

**Subject:** Dispatches from the Subcontinent - Epilogue

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## **Glamping is Back!**

We had two days in Leh, which is an important city in the northern Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir (yes, that Kashmir). They have a funny tax on bikes rented from outside of J-K, so I said goodbye to Angus. Anu arranged J-K rentals for us. I got a white Enfield that I've named Hillary Swank. Her right side has been crashed and bent a bit, but the brakes are better than Angus.

On the second day Chuck was moved to our hotel and was able to join us for dinner. He was thrilled to be out of the noisy, un-air conditioned ward. With open windows there were flies and diesel fumes around the clock.

Thursday we rode to the famous Khardung La pass, which at 17,850' is the highest road anywhere (the Indians have been called upon their optimistic measure of 18,310' and adjusted accordingly). Incredibly, there was so much military and tourist traffic at the summit we did not stop, but proceeded on to the Nubra Valley. Our destination was the camping hamlet of Hunder, about 35 miles from the peaceful nation of Pakistan. Situated at the base of several mountains, our deluxe yurts had hardwood floors, a marble-tiled bathroom, and hot water from 6:00 to 8:00 am. One night Woody and I even watched the US Open highlights from our SatTV!



Friday was a free day in Hunder, so all of us except Stu (Delhi-belly) went to the nearby sand dunes for a camel riding experience. Naturally, Howard stuck to his riding mantra of: All the Gear, All the Time.



For our last night in Hunder, Anu took us to an enchanted resort for dinner. It had lots of swinging chairs and hammocks suspended from trees, soft lighting, fire pits, and manicured landscaping. After a while a couple guys started playing kettle drums accompanied by an irritating snake-charmer horn. Then out marched 7 women dressed in matching traditional festive gowns and hats. They sang some high pitched story with hand gestures and a slow motion shuffling dance. (If you remember those miniature singing twins from the Godzilla movies, these were pretty close). The 7 would sing and dance for a few minutes and then leave for a costume change and return. This went on at least nine times while we enjoyed the fire pit and a bit of Royal Stag. Finally, for their last performance we all joined their dance. When in India...

Saturday we retraced our path back to Leh, crossing Khardung La with photo time at the summit. The rest of the 50 miles to the hotel was safe and uneventful. Chuck was able to get a flight out before we returned, so we assumed he's doing better.

Anu arranged a farewell dinner and there were great toasts and testimonials all around. The last of the Royal Stag and my gin was passed around. We assembled a nice tip fund for the crew and we delighted Anu with a new waterproof motorcycle bag for his next tour.

Capt'n Mike travels with a Spot-Tracker, so here's a link to a map showing the 900 or so miles we covered.

<https://spotwalla.com/tripViewer.php?id=1aa2d5b722e5f1dc00&hoursPast=0&showAll=yes>



Glad I did it, glad it's over. There's no place like home



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