2 doz. eggs
- mint 2 bunches
- data leaves
- bread 3 loaves

Buy

- ✓ dahl 4 mang
- ✓ snake vegetable
- ✓ cucumber
- ✓ 4 pineapples
- ✓ 3 lbs. onion
- ✓ red wine
- ✓ whiskey
- ✓ 3 shares milk
- ✓ 40 prawns
- ✓ chills
- ✓ cigarettes

Pick up Kash bread  
cake 16 rps  
liquor 111 rps

Shamsul wages 9  
Ali, Shabak, Haran 15  
Carpenter 5

156

Cooking

Morning

- prepare meat loaf. cook
- boiled eggs. don't shell.
- sauce vinaigrette
- prepare cucumbers
- prepare cheese pudding
- prepare fruit

Afternoon

- empty ice in thermos
- make more ice
- pick up cake

Evening

- 7:50 heat dahl balls, pants, chips.
- 8:00 heat dahl balls
- 8:30 put cheese pudding in
- 8:30 oven.
- 8:45 put soup on stove.
- Vegetables to heat.
- 9:00 serve soup.
- 9:10 serve me meat loaf, cheese pudding, vegetables, salad.

5:30-7:00 prepare cheese pudding

Guests

- Bartho
- Elizabeth
- Rutherford
- Isenmann
- Werkheisers
- Hirschorn
- Sachars
- Pattens

Menu

5:00-5:30  
Tea  
Pbk. sweets.

7:00-8:00  
Drinks  
Coca-cola  
Popcorn  
Peanuts  
Paper  
Hot Dogs?

8:00 Supper

Soup  
Beef  
Gravy  
Fried onions  
rice  
Salad, shrimp  
Cake  
Coffee  
Charcoal

Wine  
Rolls

PARTIES OF THE BRITISH RAJ  
The amount of attention, time and planning we put into our parties was in keeping with the traditions of the parties of the British colonialists of a 100 years before.



His Excellency the Governor & Lady Griffith  
At Home  
Friday, 6th April 1934  
Government House

Bachelor's Ball  
1928.

STAFF DINNER  
1935

Menu

- Foie Gras
- Consommé Carême
- Homards à la Newburg
- Jambon aux Epinards
- Melon Glacé à la Crème
- Foie de Volaille aux Champignons Noir

MENU

- POTAGE ST. GERMAIN
- TRANCHES DE POISSON MEUNIERE
- NOISETTES DE MOUTON CHAUFROID
- CHAPON ROTI BOUCHERE
- GATEAU MILLEFEUILLES
- CANAPES AU SAUMON FUME
- PARFAIT PRALINE
- DESSERT
- CAFE

Katapult, 3rd Nov. 1929.

Here is just a glimpse of my planning efforts to prepare for a party including: guest lists, shopping lists, menus, schedules, table settings and decoration ideas.



AN ASIDE REGARDING - PARTIES IN DACCA

Dan was always amused at Dhanmandi dinner parties when at the end of the meal a bearer appeared pushing a cart filled with various brandies and liqueurs, like a glorified street vendor. Americans in government jobs had American Commissary privileges which gave them easy access to a copious supply of imported products. Like having a key to a treasure chest, commissary rights gave them access to a trove of foreign luxury goods at duty free prices: such as Land O’Lakes cheeses, Kellogg’s corn flakes, Skippy Peanut Butter and the best wines and liqueurs from around the world. There must have been a thriving “black market” trade in these imported goods since we so often saw them shamelessly flaunted at parties hosted by foreigners who clearly did not have commissary privileges.

Children’s birthday parties were often an occasion to conspicuously display and enjoy the best in American processed treats (jellos, Hershey’s chocolates, lollipops, and Betty Crocker cakes) and decorations. Bengali cooks had no trouble using the American cake mixes with their simple graphic directions on the box. Even the decorations – the birthday candles, streamers and balloons – at these parties would often come from the commissary and were of much better quality than what was locally available.

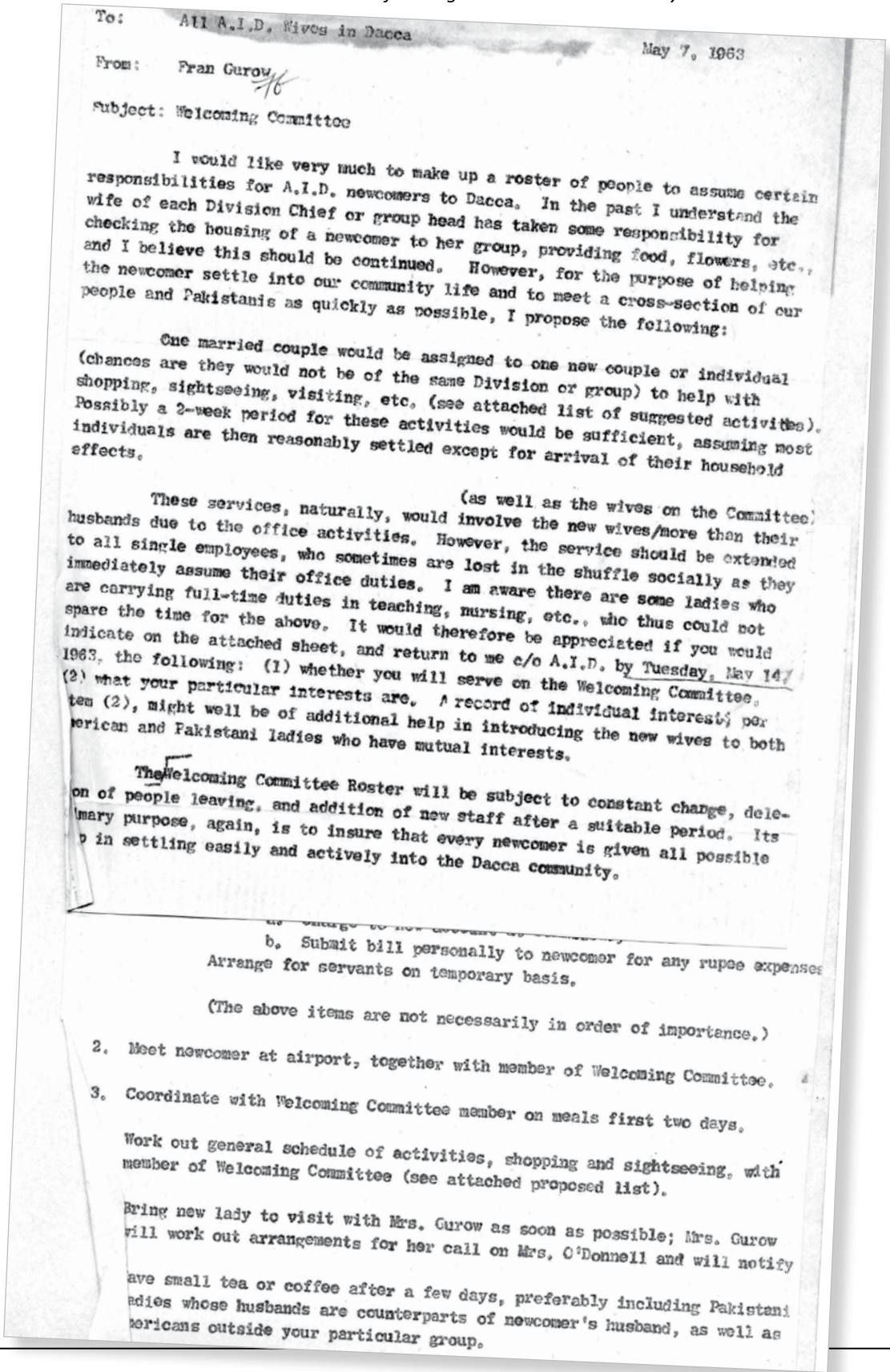
When Dan joined the team of USAID funded architects to teach at EPUET, we automatically became members of the privileged class of Americans who had commissary rights whether we liked it or not. However, having already lived more than a year in Dacca, entirely on local bought goods, we took pride in our independence from the commissary. If we needed liquors for a party, Dan would make a pilgrimage to the end of Nawabpur Road, near Sadar Ghat in the Old City, to a nameless shop where he could buy black market, imported liquors.

Fortunately, since most of our guests were Bengali Muslims, we did not feel the need to stock up on alcoholic beverages. However, we did try to keep a bottle of whiskey on hand for one visitor in particular who often stopped by around tea time for a ‘cocktail.’ Although we often entertained afternoon guests in our garden, Wohab would always make sure to serve this particular guest in the living room, so he could enjoy his “haram” (forbidden) drink in private.



AN ASIDE REGARDING - SOCIAL ETIQUETTE

ETIQUETTE CUSTOMS AS PRESCRIBED BY U.S.A.I.D.  
This was a bulletin distributed to all US personnel and their families pointing out Pakistani customs to be observed and some of the customs to be aware of among the American community.





OUR CHRISTMAS PARTIES

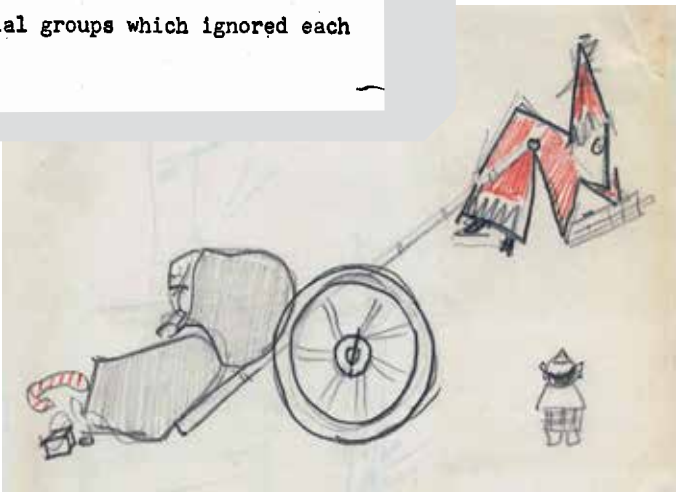
By our third year in Dacca we had established a tradition of hosting a large Christmas party at our house that would often last the entire day. Dan would fashion a “tree”, or so we called it, by piling up potted plants in a pyramid fashion and festooning them with the brightly colored tissue paper chains made by “our gang”. We made sure nobody left this party without a gift. Dan would usually select some small items such as pencil sharpeners (from abroad), scarves, or socks which he would buy in quantity and would wrap in coded colors to indicate whether the gift was for a child or a man or a woman.

Bengali guests would start to arrive as early as ten in the morning for our ‘afternoon’ party and often leave before the rest of our guests came. At our first Christmas party, Dan noticed that many of the local guests were naturally segregating themselves: the women kept to one room- like a *pordah* room. For all our next Christmas parties we knew to prepare our bedroom as the *pordah* room for the women. From that first party, we also learned how thrilled some of our guests (mostly students) were to taste “American” ham: even though it was *haram* (forbidden). To our surprise the following year we heard that we were expected to serve ham again, so we learned to have it every time.



PAT’S DESCRIPTION OF THE DUNHAM ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY  
[P. Hill, Moon Bazar, p.201]

The Dunhams had open house every Christmas Day for all the Bengalis in Dan's department at the college. Their house was gloriously adorned, with a real tree in the parlor and a handsome buffet luncheon in the courtyard. I wondered how they managed the sensitivities involved in mixing guests of different stations in life; but Dan said that they segregated themselves into homogeneous social groups which ignored each other and no one seemed to mind.



CHRISTMAS PARTY - 1963

*In this letter I give a good idea of the elaborate preparations we made for our yearly Christmas parties: including organizing the food, making the decorations and wrapping gifts.*  
[[MFD letter to CGR 12/27/1963]]

We had over 100 on Christmas this year. I got what I thought would be sufficient for 60 but we ran short on many things and trying to keep shish kebab going and everything passed around was beyond me. The servants out did themselves decorating this year. They started with cutting paper flags and chains by the beginning of the month. The Mali constructed a model village house with real thatched roof, veranda, door and windows and beautifully decorated. It was quite a surprise. They made an elaborated Marry Christmas sign for the front door and the whole house, garden, patio, and verandas were festooned in colored paper. Dan kept the living room for his own elegant decorating skills and in almost four hours had constructed a large Christmas tree of fringed red paper covering a wire spiral frame ... He and others made silver paper ornaments ... He could put a light bulb inside so that the whole tree glowed. A Paki stool acted as a short truck beneath it and we put all our own presents around it. The rest of the room was dotted with red paper and dainty candelabra with small red candles which we lit after dark.

We had a small luncheon before the party for which the cook sat up the entire night cooking a 15 lb. turkey and two small hams. We had Emmy’s plum pudding which tasted like it should and burned well except you couldn’t see the flames in the day light.

By mistake I had tripled an order for socks from Sears Roebuck so we had about 20 pairs to give away. We made little packages of bangles for girl guests, marbles and tops for boys, chewing gum, candy, and two yards of different materials also ordered from Sears for the begums. When I saw all the crowd which was arriving with their wives and families I despaired about making the gifts go around. Emmy had been wrapping them for two days previously. I think all the children got something which is the main thing?

PAT’S MEMORIES OF DUNHAM CHRISTMAS PARTIES  
[P. Hill, Moon Bazar, p.200]

The Dunhams' cook and bearer arrived late upon this hedonistic scene and stared in disbelief. Their master was an artist, and the homemade decorations over on Siddeswari Road were brilliantly devised. Little had been accomplished by our merry workers except miles of red, green and purple paper chains. The Dunham servants later reported to Dan that they thought they could do something better than the Hill house production, and indeed they did.

They thought our creche was a good idea, though poorly executed, and decided to make one secretly as a surprise for Mr. and Mrs. Dunham. When they presented it on Christmas Day, their superiority was manifest. Their stable had walls, covered with roses, and windows with bars made of match sticks, and a front porch, and paper Pakistani flags, and flower pots. It was truly lovely. They had painted a glittered sign over the door, in Bengali, which was meant to say "Our Big Day" but due to a blithe spelling error read "Day of Wine".



The creche that “our gang” made for one of our Christmas parites



## OUR CHRISTMAS PARTIES cont.

## CHRISTMAS PARTY - 1964: THE BLUE-ORANGE THEME

I describe the party food and Dan's design for a Christmas tree and how he used mirrors in the decorations.  
[MFD letter to CGR, 12/29/1964]

We had our usual mob Christmas day for which we provided cakes, Pakistani sweets, shishkebabs, turkeys, 8 doz. oranges, 8 doz. bananas, and tea. Not a crumb was left by night. Even the cakes we received as presents were gone. Dan made a surrealist tree out of large dried branches for the guava tree which we had trimmed last year, painted blue with the paint we use for the horse and hung with oranges, strings of popcorn, orange lollipops, and anything we could find in orange color. We housed the tiny provincial crèche in the book-case niche with a purple background with stars. Dan had cut squares of mirror all over, hanging on the tree, in book cases, and the crèche. One large mirror behind the crèche. Another blue branch on the wall with candles and blue ribbon. We had about 150 presents wrapped in tissue paper for adult males, adult females, children, infants - wrapped accordingly in different colors.

The Christmas celebration at the Holy Cross orphanage



I describe how Dan unified all the party decorations around the colors blue and orange from the decorations to the food.  
[MFD diary 12/1964]






We contemplated not having our "traditional" tea for Dan's classes, old friends and neighbors, but figured that the only way we could avoid it was by leaving the house. People would be coming anyway. However, although the numbers increase every year because Dan has a new class the preparations seem to be easier or perhaps my standards are slipping, or perhaps it was having Mrs. D. helping. The servants would like to spend a month, actually spend weeks, of their free time cutting colored tissue paper into flags and chains and fancy laces, which are pasted to yards, miles, of string and put up Christmas morning so that the courtyard and verandah surrounding are crisscrossed with a covering of paper flags, and are very festive. I buy a 10lb. fruit cake, 10lbs. of various Pakistani "sweets", 8 doz. oranges and so many bananas, (bought at the docks in the old city), 10lbs of beef and 8 chickens for shishkebabs, in addition to the plentiful left-overs of a turkey and ham (US Commissary) which we start at lunch, 2 cake-mix cakes, ..... 8lbs. of peanuts and 4 of chanachur (mixture of peanuts and fried tidbits), and there never is a crumb left. Besides we usually receive several cakes (the rich dense overly sweet version of cakes) during the afternoon. We wrap about 100 small presents (packets of cigarettes, soap, marbles, all the little things I have accumulated and want to get rid of, Katherine's outgrown cloths, and Dan has a measuring tape for all his new class, a mechanical pencil for last year's class, and next year??) Berg er drafstmen, bearers, sweepers, consulate elevator boys, Texas A. & M secretaries, bearers, gardener (an old bearded Hindu) their waives, and children (who stay in our bedroom in semi-purdah) fill the courtyard and verandah but keep to their won groups. Something decides the students, who have been listening and rocking to our borrowed twist records, to start tea and they all converge on the table with the food, make pretty clean work of it, then tea. The other guests have been drinking tea and shyly eating fruit and cake when handed to them. The "boro loks" and wives stay in the living room. Everyone has been handed a present when he arrives which they keep unopened until they go home. I feel badly as to the disappointment I imagine when they find out what a small thing is inside.



OUR CHRISTMAS PARTIES cont.

CHRISTMAS PARTY - 1965: DAN’S EPUET STUDENTS INSIST ON A PARTY




food". So you can't win. We had about 100 including the children, plenty of gifts, and I thought plenty of food, but not a crumb was left. The price of oranges, as you can imagine, is very high, so no oranges. 20lbs. of fruit cake. 10 shares beef. 20 chickens. Over 100 barata. candies, nuts, etc. The servants out did themselves with the paper flag decorations even though they only had two days notice and usually they want a month. Dan borrowed Pat Hills silver tree which you have to mount by sticking branches of silver tinsel into a pole and has a revolving machine with colored lights at the base and was much liked by all especially Katherine.

You missed several of Dan's parties this year. He's

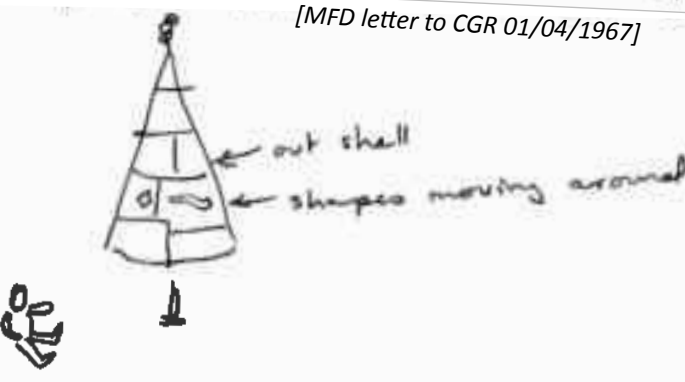
[MFD letter to Mayers 01/20/1966]

CHRISTMAS PARTY - 1966: DAN’S SPECIAL CHRISTMAS TREE



came anyway. Dan made an enchanting tissue paper tree for the living room. It had an inner revolving shell with cut out shapes. There was a light inside. As the inner shell revolved the cut outs made lighted shapes move across the different colored tissue paper of the outer shell. It was hypnotic.

[MFD letter to CGR 01/04/1967]





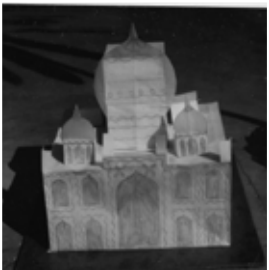
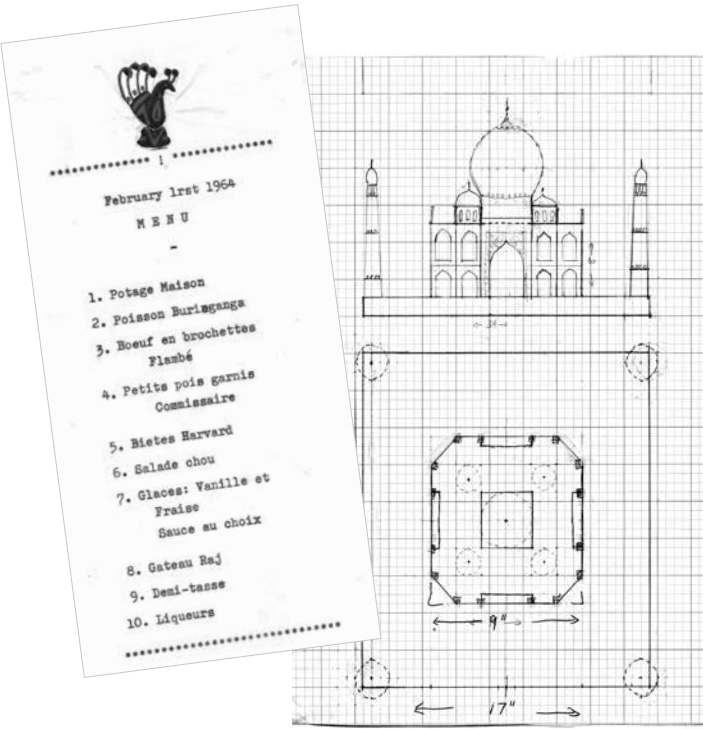
OUR BIRTHDAY PARTIES

For each other’s birthdays, Dan and I loved to come up with inventive surprises. Having access to cheap labor and materials we put on elaborate affairs requiring advanced planning and coordination. In many ways we were carrying on the British love of extravagant entertaining during their rule in India. Like the British before us, we enjoyed the creative preparation for our parties as much, if not more than, the actual parties themselves.



DAN’S TAJ MAHAL BIRTHDAY CAKE (2/1961 or 1963)

Dan’s birthday, February 1, was in the dry season, which meant we could celebrate it out-of-doors. His first birthday in Dacca came so soon after we had moved into Hafiz Villa, that I was still learning the ropes of how to run a household with servants (mostly inexperienced servants at that). For Dan’s cake that year, I had to be creative because there were no pastry shops in Dacca. At New Market, our largest shopping center, the only things that were *paowa jai* (“available”) were clothing, house wares, books, stationary, tools etc. ... nothing in the way of cakes and pastries. The Shabagh Hotel had the only *real* pastry shop per se, but their selection was limited to western style loaves of bread, no cakes and no ice cream. After much searching, I eventually found one pastry shop near the Gulistan movie theatre. I must have been impressed by their decorating skills because I decided to have them make a cake in the shape of the Taj Mahal. To help them, I made them a cardboard model for them to copy. I had no idea what to expect, but miraculously they did a great job. Regardless of how it tasted it was an amusing surprise for Dan and our guests.





OUR BIRTHDAY PARTIES cont.

DAN'S TYPEWRITER CAKE FOR MY BIRTHDAY (3/1965)

For one of my birthdays, Dan and Peggy produced a booklet called "A Guide to Mary Frances," poking fun at the guide book for Dacca that I was working on with Pat Hill and Dee Rutherford. At that time, the three of us, Pat, Dee and myself, were thoroughly engrossed in this project and could talk or think of little else. Perhaps amused by our writing frenzy, Dan made my birthday cake in the shape of my Hermes typewriter.

[MFD letter to CGR 04/05/1965]

... month. I had a memorable birthday with so many presents. Dan did three sketches of Katherine: 2 postcards, one black & white ready for hanging. He gave me three enlargement photos of the enclosed and a large supply of others. Tell me if you would like more and which ones.

There are some of Katherine at the harpsi. Which I will send as soon as they are ready so don't decide until you get them all. The other lady who is working on the guide book (who originated it) and her husband presented me with a very amusing satire of the book. (It isn't out yet) and Dan also wrote a fake ff called a Guide to My Frances which is pretty much what our book will look like. Peggy Azbill (Ford Foundation neighbor) cooked my devil's food cake according to Dan's design and Dan built it into a perfect replica of a typewriter which is where I have been spending my life these past 4 mos.

A GUIDE TO MARY FRANCES DUNHAM

CONTENTS

- Introduction 2
- History 3
- Sightseeing 4
- Map 5
- Servants' History 6
- Festivals 7
- Glossary & Bibliography 8

**Introduction**

When visiting another person you should keep constantly in mind that one is not visiting oneself. The person you visit will very probably be different in many respects. She will look different, think differently, be married to a different person and have children which are not yours. This book is made in the hope it will ease the transition into the presence of Mary Frances Dunham but it can only provide the starting point. With a little on your own part you will find other fascinating Good Luck.

- 2 -

**HISTORY**

Mary Frances Dunham was delivered in the first half of the 20th century. She increased markedly in size during the early years. Her early hood was filled with childish pursuits. After the turn of the half century she had a non arranged marriage and took on the job of a waitress. She has been in her present surroundings for over four years with no apparent historical significance.

- 3 -

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- 3 -

L.F.D. is found at Long. 90deg. W. approximately 5'4" circle & rection. Any diagram will side to most of the ial features. It is te impossible in a work to describe all aspects

Notice that her hair different from your ay vary in color on h or in the condition s kept. The reasons ie buried in both culture. With a little st on your part the on become your own. present eyes etc. Etc.

- 4 -

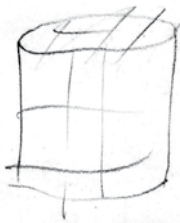
**FESTIVALS**

The main festival is the anniversary of her birth (see history). It is generally celebrated in a way unacceptable to her (see culture). A group of interested people gather and a sweetened bread dish (cake) is brought out with small flames on top corresponding to the required number of years. This "cake" is usually attractive and delicious as its making is supervised by her husband and he graciously receives the compliment it inspires

- 7 -

DAN'S HOT AIR LANTERNS FOR MY BIRTHDAY (3/1965)

By our fifth year in Dacca, Dan and I loved to include home-made hot air balloons in our dry season celebrations. These balloons were something "our gang" already knew how to make from their local village festivities. They would construct a gigantic cylindrical framework out of bamboo strips and then cover it with tissue paper in bright colors. For the heat source, they used rags soaked in wax and paraffin, which were hung below the open bottom of the balloon. When fire was applied to the ball of wax, the balloon would start to sway and gently rise. If the wax succeeded to stay on fire, the balloon would eventually float high above our neighborhood and gently drift away above the city.



[MFD letter to CGR 04/05/1965]

After dinner we had coffee in the back garden (about 10 guests) and Dan with the help of the servants launched 10 enormous colored paper balloons or rather bags upside down which carry themselves aloft by the hot air from a candle wax & rag fire which burns beneath them being attached to the bottom mouth of the bags. There was a strong breeze so the launching was full of

suspense while the first bag slowly tilted at an angle the hot air rose, wobbled about, collapsed, was difficult to hold in the wind, then filled out completely and began to rise slowly into the air. It drifted up between the trees like a glowing and flying three dimensional stained glass window and floated off in a drunken fashion over trees and houses until we lost sight of it. The second one even more difficult to get aloft finally wobbled into the air, hit a telephone post, brushed through the top of a low tree, its bag of fire touching it, and drifted toward the 3rd floor verandah of Alipore house opposite, where it hit the wall, rose to the roof, and consumed itself in a flaming end. There was something of our wedding helicopter spectacle in it

Air balloon made of tissue paper & bamboo Rags soaked in wax, lit



## OUR BIRTHDAY PARTIES cont.

DAN'S ELEPHANT BIRTHDAY PARTY  
(2/1966)

For Dan's 38<sup>th</sup> birthday (our third year in Dacca), Peggy Azbill, and I cooked up an elaborate plan to regally parade Dan home from work on an elephant. We envisioned recreating the splendor of a Moghul Nawab enthroned on top of his decorated elephant surrounded by followers. The event took much secret planning involving convoluted dealings with a government official to get the elephant(s) and a team of devoted friends to carry it all off.

This story began when Peggy and I first spotted a pair of elephants grazing in a Dhanmandi house yard. Soon after we traced the ownership of the elephants to the director of WAPDA. With nothing to lose, and low expectations, we boldly went to the WAPDA building to find him. To our surprise, we were admitted into his office directly without any prior introduction or appointment (perhaps an advantage of being two attractive, young, foreign women). And within that first meeting, after an amusing exchange over the possible rental value of an elephant, it was decided we could borrow an elephant for free on condition that we help draft up the first rental contract for future employment of WAPDA elephants.

As it turned out, the elephant we had contracted for was part of a mother-child duo that could not be separated. So on the day of the event, when we were expecting one elephant two showed up. The mother elephant, colorfully painted by her *mahout* ("care-taker") with traditional patterns came with her baby in tow. As students cheered, our friend, Hugh Murphy, arrived at the last minute to place the *howdah* ("saddle") he had made on the elephant's back just in time for Dan's exit from his class. Hugh and the mahout helped him into the decorated saddle. As Dan paraded down the streets to our house, people waved and shouted "Zindabad!" (long live) as if he were a king. But sadly, since Dan was tall and the elephant small, the sight of Dan's feet almost scraping the ground as he rode along the avenue was more quixotic than regal.

On reaching Hafiz Villa, Dan was greeted by a scene out of the Arabian Nights. Our back patio was decked out with oriental carpets and silk saris and a number of our guests costumed themselves in the same oriental theme with veils, pantaloons and turbans. Through the rest of the evening Dan was entertained like a Maharaja with skits, songs and speeches.



Peggy Azbill's newsletter giving a detailed account of the planning that lead up to the elephant surprise for Dan's birthday  
02/16/1966 (6 pages)

*You owe me letters - you promised to write if I wrote to you.*  
Dear Plushbottom and Amar gang:  
*abani is looking for new principal American School A.*  
Begun February 16, 1966  
Finished March 2  
It is a tremendous relief to know that I am the only young lady of your acquaintance who will fit in your pot of greens. My feelings would have been terribly hurt if you had said otherwise. 215 A

So much has been going on here for the past two months that there has scarcely been time to breathe.

Tuesday, February I was Dan's birthday and we had the most spectacular party of them all. The Wednesday before I dropped by Mary Frances's for a cup of coffee and Pat Hill also turned up. So there we sat trying to think of ideas for Dan's party. Pat said she could have the party at her house (she lives in Dhanmandi on the lake and said he could arrive in a boat, but then that didn't really sound exciting enough to M. F. and I, nor did it seem appropriate for Dan's party to be held in Dhanmandi. The conversation then turned to gifts and what kinds of funny things he should receive this year. I continued to think about transportation for Dan-- every party that we give involves a newer and more fantastic mode of transport than ever used previously. I commented that there were two elephants in town, owned by the Chairman of the DIT, and that his sister is a professor at our college. Remembering my elephant ride in Cambodia, I commented that it was the most uncomfortable vehicle on which I'd ever ridden.

The word ELEPHANT ELEPHANT ELEPHANT, kept running through our heads. Would it be possible to borrow or rent the elephants? How could we find out? Peggy, of course had to volunteer to secure this information. I do not particularly care for the professor so I thought it would be better to approach the brother directly. By directly, I meant of course that I would discuss the whole project with Mr. Osmani and he feeling sorry for my plight would offer to get the information for me. We had started on an adventure which hasn't really quite come to an end yet.

Next morning I slinked into Mr. O's office, looked under the desk and behind the draperies and then whispered that I needed to talk with him privately. A wide grin appeared on his face, he told the office staff we were not to be disturbed, he locked all the doors to his office and I then explained the plot. He thought it an excellent idea (he loves to be involved in my escapades-- he helped us put out our secret newspaper at evacuation time). He suggested that he would call the DIT and find out about the elephants and let me know the outcome in the afternoon. Later that morning I walked through his office and heard someone complaining about a leaky faucet. Poor man how boring after having been helping me get my chowkadar out of jail the day before and now looking for elephants.

At 2 p.m. the phone rang and Mr. O said, "Miss Azbill about the objects you were inquiring about, they rent for 2,000 Rupees a day each. I sat down and asked if they could be rented by the hour, -- definitely not! That's too much, what to do? In Chittagong or Sylhet you can rent elephants for only 50 rupees a day, he told me-- if only we had more time. He continued that he had only been able to talk with the secretary, but it was the Chairman of the DIT who actually controlled the movements of the Elephants in Dacca and perhaps if I called him personally, he might be swayed by my charms and give me the elephants gratis.

The position of Chairman of the DIT is comparable to a cabinet post in the United States government. This is the kind of man one ordinarily approaches after making an appointment with his private secretary and after waiting several days, weeks, or months for said appointment. He builds and destroys roads and makes the decisions as to the shape Dacca will take. So I decided maybe I'd better approach Sultana first after all. To my surprise she was amused and promised to mention it to her brother at a party that evening, so that when I did get an appointment with him, he would be prepared for us. In the meantime I should make an appointment with his secretary.

I called and had to make an appointment to call the secretary-- when I finally reached the secretary an hour later, I informed him that "This is Miss Azbill from Ford Foundation, I'm a friend of Mr. Madani's sister, Mrs. Panni, and I would like an appointment with Mr. Madani for 5 minutes at 11:30 this morning". He asked to check his appointment book and then gave me the appointment. I sent Nasir to MF to tell her we had an 11:30 appointment-- I needed her presence for moral support. Then I whipped off to make an appearance at the college before



OUR BIRTHDAY PARTIES cont.

pulling my disappearing act. *Peggy Azbill's newsletter cont.*

Dan was at home when I arrived, and nearly dropped his teeth at the sight of me in stockings and quietly chic dress--- but that was nothing compared to his reaction when MF came out equally dressed for the occasion. He asked where we were going so dressed up--- but we left the question unanswered as we did so many others in the few remaining days before his birthday.

Nasir drove us to the DIT building and we got out. According to Mr. O's directions we took the elevator to the fourth floor and walked up another flight to where he said the Chairman's office would be. We were misdirected and had to descend to the third floor where we were directed to the office of his personal secretary. There we found two secretaries at different desks and people sitting all around waiting. The secretary at the desk nearest the door told us to sit down and asked for my card. I was embarrassed and never so sorry that I hadn't had some printed with FORD FOUNDATION in large print. So I wrote my name and Ford Foundation on a scrap of paper.

Within minutes we were ushered into the vastness of Mr. Madani's office. This office was as large as the other had been small and as deserted as the other had been crowded except for a peon or two standing behind his desk and a friendly caller sitting at one corner. We walked a mile across the wall to wall carpeting to the large desk at the other end, Mr. Madani behind it, with large windows behind him overlooking Dacca. We were shown seats at the other corner. Mr. Madani continued with paper shuffling activities for several more minutes and then looked in our direction. I performed the introductions and continued, "Mr. Madani, please don't laugh!" He didn't seem about to laugh, in fact he never looked directly at us during the entire interview. "I understand that you control the movements of elephants in Dacca". He nodded, "Mrs. Dunham's husband is having a birthday on February first and we need to borrow an elephant". MF made a gurgling sound and I interjected, "or rent it if it is possible". I intended to make it quite clear that I chose to borrow the elephant and not rent it. Mr. Madani still seemed unmoved, looked at the ceiling and said, "Nobody has made this request before. How many elephants do you require?" We were taken aback and mumbled that we only needed one. He looked distressed and his friend sitting at the other corner who had entered into the spirit of the game was shaking his head sadly. "Are they happier together?" we quickly asked. "Yes, they are!" "Well, we would n't want them to be unhappy." "Then you must take two", said the chairman. During this conversation he had sent his peon out and another man had appeared at his desk.



"... the Maharaja's elephant, presented to him by Queen Victoria, carried a howdah of solid gold, encrusted with blazing jewels which required twenty-four men to hoist it up on to the animal's back. At the end of the day, the elephant was rewarded for its efforts with a pint of sherry."

[Moore, Maharanis. p.27]

"In exchange for the elephants you will make me a draft of rules and regulations regarding the use of the elephants. Is this agreed?" We eagerly accepted; we were in ecstasy. Two elephants when we had gone on a dare for one. "This is my Executive Engineer...." continued Mr. Madani",.... of Elephants. He will see to the arrangements with you".

The Executive Engineer in Charge of Elephants came over to our side of the desk to give his name and telephone number so we could contact him (we were sorry that he didn't have cards either. Mr. Madani showed that he had no more business with us so we made our exit, walking on clouds.

Since our first concept of elephants and Dan's being made to ride somewhere very public, we had thought of schemes and alternate schemes depending on what the elephants could do or would be allowed to do. Now we suddenly seemed to be in control of them ourselves with infinite possibilities at our disposal. Hugh, who has sworn revenge on Dan ever since he was made to ride an ox-cart down the flag lined presidential avenue to the Japanese restaurant, had said that if we got the elephants, he would build a chair and decorate them.

With two days to go the conspirators began individually arriving at my house for Sunday breakfast to plan how to make Dan ride the elephants. Then all of us piled into Roy's tiny car and went from our end of town to the governor's front yard in the other end to visit the elephants themselves. We planned to have the elephants or (daisies as we called them-- we had to have a code name) meet Dan at school after his classes and bring him home or at least as far as they could. All the students and faculty could be there to see him off and we thought they had better have tea or something to make it a party and make up for the party they wouldn't get at the other end. From the same caterers (whose address happened to be #1 Elephant Road --near New Market-- we ordered a shamiana and MF showed the owner the courtyard while Roy and I kept Dan occupied in the Living room.

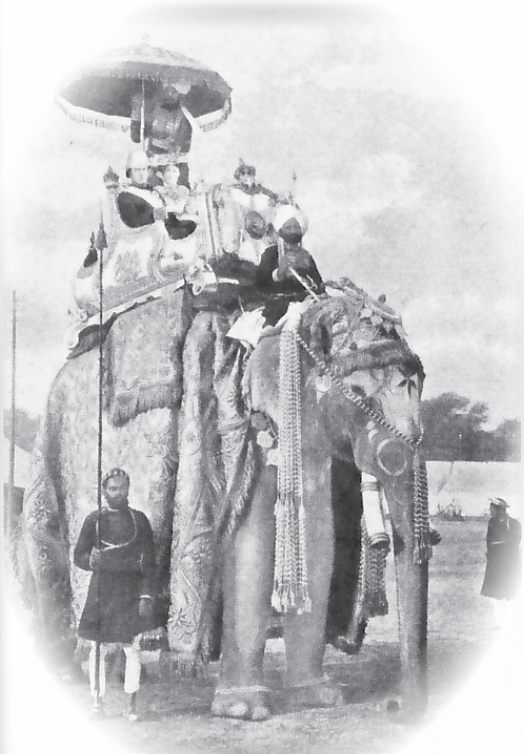
*Application*  
Regulations for the Hiring of the D.I.T.  
Elephants

Department of Elephants  
Chief Controller  
D.I.T. Building  
Dacca, E. Pakistan

Date:

Name of hiring party:  
Address:  
By whom referred:  
Purpose of hire:  
Name of Elephant (s):  
Current station:  
Destination proposed:  
Date of arrival at destination:  
Time of arrival at destination:  
Time required at destination:  
Date of hire: Time of hire:  
Date of release: Time of release:  
Charges  
In as much as elephants are an exceptional form of locomotion and in as much as they are not machines, certain standards of performance may not be guaranteed by the owners and certain charges may be asked in supplement to the ones given below if the owners see fit. The party hiring the elephants do so at their own risk and the owners will not take any responsibility in the event of accidentne .....

Cost of elephant per day  
Labor of ~~two~~ <sup>one</sup> keepers <sup>and keeper's helper</sup> per elephant per day  
Cost of elephant per week





## OUR BIRTHDAY PARTIES cont.

Peggy Azbill's newsletter cont.

3

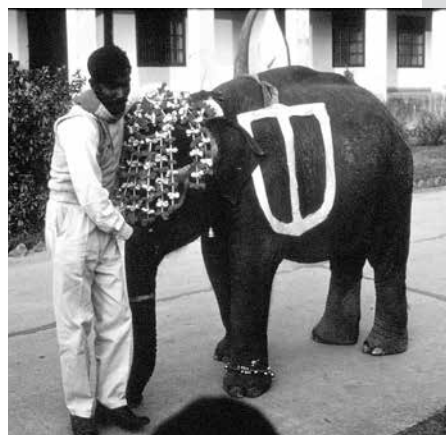
Other guests invited for dinner were invited secretly to be in the courtyard at school around five when they were promised an unprecedented sight. They were not told what. Meanwhile at Hafiz Villa (the Dunhams house), the back courtyard was to be converted into the banqueting tent of a Maghul prince for which MF hired a shamiana to be put up covering most of the courtyard with the ground cloth on which we would spread all the oriental carpets from Hafiz Villa and Seagull House. Colored electric lights were strung around the edges of the Shamiana and also crisscrossing it. MF had invited 30-35 guests for dinner and had her cooks rolling sides of a cow into beef roasts on Sunday.

On Monday, the day before Dan's BD, M. F. arrived at 7:30 a.m. and called the EEE (Executive Engineer of Elephants) and arranged to see him in his office. When she got there the Mahouts (elephant keepers or drivers) and others were waiting to greet her. She assured them that we would be at the elephant park by two the next day to start work. The Executive Engineer, though surrounded by people waiting for papers to be signed and decisions to be made, was delighted to see her and wanted to embark there and then on the drawing up of the draft of regulations for the hiring of the DIT elephants. He got out some paper and after getting as far as the title didn't know how to spell ELEPHANT which MF wasn't sure of either or how to start the draft. A friend sitting at the corner of the desk suggested

## (1) NAME OF ELEPHANTS

That struck everyone as a very good beginning. Other items to go down were discussed, but terminology for such an unprecedented situation was taxing on the imagination. MF tried not to show that she was pressed for time and imagined the EEE should be doing other things too. We had thought that we would have time after Dan's party to work on the draft, and make a nicely bound copy which Dan might possibly illustrate. She tried to suggest some of these inner thoughts to the EEE and as he saw how futile it was to try and draw up anything requiring so much thought for the future in such a short time, he agreed that she could take the matter home. She repeated all the plans we had made with the Mahouts the day before concerning where and when we wanted the elephants and he seemed pleased with everything. Two additional men who were to go with the elephants and who turned out to be useful in interpreting difficult instructions and helping to keep things on schedule, were put on the job. Other than their names we still don't know who they are. The EEE was highly amused by all our plans and made sure the elephant drivers understood what they were to do.

On the day itself, when we thought we had more than we could possibly get done, it suddenly occurred to us that we should have notified the Vice-Chancellor of what had been planned to take place in his University at five that afternoon. After some trouble in finding his office MF found him alone and delighted to see her. When he heard why she had come, his eyes sparkled with fun and he said we must devise a scheme to make sure Dan stayed in school until 4:30. MF told him she was sure he would stay until 5:00 since she had heard he was to help Mr. Volimer (Roy) with a jury----- But the VC was scheming his own scheme. He said he would call Mr. Vrooman (head of project advisers) and say he would like the architecture faculty to wait for him at 4:30 as he was bringing someone who was interested in the school for a visit. No sooner thought than done and he made a connection with the Architecture department, getting Jim Walden instead of Mr. Vrooman. Jim asked if they should prepare anything special for the visitor and the VC said nothing at all, just wanted to visit. When Dick Vrooman heard about it, he was caught in three traps; he knew there was to be something for Dan at 5:00; he had a jury to attend, and now the VC wanted a meeting at 4:30. The VC hugg up, looked at MF gleefully and stated, "I too will be a conspirator".



Hugh was late to pick up MF after lunch to go to the elephants. So she left a note saying "I've gone to pick daisies". and went down with Ruplal and sent Ruplal off to show one of the men the route the elephants would take, and get back to the house in time to take Dan to the jury in time for the house to be free of Dan and ready to be decorated by the shamiana workers who were planning to work between 3-6-.

It was a good thing MF hadn't gotten to the elephants any later because the Mahouts had not even begun painting them. We expected a better painting job than they finally did but there was no time to worry about that then. There was the additional fear that they weren't allowing enough time to get to the university. They were instructed to start off at three even if they hadn't finished painting the elephants.

Hugh was an hour late, but finally arrived with what he had purchased from "bamboo land" for a howdah. Quite fine! A wide cane stool with only the four legs left after sawing out the supporting pieces, so it could fit on the elephants back. And a Pakistani baby basket with one side sawed off so Dan could put his legs through. This basket was to be wired on top of the stool and an arch of caning was to be behind him. The mattress from my chaise lounge was fitted under all this on the elephant's back.

When everything seemed to be going all right, Hugh drove MF home and went on to the airport to meet a new family coming in for his firm before he could get back to us at the university at 5:00-

Meanwhile, back at Seagull House, despite all my protests that I would be too busy, E. H. threw a luncheon for Mrs. Hanson (the wife of the FF representative in Pakistan) and invited Mrs. K. and other important people so I had to go and be polite and interested when my mind and heart were completely wrapped up in elephants. Finally at 2:30 Mrs. H. said she needed to go to the airport and could my driver take her and then drive her for the remainder of the afternoon. I had to tell her I was awfully sorry, but I had big things afoot that afternoon and evening. Needless to say, this did not endear me to her heart. I was to pick up MF at home and we would take the ayah and Katherine, Habib, Sultan, Jamal and tea supplies to the university and get things set up. We arrived at a little before 4:30 to find the elephants had gotten there long before and were munching on banana tree shoots with a large crowd around them-- just outside the gates. The painting hadn't been finished and they had forgotten to bring the paints. So someone had to be sent back by rickshaw to get them. Dr. Rashid (the VC) came out, prompt as his word and said we must have the "meeting". We feared there would be a little trouble but let things take their course. We arrived upstairs and were told that Mr. Vrooman and the others were at a jury. We walked down to the classroom and Mr. Vrooman was summoned. He didn't know what to do with Dr. Rashid, but invited him to the jury. He eventually went in as we had disappeared to see to the elephants which he had ordered to be brought into the courtyard on MF's request and the gates shut to keep out the crowds.

By five the caterers with tea cups hadn't arrived and Ruplal and I went to find them. The hand cart with all the things was just leaving the shop when we got there. They wouldn't give the things to us (probably because we looked like such suspicious characters in the AID jeep). Ruplal said it would take them 10 minutes to reach the university; it seemed to me it would take more like half an hour. We returned to the scene of the big action.

In the central corridor, Sultan, Jamal and Habib were boiling water on the kerosene stove they had brought. Guests were arriving in cars. Some had brought their children as we had



## OUR BIRTHDAY PARTIES cont.

Peggy Azbill's newsletter cont.

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suggested without saying why-- to say the children enjoyed the elephants is the understatement of the century. Finally Hugh arrived and worked on getting the howdah attached and decorated. He had to get up on the elephant in order to do this and it was quite obvious that he was loving every minute of being up there-- sitting cross legged with his back toward the head of the elephant, then finally sitting in the howdah and decorating it. It was quite a sight to see him on his howdah that he had rigged, decorating it with whatever we handed up to him and working against time. \*

MF had a banner made which two students could carry ahead of Dan saying Happy Birthday in Bengali as he rode behind. The jury was still in full swing and it seemed the class would never end. MF told Dolly (one of Dan's girl students) to pass a note around saying the students were to shout, Happy Birthday, when they were dismissed. She had warned them earlier that they were to be prepared to stay after school. The elephants had bells on including my five strings of donkey bells around their ankles so they were making clanging sounds in the courtyard as they moved about and submitted to further decorating. The elephants had gay batik cloths on their backs, my red Thai umbrella was ready on a long pole. The Mahouts wore bright batik lungis with white shirts, crimson sashes and turbans-- the whole scene looked quite MGMish from the upper verandah where Dan surrounded by students to guard him appeared.

Within minutes he was down, put on the elephant and into the howdah with the help of a large upturned box, and with the umbrella waving above him, the banner before him, the little elephant behind him and a throng of followers, he was through the gates and headed homewards.

We served tea (the caterers had finally arrived) and some of the following returned shortly afterward for tea.

Roy's costume was at my house so he and I got in his car, after putting MF, Katherine, and the ayah in my car and sending them home so they'd be there to receive Dan. Everything concerning the elephants had gone so well that we suspected they would be allowed to go all the way to Hafiz Villa. We passed them as they were passing the Shahbakh Hotel. It was almost dark by then and his following had diminished, although he still had about 6 students and Hugh (in car) guarding him to the end.

When we reached Hafiz Villa, the courtyard was finished and the colored lights were shining. Wuhab had done a good job of spreading the carpets and the effect was quite exotic and cozy at the same time. He had also strung paper flags over the front door. The elephants arrived about fifteen minutes later and the whole neighborhood knew about it. Dan, having dismounted, wobbled into the shamiannaed courtyard and lay down. He said that it had been the longest hour of his life, but that he had enjoyed the last part along the avenue after dark.

In the meantime Roy and I had streaked to Seagull House to get him dressed in his costume-- only to find the Hexners waiting with another economist from Harvard who had heard about me in Manila and had brought letters. Roy prepared drinks for them, then excused himself to take shower and dress-- from the glances that went around, I gather the assumption was that Roy and I were living in sin. The house looked as though it had been stripped by dacoits (everything had been taken to Hafiz Villa-- rugs, copper tables, trays, etc.). They guzzled their drinks and

\* The sun was sinking low and we didn't want Dan to process in the dark and not be properly seen. The VC had to go to the mosque and couldn't wait for the take off. Finally there was a shout of Happy Birthday and Dan and all his students appeared on the upper verandah.

6

left.-- Bill Hollinger confusedly feeling this was not the young woman he had heard about.

Roy dressed in a costume out of Scheherazade which he had spent all morning renting from an outfitter for films was a surprise for everyone. He had baggy peach satiny pants and shirt, turban with feather, long curved sabre, and even longer curling moustache. He was unrecognizable at first. As the guests arrived, he would make a deep bow and insist on making them pause at the top of the steps with the fringes of the shamianna in their faces while he pompously introduced them by name, usually with some title affixed. He also announced events for the rest of the evening, which turned out to be quite a few; and would call "BEARER" in large British tones if anyone needed anything.

During dinner, there were speeches, awarding of PhD degree to Dan (if he agreed to pay Rs. 2003.37 Rupees-- 2,000 for the degree, 30 paise for the stamp and 7 paise for the import duty on the envelope). MF and I, dressed in rich dancers costumes (by Wuhab) with bells on our ankles did a dance a la Bulbul Academy followed by Lee who was to do the twist, but Roy put the record on at too fast a speed so she fled in confusion. The donation by Dr. Jim Taylor of a do-it-yourself cholera kit in memory of their trip together to Hasnabad when he and Dan set out on bicycles, buses and country boats to save Wuhab's son from cholera a month ago, and a birthday congratulations speech from the "student body" (made by me) the style of those made at farewell functions here-- very flowery.

Pat Hill's cook had made cakes in the shape of books and piles of books (to commemorate Dan's recent passion for binding books).

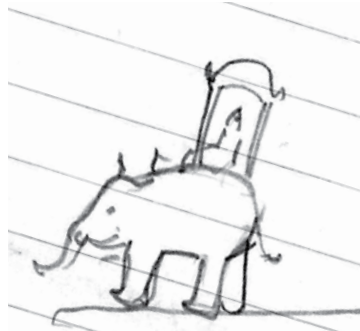
The next morning MF went straight to the EEE's office to hold him off further on that draft. I had heard from Suitana that her Brother, the Chairman, was awaiting it. There seemed to be no doubt about his seriousness. She found all the Mahouts waiting for their backshish. The EEE was pleased to hear how things had gone and tried to make an appointment for her with the Chairman for next day (as he was out that day). This would give us a day and a night to do the draft.

That night I gave everyone supper and we started putting down ideas. This was ready the next day, Friday by 2 p.m.

MF thought the chairman was making a big joke-- but Dan and I realized he was really making an exchange for the elephants and desperately wanted our ideas on regulating their use which would save him time and thought; especially since the Womens Volunteer Association was having a bazar on Saturday and was offering elephant rides.

By one O'clock next day we had 16 pages-- mostly nonsense, half serious, half-ridiculous, typed and in a binder with some illustrations in India ink by Dan.

We took it to the DIT building and by 2:30 were in the secretary's office-- hoping to hand it to him and run, since we had Katherine. He wouldn't let us and insisted the chairman wanted to see us. He crossed the hall and came back and said the chairman would see us immediately. Mr. Madani was all smiles when we handed him the folder, and he glanced through quickly explaining to another friend at the corner of his desk what it was all about. He said he would read it more carefully and then call us up for further consultation. He said that we had done so much work that we were entitled to the elephants at least two more times. For fun we had put in the brochure that their basic fee should be Rs. 1,000 per day (this was the fee quoted to Mr. Osmani when he had called them earlier for me). We forgot to erase it, so the next person may have a large sum to pay. Now we feel that we practically own the elephants and it is with pride and pleasure that we shall watch their growth and development.





OUR BIRTHDAY PARTIES cont.

MY HARPSICHORD CAKE BIRTHDAY PARTY (3/1966)

A month after Dan’s elephant party, he retaliated with a surprise birthday party for me. On the morning of my birthday, I was woken early by the sound of people singing “Happy Birthday to you...” Still clad in my *lungi*, I emerged onto the veranda to find our courtyard filled with guests seated around make-shift tables in the patio. I was handed a detailed program of scheduled activities that would last the day, including a lunch at the Vollmers’ and ending with a dinner at Peggy Azbill’s flat.

Both these meals were special, but Peggy outdid herself by providing squab; one for each guest. This was quite extravagant for a Dacca menu and time consuming to prepare. It required the help of both Peggy’s and our staff to transform the Dacca pigeons into a successful squab *entré*. To cap the celebrations, Peggy’s cook made a cake in the shape of my spinet according to Dan’s detailed instructions. This cake had a lot of meaning for me at that time because Dan had just gone to a lot of trouble with Dacca customs to import the spinet for me from Germany.



OFFICIAL PROGRAM MARCH 26, 1966

MARY FRANCES DUNHAM'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

The birthday of Mary Frances Dunham, author, lecturer, musician and assistant ayah, will be celebrated tomorrow (Saturday) in a befitting manner.

Cultural functions, juvenile activities, symposiums will be the highlights of the day's program. Evaporation will take place from all open bodies of water in the cities and throughout the province. In Dacca the main program for the day begins with the opening of the mosques, temples and churches. Flags will be raised on all public buildings.

Program for Invited Guest Participants

06:09 Sunrise ( only those who have duties directly concerned need be present)

07:00 GALA BREAKFAST MIXER - menu attached- all guests are requested to be quietly in their places by five minutes

07:01 Entrance of Mary Frances Dunham ( untouched)

08:00 Procession of Gentlemen Guests to Offices, Universities Governmental or Autonomous agencies.

08:15 Railway guard gates will be lowered for extended period major traffic thoroughfares now and several times during the day.

10:00 Opening of New Market ( attendance optional)

11:23 Life jacket drill

12:15 Lunch served to all inmates of prisons and mental inst

13:00 LADIES LUNCH - menu attached- exhibit of Eastern Art ( given by Mr. Vollmer in his residence. (Dress Optional) Gentlemen invited.

14:15 Janet's

14:43 Mary Frances Dunham will listen to complaints about lateness of invitations and inappropriateness of guests

14:52 Columbus discovers America

15:17 Deck tennis on Promenade deck

16:00 Psychology 303 ( prerequisite Psychology 302)

17:00 Free afternoon for shopping

17:37 Tibet soap Commercial

18:04 Dep. Tejgao, Arrv. Myingsing ( Read Down)

18:30 Preoperative cleansing

18:57 Questions on reading material

19:30 EXCITING CULMINATING DINNER- menu attached- At Miss

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Program for Invited Guest Participants

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11:23 Life jacket drill

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13:00 LADIES LUNCH - menu attached- exhibit of Eastern Art (some erotic) given by Mr. Vollmer in his residence. (Dress Optional) Gentlemen invited.

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18:30 Preoperative cleansing

18:57 Questions on reading material

19:30 EXCITING CULMINATING DINNER

22:00 Door prize winning

22:15 Retrospect on day

23:00 Lights out

GUEST PARTICIPANTS

1. Mrs. Mary Frances Dunham -Guest of Honor

2. Mr. Daniel C. Dunham -Husband of honored guest Architectural Consultant U. S AID

3. Miss Peggy Azbill -Ford Foundation Adviser to College of Home Economics -Dacca Secretary

4. Miss Hazel Garber -Catholic Relief Services Representative to East Pakistan -Research Specialist ORL

5. Mr. and Mrs. Barth Healy -Project Engineer Leadhill-Delaware Co.

6. Mr. and Mrs. Bert Harshorne -Ford Foundation Adviser to College of Home Economics -Assistant Program Officer U. S. AID

7 -8 Dr. and Mrs. Ralph Hill

9-10 Mr. and Mrs. Elizabeth Hillier

11. Miss Elizabeth Hillier

12-13 Mr. and Mrs. Paul Isenman

14-15 Mr. and Mrs. Yacoub Joury

16. Mr. Fred Langford

17-18 Mr. and Mrs. Gus Langford

19-20 Mr. and Mrs. Robert Miller

21 Mr. Hugh Murphy

22. Miss Suzanne Rockne

23-24 Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Rosenberg

25-26 Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Rouch

27-28 Mr. and Mrs. Scott Rutherford

29-30 Dr. and Mrs. David Seckur

31-32 Dr. and Mrs. James Taylor

33. Mr. Roy Vollmer

34-35 Rev. and Mrs. Richard Werkheiser

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100. Mr. and Mrs. Richard Werkheiser

I do hereby faithfully promise to bring a gift to Mary Frances Dunham at each function I attend.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

SUGGESTED GIFTS

1. Architectural Drafting Equipment

2. Men's shirts ( size 14 1/2 - 33)

3. Gold or jewels

4. Valuable art works

5. Money

The inclusion of a participant's name on the guest list is not a guarantee of their presence at any or all of the aforementioned functions.




OUR BIRTHDAY PARTIES cont.

DAN’S BIRTHDAY CARD FOR ME SPOOFING MY ENGLISH LESSONS

Dan provides a good description of our life at Hafiz Villa in this joke card for me

THE PUKKA BARI

A first primer for non-English-speaking Learners



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to hieffed wad

to hieffed wad

Publishers: Rutherford-Hill

See

CHAPTER ONE

\* THE FAMILY \*

This is Father (Sahib).

This is Mother (Memsahib).

This is Katherine.

This is Biral.

This is Sona Mia.

\* THE FAMILY (continued) \*

This is the Cook.

This is the Cook's brother.

This is the Mali.

This is the Mali's cousin-brother.

This is the Bearer.

This is the Bearer's uncle.

This is the Ayah.

This is the Ayah's sister.

What a big family this is!

Sona Mia says, "Memsahib khotal?".

CHAPTER TWO

\* WE WORK AND PLAY TOGETHER \*

Father is weeding the garden.

Mali is smoking.

Katherine is showing Sona Mia her doll.

Bearer is reading 19th century English novels.

Ayah is washing her hair.

Mother is packing trunks.

Cook is having his harpsichord lesson.

This is the Mali's cousin-brother.

This is the Bearer.

This is the Bearer's uncle.

This is the Ayah.

This is the Ayah's sister.

What a big family this is!

Sona Mia says, "Memsahib khotal?".

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Mali is smoking.

Katherine is showing Sona Mia her dolls.

Bearer is reading 19th century English novels.

Ayah is washing her hair.

Mother is packing trunks.

Cook is having his harpsichord lesson.

Bearer's brother is making purple paper flags.

CONTINUED

\* WE WORK AND PLAY TOGETHER \*

continued

Sona Mia says, "amee bujjhi nah."

CHAPTER THREE

\* HOUSE AND GARDEN \*

This is the house.

This is the paint mistri.

Memsahib says, "paint all the walls

Mistri says, "why not?"

Mistri says, "shob shesh!"

One wall is dal green.

Two walls are curry yellow.

One wall is dal pink.

See Memsahib jump.

See the mistri smile.

Now the cook's brother is painting t

white.

CHAPTER THREE CONTINUED

\* HOUSE AND GARDEN \* CONTINUED

This is the garden.

There is a cow in the garden.

See the cow eat the flowers.

See the cow eat the leaves.

See the mali cry.

"JAO, COW, JAO!"

Sona Mia says, "amee doll mistri nah!"

CHAPTER FOUR

\* FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS \*

This is the Tea Shop.

This is the Watcher.

He sits at the Tea Shop.

These are the Dacoits.

They are friendly Dacoits.

They come at Christmas-time.

These are the Dhanmondai cousins.

They have cars.

CHAPTER 5

BIRTHDAY SURPRISES

Father has a surprise for Katherine.

Katherine opens the box.

It is a mongoose.

Katherine says "Biral."

Mother says "Oh No."

Mali says "Snake anbo."

Sona Mia says "Ki korbo?"

FIRST BIRTHDAY PRIMER

Single copy price: Rs. 10

Multiple copy prices: 5 copies Rs. 45

10 " Rs. 80

25 " Rs. 175

50 " Rs. 300

100 " Rs. 500

Sales to date have simply paid printing costs. Future profits will be used on purposes of genuine value to the entire community.

FINIS

(why not?)



OUR BIRTHDAY PARTIES cont.

Lac des Cyngnes  
or  
Goose Lagoon  
or  
Honkshi Dighi

Near a sacred dighi somewhere in East Bengal there lived a handsome prince, Siegfried-Ali. Now Siegfried-Ali lived in a beautiful Raj-Bari (slide - note the Greco-Roman influence in the columns)  
One day Siegfried-Ali's mother, Begum ~~Hmm~~ X, said to her son that he must choose a bride.  
Siegfried-Ali was not too happy to hear this, and so decided to go Honkshi (duck) hunting at the sacred dighi.  
First he touched the sacred tree by the dighi for good luck. Then he shot at a beautiful duck, who promptly turned into a princess, of course. Another duck turned into another princess, and the two danced for the prince, enchanting him with their charm and grace.  
Suddenly the evil magician, Rothbart-Huq, came on the scene. He was shoondar-na...a really bhallo-na loche.  
He frightened the duck-princes, who were under his evil spell.

Prince Siegfried-Ali came up with a wonderful idea! Suddenly he got out his trusty pen-knife, cut a small chip from the sacred tree by the sacred dighi, and touched the evil Rothbart-Huq with it! Rothbart-Huq gave one frightful gasp, and turned into a piece of stone

Prince Siegfried-Ali and the two princesses returned to the palace rejoicing. The Prince married the first princess, and they quite naturally lived happily ever after. The second princess married the Prince Siegfried-Ali's brother, who was at that timestudying city-planning in the United States. Otto returned to East Bengal and gave many wonderful lectures on the new things which he had learned:

Wicked mag. made Ali - Begum Ayah Ducks Ali's brother made.

PORE DAN

Pore Dan is daid, pore Dan Dunham's daid,  
The o bituary tells the woeful tale;  
At 38 years old, he's so rigid and so cold,  
Tho yesterday so hearty and so hale.

Pore Dan is daid, pore Dan Dunham's daid,  
His students stand so downcast and aloof;  
His premature demise has deprived them of a prize:  
The chance to throw him from the highest roof.

Dan Dunham was the most misunderstood man in the territory:  
People used to think he was a scholarly bohemian  
And they called him a boro-sahb and a conveyor of light,  
But the folks that really knowed him  
Knowed that beneath them 2 dirty lungees he always wore  
Dan was Dan was Dan was Dan was Dan.

Pore Dan is daid, he's standing on his haid  
Where Mary Frances stuck him in the ground,  
He read the ~~news~~ news where his wife expressed her views  
And before he dropped, h e swore she should be crowned.

Pore Dan, pore Dan!

Spoof cards for Dan's birthday 2/1967

OTHER PARTIES

PEGGY AZBILL'S RIVER BOAT BIRTHDAY PARTY

For one of Peggy's birthdays Dan and I hired a traditional large country boat for the day to celebrate her birthday. We organized it as a surprise and took her to the boat blind-folded. Dan and Hugh made a banner that was pinned to the sail that said "Happy Birthday Peggy" in large letters. Although the space was small we still managed to squeeze in at least two servants to help host the guests and keep them plied with liquor and snacks. We must have been an unusual sight on the Buriganga as we boated up and down the river under our colorful banner with no destination or purpose in mind. We may have been the first and only foreigners in Dacca to have celebrated a party on a traditional country boat.



KIDS' PARTIES

Katherine had a number of other children her age with whom to celebrate birthday parties. Two sets of our close friends had daughters right around the same time we had Katherine: the Rutherford's Ann and the Rusby's Shireen. There were a number of other foreign children in our social circle as well, including the Rutherford's two sons - John and James, the Hill's two sons - Christopher and Anthony, and Maris Langford's son Gus. There were many occasions for kids' parties. Dhanmandi birthdays often included local entertainers with puppets, snake charmers, and even elephants. The Langfords went so far as to build a cement wading pool for their Guslet's birthday that became a permanent part of their garden.

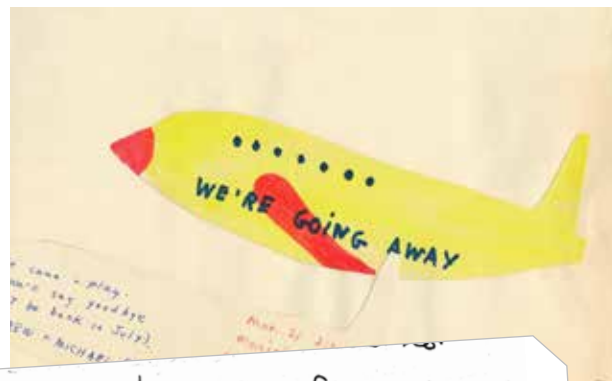




## FAREWELL PARTIES

### FAREWELL MABLE SHANON (2/1963)

We hosted a farewell party for Mabel Shannon, our next door neighbor and Dan's gardening buddy. She had been working for Catholic Relief Services for a long time before we came and had a significant number of friends who wanted to see her off. Dan and I staged a gala candle lit dinner party for her in our garden. We had a servant assigned to every table and served commissary treats such as ham, pickles, and cheeses.



write: We used the day to give a farewell party for our neighbor Mabel Shannon who has probably reached N.Y. by now. It was the biggest party we have ever given and a little risky at this time of year with sudden storms likely to come and the weather likely to be hot. However, being "privileged Americans" we can have as many card tables, chairs, glasses, and ice as we want from the commissary, - oh and colored lights, so we took advantage of all of these. They do not provide china and cutlery so we planned a "high cocktail" - i.e. substantial hors-d'oeuvres which turned out to be a sit down meal. We served cocktails in the front garden where we had the colored lights making the garden look very lush and romantic. In the back patio we had four card tables (one on the verandah) set for dinner with candle light, a servant per table, and two grills going with a variety of shishkebabs skewered on bamboo sticks being constantly prepared.

This description of our party for Mabel gives a good idea of the creative energy and organization that we put into all our parties.

[MFD letter to CGR, 04/16/1963]

I had a large cold ham, salads, hot macaroni au beurre, beans cooked by the home economics girls, and fruit salad trempé dans du cointreau. We served in shifts so that when a table was ready for coffee they moved back into the front garden and the table was cleared for the next group. It worked better than we had expected and several people said quite genuinely it was the best party they had been to. At least half the guests were priests and bishops (all the guests being Mabel's friends. She is Catholic and works for the Catholic Relief Services) and so they were guests who really appreciated the commissary goodies such as ham, pickles, <sup>hot rolls made with good U.S. flour & U.S. butter</sup> cheeses. The commissary Americans went for the shishkebabs which the cook had really excelled his other performances. I had to borrow plates and silver ware from friends but we served the fruit salad in pottery bowls which Dan bought at the local market at a penny each. The fire of the grills and the candle lit identical tables looked quite well in the patio where our frangi-pari tree and hibiscuses were in bloom. We are fond of Mabel and her friends were mostly people I would have invited for my own party so it made a most pleasant celebration. We were lucky with a cool clear evening.

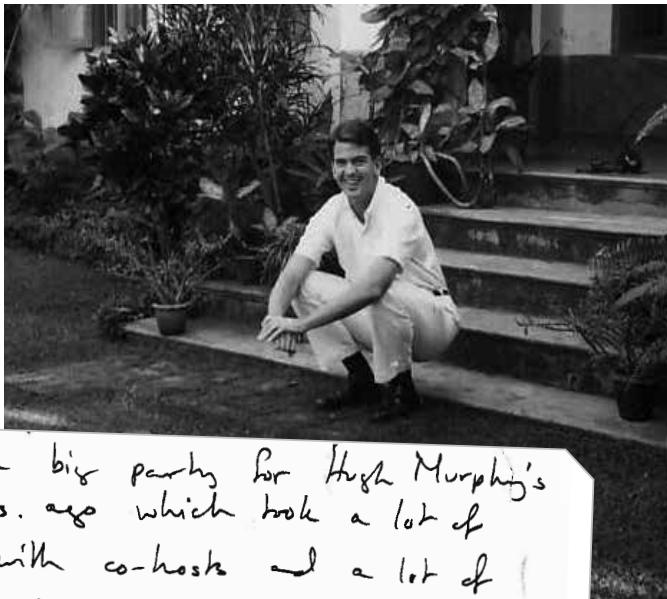




FAREWELL PARTIES cont.

FAREWELL HUGH MURPHY (3/1965)

Two years after Mabel Shanon's departure, Dan and I hosted the farewell celebrations for Hugh Murphy, her replacement. He was a dear friend of ours who had gone on many expeditions around the countryside with us so we wanted to do something memorable for his farewell. Because he was with Catholic Relief Services we had the idea of putting on a mock Charity Ball in his honor and required all the guests to bring an item of clothing as a donation. The evening ended with a mock-ceremonial gift of a "bride" (our Mali disguised in a *burka*) for Hugh as a souvenir to take to his next home.



We had a big party for Hugh Murphy's departure two sats. ago which took a lot of pre-planning even with co-hosts and a lot of cleaning up. We did a mock "Charity-Ball" and put on the invitations that guests would only be admitted on presentation of a used clothing donation and we got a mound of old clothes. We hung their "presentations" all around the garden & house to their embarrassment with big and elegantly printed cards saying "Gift of Mr+Mrs. .... to Hugh T. Murphy." We cleared out the bedroom for a ball room, decorated the garden & patio, had a band stand where three of us ladies sat and announced the Charity Ball proceeds, door prize, etc. - all spoof speeches, and everything rigged so Hugh would get it ending up with the mali clad in a burkah so it looked like we were presenting a demoiselle to Hugh but who was actually carrying an envelope saying he would receive a year's subscription to the Pak. Observer. Other such carryings on.



The mock "Charity Ball" we threw for Hugh as a departure party.  
[MFD letter to CGR, 03/08/1965]

FAREWELL DUNHAMS (SPRING 1967)

In 1967, when it came time for our family to leave Dacca - there were many farewell parties to see us off. I particularly remember a party that the Langfords staged for us. Each guest wrote a limerick making fun of our life in Dacca. I cherish the book and letters Dan's students wrote for us to show their appreciation for the time they spent with us.

Dated May 25, 1967.

FAREWELL DINNER TO DUNHAMS

Friday Evening May 26, 1967.

|           |                                                                                               |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7:30 p.m. | Assemble at the Lobby of Dacca Intercontinental.                                              |
| 7:40 p.m. | Go to a lounge (The location of lounge will be known at the Lobby) for an informal gathering. |
| 8:30 p.m. | Buffet dinner (Pakistan House) at the Chamberlain Room.                                       |
| 9:20 p.m. | Function ends.                                                                                |

DACCA

April 12, 1967

A SMALL TRIBUTE TO THE DANIEL DUNHAMS  
Translation from the original Bengali (to be sung to the tune of one of the compositions of Rabindranath Tagore - commonly known in English as "Little Brown Jug")

Mary Fran and Dan lived all alone,  
In a funny hut they called their own.  
She loved rice and he loved rice;  
Then then they had lots of fun.

CHORUS:  
Cry, cry, cry, you and we,  
Dunhams we will miss thee.

At first there were only two,  
But after a while Mary Fran was due.  
O funny hut how we love thee,  
Now we have a family.

2nd CHORUS:  
Weep weep weep, you and we,  
Dunhams we will miss thee.

Father Graham  
"The original was in Bengali."

Mr. and Mrs. Daniel C. Dunham  
Hills and Rutherford  
day, 20th May, 1967, 7:30 o'clock  
543/F Road 13

You are cordially invited to join the farewell  
party in honour of Mr. & Mrs. Dunham, on Monday, 15th  
May at 5:30 P.M.

Brother Graham  
"STHAPATYA - PARIKALPANA SANGA"  
(Students' Association of the  
Faculty of Architecture/Planning)

And this is Mrs. Mary Francis Dunham

You just cannot miss her cycling along Balg Road with her little daughter seated in front. A charming lady, forever smiling and always ready to help anyone. She is an excellent dancer, and for sometime tried to learn Oriental dance and music. A linguist, musician, writer, and a possessor of numerous other talents is she. People knowing her will always agree that she is a very good hostess too. Her Christmas parties and the tempting food served, proves this. In this faculty she taught "Music Appreciation" and "English" for sometime.

And this is Miss. Kathy Dunham

Who most of you know will speak Bengali in New York. She might even attempt to go bare-foot in New York as she is doing with her Pakistani friends here.

And we promise them all a happy remembrance.

LET US NOT FORGET . . . . .

Professor Daniel C. Dunham is unmistakable. "The Shabab wearing a shirt made out of a lungi". He gets the unique pleasure if he is called upon to talk. To him topics of discussion never run short. Restless he is too, you won't find him in one place for long. Even when he is walking down a corridor you would find him on one side swinging his long arm out at the side wall and hitting it at a rhythm, except of course when it comes to an open door. Conscious he is of this restlessness and would say for the benefit of those possessing unproductive restlessness that he used to tie himself to the table when sincerely required to work.

Sometimes he makes people of this place uneasy, for he knew more about this place than them. He likes "polao" and can easily recognise the tune of "Rupban".

Professor Dunham started his package of experience when he was twelve, for he went to work then. His non-professional jobs ranged from baby - sitting to sea - man in the merchant marine. His many qualifications includes High School work in Florida and Wisconsin. Wisconsin is the original place from where he hails, Bachelor of Science degree from University of Wisconsin; certificate in architectural decoration from Ecole des Beaux Arts, Paris; Master of Architecture from Harvard; diploma from the school of Tropical Architecture, London, and many more which just primarily say, he tried to gain anything about architecture that came in his way.

He is also the proud holder of many student award in art and literature, and believe it or not a right to U.S. Patent No. 181713 for solar cookers.

One thing is sure that he loves reading and writing. An article on the "Development of Architecture in Dacca" which appeared in Pakistan Engineer in Oct. 1963 would be an interesting reading.

Professor Dunham is in his mid-thirties and so don't believe him when he says he is very old. He says this not because maturity in architecture is achieved when you are old. It is just his way of apologizing for the amount of talking he does which he feels are old man's hobby.

This is Mr. Daniel C. Dunham.





WEDDINGS



ROB GOLAM’S WEDDING

As for local weddings, we were honored to be invited to quite a few. I especially remember attending Rob Golam’s wedding. He was a staff member at Berger and became one of our closest Bengali friends to this day. His wedding was a traditional Bengali Muslim wedding – with all the trimmings. The women wore their best saris. The men looked like Moghul princes in their *kurtas*. When Dan and I arrived I was immediately escorted to a women’s room where I remained for most of the ceremony. I could see little benefit in the segregation of the women from the men guests. Given the lack of education of women at that time this custom made weddings a bit tedious for me. The conversation usually did not progress beyond saris, jewelry and shopping – none of which did I have much to say about.



“... wedding celebrations are intense, joyous, boisterous, emotionally wrenching, not to mention expensive affairs that must uphold a family’s ‘standard’ real or pretended.”

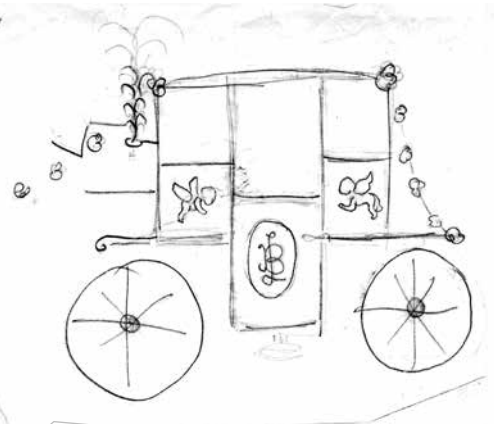
[Novak, p41]

BARTH & “SWEETIE’S” WEDDING (2/1966)

Dan and I did not go to many weddings foreign or local. The only foreign wedding we had a part in was the Healey’s wedding. Barth Healey (who replaced Hugh Murphy at Catholic Relief Service) was a good friend of ours, so when he told us he was engaged, we were pleased by the opportunity to help organize their wedding. For weeks before his fiancée, Lee, arrived, we heard Barth refer to her as “Sweetie,” so we soon adopted that name for her ourselves. When she finally arrived we had to check ourselves from calling her Sweetie to her face which was often a challenge.



Their wedding promised to be quite interesting and unusual considering that Barth was Catholic, his fiancée was Jewish, and country primarily Muslim. The wedding ceremony itself was indeed quite inter-denominational. It took place under a temporary Jewish matrimonial structure (which the bishop kindly allowed) in the Cathedral, accompanied by the blessings of the protestant minister. I hired a horse drawn carriage from the Old City, which we cleaned up and decorated with cherubs and a monogram of their combined initials. The carriage added some panache to the day when it carried Barth and his wife across town to their wedding reception.



[MFD letter to  
Mayers 01/20/1966]

"sweetening," the name that developed for Lee unbeknownst to her because Barth was calling her that, lives in Mother D's house until they get married which I am afraid we have precipitated for Barth because I expect my father on the frist and need the house."

PEGGY COMPLAINING ABOUT BARTH’S WEDDING  
[Azbill letter to MFD 02/16/1966]

The week after Dan's birthday Barth and Lee got married; for weeks in advance they (and we despite our lack of desire to be) were in the thick of planning their wedding, lee somewhat more eagerly than Barth who claims to have been trapped. Gus and Maris acted as the major hosts for all the festivities which, although they were for a small gathering included all the usual preparations, a shower for Lee, a bachelor dinner for Barth (in which I did all the cooking and servant supplying--though they refused to let me attend). The day before the wedding they received permission to be married in the Catholic chapel rather than the civil ceremony which had previously been planned-- Barth is Catholic-- Lee Jewish-- the wedding was the strangest most depressing wedding I've ever attended. Later at Gus & Maris's there was a small Jewish ceremony and before we ate the cake, Dick Werkheiser-- the Anglican minister said a good old protestant blessing. In the midst of such madness and confusion, I felt the only thing to do was get smashed-- but politely and quietly-- so ---- on 5 glasses of champagne followed by innumerable Chivas Regals, I unequivicolly refused to catch the brides bouquet. There was a small intimate supper with Lee and Barth afterwards to which I had not been invited, Thank God! After the weeks of hell in getting everything ready for the wedding, Dan refused to go to the dinner-- they said it was a way of thanking D and MF for what they had done. This, being the case, Dan said it would be more thanks not to go. Then Lee accused them of not going because I wasn't invited



OUT ON THE TOWN

THE CINEMA

As for movies, we had a selection of two cinema halls in Dacca: the Gulistan on Jinnah Avenue and the Moon theater in the Old City. Both showed mainly Indian, Pakistan or Bengali popular films of the time with lots of romance and fighting. Dan would typically send a peon ahead in the early morning to get tickets and we would arrive at the cinema early so as to make sure we got good seats. Over the years we went to the Moon theater a couple of times to see classic foreign films such as “Born Free” and “Lawrence of Arabia”.-

The first time that I went to a movie in Dacca was to see an old Bengali favorite at the Gulistan with a Bengali “date”. It was during our first weeks in the country, when I was eager to learn the language and thought a Bengali movie might be fun. There was a young peon at Dan’s office whom I was getting to know because he loved to practice his English with me by spontaneously bursting out into Kipling-like verse “Onward, onward and not a step backward.” I thought it might be entertaining to see a Bengali film with him as my translator and was pleased he agreed to go with me. We sat in the designated women’s area up in the balcony where we had more space and air than among the smoking crowds of men below. Sadly his translation skills were a disappointment. When the dialogue seemed to be vital to understanding the plot, he would say nothing, but when the talking stopped and the actions were most obvious, he would enthusiastically and loudly narrate what he saw, saying things like: “She is thinking!” or “He is sitting down.”

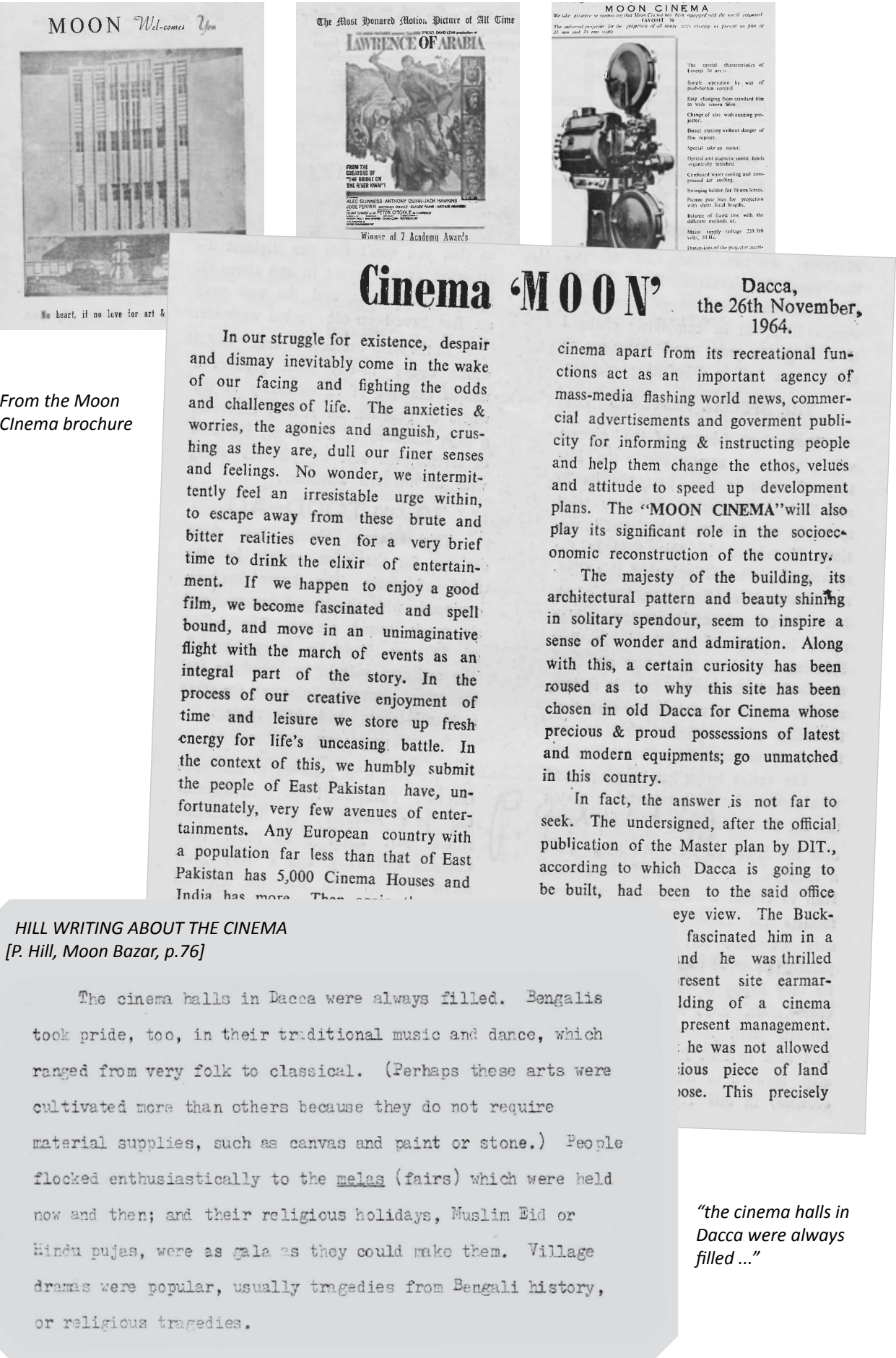
“We don’t have five movie theaters within walking distance as we did in Bayswater, in fact the movie situation is deplorable only ancient American films we have seen already and no foreign ones. ....”  
[MFD letter to Elizabeth04/18/1961]

advantages, mostly those of contry living. We don't have five movie theaters within walking distance as we did in Bayswater, in fact the movie situation is deplorable only ancieant American films we have seen already and no foreign ones. We bought a record player-radio in Hong Kong, a small tape recorder, and a camera for me, which number amongst our toys. I packed a barrel whichtook three months to get here with my library of the worlds classics (in the original, of course) and we have read numero detective stories and every week we read Time, Newsweek, and the Manchester Guardian, all cover to cover until we almosthave them memorised.



“... Any European country with a population far less than that of East Pakistan has 5,000 Cinema Houses and India has more ...”

[source: Moon Cinema Hall brochure]



From the Moon Cinema brochure



OUT ON THE TOWN cont.

CHU CHIN CHOW’S

As I mentioned, much of our after work leisure time was spent making or receiving impromptu dinner visits with friends close by. However, on rare occasions, when we were desperate for a change in our daily diet, we might go to Chu Chin Chow, the only restaurant in town that was not local cuisine. It was located on Topkhana Road near the USIS office, so it was relatively easy to get to. From its well worn décor we always assumed it was a relic of British times that managed to survive in spite of its mediocre cuisine and limited selection of dishes. Oddly enough it had enough significance in our lives that we included it in the portrayal of our family life in two of the rickshaw paintings we had commissioned.



THE NEW INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL

We would occasionally splurge on drinks or a meal at the Intercontinental Hotel when it first opened. However, our reactions to the hotel were a mixture of horror, shame and amusement.



PEGGY’S DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL  
[Peggy Azbill letter to MFD 11/09/1966]

Since the Inter-Continental had its opening, many of the dire consequences which Dan predicted have come to pass. Pat Hill, Dan, and others enjoy going there either for the fascination of horror or to rub their hands in glee with an "I could have told them!" expression. Dan took Mr. Akef and myself after the performance of "Oklahoma" and we went to the coffee bar, the "Cafe Aram", rather. I found the horror of the worst in US taste transplanted into our Dacca too depressing to think it funny. I suppose it was funny that somehow a fly had made it from the outer world into the hermetical air-conditioned splendor of Medick's in Orient where it buzzed happily in the sugar bowl and that it took a team of ten bearers (waiters? our friends, anyway) to butter some toasts, serve some soups, some coffees, some hamburgers, to the innocents from abroad who had somehow taken the Dacca route to the East. They say the silex machines are the latest to have broken down. One morning shortly after the opening, Dan was near the pool when he heard one of the hotel managers say to the other, "What do you suppose we can do about it?" "I don't think we can do anything about it." was the answer. Dan could not figure out what "It" was but it had something to do with the pool and sounded pretty irrevocable. Of course things are going to break, we say, if they insist on hiring only matrics. They will have to learn to hire our friends from experience. The prices are exorbitatn. Dick took Ann for dinner in the main dining room (the "Chambeeli Room"- "A cosmopolitan Supper Club with the fines International Cuisine..... Dancing to Europe's T op Orchestra and Discotheque Rythms; first in Pakistan.) The music was so loud they couldn't hear each other

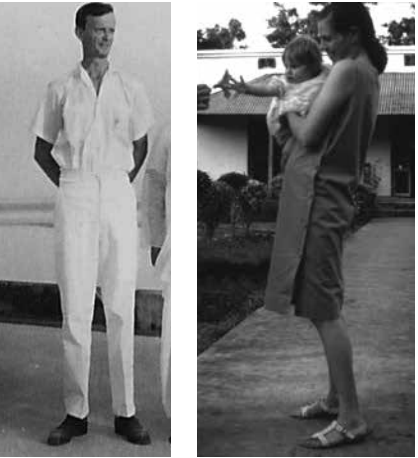
THE DACCА CLUB

Although we rarely went to the Dacca Club, it was often on our horizon as an indulgence that we would avoid. By 4PM on any typical work day with all its challenges, Dan could understand the urge to escape to the seclusion of the Dacca Club (with its swimming pool, tennis courts, and alcohol) although he never gave in to this temptation himself.

PAT’S DESCRIPTION OF THE DACCА CLUB  
[P. Hill, Moon Bazar, p.145]

The Dacca Club was the sorry resort of the athletic. The main building, sagging and mildewed, contained a bare dining room and a gloomy bar with brown paint and tired leather chairs. Another building housed the squash courts, and there were a few tennis courts outside. The swimming pool was covered by a roof which kept it in perpetual shadow, and the plumbing in the dressing rooms leaked. Our physician said cheerfully that his livelihood was assured as long as people swam there; but as long as it had no competition, people did swim there, and resigned themselves to ear, nose and throat infections.

“Our physician said cheerfully that his livelihood was assured as long as people swam there ...”

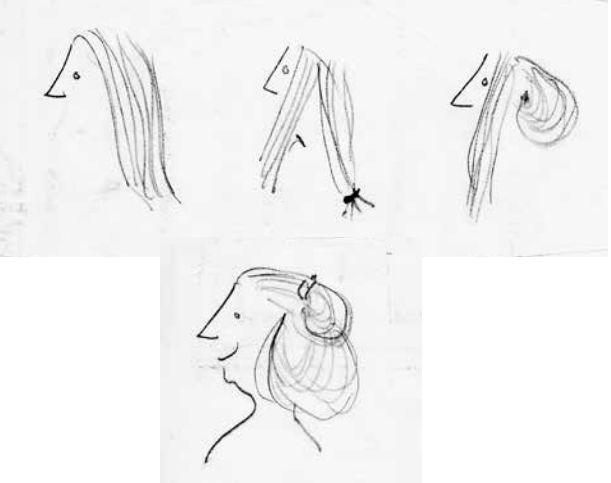


WHAT WE WORE

Men typically wore tropical weight office pants and shirts. Women could wear the “shifts” popular at the time, even though the bottom of the “shift” was above the knees and exposed a lot of leg.

Sandals of various designs were the preferred daytime footwear. I liked flat sandals because I did so much cycling. The best leather sandals were made in West Pakistan and had to be imported.

For evening wear at parties foreigners enjoyed dressing up a bit. Dan especially liked the excuse dinner parties gave for him to dress me up in creative haute couture.



OUR HAIR

The Only Hair Salon in Town

There was only one hair salon in town. It was run by a lady who was partly East Asian and partly British. She had equipped the first floor of an old mansion on New Eskaton Road with a large sink and an electric hair dryer: tools of her trade that enabled her to do permanents and the buffon hairstyle popular at that time. I went to her salon on occasion for a “real” hair washing. Her imported shampoo was such a treat compared to the local laundry soap I had resorted to using at home for washing my hair.



আমার বাড়ি এসো পথিক  
বসতে দেব পিঁড়ে  
জলপান যে করতে দেব  
শালি ধানের চিঁড়ে।  
উড়কি ধানের মুড়কি দেব  
মুতন ধানের খই,  
বাড়ির গাছের কবরি কলা  
গামছা-বাধা দই।

আম-কাঁঠালের বনের ধারে  
শুয়ো আঁচল পাতি,  
গাছের শাখা ছলিয়ে বাতাস,  
করবে সারা রাত্রি।

আমার বাড়ির ডালিম গাছে  
ডালিম ফুলের হাসি,  
কাজলা দীঘির কাজল জলে  
হাঁসগুলি যায় ভাসি।

Sojourner, come to my house.  
I will bring a mora for you to sit on.  
I will bring you cool water to drink,  
With *chire*<sup>1</sup> made of the finest rice.  
I will give you the finest grains from new rice,  
(And) bananas from my home tree,  
(And) freshly strained yogurt.

Near a mango-jack fruit grove  
On an *achol*<sup>2</sup> you may lie down,  
The branches moving in the wind,  
Will fan you all night. ...

I have a pomegranate tree in my home  
And the pomegranate flowers are smiling  
In the water of the pond  
The swans are floating.

<sup>1</sup> 'Chire' is a type of dried rice dish

<sup>2</sup> The 'achol' is the end of the sari that goes over the shoulder

[‘Amar Bari’ by Jasimuddin. Kachi Kotha, p53]

When translating this poem, I found similar first lines quoted in Folkloric Bangladesh by Ashraf Siddiqui (Dacca, 1976 p. 40-41). He says that the poem of Jasimuddin comes from an old folk nursery song.



## 8.2 OUR GUESTS



MY FATHER’S VISITS

1/1962 and 2/1967

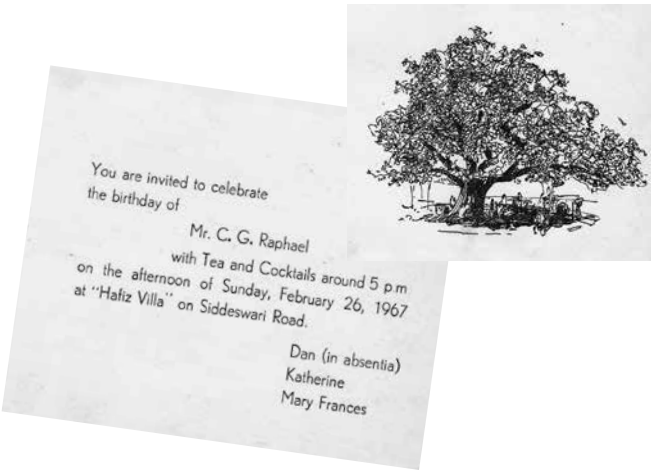
My Greek father made two visits during our seven years, both during the pleasant winter season and each time staying with us about two weeks. He was an international lawyer by profession and was used to traveling a lot, so visiting us in Dacca was relatively easy for him to do.

For both his visits, we treated my father to a grand Dacca style party with lots of food, decorations and guests. For one of these parties we celebrated my father’s birthday with a theatrical interpretation by “our gang” of “Piramus and Thisbe” from Shakespeare’s “Midsummer Night’s Dream.” I had chosen this story for them to perform because I knew my father loved Shakespeare and the story was from a Greek myth that he would recognize. Everyone enjoyed how “our gang” rendered the story in their own way in a Bengali village setting wearing *lungis* and saris as their costumes.



CGR on the steps of Hafiz Villa - with our “Gang”

CGR with Katherine



“WEL-COME”

Dan and I were amused when Cook produced a professional looking cake for my father’s first arrival with the word(s) “WELL COME” written clearly in colored icing on the top. Although a novel spelling to us, we learned that this was common usage dating as far back as the Victorians.

“Sometimes hospitality – often with a mis-spelt WELLCOME written large upon a triumphal arch – was a little more formal...”

[Allen, Plain Tales from the Raj,^ p.158]



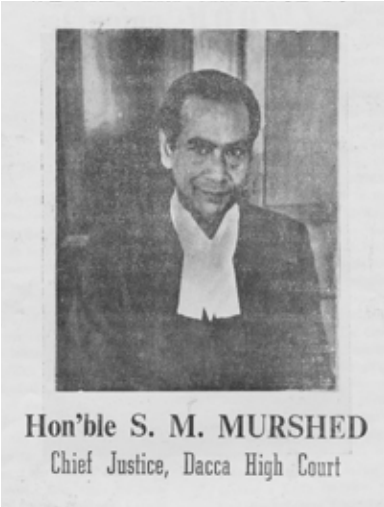
FEELING AT HOME AT HAFIZ VILLA

My father enjoyed our humble living arrangements of Hafiz Villa and being waited upon by “our gang”. The day my father arrived, cook surprised all of us, by serving Greek *avgolemeno* soup. I had told the cook the day before about my father being Greek, but I never would have guessed he knew how to make such a difficult and special soup. We asked him how he had learned to make it and he had said that his father had cooked for a Greek family, probably one of the merchant families living in Narayanganj. My father was comfortable with our outdoor lifestyle: taking meals in the courtyard, eating fresh guavas from our tree, and relaxing on the veranda. Perhaps it reminded him of his Mediterranean routes growing up in a Greek village in Turkey. He also enjoyed traveling with us in the countryside. On several occasions, we took him for a picnic on a small country boat which we would hire by the hour from the Old City or when we were out in the countryside. I also treated him to the luxury of a first class cabin on the “Rocket” launch to take him down river through the Sundarbans to Khulna.



MFD enticing CGR to visit Dacca again ... offering him the “annex” with its own hot water & garden, boat trips, a visit to Cox’s Bazaar etc. and to play with Katherine. [MFD letter to CGR 12/12/1965]

Why don't you come here instead of a cruise. I am sure it would cost no more. You could have “the annex” to yourself + servant. The weather is perfect. So far not as cold as some years at night. Katherine now has her own room - your little room, with the ayah. We could take some river trips. We could visit a running in the hills or go swimming at Cox's Bazaar. “The annex” has hot water and its own garden. You could play with Katherine ifowhen you like. No telephone. Bring one dark suit, one light summer suit, and the rest old clothes. I am serious. You may not get the opportunity again.



BEFRIENDING THE HON’BLE CHIEF JUSTICE

On his second visit to Dhaka, my father by chance met the Chief Justice Murshed, who upon learning that my father was a lawyer, insisted on getting his professional help with a legal situation involving imported goods. My father ended up being taken to Chittagong to help handle the affair. How it was resolved, I don’t know, but the relationship between my father and Murshed continued. Within a few years, when Murshed was doing business in New York, he deposited his wife in my father’s care. I don’t know how much my father cared for Murshed but in the end his relationship with him served us well when we needed help getting a passport for our driver, Ruplal, to immigrate to the USA (see Epilogue chapter 16).



## EMMY'S VISITS

### FALL-WINTER 1963-1964

Emmy, who helped raise me since I was twelve, came to visit us the winter before Katherine was born. Her visit was long enough to give us time to travel to Haluaghat in Assam and to go to India to explore her family routes in Calcutta and Darjeeling. (See chapter 11 for more about Emmy's stay and travels).

During her time with us in Dacca some of the most violent communal riots between Muslims and Hindus occurred. To keep Emmy safe we had to restrain her from carrying out her British sense of duty to help the victimized Hindus and Christians. Fortunately there was my pregnancy to distract her and keep her busy while trapped in our home. (See chapter 15 for more on this time during the riots).



PEOPLE OF EAST PAKISTAN  
**RESIST THE  
HOOLIGANS**

24-hour Curf  
In Parts Of  
Dacca City

During Emmy's visit with us there were violent riots in the streets and a government imposed a curfew

Calcutta both before and after Darjeeling was wretchedly hot. Emmy neither likes the pleasures of a city nor the heat so she was quite miserable. We got to go to her father's old Church one Sunday where there was a man who remembered her father, sister, and friends and where he showed us her father's name inscribed on a corner stone. She did quite a bit of shopping so I hope her trip was worthwhile from that angle too.

Traveling with Emmy  
in Calcutta and  
Darjeeling  
[MFD letter to CGR,  
03/15/1964]

Back in Dacca the temperature is in the 90s and Emmy is feeling it. The evenings are still cool, not enough for her I'm afraid, but we enjoy them. Our house is still a joy to us with the courtyard for the evenings, the garden for the afternoons, and the thick walled interiors for the day.



Emmy at the airport with Selina and Nurul Huda



Sam Lanford, Emmy, Flo Lanford, MFD and others



MOTHER D’S VISITS

Dan’s mother, whom we called “Mother D,” came to visit us in Dacca on two separate occasions both of which began or ended in catastrophic events. The first visit started with one of the worst cyclones in Dacca’s history and the second visit was cut short by our evacuation to Manila during the 1965 war.



THE FIRST VISIT: THE CYCLONE

Spring 1963

The first time Mother D came to visit us was in the spring of 1963. It was her first travel abroad so Dan planned her trip to include a stop over in Hawaii (where she had a good friend) and a few days in Bangkok with me. In spite of her 79 years, she handled the travel well and arrived in Dacca in good spirits. However, within a few days of unpacking we were struck by one of the most ferocious cyclones of the decade. Having come from Florida, hurricanes were not a new phenomena for Mother D but this Dacca cyclone was clearly the worst she would ever experience. Regardless, she was un-phased during the entire chaotic and frantic 24 hours of the cyclone. She remained calm amidst the flurry of household activity to close shutters, mop floors and fend off the storm. (See Chapter 13 for more on the cyclones that hit Dacca).



MOTHER D TAKES OVER HOUSE MANAGEMENT

During part of Mother D’s stay when I was away, she used her time to transform household routines and menus to her usual American habits. For the cook, this meant providing coffee *with* the meal (rather than at the end), serving the salad with the main course rather than afterwards and learning to make tuna noodle casseroles. These adjustments were challenging for Cook. The first time he tried to follow her instructions he served the salad “on top of” the main course instead of “with” it. After that episode, she ceased trying to make changes. To help her with her own daily needs and comfort we hired a bearer, another “Mohon” from Wohab’s village, to be her private servant. He was quite fresh to the job and often went about his tasks singing or playing the flute. In his care for Mother D, he was a bit rough in village fashion, showing no caution about Mother D’s privacy: often entering her room at will without knocking even though she might still be dressing.



Getting ready for Mother D’s first visit.  
[MFD letter to Stephen, 05/25/1963]

because Dan was to be absolutely quiet and we did start to work sooner than we should and were working up to the eve of Mrs. Dunham’s arrival. We took some of the furniture we were entitled to to furnish her room with chest of drawers, easy chair, desk, etc but had to have it all upholstered.



## MOTHER D'S VISITS cont.

## MOTHER D'S BRIDGE MORNINGS

Knowing how much his mother loved to play Bridge, Dan arranged for her to join a group of wives who regularly met to play bridge while their husbands were at work. Although Mother D was almost 80 years old and was in a strange land with a language she did not know, she was fearless about making the journey crosstown through traffic, noise and dirt by herself to these morning bridge sessions.

Sometimes Ruplal was free to drive her, otherwise she went more often by rickshaw. For these trips, Dan gave her a *mora* (a cane woven stool) to help her climb in and out of rickshaws. Keeping firmly seated in a rickshaw was always a bit challenging because the seats (for no reason I could understand) were always pitched forward. With every bump and jolt of the rickshaw one was constantly at risk of sliding forwards off the slippery vinyl seat into the backside of the rickshaw driver. Somehow Mother D mastered the technique of staying put on those seats. Occasionally we were able to induce the rickshaw driver to adjust the seat to a more comfortable horizontal angle for her which made the ride much easier. Dan and I were always awed by her perseverance and dignity as she rode off through Dacca traffic, noise and dirt swerving this way and that determined to make it to her bridge session.



Mother D with  
"our gang"



Mother D with Mali

Describing Mother D's  
activities in Dacca  
[MFD letter to Stephen,  
05/25/1963]

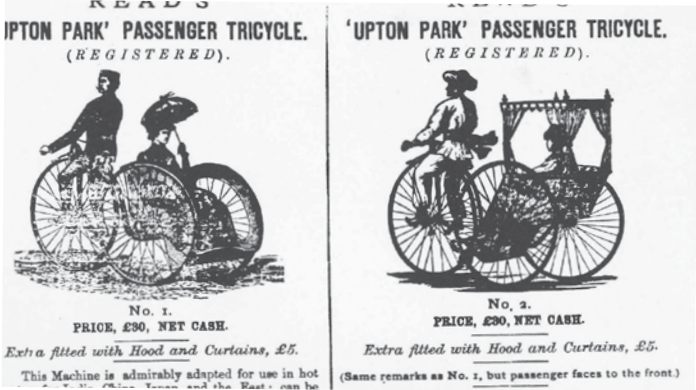
It was most pleasant having her at home and she said that having been here made us seem less far. She saw us at our most hectic with a heavy winter social season with the parties of our new group, Dan's new job, my many new jobs which somehow snowballed into teaching at four schools at once by the time I was substituting at the American school. We dragged her around to all our schools, the Adamjee jute mills, the old city, the two tourist shops, and what sights there are around Dacca. As you probably remember, the winter is lovely, and we could eat breakfast and lunch in the courtyard, and be cozy in the living room in the evening with a small consulate kerosene heater. We had quite a cultural season with a good chamber orchestra brought over by the Germanic Institute, three plays produced by the Bristol Old Vic, a very good company of young actors who did Hamlet, A Man for All Seasons, and ~~the~~ the Man. When she left it seemed as if she had been here only a week. I went as far as Bangkok with her where I had a nice holiday.

Description of how  
we accommodated  
Mother D  
[MFD letter to CGR,  
03/16/1963]

house and her own schedule although I don't think she disliked the domestic help we could give her here. (We had hired a fourth-Mohom, a brother-in-law of Wahab who was fresh from the village, with so much "sans gêne" that he would go to clean Mrs. D's room when she was dressing, and who loves to sing and play the flute.) I think she was worried about the condition of my hair and wardrobe and ignorance of Bridge, but otherwise seemed happy. She must have found me taciturn, but Dan assures me she was happy doing very much the things she does at home except for the television, and even that she claimed she didn't miss and says she is getting too much of it at her sisters in Los Angeles. She was ecstatic over Hawaii but we knew she would be.



MOTHER D’S VISITS cont.



Mother D taking her routine rickshaw ride to her Bridge game across town in Dhanmandi

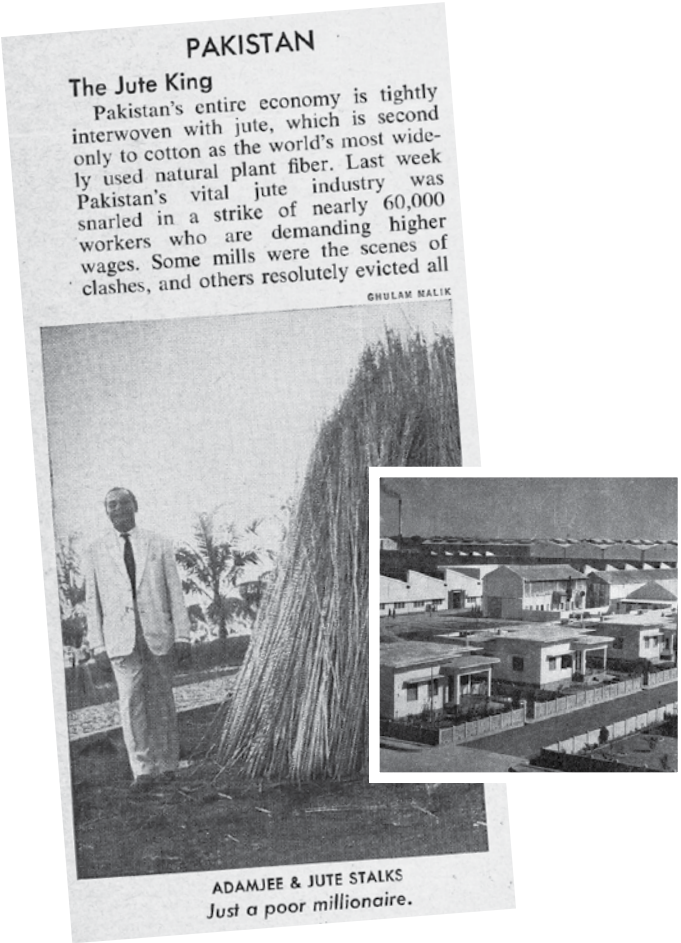


From Dan’s birthday card for Mother D

A FIELD TRIP TO ADAMJEE JUTE MILLS

Mother D and I got to accompany a group of Americans on their business related tour of the famous Adamjee jute mills in Narayanganj, a suburb of Dacca. Jute was such a part of our daily lives, (market bags, carpet backings, export packing, etc.) that I was pleased to have that opportunity to see how these “golden fibers,” as they were often called, were woven. The Adamjee jute mills in particular interested me because I had heard about Baba Adam, a zamindar cum industrialist of the 19th century who had built them. Along with the Calcutta mills the Adamjee jute mills flourished with a thriving international business since the 19th century. However, by our time, the jute market was no longer in demand and the Adamjee mills were suffering.

Seeing the jute mills was a Dickensian experience for me. The mills were housed in vast sheds where huge noisy machines were chomping away, cutting and weaving the jute. The air was full of fine dust that the workers were breathing. Later, I was saddened to learn members of Ruplal’s wife’s family were working at the mills during those times under those unhealthy conditions.





MOTHER D’S VISITS cont.

THE SECOND VISIT: THE EVACUATION

Spring 1965

When Katherine was a year old, Dan planned for Mother D to visit us for an extended stay. We arranged to rent a small apartment behind our house for Mother D to live in. The accommodations worked out quite well because they gave her some independence and freedom to come and go into our house whenever she liked. She settled in so well that we were confident that she could stay most of the year. However, within months of arriving, the country was thrown into war-mode and soon after she, Katherine and I were evacuated to Manila. Although most of the fighting of this war was concentrated between West Pakistan and India, East Pakistan took it upon themselves to be prepared and enforced nightly curfews with lights out. For Mother D these curfews provided an ideal opportunity to invite friends for bridge. She was accustomed to her weekly bridge parties in Tampa, Florida and was pleased that the curfew provided an excuse to pick up the routine in Dacca. During those curfew evenings we retired to her quarters where we curtained the windows against light shining outside and invited a friend or two to join Mother D at bridge. Mother D loved those candle lit evening games and remarked that she never “had it so good”. (See the full story of the 1965 war-time in Dacca and our evacuation in chapter 15).



Me with Katherine and Mother D in Manilla after our evacuation from Dacca



Getting the annex from our landlord and preparing it for Mother D’s second visit [DCD note to MFD, 06/06/1961]

THE LANDLORDS SON HAS STARTED  
a new house farther DOWN ON THE  
LOT. WHICH HE CLAIMS WILL BE  
READY IN ONE MONTH I NOW THINK  
THAT WOULD BE BETTER FOR MOTHER  
IT IS SEPERATE FROM HIM. BUT A  
LITTLE FARTHER FROM US.  
Should I buy a CAB, \$700 LOVE  
Dun

Mrs. Dunham's, niece's, house (apartment)  
is almost finished. The consulate tailor is doing  
the upholstery and she is doing her curtains. It  
has taken too long mostly because it is the finishing—  
painting, plumbing, & wiring — which is so difficult to  
get done here. I have lost much of my old fight  
and have not been supervising with the same assiduity  
as our first remodelling projects.

[MFD letter to CGR, 12/29/1964]

AN ASIDE ON SOME SIGNIFICANT VISITORS TO DACCA



In February 1961 Queen Elizabeth II paid an official Commonwealth visit to Dacca. She rode through our neighborhood slowly in an open state car, escorted by mounted guards for and aft. The main road through the old city and to the airport was lined with whitewashed mats to hide the bustees that lie along the roadways.



The Duke (Duke Ellington) with his Orchestra played a concert at the Gymkhana Race Course Grounds in Dacca on Oct 28, 1963, when they came through South Asia on a goodwill tour.



Prince Karim Aga Khan IV came through Dacca in December, 1964. During his stay we had a chance to see him when we were invited to attend the ceremony at the Bulbul Academy to honor him on December 8, 1964. Dan remembered accidentally spilling soup on his highness when Dan was working as a butler for a prominent family in Cambridge.



Louis Kahn, was the architect for “The Second Capital,” the Parliament complex for East Pakistan. Dan had played a significant role in his selection as the architect. In 1965, Kahn came to Dacca a few times to check in with Roy Vollmer and Gus Langford on the progress of construction. During his visits he also spent time at the EPUET architecture faculty. He also had an evening with us at Hafiz Villa, played a bit with Katherine who was just learning to walk and borrowed my Colette for which he wrote me a kind thank you note.



We were invited to a reception for Liu Shao-chi, Chairman of the People’s Republic of China when he came to Dacca in April, 1966. We did not attend even though we knew that his visit would be of great interest especially to Americans concerned with Cold War politics. The US Consulate had once asked Dan because he was an architect if he had any plans of the Dhanmandi high-walled compound where the Chinese delegation was housed. Dan could only suggest that someone take photos from the roof of one of the neighboring Dhanmandi houses.



R & R CHEZ DUNHAMS

PEACE CORPS – PAKS 1, 2, & 3

USAID had chosen our house among others as a suitable “R & R” retreat for the burgeoning Peace Corps program. We had comforts, but not luxuries hence it seemed just right. Sadly the Peace Corps efforts in East Pakistan did not have much of a chance to succeed given the political wrangling which dominated the region and their village assignments at that time. During our time in Dacca, we saw three groups of US Peace Corps volunteers do their service. They were nicknamed “Pak 1,” Pak 2” and “Pak 3.”

Among the hundreds of volunteers that came through Dacca, we became close friends with the Peace Corps director, Bob Terry, and the Peace Corps doctors. We also became especially fond of some of the volunteers whom we hosted during their stays in Dacca. In particular, I remember how impressed Dan and I were with a bright young volunteer, Bill Guth, whose expertise was brick-laying. While he stayed with us, Dan was delighted to have such a technician to talk to. He was extra-ordinarily smart and perceptive about his construction projects working with Bengali villagers. He later came back to Bangladesh to collaborate with Sadek Khan on an award winning film called “*Nodi-o-Nari*,” (Rivers and People) about Bengal village life. After we moved back to the US, we reunited with him in the summer of 1971, when we converged in Washington DC with other pro-Bangladesh Americans to lobby for the cause of Bangladesh’s independence.

USIS photo of Pak-1 in Dacca 1963



"East Pakistan I" team with our Bengali staff, completing service, Dacca, July 1963. We were followed in East Pakistan by eight more groups, totaling the work of some 1,400 Peace Corps Volunteers serving in several countries of Asia – Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Ceylon, Thailand, Indonesia, and The Philippines – was honored by the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Peace and International Understanding, which Sargent Shriver accepted in 1964.

|                    |                          |                      |                  |
|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Bob Terry       | 12. Bill Guth            | 23. Sherwood Tiernan | Missing          |
| 2. Dan Scheerer    | 13. Conrad Linkiewicz    | 24. Bob Ahlers       | Bob Burns        |
| 3. Bill Gold       | 14. Ken Clark            | 25. M. A. Ali        | Lloyd Goodson    |
| 4. Pete McDonough  | 15. Dave Phillips        | 26. Jack Jordan      | Judy Huneke Hein |
| 5. Bob George      | 16. Bob Saint            | 27. Bette Taylor     |                  |
| 6. Tom McMahon     | 17. Mike Sidor           | 28. Jean Ellickson   |                  |
| 7. Chuck Hitchcock | 18. Mick McGuire         | 29. Celina Hasan     |                  |
| 8. Paul Slawson    | 19. Bill Hein            | 30. Catherine Khatri |                  |
| 9. Anowar Hossain  | 20. Roger Hord           | 31. Kiki McCarthy    |                  |
| 10. Bob Taylor     | 21. Bill Reder           | 32. Jeanne Dumas     |                  |
| 11. Jim Bausch     | 22. Pete von Christerson | 33. Rachel Jordan    |                  |



Peace Corps Volunteers For Pakistan!

FIRST GROUP TO BEGIN WORK BY OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER

(By Our Staff Reporter)  
The first group of volunteers under President Kennedy's Peace Corps programme is expected to begin work in Pakistan by October or November. The total strength of the group was as yet uncertain, but details were being worked out with the Pakistan Government.  
THIS was stated by Mr. Robert Sargent Shriver, Jr., Director of the Peace Corps, while addressing a Press conference at Tejgaon Airport yesterday morning shortly before he left for Calcutta on the conclusion of his survey-tour of Pakistan.  
Mr. Shriver also said that every opportunity would be given to the Corps volunteers to live as closely to the people as possible and that the programme should not be confused with rural areas. Mr. Shriver hoped that the people of this country would respond to the idea and accept the volunteers. It was not necessary that the volunteers would be sent to live and work



PEACE CORPS  
EXPERIMENT IN INTERNATIONAL LIVING  
EAST PAKISTAN PROJECT

C/o. American Consulate-General,  
Dacca 2  
Telephone: 4241, Ext. 35  
October 24, 1961

Instruction to American Hosts.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Dunham:

This note is to thank you for the kindness in offering to invite into your home for a 36-hour recuperation visit two Peace Corps Volunteers. Their name(s) ~~are~~ are William Hein and Peter von Christerson. They are to arrive Saturday, October 28th.

Would you be good enough to send your car to the airport at 12.15 at which time the undersigned will issue you with bedrolls which your guest will be using?

It was decided to give the Volunteers an opportunity to rest from their long flight before going on to the other activities of their program. It will interest you to know that on Monday half of the group will be going to the Academy for Village Development in Comilla and the other half into Pakistani homes for a period of three weeks.

It will be very much appreciated if you will facilitate in every way the much needed rest of the Volunteers. Perhaps they will wish to sleep right through the evening and the night.

Would you be good enough to send them and their baggage to the Consulate-General on Monday, October 30. You will be saying goodbye to your guests when you deliver them at Adamjee Court,

If it becomes impossible for you to carry out any of the above plans will you please notify Mr. Robert Terry or Mr. Donald Watt at 4241 Extension 35.

Hoping that you will have at least a little time to become acquainted with the Volunteers, I am most gratefully

Donald B. Watt  
DONALD B. WATT

P.S. Should the incoming flight be delayed, we shall know of it by teletype in time to telephone or send a message to you, saving you an inconvenience and telling you when the Volunteers are next expected.



Dan's cartoon of USA relations with East Pakistan



AN ASIDE ON CROSS CULTURAL ETIQUETTE NORMS

INSTRUCTIONS  
FOR THE USAID  
WELCOMING  
COMMITTEE

To: All A.I.D. Wives in Dacca May 7, 1963

From: Fran Gurov

Subject: Welcoming Committee

I would like very much to make up a roster of people to assume certain responsibilities for A.I.D. newcomers to Dacca. In the past I understand the wife of each Division Chief or group head has taken some responsibility for checking the housing of a newcomer to her group, providing food, flowers, etc., and I believe this should be continued. However, for the purpose of helping the newcomer settle into our community life and to meet a cross-section of our people and Pakistanis as quickly as possible, I propose the following:

One married couple would be assigned to one new couple or individual (chances are they would not be of the same Division or group) to help with shopping, sightseeing, visiting, etc. (see attached list of suggested activities). Possibly a 2-week period for these activities would be sufficient, assuming most individuals are then reasonably settled except for arrival of their household effects.

(as well as the wives on the Committee)

These services, naturally, would involve the new wives/more than their husbands due to the office activities. However, the service should be extended to all single employees, who sometimes are lost in the shuffle socially as they immediately assume their office duties. I am aware there are some ladies who are carrying full-time duties in teaching, nursing, etc., who thus could not spare the time for the above. It would therefore be appreciated if you would indicate on the attached sheet, and return to me c/o A.I.D. by Tuesday, May 14, 1963, the following: (1) whether you will serve on the Welcoming Committee, (2) what your particular interests are. A record of individual interests; per-ten (2), might well be of additional help in introducing the new wives to both American and Pakistani ladies who have mutual interests.

The Welcoming Committee Roster will be subject to constant change, deletion of people leaving, and addition of new staff after a suitable period. Its primary purpose, again, is to insure that every newcomer is given all possible help in settling easily and actively into the Dacca community.

b. Submit bill personally to newcomer for any rupee expenses

Arrange for servants on temporary basis.

(The above items are not necessarily in order of importance.)

2. Meet newcomer at airport, together with member of Welcoming Committee.

3. Coordinate with Welcoming Committee member on meals first two days.

Work out general schedule of activities, shopping and sightseeing, with member of Welcoming Committee (see attached proposed list).

Bring new lady to visit with Mrs. Gurov as soon as possible; Mrs. Gurov will work out arrangements for her call on Mrs. O'Donnell and will notify

have small tea or coffee after a few days, preferably including Pakistani ladies whose husbands are counterparts of newcomer's husband, as well as Americans outside your particular group.

MY NOTES ON THE U.S.A.I.D. WELCOMING COMMITTEE INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEWCOMERS [Dacca, Dec. 1964]

GREETINGS TO THE NEWCOMER

This handbook has been prepared by a group of USAID ladies in Dacca. Its purpose is to assist newcomers in solving their initial problems and, hopefully, to answer numerous questions that invariably arise from any move to a new community or country.

In official diplomatic circles there are strict rules of precedence, procedure and decorum which must be observed ... and these are accepted on a worldwide basis by all who must observe them to the letter. [but] ...

... Thus comes the problem of some thousand "non-official" Americans families serving abroad ...

... Be an ambassador ...

... "The U.S. Government urges all its citizens abroad to remain Americans in the fullest sense of the word, but to temper their freedom of action and dress with due regard to the sensitivities of the country to which they are assigned. ...

... that we should not wear Pakistan dress in public places or anywhere that Pakistanis might be present...

... the inescapable fact remains that we do not wear any national dress but our own...

... that our children ...

... that we respect the Moslem attitude toward dogs ...

... that we assist the American community whenever possible, for that is our duty as in America ...

WELCOME PREPARATIONS ...

Suggested shopping list for local market for new arrivals

- 1 carton of matches
- 1 loaf of bread
- 1 dozen eggs
- 1 or 2 kinds of fruit (bananas, papayas or mangoes)
- 4-6 dish towels
- 2 floor cleaning cloths
- Coca Cola      Seven Up      Soda      Orange

On a personal loan basis try to supply the following

- 4 - 6 bottles of boiled water (and fill ice trays with boiled water)
- Cleaning rags
- Candle holders
- 1 cake

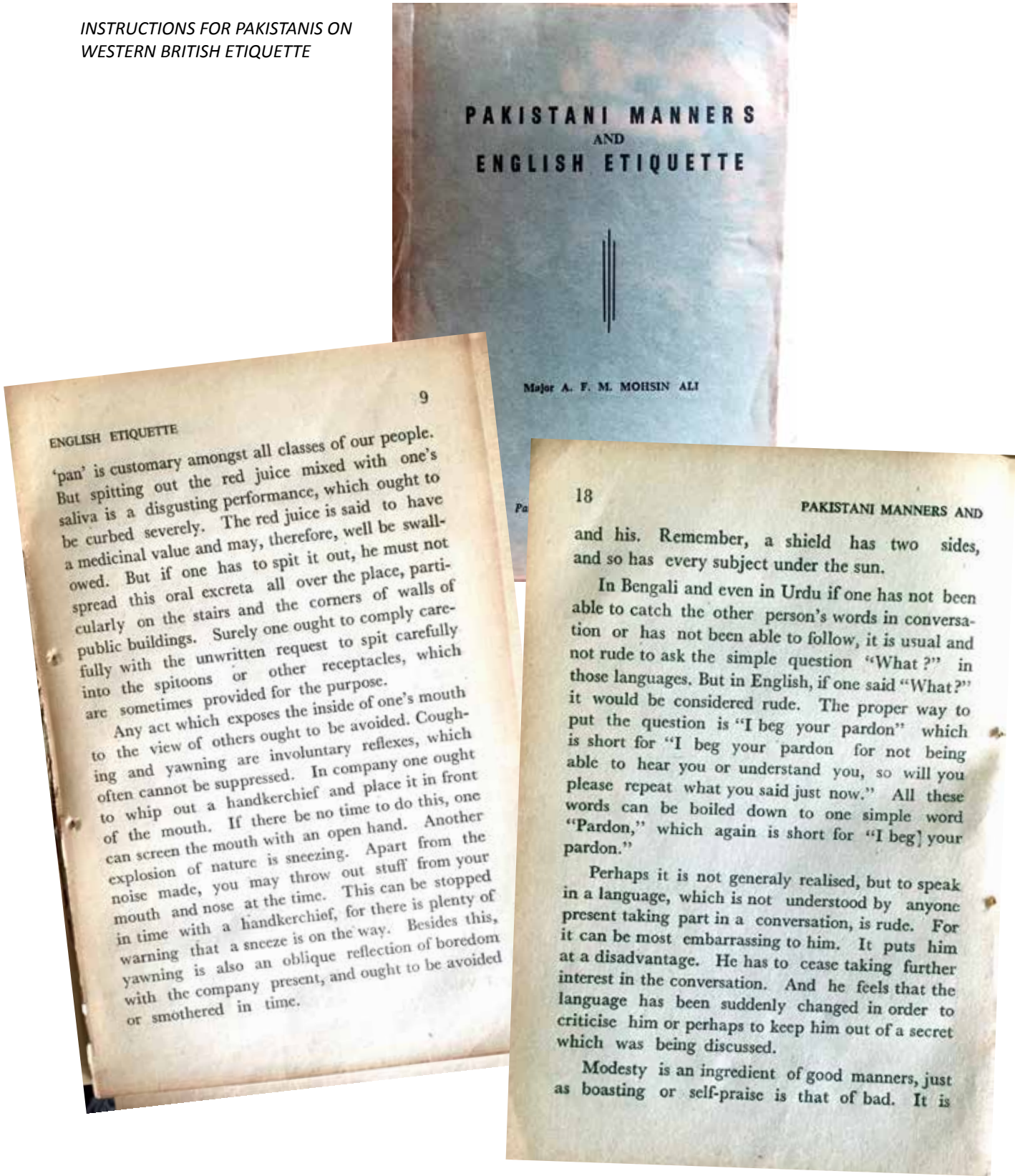
SERVANTS ...

Cooks, nursemaids (ayahs) and any other servants that come in contact with you should be given a physical examination ... at Holy Family



AN ASIDE ON CROSS CULTURAL ETIQUETTE NORMS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PAKISTANIS ON  
WESTERN BRITISH ETIQUETTE



MY NOTES FROM THE BOOK "PAKISTAN MANNERS AND ENGLISH ETIQUETTE"

**Pakistan Manners and English Etiquette**

[By Mafor A.F.M. Moshin Ali, Pakistan Press Syndicate Publications, 1958]

p.4 "In some cases one's behavior in crowded places leaves much to be desired ...

p.5 "... Young people are fond of looking at their watch particularly if it is a new one...

p.5 "Another matter which is bad manners for a visitor is to look into papers or files lying on the table of a person he has come to visit... The visitor while waiting has no business to pry into the papers lying on the table."

p.6 "About how a young person should stand before an older one. ... stand still with one hand holding the wrist of the other...

p.7-8 "One may be simply or poorly clad or even richly clad but if one's clothes are not clean, one cuts a sorry figure amongst others. .... There is an old English saying that cleanliness is next to godliness. .... Daily cleaning of nails"

p.8-9 nose picking, skin scratching, spitting such as pan ... description of red juice on walls.

p.10 for visitors, should cover upper half of body though weather hot and humid.

p.11 engagements. Turning up on time

p.12 VIP or if not ...

p.15 thank you etiquette: "... And if you want to be profusely polite, say, "Thank you very much for a very PLEASANT TIME". And do not belch demonstrating perhaps your happiness at the rich repast either while eating or when leaving..."

p.21 ... shaking hands...

p.25 western table settings and etiquette...

p.33-34 the story of the Shah of Persia at Queen Victoria's dinner and drinking out of the finger bowl.

p.38 what to do when bacon is served

p.39 "bed tea"

p.41-42 names and descriptions of rooms in a western house

p.44-47 "Modern Sanitary Equipments"



## PROJECTS

নিজের কাজ\*

(NIJER KAJ)

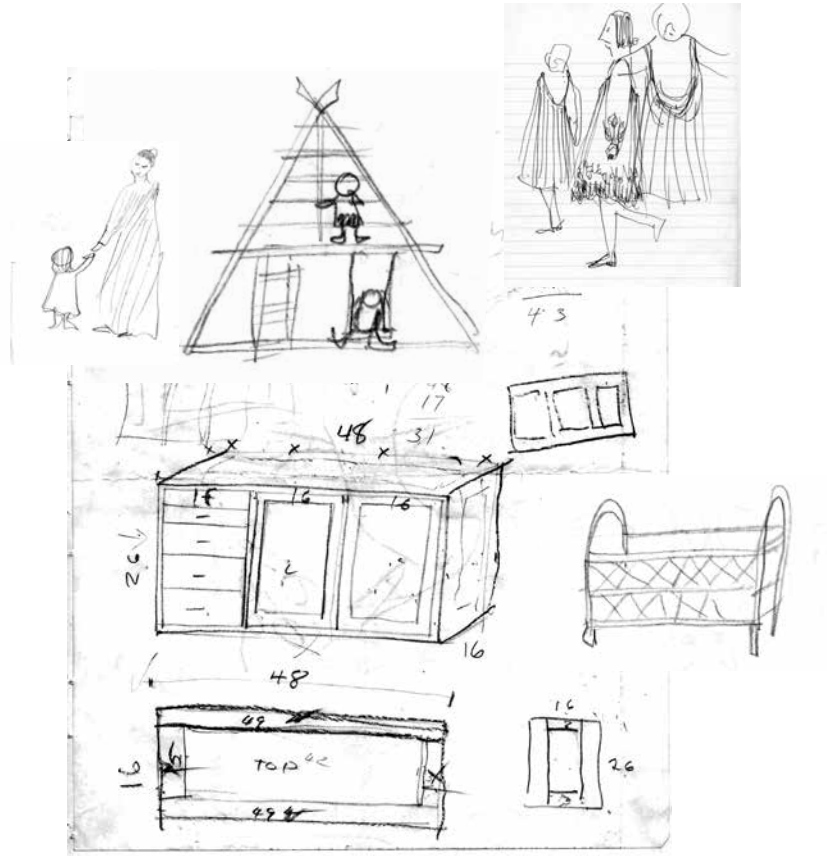
9.1 PROJECTS FOR OURSELVES

9.2 PROJECTS FOR OTHERS



\* This Bengali wording is from our personal family patois





9.1 PROJECTS FOR OURSELVES



MAKING JEWELRY

I think Dan must have been one of the first foreigners to explore the pearl shops in the Old City. The pearls were known as “pink pearls,” because they had pale tints of color, sometimes pink, but also yellow and gray. At the shops, Dan would search out matching pearls. Since the pearls came in all shapes and sizes (most of them looking like rice crispies). It could take him a long time before he had enough of the same shape and color to make a necklace. Sadly, after spending so much time to find matching pearls, Dan learned that the local craftsmen did not have the tools or the skills to drill the fine holes to string them. Dan had to have the work done in Hong Kong instead. Over time, he made me a number of beautiful necklaces for me: some were purely pearl strands and others were mixed with semi-precious gems to replicate traditional Moghul jewelry designs.

Instructions to my father about what to bring on his next trip including “... as much gold as you can in the form of anything that looks like it belongs to you ..” so that Dan can have it melted down for his own custom designed jewelry.  
[MFD letter to CGR, 01/11/1966]

Bring a warm suit for evening and whatever you need to keep warm through Europe. Bring casual clothes for daytime wear in Dacca. I have a resident tailor if you want anything made to order but you had better bring the cloth. Bring as much gold as you can in the form of anything that looks like it belongs to you - wedding rings, chains, pins ??? we can have jewelry made to order, Dan's designs, and shoes reset where this kind of work would be impossible in the West. Customs may be strict these days so don't bring an excess of anything. If you would enjoy coming via San Francisco or Hong Kong you may be our shipping agent in Hong Kong. Beirut is a stopping place for us if you come via Europe.

Katherine and I got some very fine Christmas presents, hand made and designed by Dan. He finally got his year's collection of pink pearls drilled in Hong Kong and strung with little gold links between in Dacca. He bought real pearls in Hong Kong to replace the bad ones on those necklaces from Nepal and had them restrung here so that they looked new and elegant. He has just finished earrings to match the pink pearl necklace. He has been having books bound in leather



Dan “finally got his year’s collection of pink pearls drilled in Hong Kong and strung with little gold links between in Dacca.”  
[MFD letter to Mother D, 01/12/1966]

“ ... for ladies who have plenty of trinkets, some Indian jewelery is a very good addition, but it would not answer for people with a small stock. The gold is so excessively pure, that it is an excellent investment, and you can sell your bracelet or comb, when tired of it, for almost its original cost; still you get much less show for the money than with a larger supply of trinkets in English jeweler’s gold....”

[Eden Sister Letters, p.111]

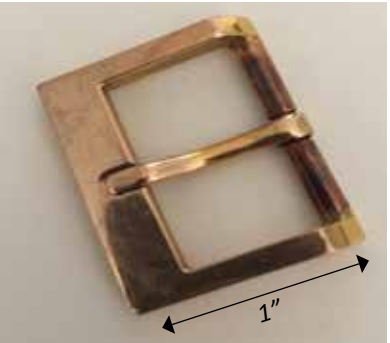
West Pakistan earring designed by Dan.



EAST & WEST PAKISTAN EARRINGS

Dan was also the first of our Dacca contemporaries to design gold jewelry and to have it made to order. For one of my birthdays, Dan cleverly designed a pair of gold earrings for me that at first sight looked odd because they did not match. One of them was in the shape of West Pakistan and the other in the shape of East Pakistan. Their geographic shapes were so perfectly replicated attesting to the fine craftsmanship of the jewelers. After some time, on a bumpy rickshaw ride I lost the West Pakistan earring. Perhaps it was prophetic considering East Pakistan was soon to become a free nation.

Dan’s gold belt buckle that never got stopped at airport customs



“... if there is a lull in the conversation, [we] can always start it going again by saying ‘Show us your belt buckle, Dan’. This came to be called “belt buckling”.

DAN’S SOLID GOLD BELT BUCKLE

Dan sympathized with the Bengali emphasis on gold ornaments as investments. He also appreciated that in Dacca he had access to much purer grades of gold than are typically acceptable in the west for jewelry. Gold was so highly valued that goldsmiths were typically commissioned to “recycle” old gold ornaments into new jewelry items. Dan once had gold melted down into a belt buckle. This was part of a clever plan to get the gold out of the country without paying any “fees.” Passing through Dacca airport in those days was always suspenseful because the rules for what got charged duty were fluid and unpredictable. Customs officers would surely make note of any gold jewelry leaving the country, but Dan knew it would never occur to them to question his belt.

[MFD letter to Mayers, 01/20/1966]

You missed several of Dan's periods this year. He is fond of gold and went to great lengths to have an old belt buckle gold plated and was disappointed when it made the belt itself look older but he is very proud of it and nothing makes him happier than to have someone notice it, which doesn't happen without some prodding or attention drawn to it. Those of us in the know, if there is a lull in the conversation, can always start it going again by saying "show us your belt buckle, Dan". This came to be called "bolt beckling". He has also gone in for leather book binding and we have five or six leather-bound books.





“For Christmas I got two Bengali dictionaries of different types bound in red and blue leather with gold writing.”  
[MFD letter to Mother D 01/12/1966]

BINDING BOOKS IN LEATHER

During our first year, on one of Dan’s explorations of the Old City, he discovered the district where books were printed and bound. He became enamored by the process of the leather work and the elegance of the gold printed titles on the spines. Against my better judgment at the time, Dan decided to have all our paper back books (regardless of their content or paper quality) bound in leather with our initials printed in gold on the spines. I have since come to appreciate the look of the leather bindings on our shelves even though the pages inside many of them have not endured.

That first group of bound books looked so elegant lined up on our shelves, that I decided to have all my most beloved books bound (namely my dictionaries and classic literature). Going to the book binders soon became a regular activity he looked forward to. Whenever he had a batch of new books and a little spare time, Dan would whisk them off for binding. The first step was always choosing the color of the leather, and the layout of the spine. Sometimes he splurged on Florentine style patterned papers to give the inside covers some *panache*. After a week, he would check back to see how the work was going often to be disappointed by mistakes or delays in ordering the specific leather he had chosen. In spite of the problems, our collection of leather-backed books increased steadily and handsomely. Dan became so pleased with the book binding possibilities that he would even have the cheapest worst quality books in our collection bound so as to keep up the elegant appearance of our shelves as they filled with our newly bound books. Many years later, all I am left with is the binding on some of the more cheaply published books in which the paper has disintegrated.

Dan is also leather-binding about 100 books. It took him quite awhile to find a binder that would do a good job and it takes quite awhile for a batch of books to be done, but you can have a book all leather bound for about Rs 5 on the average with gold lettering. At first I was not convinced of the leather binding, but I must admit our shelves are looking very elegant and the books will last longer.

[MFD letter to CGR 12/13/1966]

“bolt beekling”. He has also gone in for leather book binding and we have five or six nicley bound books. This makes the other books look much worse so his intention is to do about 100, all the islamic books in green, the chimese books in red, etc. There is nice leather these days in leather street but the price of binding cloth has gone up with a shortage of it. If you come here you will be more appreciated if you bring some binding cloth. Also all the books have not turned out as instructed and he is changing binders after walking out with the last installment have finish ed.

MAKING BAMBOO THINGS

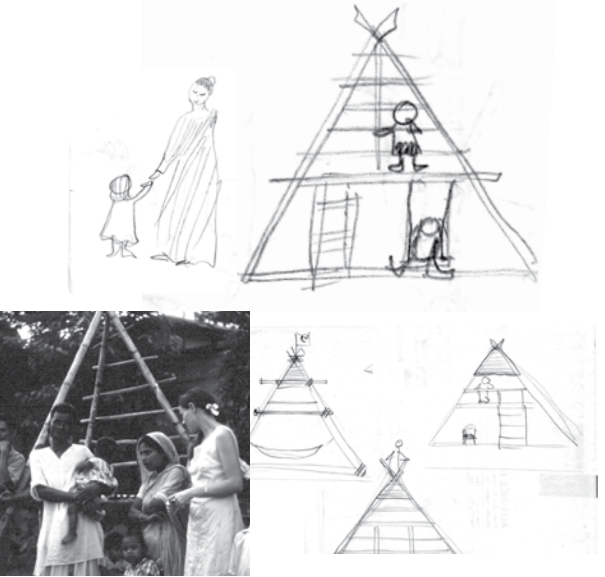
Locals and foreigners alike often disdained the use of bamboo as being too *kacha* to use, since it was cheap and easy to get locally. But for these very reasons, Dan and I loved using it for our designs whenever possible.

DAN’S CHAIR

Knowing how hard Dan worked at the office, I was inspired to design Dan a lounge chair like the ones I knew the British raj used to relax in at the end of a long hot day. I designed it to have an adjustable back to allow Dan to put his feet up and recline. To fabricate the chair, I carefully compared all the small roadside furniture markets on Mymensingh Road and selected the one that seemed to have the most well made samples on view. I gave the shopkeeper my design and a one-week deadline so as to have the chair ready for Dan’s birthday. When I checked in on the furniture *mistri* a day before the deadline, I was disappointed and stressed to find he had not started the work. “No worries,” he told me as I left in distress. And miraculously the next day, just in time for Dan’s birthday celebrations, the chair was done, and was perfect.

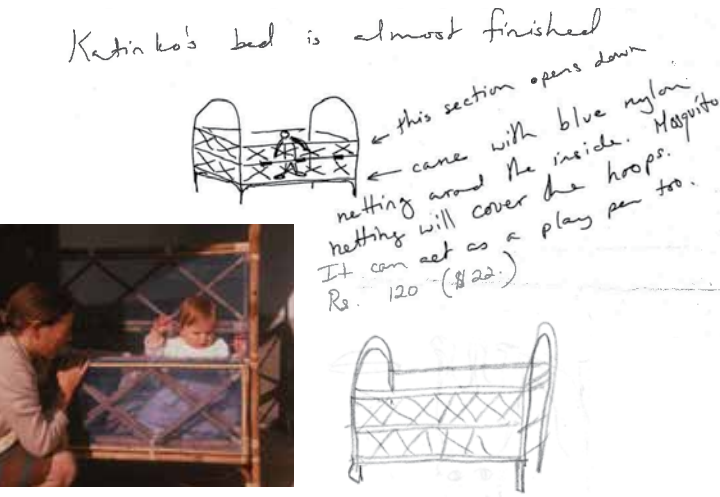


My chair design for Dan - unintentionally reminiscent of the British Colonial chairs of the Victorian times.



KATHERINE’S JUNGLE GYM

For Katherine’s second birthday, Dan designed a jungle gym in the shape of a pyramid made out of bamboo struts. With the help of our Gang he constructed it in the vacant lot next to our house. It was a novelty in Dacca where there were no playgrounds, so it attracted quite a bit of attention from curious passersby and was used from time to time by neighborhood kids.



KATHERINE’S CRIB

Dan designed a crib out of bamboo just in time for Katherine’s birth. Perhaps it may have been a bit over-designed because it looked more like a cage than a crib. In spite of its appearance, it did the job of keeping Katherine safe and free of mosquitoes.



MAKING TEAK FURNITURE

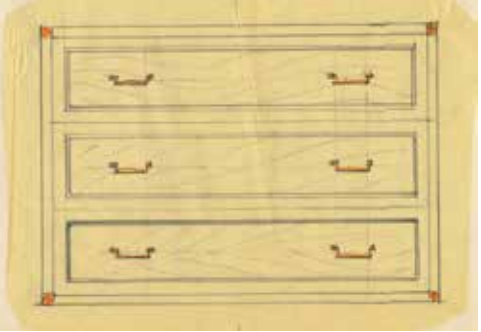
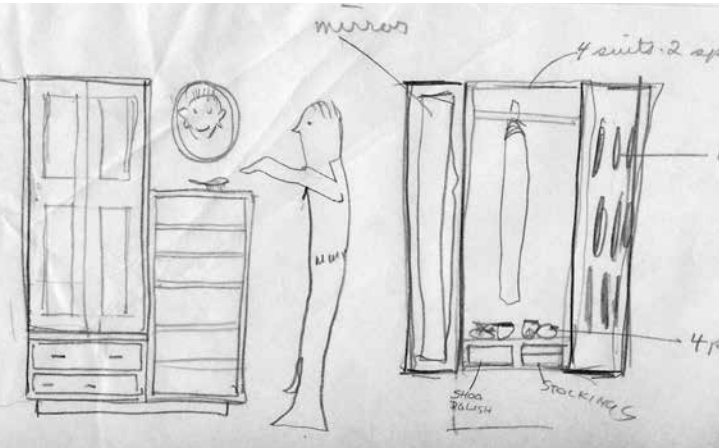
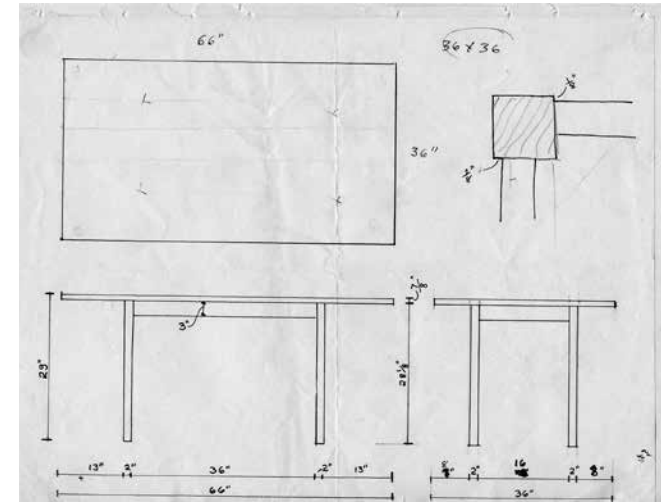
TEAK ‘BOXES’

Inspired by my passion for square boxes to solve our storage needs, Dan embarked on an ambitious project to make a set of teak ‘boxes’ to serve as elegant cabinets for us. Dan knew teak was available from Burma because he had observed teak logs being unloaded at the Sadarghat docks in the Old City. Dan carefully selected the logs he wanted to use before having them sawed into six-foot boards. For the next year, when Mother D was living with us, he stored the teak boards under her bed to dry them out so as to be ready for the carpenters.

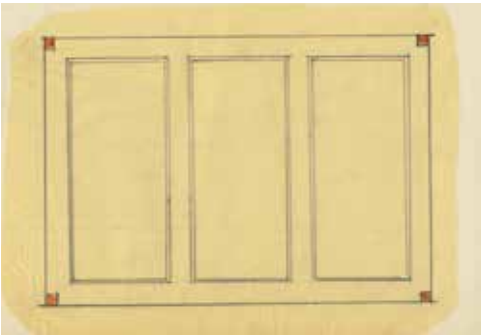
While the boards were drying, Dan had time to choose good *kath mistris* (carpenters). He remembered meeting a community of carpenters at a village he visited when on a Catholic Relief outing with Hugh Murphy. On that trip, the villagers had given him a gift of an usual wooden sculpture. It was about two feet tall, of an aged woman, bent over with her vertebrae bones carefully carved and a large goiter protrusion hanging from her neck. We treasured that sculpture and often wondered if the statue was made to commemorate the woman’s cure for her goiter or was just simply to represent her as she was with all her ailments. Dan was pleased to have an excuse to go back to that village to hire two carpenters for his furniture project.

Dan’s concept for the cabinets was to design them for easy shipping. So that they could be packed compactly in a freight container, he made sure all the sides of the cabinets were flat. Instead of protruding handles he used hinged, brass handles that folded flat. He had to order them from Karachi.

As for the design of the cabinets, Dan had lived in Dacca long enough to know not to risk doing anything new. Hence he designed the cabinets to use door paneling type details that he knew the *kath mistris* were already skilled at. The end result was handsome indeed. The simple clean lines of the panels gave the cabinets such an elegant timeless appearance that they still look contemporary more than 50 years later.



Front



Back

Dan used oor pannelling details in the design of the cabinets



THE KATH MISTRIS

Our two *kath mistris* were both in their sixties (if not older). Every morning they made the two-hour walk from their village to arrive at Hafiz Villa before Dan left for work. Dan would lay out sheets of full sized templates marking how the boards were to be cut that day. He would also provide them with detailed drawings to illustrate how the cabinet should look when completed. With rudimentary saw and drill, the *kath mistris* would work all day on our back veranda. They did excellent work carefully assembling the cabinetry together with clean miters and bamboo pegs, never using nails or screws.

[MFD letter to CGR 12/13/1966]

"We have three workmen everyday sawing and sanding. Everything hand made and pegged (no nails or screws showing)."

[MFD letter to Aunt Antigone 12/02/1966]

Dan has organized and is supervising the making of a set of furniture which we can take wherever we go consisting mostly of nicely finished teak chests with drawers which can be stacked or placed singly according to space, teak table tops, chairs, and stools. We have been using cane furniture which we got our first year and which is giving out so we will need furniture enev if we stay. Although labor is cheap and the teak costs nothing like it would cost in the States, it takes time to design and supervise. The workmen work in the courtyard (this is our beautiful season).



MAKING TEAK FURNITURE cont.

THE FINAL PRODUCT

Dan was loathe to waste any of the good teak wood so he used the scraps to make miscellaneous accessories including a set of wooden desk top filing boxes, pencil holders and wedges of wood to hold up index cards in the filing boxes. With the extra boards he made a set of wood shelves that have served us well over the years because of all the different ways we could use them.

For the last stage of the furniture fabrication, Dan hired a “labor” to rub all the pieces with boiled linseed oil. It took the “labor” several weeks to oil all the items, during which time, he managed to steal some items of mine including a bra and a necklace. Fortunately, Dan was able to track the culprit down and retrieve the stolen items, so the story ended happily.

All in all, Dan had eighteen cabinets made of varying sizes and designs: some with drawers, some with swinging doors, some with sliding panels, some large some small. Their workmanship matched perfectly enabling the cabinets (or boxes as we called them) to be stacked in different combinations with no gaps or overlaps. This seemed a miracle to us given the imprecision of the tools they used.

Dan also had two dining tables and a set of eight chairs made from the same teak. For the seats and backs of the chairs, Dan used the hand woven cane, called *chai*. The attractive cane weave allowed for airflow, which made it a perfect choice for the hot climate.

Our teak furniture has become among our most valued possessions in our family. Just as Dan had initially envisioned, the teak boxes packed well in the shipping crates when we moved back to New York. To this day, living with the teak furniture is like having a part of our Dacca life with me. I am always pleased when a guest takes note of the teak furniture; it gives me a chance to tell them the story of how Dan had them made and thus give them a glimpse into the joys of our Dacca life.

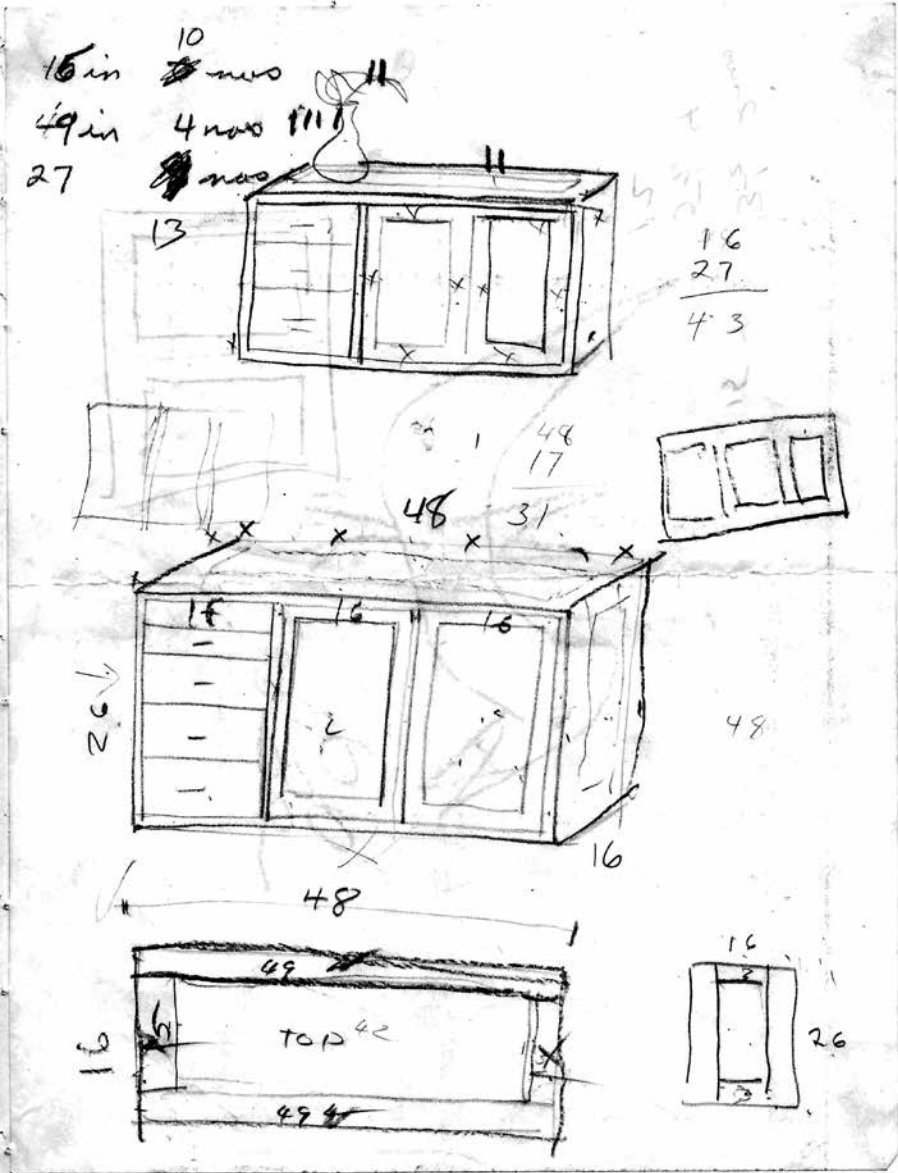
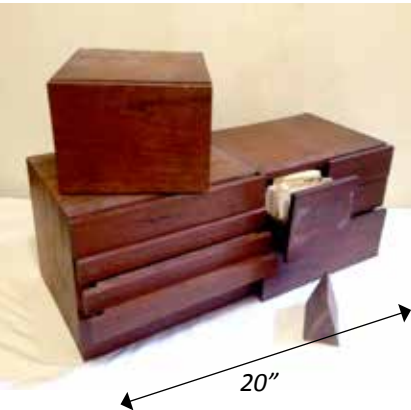
Sadly, keeping the teak furniture maintained takes at a lot of care and time. For many years, we scrupulously kept the brass hardware polished, and a couple of times we rubbed the furniture with boiled linseed oil (a very time consuming and messy task). Dan also taught himself how to reweave the caning in the chair seats and backs, which had become quite brittle due to the dryness of New York’s winters. I remember many evenings in our New York apartment, Dan patiently reweaving a chair seat while he watched TV.

[MFD letter to Peggy Azbill, 11/09/1966]

Since I started this letter we have had several additions to our manorial staff. Dan is going ahead with making furniture, solid teak with oil polish. .... (first one coat, then drying two days, then another... six times, then once a month, then once a year). The chairs you know now have a honey look and the first "box" (panneled box cum drawers) is a success. He hasn't stopped the leather binding of our library and we have about 50 leather bound, gold inscribed, books in the living room. Dan found some elegant brass oil lamps on long stems (Hindu oil lamps) and a Bengali Krishna. So we are well on the way to acquisition and materialism. The additions to the staff are a "labor" who does oiling and sanding, and two kat mistris of which one is the counterpart of Shona Mia. Dan brought these two from the village that gave him the old lady and they have set up their work bench outside the garage and come to toil there daily. Whenever Dan is home he inspects and instructs reads up on wood finishing and designs.



I had a reputation for my love of “boxes “ which Dan incapsulated in this collage he did for Katherin’s “Amars” book.







GARDENING

One of Dan’s favorite pass times at home was gardening. He had an eager ally in his gardening passions, Mabel Shannon, who lived next door. Mabel worked for Catholic Relief Services and although she was in her late sixties, she was one of the few other memsah’bs like me who liked to use a bike. When he had free time and access to an office car, Dan would fetch her to go on a plant-shopping spree. Mabel knew what flowering plants grew best at a particular season and what would grow well in Dacca. With Mabel, Dan would drive around Dacca, looking for attractive plants that would survive the longest and be the easiest to care for. Mali, our gardener, however, was happiest planting edible things and where Dan had instructed him to put nasturtiums he might find cauliflower or egg plants instead.

Dan and Mabel also amused themselves looking for unusual alternatives to the ubiquitous marigolds and periwinkles that were most often used in Dacca landscaping. Sometimes they would go to “Farm Gate”, the government agricultural research center and pick “exotic” plants to bring home including sometimes vegetables, such as asparagus and lettuce, that we would never see in the local markets.



Dan relaxing in our front garden



Mabel Shanon

Dr. Wallich, of the Botanical Gardens (a great man in botanical history), has given me seven hundred plants, which would be exotics of great value if we were not acting in that capacity ourselves.”

[Eden Sister Letters, June 17, 1837]



PAT HILL WRITING ABOUT DACCA GARDENING WOES

“... I have been trying to find out why all malis plant endless purple flowers. I have counted five kinds of purple flowers in my bagan. I don’t know if they love the color -- it looks so teek (sic) in an orange vase -- or if these are just hardy flowers that can flourish without diligent care. I’m going to have the little fuchsia pom-pom things torn out by the roots and burned with ceremony.”

MAKING RUBBINGS

On one of my own forays into The Old City, I visited the Armenian Church. It lay almost hidden, deep in the center of the Old City near by to an old Hindu temple. Although it was not as large as St. Thomas church, it had more charm. It was surrounded by grave stones lying flat in the earth. Some of these had fine carvings of cupid angels that reminded me of the tomb stones that Dan and I had made rubbings of in Emmy’s village. When I told Dan about the Armenian church, he came back with me with paper and black crayons ready to make rubbings again. They came out so well that we used them for our Christmas cards that year.





## DESIGNING CLOTHES

Shona Miah, our favorite tailor, looked to be in his sixties and was so thin that Dan used to say he could run between raindrops. When he came to work, he would spread a spotless white sheet on the veranda floor and perform a prayer before he set his sewing machine down and his box of threads.

Shona Miah was an expert tailor who could accomplish miracles of intricate tailoring. One of the more challenging projects I gave him was a mini-dress I had designed with a wide zigzagged neck line. The dress was black on the outside but had a bold, red silk lining that could be glimpsed at the jagged edge of the neckline. To this day I marvel at how Shona Miah achieved the effect.

Over the years, relying on Shona Miah's talents, Dan designed a number of haute couture outfits for me to wear at formal receptions and parties. These included harem style pantaloons made from the Thai silk which I had brought back from Bangkok on my trip there with Mother D. It had broad stripes of various shades of pale green and turquoise blue. Out of yards of black chiffon from Calcutta, Dan designed a full body outfit including wide pants and extra long wing-like sleeves. The fabric was so sheer, that he designed special black satin undergarments for me to wear underneath. Like so many of Dan's designs for me, it was quite avant guard.



*Shona Miah, everyone's favorite tailor. He was so thin that we described him as "The man who could run between raindrops" because he was so thin.*



***“AMI JANI NA”***

Occasionally, our sewing projects went too far for Shona Miah's devout Muslim values. When there was a project that he disapproved of he would frown and shake his head muttering: "*Ami jani na ...*" (I don't know...). Sometimes he would overcome his scruples and do the work and occasionally he would completely refuse. For example, he refused to sew a cloth doll for Dee Rutherford's daughter because it seemed too idolatrous.

Yet another time he overcame his reluctance when Dan had him make stuffed animals as toys for the Tejgaon orphanage. After having helped the orphanage during “The 1965 War” (see chapter 15), Dan felt inspired to give the kids gifts the following Christmas. I am not sure where the idea came from, but he decided to make stuffed mice as toys for them. Shona Miah was very reluctant about the project, but somehow Dan convinced him to sew a quantity of cone shaped bodies for the mice. He then had our servants work in an assembly line fashion to stuff the mice with soft capoc, and attach the button noses, button eyes and strings for tales. We were quite pleased with the design and thought the mice made cute gifts. But we were sadly mistaken. When the orphans saw the mice they were confused and disappointed. Why should they want a stuffed rodent when other children they saw had real dolls like the ones they saw in the shops. Hence we were left with several dozen mice and a good lesson learned about our misconception of what Bengali children might like. Perhaps we should have listened to Shona Miah when he first shook his head and said:

*"Ami jani na."*

*When we found out about Shona Miah's foot injury we got him medical attention and put him up at our place to recover.*

[MFD letter to Peggy Azbill, 11/09/1966]



*"Ami jani na," Shona Miah would say as he sewed the ballet tu-tu's for our Lecture on Swan Lake*



*The nuns handing out our gift of stuffed rat toys  
sewn by Shona Miah to the orphans*

Sometimes there seem to be more cases than we can handle. Among a few: Shona Mia got his foot run over by a hand cart. We didn't go to his house until about a month after he had stopped coming to work. When we finally went, we found his foot looking badly and he very weak and sickly. We transferred him to Holy Family for two weeks but they have had such a run of emergency cases (including the French consul and his wife at the same time) that they were generally eager to get rid of him. He improved somewhat to the point where he can hobble with a hospital cane and we removed him to Wohab's room where he has been for about sixteen days. The last ten days he started working again and seemed to be picking up but to-day he was in tears and said he would go home and never come back. Dan persuaded him to go home and see his family for a while and then see how he felt, telling him that it will take a long time for him to regain the use of his foot. The other cases include a boy bitten by a rabid dog and Wohab with an eye infection. It is all so unfair



COLLECTING ART

Dan and I took great pleasure in spotting and acquiring beautiful works of local art, sometimes accidentally when we were offered something as a gift and sometimes intentionally when we went out into the Old City or the countryside seeking treasures. What we collected, reflected our broad interest in art from the folk art of the villages and the streets of Dacca to the highly refined museum quality sculptures of ancient Indic traditions. I think Dan and I were quite rare in our ability to recognize beauty in much of the day to day *katcha* things of Bengal life, such as the hand-blown glassware or the rickshaw paintings, that most people took for granted.

SCULPTURES

Dan realized early on that he should collect sculpture because he knew that Bengali Muslims considered most sculpture idolatress. He feared that bronze statues in particular, were being melted down for their metal. On many of our outings, Dan and I with friends made it a hobby of collecting beautiful statuary since we knew that the local population had no care for it.



**11th Century baasalt stele of the sun god, Surya**  
*We rescued this statue from its use as a front door step (see Chapter 9 for the full story)*



30"

**Bronze Shiva-Parvati Miniature**  
*Dan happened to spot a tiny sculpture on the floor of a village house. When he looked at it closely he saw that it was a bronze statue of Shiva with his consort Parvati. Knowing the owners had little value for this Hindu statuary he was able to buy it from them. From the intricate detailing of the artwork he knew immediately that it was probably made in ancient art of "cire perdu."*



3"

**Statue of a beloved local woman (wood)**  
*Dan was given this statue of an old women with a conspicuous goiter as a gift by a village of carpenters where he was helping to distribute food for a charity.*



30"



5"



8"

RICKSHAW PAINTINGS

Whenever I rode a rickshaw, I enjoyed viewing the flamboyant paintings on the rickshaws around me. These paintings were done in brightly colored acrylics on an oblong sheet of metal that hung between the wheels on the back of the rickshaw. They often showed scenes from popular movies such as a heroine being seduced by her hero, WW II soldiers shooting their guns, or forlorn lovers gazing at each other across a village river with swans on it. Regardless of the topic, these paintings often included in their landscapes well known landmarks such as the Taj Mahal or infrastructure such as trains, bridges and/or a PIA airplane overhead.

Admiring the "mobile" exhibit of these rickshaw paintings, I thought that perhaps I could commission one for Dan's upcoming birthday. When I asked where the artists lived, I was directed to a crowded narrow lane in the depths of the Old City where Alauddin, one of the more popular rickshaw artists, lived. He worked out of a small room on the ground floor where his best light came from the open door. Considering most of his clientele were impoverished rickshaw drivers, he must have been quite surprised by the sight of me. Here I was, a foreign memsah'b commissioning a rickshaw painting as if he was an Artist with a capital 'A'. In spite of his shock, he seemed to have no hesitations about my request, but did seem clueless about what to charge.

I am quite certain that I was the first person to think of commissioning rickshaw art for personal display. To the Bengali's this art form was too low class to consider exhibiting in a house and to most foreigners it was an art form that was taken for granted as merely a decorative feature. For Dan's painting, I merely listed for Alauddin the types of things I hoped he would include in the picture. The result was so charming that Dan was thoroughly pleased and we went back for more. For subsequent paintings, I realized I could be more specific about what I wanted by providing photos for Alauddin to work from.



[MFD letter to CGR 11/13/1960]  
*Rickshaws "are gaily painted with cowboys and cowgirls it seems, and have sunshades that you can draw over you like a carriage. The costuming is probably the same as you have seen often the bottom half Eastern style and the top half Western."*

PAT HILL WRITING ABOUT DAN AND THE RICKSHAW ARTIST  
[Pat Hill letter to MFD, 06/09/196]

I have tried to check your husband. We miss him too, and I drove over this afternoon again, but he is either asleep or out -- if one could just know the precise moment he could be caught over morning coffee. I did see him a few times soon after you left. He was truly gallant about the rickshaw artist, and guided us to the little bohemian studio one morning in a wild rainstorm, swimming and splashing down the alley. The weeks Hugh and Fran were in the west wing were awfully dreary for him on Siddeshwari. When you write, tell him we'd love to see him.



## COLLECTING ART cont.

**Our first rickshaw painting**

For the first painting I wanted to have a generic rickshaw painting, but with specific elements that I chose. So for this painting, I provided Alauddin with a list of items that I had seen in other rickshaw paintings that I wanted him to include in mine, such as a train, the Taj Mahal, swans on a river, and a village house with its typical curved roof. I then encouraged him to add whatever else he liked, so he added elements such as the soldier admiring a village woman carrying a water pot and the PIA airplane flying overhead.

30"

**Our second rickshaw painting**

For the second painting, I wanted to personalize the scene to my family's life in Dacca. Thus I requested Alauddin to include the Chu Chin Chow restaurant (our only foreign restaurant), the "DIT" building (the most modern architecture in Dacca at the time), and our own house Hafiz Villa with my family standing in front. In this painting, I especially appreciated the Mughal style attention to detail and the choices the artist made about how to represent us. Although Katherine must have been only a toddler at the time, she is depicted as a beautiful young girl. Dan, who was blond haired, is given black hair. I am shown twice in the painting. In the background I am standing hand in hand with Dan and Katherine. In the foreground, I am shown again, but this time arm in arm with the owners(?) of Chu Chin Chow. Around us, are scenes (most likely from popular movies) of war, hunting and boat life, etc. which were all the artist's choice including his tell-tale item, the PIA airplane flying overhead.

**Our third rickshaw painting**

By the third painting, I was confident enough with Alauddin to commission him to make a rickshaw painting specifically describing our family home life at Hafiz Villa. For this painting I gave Alauddin a number of photos of us doing different routine activities around the house. As always, the artist took liberties with his embellishments; for example, he shows the Mali mowing the lawn with a lawn mower – something we never had or ever saw in Dacca; he “up-scaled” the simple bamboo lounge chair that I had designed for Dan. He shows four year old Katherine as a young woman again and he placed me with my spinet on a stage-like platform in the garden. Of course he did not forget to include the standard PIA airplane flying overhead.

**Our fourth rickshaw painting - 20 Years Later**

In 1993, when I returned to Dhaka to live with Katherine while she was doing Fulbright research there, we decided to have yet another family portrait rickshaw painting done. For this painting, we had the scene set on our rooftop, where we spent much of our time so as to avoid our one-room apartment below. In the background you can see the kitchen cum dining shelter that Katherine designed where we spent much of our free time. We gave the artist photos of each family member doing their most typical activity and let him compose the scene. Hence the ayah is hanging out the wash, my husband is watering plants, I am on my bicycle, Katherine is at her desk writing and Steve (her husband) is playing the piano with his tablas at his feet. Steve did in fact practice the tablas on the roof but the piano, bike and desk were never up there. And as always there is an airplane flying overhead, added by the artist.





**Jock's rickshaw painting**

*For Jock Copland's Dacca farewell party I hired Alauddin to make a painting showing Jock's circle of Dacca friends. I must have given him photos for each person.*



**9.2 PROJECTS FOR OTHERS**



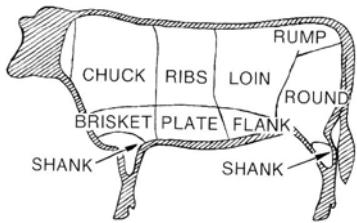
TINKERING

Dan used to say he should have been born in the 19th century because he loved to tinker and invent but living in Dacca seemed to be just as suitable for his inventive talents. Both Dan and I appreciated that living in Dacca gave us access to materials, labor and craftsmanship that opened a door to unlimited possibilities for what we could design, make and do. As a result we embarked on a wide range of different projects including such things as initiating business endeavors for our Gang, binding our books in leather, fabricating furniture, designing jewelry and clothes, and collecting art.

FOOD RELATED BUSINESSES FOR OUR ‘GANG’

“MANGSHA KHAI, BHALO JAI”

Getting meat for cooking at the standards foreigners were accustomed was difficult in Dacca in those days. In this Muslim country, pork was only available from Hindu and Buddhist vendors who would come surreptitiously to the back door bearing bloody hunks of freshly cut pig wrapped in burlap. Beef was available in the local markets, but it was never in recognizable cuts that foreigners knew how to cook. Recognizing the dissatisfaction of most foreigners with these meat choices, Dan had the brilliant idea to train Cook to run a butcher/meat delivery business catered to foreigners. Dan even went so far as to create a catchy logo for the business: “Mangsha khai, bhalo jai” (“Eat meat, go well”). To educate Cook on how foreigners preferred to get their beef, Dan used a book he had brought back from the US showing all the standard cuts, - such as “chuck,” “rump,” “ribs,” “shank,” “loin” etc.. Dan also demonstrated to Cook how to package the meat in sealed cellophane in the typical American super market fashion. Dan even designed order forms for Cook with the company logo “Mangsha khai bhalo jai” printed at the top. The idea had potential, but sadly after a few orders Cook quietly resigned from the business.



One of our friends made us this card about Dan’s butcher business

BAR-B-Q TRIPOD FOR SALE

Another enterprise Dan initiated for our Gang was selling door-to-door bar-b-q grills. Like the butcher business for Cook, Dan saw an opportunity for Mohan to sell barb-b-q grills to the foreign community that had a tradition of eating outside with fresh grilled meats (à la American backyard barb-b-q parties). Dan cleverly improvised a grill design that could be easily fabricated from local materials and was light weight enough to be carried around. To hold the coals, Dan used the typical metal cement mixing bowl as the main basin of the grill. It sat in a ring supported by a tripod of three re-bar legs. A piece of woven metal (typically used for fences) served as the grill. Dan’s concept was to make the grill as portable as possible so that Mohan could carry a few of them as he went from house to house selling them. Sadly the barb-b-q enterprise went the way of the butcher business. I doubt Mohan sold more than one grill. Nevertheless, we knew Dan’s design worked well because we used it often ourselves for parties and as a heater in our living room.

My description of Dan’s effort to get cook set up with a butcher business catering to the foreign communitiy  
[MDF letter to CGR 12/05/1964]

home last week. He don't know when to expect him back and feel short handed. Dan had set him up with the cook in a business partnership called the "Big Man Butcher Co." The cook goes down to the big market early on Sat., the first day the cows are slaughtered, buys four or five entire sides of beasts which we store in the bottom of our refrigerator (a large consolate one) for a day to tenderize it. Then under Dan's newly acquired knowledge of butchery (and tools we brought back) the cook carves up the sides into "rolled roasts", "porter horse steaks", "T-bone steaks" etc., cuts which are not available unless you do it yourself. This way. Meanwhile Mohan has been out getting orders. The cuts are wrapped in foil and stored in the freezer where they take on professional shape. Mohan delivers them on Monday. As Mohan & the cook have had a previous quarrel I don't know how long the partnership will last. Dan thinks it is the last business enterprise he is going to set up for anyone as they have so little enterprising spirit of their own. Anyway Dan's fame has spread and the Sisters at the Orphanage have asked his advice on how to cut up their cows.

“Big Man Butcher Co.”

“The cuts are wrapped in foil and stored in the freezer where they take on a professional shape.”

“Dan thinks it is the last business enterprise he is going to set up for anyone as they have so little enterprising spirit on their own.”



DAN’S TICKET-SCALPING  
ENTERPRISE FOR “NO FACE”

ABOUT “NO FACE”  
[Bob Mayers’ Memoirs]

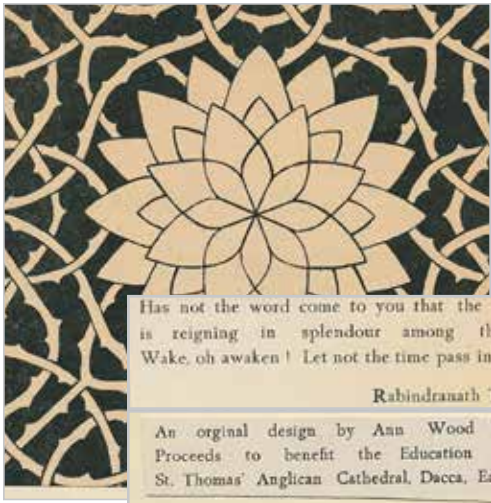
There was only one large movie theatre in crowded downtown Old Dacca and going to the movies was a true ordeal. Long lines coiled around the block. For us foreigners there was an added risk: the movies were sometimes dubbed in Bengali with no English subtitles, but there was no way of knowing this for sure until the movie started.

We pulled up to the theatre in our tiny blue Citroen 2CY; one of us got out and stood on line while the others waited in the car. Inevitably, a hideous spectre appeared on the windshield. This was "No Face", a man whose face was terribly disfigured by leprosy. Where No Face's nose should have been there were just two small holes; skin was hanging off his cheeks. No Face knew how frightening he appeared and would bend over the windshield of foreigners' cars and hover there until someone gave him a few rupees to move on.

One day, we went to the movies with our friends Mary Frances and Dan Dunham, who had had years of experience living on the subcontinent. As the 'Head From Hell' appeared at our windshield Dan got out of the car and had a heart to heart talk with No Face. Soon, we saw Dan hand No Face a stack of rupees and get back in the car to wait with the rest of us. Dan explained that he had told No Face that by begging the way he did he was degrading himself in front of foreigners and that he could, instead, be in "business" for himself and provide a valuable service. An agreement was reached and Dan had "staked" No Face to the purchase of not four but 20 tickets, which he could now sell at a nice profit to . foreigners as they pulled up to the theatre. With part of the profit he could buy more tickets. Dan announced. "No more lines; no more disgusted screams; No Face is now our official Dacca Ticket Scalper". From then on our ticket problem was solved."



Gulistan Cinama Hall



Dan’s design  
for the Charity  
Christmas cards

CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR CHARITY

One year Dan and Ann Werkheiser (wife of the new minister at St. Thomas church) made a business of designing and selling Christmas cards to raise money for a charity. Ann originally designed a card of a stylized lotus blossom in black and white inspired by a Tagore poem. When Dan saw it, he came up with the idea of inviting others to design cards too so that they could sell a selection of cards for holidays to raise money for charity. Dan had the printing done at his usual place in the Old City, because they were accustomed to his creative projects. The idea was a complete success and the cards always sold out at pre-Christmas events.



[MFD letter to Aunt Antigone, 12/02/1966]

The enclosed cards explain themselves on the back of each. The Werkheisers (young minister and wife ) thought of the idea to have locally designed cards which would be sold here and in the sister Rhode Island parish. It turned out to be a large undertaking. They sent about 1,000 to Rhode Island and sold about 5,000 here. Dan helped with designing some of the other cards as well as the elephant. It is very difficult to get anything done here that requires much fine work and Ann spent days at the printers (the same who did our book and are the best)

Dscriptions of the  
Christmas Cards project  
[MFD letter to CGR,  
08/25/1966]

kind. She wanted the cards to be Bengali as much as possible. The main bulk are to be sold at the sister diocese of Rhode Island. The printing is finished and we have been helping with selling here and final pasting touches. Dan helped a lot with the designing and one card is completely by him. Two others bear other names, but he really had the ideas



## DAN'S SOLAR COOKER

As well as the solar hot water heater that Dan had installed on our roof during our early days in Hafiz Villa, he amused our staff and guests with his solar cooker design which he had brought back from New York on one of our home leaves. The stove was the product of Dan's college years when he collaborated with Professor Duffy to design a solar cooker. Dan figured out a simple way to enable the reflector to track the sun by hanging it from a crescent shaped stand. Suspended above the center of the dish was a metal ring to hold a pot. Professor Duffy got the solar stove design patented under both their names, but not until Dan came to Dacca did he have a chance to put the stove in action.

Dan trained our staff on how to boil a pot of water on the stove, which usually took about 15 minutes on a sunny day. He also enjoyed the entertainment the stove provided for the curious neighbors. For their pleasure, he would place a piece of newspaper at the focal point so that he could watch their gasps of surprise when it burst into flames. In all, Dan brought three solar stoves to Dacca. We kept one and donated the others to Catholic Relief Services to be used in the Chittagong leper colony where there was a constant need to boil water for bandages and not enough wood for fuel.



Dan with Cook in our courtyard using the solar cooker

Bengali women were more amused than eager to stand in the sun.



Ruplal and Mona demonstrating Dan's solar cooker

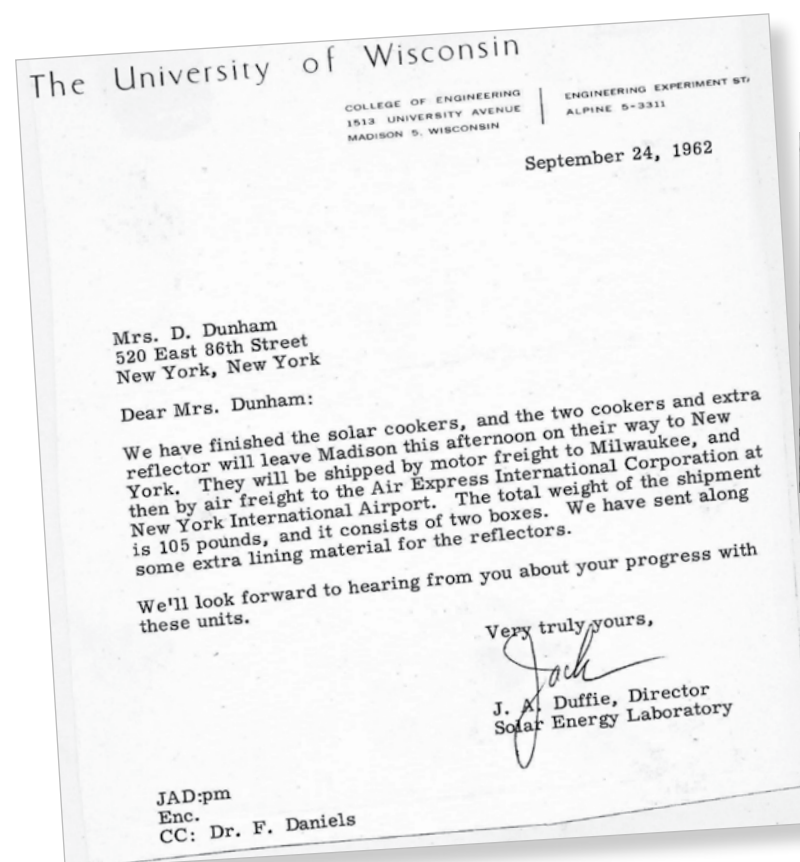


Dan and Hugh Murvhy demonstrating the solar cooker at the Leprosy colony



Three new solar stoves arrived recently and Dan has been distributing them around the neighborhood. We have the people in the bamboo hut in the neighboring field using one quite successfully. There are always crowds of curious Pakistanis gathered around it. We can watch the woman using it from the house and Wahab gives her instructions. Murray is very enthusiastic and is trying to find a way of getting some sponsorship to experiment with more as Dan was ~~doing~~ <sup>tries to do</sup> with the Ford Foundation Home Ec. school here, but it took us so long to get the cookers that we hadn't gotten a program going. It would never replace the little wood stoves but it really looks like they would be a big saving if only the people could get used to it. The middle class families who know how to save money, have some technical education, and who want to save, would use them with no trouble but the problem is getting the villagers to use them.

"Dan has been distributing them around the neighborhood. We have the people in the bamboo hut ... using one quite successfully. There are always crowds of curious Pakistanis gathered around it."  
[MFD letter to CGR, 04/16/1963]





THE *BHALO* CARDS

My own desire to learn Bengali, led me to the idea of making vocabulary flash cards for public use. I found that the normal language books failed to provide a simple yet flexible choice of vocabulary to serve foreigners during their early adjustment to life in Dacca. I designed the cards to have Bengali on one side and English on the other, so that the cards would be useful to both foreigners learning Bengali and to Bengalis learning English.

To limit the vocabulary to a manageable size of 200 cards, I chose only words that I felt were the most useful. I specifically chose words that were not easy to express through pantomiming, drawing or by pointing to something. Thus, I included the word “*rong*,” meaning color, but not words for specific colors since these could be pointed to. I made sure to include the verb “*kora*” (to do or make), because an infinite number of phrases could be made with it easily. For example, if a foreigner wanted his shirt washed, he could say “wash *koro*” while pointing to his shirt and pantomiming the action of washing it. “*Bhalo*,” meaning good, was yet another useful word, which could convey a lot when combined with pantomiming, drawing or pointing. Although not in our card set, Dan loved to use this word in its negative “*bhalo na*,” which always amused the Bengalis since they never used that combination of words to express disappointment.

With his favorite printer in the Old City, Dan figured out a way to print the cards efficiently. Out of one sheet of card stock he could get twenty flashcards: each two inches square with a Bengali word on one side and its English translation on the other. When it came time to collate the cards into individual sets of 200, Dan found his usual solution for getting help. He went out to our street corner and hired “labor”. With six “labors”, five foreign friends, Wohab and Mali, we were able to collate the 20,000 cards into 100 sets in one afternoon! Meanwhile, Dan drafted architecture students to the task of designing and building the little hinged cardboard boxes to hold each set of cards. The result was less attractive than we would have liked, but at least the boxes were sturdy. Some were sold, some given away and now more than 50 years later I still have three sets left in tact.



**How to use the cards**

The black side shows the English word with the same word. The red side shows the Bengali word with the same word. The cards can be used as a dictionary or for your need and choice for learning.

**IF YOU WANT TO LEARN BENGALI**

If your native tongue is English and you want to learn Bengali, these cards are designed to shorten your way to live conversation. You can find out the names of many objects by casual enquiry, but without some supportive vocabulary, you can only try to make yourself understood as a baby does, by pointing or repeating one word over and over—louder and louder. In the course of daily experience a housewife can learn many household nouns, an engineer can learn to identify engineering equipment, but, until you can say something about what you can name, you are tongue-tied. For the serious student of Bengali, the cards will not replace a proper course of lessons, but will serve as a convenient means of practice outside the classroom. When you can express yourself in “pidgin” Bengali, you are closer to speaking proper Bengali than if you never open your mouth.

These 200 words have been chosen for their broadness in expressing common needs, wishes, and feelings. You will find them to join them with the more specific vocabulary of your own language to form simple explanatory sentences: “I need a pen.” “What time will you return?” “I am happy to see you again.” Then, if you use them and practice them, you will be able to express at least some Bengali, and rapidly learning more. You will always be speaking correctly, but you will know the difference between expressing a thought and being understood, and you will find that the Bengali speaking people, at all levels of education, very much will help you untangle your syntax or pronounce your new words more correctly. By untieing the tongue and encouraging the practice of functional sentences, a knowledge of the cards will accelerate a mastery of Bengali at an early stage.

**Pronunciation Key**

| Read   | Rhymes with       | Practice             | Card No. |
|--------|-------------------|----------------------|----------|
| 1. —ah | Hah !, Mama       | Dah-kah (Dacca)      | —        |
| 2. —ee | He, Week, Meet    | Jah-ee (I go)        | 64       |
| 3. —ay | Play, Day         | Ah-chay (Is, Exists) | 10       |
| 4. —aw | Paw, Law          | Aw-neck (Much)       | 106      |
| 5. —oh | Oh !, So, Go      | Lohk (People)        | 124      |
| 6. —oo | Boo !, Boot, Loot | Too-mee (You)        | 199      |
| 7. —oy | Boy, Toy          | Shoh-moy (Time)      | 165      |
| 8. —e  | Neck, Tell, Set   | Ek (One)             | 1        |
| 9. —a  | Cat, Bat, Hat     | Bas-toh (Busy)       | 26       |
| 10. —o | Or                | Por (After)          | 4        |

36 Adj. Cold

73 Noun Help হেল্প

143 Adv. Slowly স্লোলি

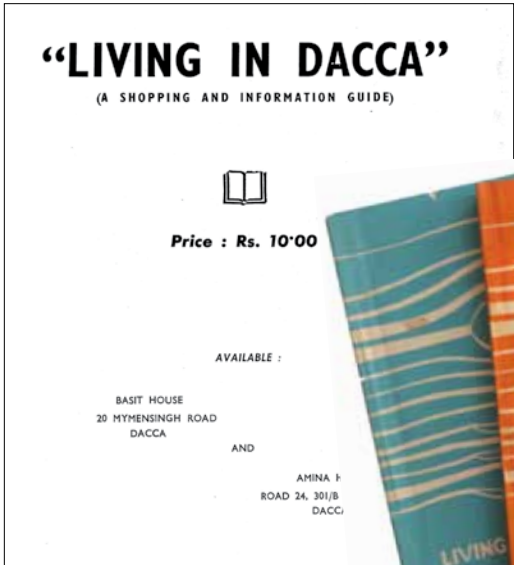
১। আমি মনে করি  
২। আমি মনে রাখি

১. Ah-mee mon-ay kor-ee  
2. Ah-mee mon-ay rah-kee

এখানে  
Ay-kah-nay



“LIVING IN DACCA”



“LIVING IN DACCA” – Dacca’s First Official Guide book. The first edition of four was published in 1965.

Dan designed the cover and book layout



WRITING DACCA’S FIRST GUIDE BOOK

Some time after our success with the “*Bhalo Cards*,” I embarked on a very ambitious publishing project with Pat Hill and Dee Rutherford, to write and compile the first guide book for Dacca in English. We had so often been praised for how much we knew about Dacca and so often asked to lead tours of the city for new arrivals, that we thought it was high time that Dacca had an English guide book. This became an on-going project that lasted almost three years.

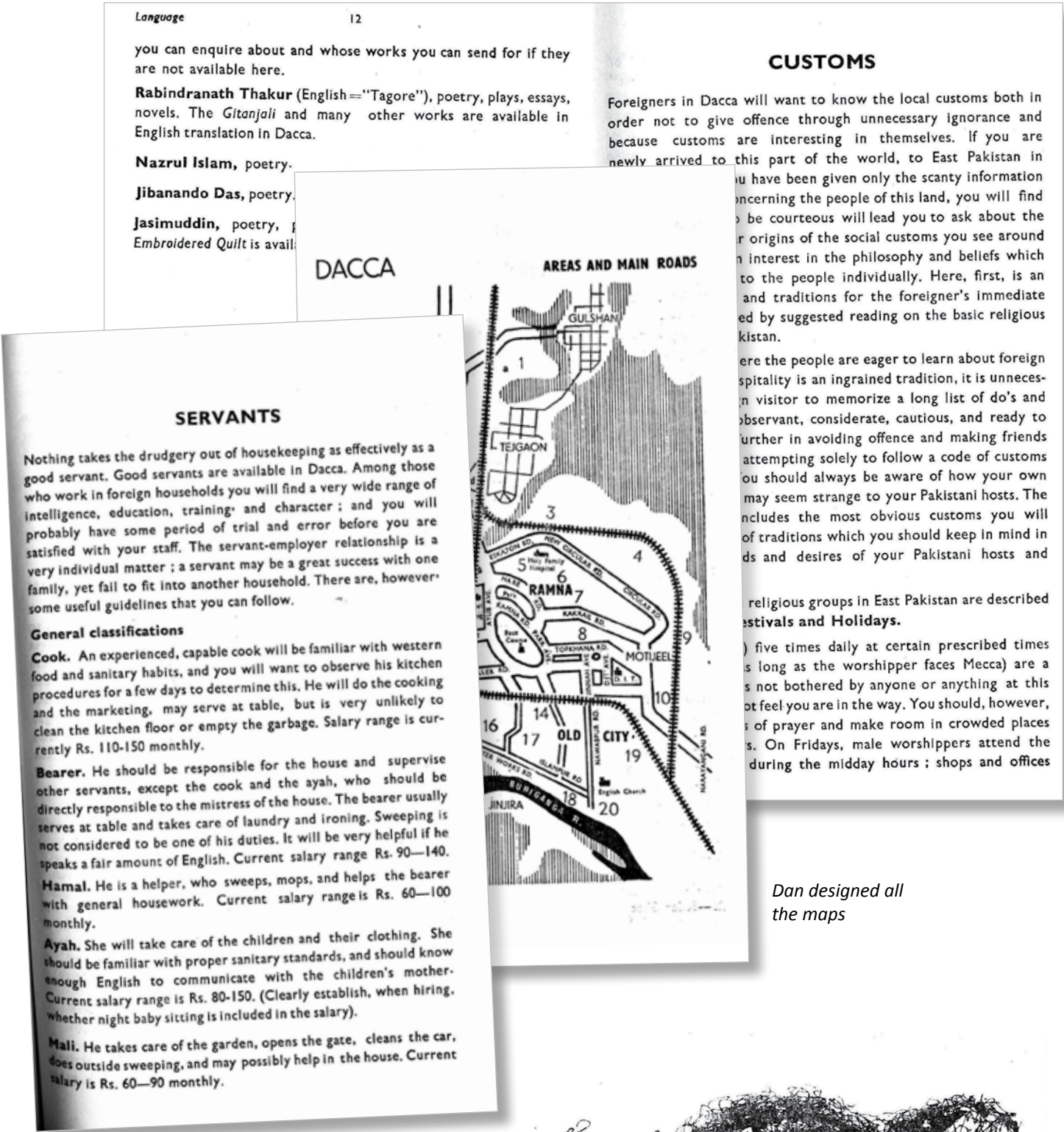
However, we envisaged doing more than just listing landmarks and shopping centers. We included historical and cultural information in the book as well. We parceled out each section of the book to volunteers to cover topics such as Festivals & Holidays, Transportation, Health, Servants, Cooking, etc. Most of the writing, however, fell to Pat, Dee and myself. Jim Walden’s wife, Joan, designed the handsome black and white cover.

Dan undertook to do all the maps and illustrations, including a series of black ink sketches of local Dacca scenery. To do the sketches, Dan would go out early in the mornings before the city was buzzing with traffic. But even at those early hours, he couldn’t avoid the crowds of curious onlookers who would surround him oblivious to the fact that they were blocking his view.

That first edition of our guide book was two years in the making, including a six month delay for a war time evacuation to the Philippines, before we were ready to take it to the printers. Thanks to USAID funding, we could choose the best printers in town rather than take chances with the local printers in the Old City. We were pleased to be able to use locally made paper from the new Karnafuli mill near Chittagong. Otherwise we would have had to import it.

It was fascinating for me to see the printing process which at that time, was still type set requiring each individual letter to be placed by hand in the molds. Dee and I made countless trips to Motijheel with sheets of “galleys” containing our corrections and we would patiently watch over the printer as he picked out each letter to be replaced according to our corrections. The process was tedious and time consuming but we persevered nevertheless.

In the end, we were pleased with our results. The book did so well that it was subsequently updated and published in three more editions, each with the same cover design, but in a different color. Thanks to Dee’s father, who worked at the Library of Congress in Washington DC, our *Living in Dacca* is fully registered there with a Dewy Decimal code.



Dan designed all the maps

Dan did all the illustrations for the guide book.





“LIVING IN DACCA” cont.



These excerpts describe the hardships of writing this guide book

[MFD letter to CGR 03/08/1965]

I have been working night and day on the guide book. I have never written about so much in such a short time and I don't enjoy doing it. We are only 3 really working on it and it is an encyclopedic job. I have gotten interested in history for the first time in my life, however, and enjoy that aspect.

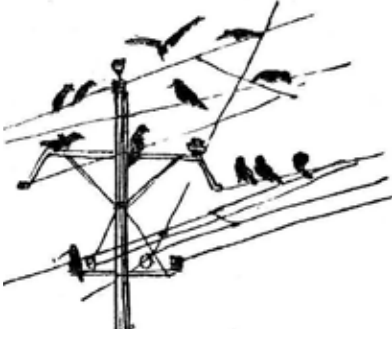
[MFD letter to CGR 05/28/1965]

The storm has delayed the printers and then they had to put our work aside for a few days for another job. To-day they say that if all goes well (this includes my daily trip to the printers) the book should be finished by the middle of June. Although I don't believe them there is hope that I might be able to finish my work by then and let the other proof reader carry on. Can you take

[MFD letter to Aunt Antigone 12/02/1966]

Updating for the second edition of Living In Dacca

We have also been working on a second edition to that guide book. We thought it would be a matter of up-dating the information but we find ourselves rewriting the articles and spending too much time again. However, I think we have got a publisher this time which will take the selling off our hands. The venture is now almost completely in the hands of two ladies (including the one who originated the project) and myself, much easier than a large committee, but a lot of time for three.



[MFD letter to CGR 12/13/1966]

If you don't hear from me for awhile it will be because we are trying to get the 2nd edit. of Living in Dacca to the press as soon as possible in view of the fact that the editors will be leaving Dacca in a few months. We have been rewriting almost every page instead of just making minor corrections and we are only three. One of us had to be taken to Nepal so she would relax. The Oxford University Press manager here has offered to have his brother sell the book in his new modern-style shop and I think be the publisher. We are not sure what we will do. We want to be able to sell it in the hotels, too. This time it will be copyrighted.

[MFD letter to CGR 04/23/1967]

Living in Dacca is not off the press. Far from it. Dee Rutherford had to have an operation and I am really the only one who can keep at the printers daily which I have been doing for the past 2 wks, but things are moving too slowly. Maybe half will be done by the end of May, by which time, hopefully, Dee can take over. Otherwise we have failed and lost much time and effort.

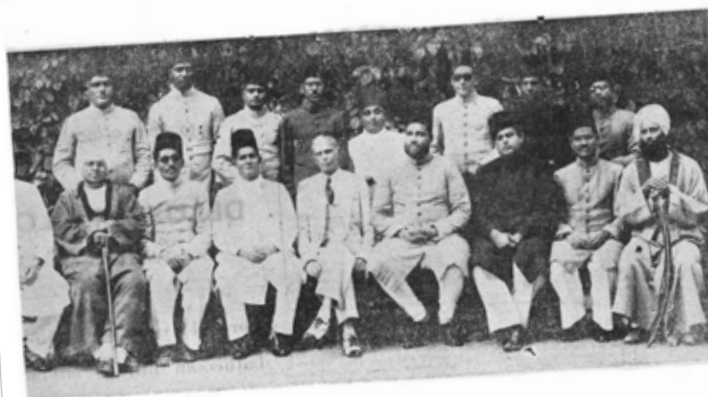
The Pakistan Co-operative Book Society Ltd.  
PRESS SECTION  
125, MOTUHEEL DACCA-2  
No. 5530  
To Mrs Mary Francis Dunham  
Date 2/9/65  
Please receive the following and return the duplicate and triplicate copies duly signed.  
Quantity Description  
Job no. 960 of 27/4/65  
10 copies of book  
Living in Dacca.  
Signature & Date  
2/8/65  
D. Dunham

The stresses of getting the second edition printed



*Dan's spoof "Guide to New Comers"*

SERVANTS



"You won't, of course, need all of the servants described above, but will discover which ones are suitable for your own needs."

MEDICAL FACILITIES



"Early registration means prompt service."

GARDENING



"Gardening in Dacca can be a dream come true."

SIGHTSEEING



"Reservations can be made for a six-seater camping car equipped with camping kits . . ."

THE HOME



"Your basha should be a place which you and your family can truly enjoy. . . . "Leave the door open for new neighbors and new impressions."

ENTERTAINING



"There are only a few things to remember about large scale entertaining in Dacca which differ from the art of entertaining anywhere."