



West meets East

Coping with a different culture

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As this presentation goes along, write down your own observations, comments
and things you desire clarified

Organization

- Not 'evidence based' but experience based
- Partially story, partially practical, minimal medicine
- Shaded by struggles and failures
 - 2 parts joy and fulfillment
 - 1 part heartache and frustration
- My examples are from Nepal
 - That is where I lived from 1993 to 2001
- Names may have been changed to protect the not all too innocent

Resources

- On Being A Missionary
 - Thomas Hale
- www.followtherabbi.com
- Pictures are personal, taken either by my wife, me, or friends

Take Home Message #1

- What you believe dictates how you think, how you act, and how you react
- This is your 'worldview'
- This affects you (and those you interact with) on a day to day basis, not only when you cross a border



Perspectives

- How does where we grow up affect our worldview?
- Example from Ray VanDerlaan's website, 'Follow The Rabbi'



Myself

- Citizen of the United States
 - Culture: Hellenistic
- Christian
 - Purpose and meaning for my life
 - Point of interpretation
 - Pride not in who I am but in whom I serve
 - Question of relationship along with action



Nepali

- Citizen: Hindu Kingdom
- Recently 'Secular State' with a new Constitution
- Culture: Nepali Hindu
 - Pride and identity is not in what I do or achieve, but to whose family I belong
 - Advancing my family/community
 - What I see is important to me



Practical Stuff

- Know where you are going
 - Also what countries you are traveling
- Get a Passport (6 months)
- Get a Visa
 - May not be as easy as you think
 - Know the rules (and they will change...)
- Immunizations
 - www.cdc.gov
 - International Travel Clinic at ECU
 - Dr. Dawd Siraj

Practical Stuff

- Whatever you do, do it as well as you can
- Learn a bit about your host country
 - Be ready to alter what you think you know
- Who am I responsible to?
- Bring back the trinkets
- Support includes:
 - Who do I write to?
 - Who will I talk with when I get back?
 - Setting up 'Lines of Communication'

While You Are There:

- Mindset
- Meals
- Illness
- Cultural differences
- Co-workers
- Language
- Coping



Mindset

- I am a guest
- Sometimes culture is not a matter of right or wrong but of taste or preference
- Can you put yourself in their shoes?
 - Not to accept their viewpoint but to understand
 - To understand you have to listen, listen, listen



Meals

- Right and left hands
- Try new foods, as you will have no choice
- Variety of foods, if available
- Cook it, Peel it, Forget it
- Water



Illness

- It is likely to happen
- GI, GI, GI
- If possible, find out where you can go for reliable treatment before you go
- Cook it, Peel it, Forget it
- Water



Cultural Differences

‘Abstract and Concrete’

- Time Oriented (Quick Decisions)
 - Event Oriented (Consensus)
- Crisis Planning
 - Deal With It As It Arises
- Task Oriented (qualification/performance)
 - Person Oriented (family/loss of face)
- Individualism
 - Community
- Distrust of Authority
 - Respect for Elders

Co-workers

- Most debilitating obstacles will be inter-personal relationships, most often with those of your own nationality/language
- For each strength, we also have a weakness
- We have to work with others who are imperfect
- Universal assumption: I do not bother anyone
 - We all have relationship problems

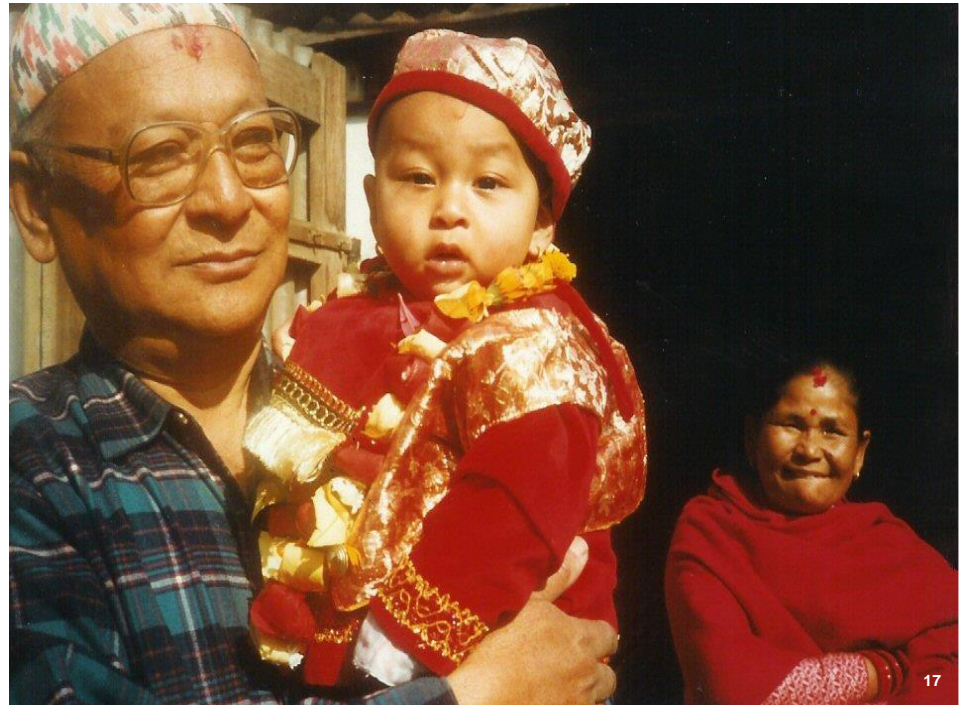
Language

- You will make mistakes
 - Try it anyways
- Remember your favorite faux pas



Coping

- Journal – writing or pictures
- Be willing to make mistakes
- Be Patient
- Reality Check: What is your motivation in going?
- Learn the Language, they love it!
- When all else fails, smile



Returning

- Debriefing
 - Who to talk with
 - What to talk about
 - When to debrief
- Formal and informal
- Culture Shock is real
 - Reverse Culture Shock is even realer
- Expect changes in your own viewpoints
 - Is my own home culture right or wrong?



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Clarifications?

