

**Subject:** Dispatches from the Subcontinent II

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### ***It's A Great Big World Here!***

After Rohtang Pass we back-tracked through Kullu and headed South and East to Sarahan in the Simla province of the Himshal Pradesh state, which borders The People's Republic of China. Going through the towns was bat-country with crazy lane-splitting, fighting huge TATA trucks for real estate (they always win), and slapping outstretched hands of uniformed school boys walking home. The last few miles up the very slick and steep, rocky two-track was a real test. My Enfield whom I've named Angus, chugged right up there with some moderate caning.

We've had three incidents so far, but none with injury. Bret had a sideswipe with a passenger car in some town. Although he didn't go down, he dented the motorist's door. The driver was yelling "Indicator, Indicator" while pointing at the car's flashing blinker. Bret apologized, they shook hands, and they went on their way. He had another incident that day when he went right to overtake a slower vehicle. There was an coming car he didn't expect, and in avoidance he moved further right, but ran out of space and landed in an embankment. Did I mention they drive on the left here? Sue had a similar experience and slid to a halt in the

mud with her Enfield resting on her leg. No injuries on these, and maybe good for all of us for that existential reality check.



Time to refuel and rest.

This tour is shaping up to have a great group of participants. One of my favorites is Howard from Anchorage. He is a US Army retired Lt. Colonel in the Military Police. He has done intelligence work and police training in Afghanistan and Iraq, and has broken up bar fights at military installations around the globe. Every time we come through a scary traffic encounter, he is laughing like a crazed lunatic. He is a big fella who lives larger than life. Best of all, he's on our side!

Lara from Portland rides pillion with her husband Jacob. She is a nurse practitioner who does frequent mission trips to Haiti as an Emergency Medical Technician. She says her job is putting white things on red things.

BJ is some kind of nomad who lived in Las Vegas until he quit his tech job and sold most of his possessions. He's got a storage unit somewhere with a bunch of bikes and other stuff. He's riding this trip and then touring the Golden Triangle in Southern India. After that

he's talking about Singapore and other Asian destinations until he needs to go back to work. A very funny guy I would probably not travel with.

Bret is a huge teddy-bear, firefighter from Salt Lake City. He apologized to all of us for his transgressions on the road and promised he would not put our tour in jeopardy again. Such a sweet guy.

Sue is a ceramic artist and single Mom of three teenagers in Phoenix. She started riding five years ago and this is her first overseas biking tour. She rides remarkably well, and her motto is: Artist, Teacher, Adventure Seeker.

Today we have made it to Kalpa, which is in the Spiti Valley of the Eastern edge of North India. They have us in a nice hotel surrounded by 20,000' peaks. Tomorrow we hope to get our permits to travel up to a mile from the border of Nepal.



Bill from Florida clowning around with the roadside vegetation.



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