

**dispatch #6 from ralph
delhi, january 24, 2006
delhi and bangalore**

DAY #31, Sunday, January 15, 2006

Tea, final packing, and departure before breakfast. Arrive early enough at the airport. You have to know this: get your bags xrayed before checking them, queue for the xray machine of your airline, take batteries out of your travel alarm. Air Sahara seemed a good airline and served a very nice meal at breakfast time, but very little space for your knees. Plane arrived Delhi domestic airport on time but had to circle 45 minutes due to fog. Guess they cannot afford instruments. Then, all the baggage came out but a dozen of us were bagless. Given another 30 minutes, all was set right. I exited and found Prasun waiting, reading on the hoof from J. D. Murray's *Mathematical Biology*. About 45 minutes drive to his house, very nice flat in a new block in the explosively growing South City, full of spectacular new high rise commercial buildings by modern architects. It was good to see Sue again, Charlie (now 16) was out taking a coaching class for the SAT. Much talk with Prasun about his current interests, tensorial reaction diffusion equations for chemical transport through the brain, tensorial imaging for centers of epilepsy, etc. Prasun told me that about 1000 pedestrians are killed every day in India while trying to cross a street. Arrived Aravali International Guest House around 4:30 pm. Confirmed worst fears. Lunch was huge so I skipped dinner, unpacked, called Ray, skipped doing my laundry, and went to bed.

DAY #32, Monday, January 16, 2006

Problems with the guest house room: no phone (also no proper reception desk) so Ray cannot call me; very bad water leak in the bathroom, its floor all wet; mattress poor; no room cleaning at all; difficult to do laundry due to dirty floor, wet bathroom, only one towel, etc; otherwise ok. Went for a walk and had breakfast in the guest house next door, not bad. Worked on my paper for the RKM conference proceedings. This is an exciting writing project as it includes a short autobiographical section on my life in Nainital in 1972.

Ram came for me at 1 pm driving his own car. Seemed somewhat out of sorts, too busy, like my visit was a burden, he has another visitor. Went to his office and discussed what he was required to do for me, he was afraid it would take too much money. I explained he would only pay for my room and board, no transportation. I had found out that room and board at the guest house was setting him back about \$12 per day for five days. He seemed ok with that, but I was beginning to wonder what I was doing here. Ram is regarded as one of India's authorities on nonlinear dynamics, and has a couple of current projects he wants to discuss with me. Considering this and the four lectures I am to give, this seems very unbalanced. Unsatisfactory accommodations and I have to walk with my heavy bag to lectures.

Then I worked on my email in his lab. As in Japan, it was difficult to connect to the internet through all the firewalls and proxies. I managed to catch up my email but could not send my Dispatch #5 to my Dispatch email list. Then my first lecture. Large and diverse audience, gave a new version of the history and significance of the chaos revolution, based on my book with Yoshi, *The Chaos Avant-garde*. The students seemed disappointed as they expected more math formulas. The power went out at the very beginning, We drank our tea until the lights came on again.

After the lecture Ram wanted to present one of his research projects but I begged off, being tired. After another hour of work at my laptop in his lab he brought me home, with a stop in the

market for his vegetables, where I bought batteries. Had dinner in the guest house next door, did my laundry, and went to bed early, 9 pm. I had fantasies of moving to a hotel in Delhi, such as the Yatri House, but decided to tough it out. In fact, I was getting used to my room, with all its faults.

DAY #33, Tuesday, January 17, 2006

Got the shower to work, had a nice circle walk before breakfast. The campus is almost wild, peacocks scream, same as home in Bonny Doon. Breakfast next door, will be fetched ca 10 am by one of Ram's grad students, Vivek, to try working at Ram's other lab, in the IT dept, which is just a ten-minute walk around the corner. This turned out to be excellent. Comfortable chair, high-speed connection, and power backup. The power went out several times, I just kept on sending email. The lecture was unusual fun, in that the audience of more than 50 students was keen, and asked many questions. My bad attitude for Delhi is moderating.

DAY #34, Wednesday, January 18, 2006

Much like yesterday, except that I felt ill with mild fever (it went away) and Prasun came for a visit a couple of hours before my lecture. Also, I was shocked to realize that I am getting used to this miserable excuse for a guest house. Nevertheless, I do hope never to see it again. Prasun brought me a loaf of bread and some mango jam, since I can barely face eating in the guest house any more. I called American Airlines to see if I might get on an earlier flight home. Yes, for a change fee of \$3700.

DAY #35, Thursday, January 19, 2006

Up early, tea brought to the room, I called Ray. She had found a way for me to return a few days early for an affordable fare. A knock on the door announced a phone call in the office. This was Shanta calling from Santa Cruz to ask me to call Ray. I was very cheered to have the end in sight, as five weeks is more than enough for a trip like this. I greatly miss home. Had bread and jam for lunch. My final lecture (and the whole four-lecture series) now seemed quite successful, an excellent audience, the first such so far. Dinner at Ram's house on campus, most pleasant dinner and talk and came to feel much closer to him. He seriously invited me back and I must say I that after I had gotten used to the guest house, discovered the KC market -- on campus near the north gate, where you can have a chinese meal and buy anything, get a haircut, and so on -- and learned the map of the campus, I felt more positive about returning next year.

DAY #36, Friday, January 20, 2006

Five weeks completed, five days to go, Today is the day for the move to Bangalore. Prasun called this morning and we planned a couple of collaborative projects. Packed, checked email, ordered taxi to the airport for 1:45 pm. Had lunch with Jim, my next door neighbor at the guest house. He is a professor of Social Services in The Hague, and has been visiting India for years. The taxi was on time, a brand new car !!! All according to Hoyle until the plane parked on the tarmac for two hours. Finally I arrived in Bangalore, Rebecca there to meet me, almost five hours since leaving her home in a taxi. We arrived at the National Institute for Advanced Studies (NIAS, knee-us) in time for a nice dinner with Tim in an outdoor patio, then on to check out the much reputed RRI Guest House. I had been awarded the very special "double green room" -- a suite actually -- after all my complaints from the Aravali International Guest House at JNU Delhi. It was superb, possibly a notch above the RKM in Calcutta. Has everything but internet access.

DAY #37, Saturday, January 21, 2006

Most pleasant breakfast at 8 am. Not a single mosquito. Feeling rather well. Hung out all day at NIAS, attended a lecture, fabulous lunch outdoors, long talk with PG on yoga nidra, consciousness studies, Indian music, modeling and simulation, digits of the golden ratio -- so many interests in common. He recalled his year in Santa Cruz, 1987-88, while I could remember rather little of it. How much happier he has been since leaving Washington State University Dept. of Mechanical Engineering, to move to NIAS about a decade ago. Here, wide ranging applications are respected and encouraged, chaos theory is OK, etc etc. We went to meet the current director of NIAS, K. Kasturirangan, an astrophysicist who had been instrumental in setting up the Indian space program, and is now an MP. I was surprised to be immediately drawn into a real conversation about my book, *Evolutionary Mind*, with Terence McKenna and Rupert Sheldrake. I had brought a copy for PG as a gift, nervous that it might be too far out, but he really liked it and was carrying it along as we went to meet the director. The idea emerged of my visiting in the summer, as the climate of Bangalore (and the whole Deccan plateau) is pleasant year-round, somewhat like Hawaii.

Tim's wife Rebecca arrived in a taxi to take me and PG's grownup son Vivek (he remembered meeting me when he was ten years old) to a wedding reception near the airport. Along the way, we saw an epic traffic jam, for which Bangalore is famous. Our clever taxi driver drove through back alleys to escape, but eventually got captured by a blind alley like a Venus Flycatcher, where the engine died, and we jumped ship like rats. We flagged down a three-wheeler, and after a Cook's tour of many more back alleys, we arrived at the reception. This adventure took about two hours. Worth every minute as the catered food was memorable. Maybe Bangalore cuisine is one of my favorites so far. Got home late, did my laundry in the luxurious laundry sink, one of the graces of the double green room, got to bed at midnight.

DAY #38, Sunday, January 22, 2006

Another nice breakfast at 8 am. This one began with the perfect papaya, served with a slice of lime. Then I succeeded in making the telephone work, and arranged my next flight. I was called to the kitchen several times for calls on the best working phone. Tim arrived with three students who had taken an overnight bus to ask our advice on graduate study in the US. Then Tim and I had lunch in the guest house. At desert time (splendid bananas) a new arrival came in and sat down for lunch. His accent was very unusual, and yet, seemed so very familiar. Perhaps Hungarian? In the course of conversation, it was revealed that he was a mathematician from the City University of New York (CUNY). I said I was a mathematician from UCSC. He said, "well then, you must know Ralph Abraham". Tim laughed and said, "yes, he knows him very well". I said, "yes that's me". He appeared dumbfounded. I asked his name. "Adam Koranyi". My turn to be struck dumb. Adam was one of my best friends 40 years ago at Princeton. Met again after all these years in Bangalore. What are the chances of that? In the evening, I enjoyed a traditional Karnataka puppet show. Not as outre at the Kathakali dance troupe from Kerala, but the drumming was similar, and particularly interesting.

DAY #39, Monday, January 23, 2006

Lunch with Mira at NIAS. She had been a yogi in the same Himalayan cave as the yogi Giri at the RMK Conference on Science and Consciousness a week ago, but quit to become graduate student in philosophy at NIAS. She gave further information on the vibration metaphor in the yogic traditions, and reminded me of the Yoga Vasishtha, a classic that Neemkaroli had given me to study in 1972. In the evening I was invited for dinner by PG Vaidya and his wife and son.

PG recalled being in my course on computational math, along with Adragon De Melo, who was about to become the 11-year old graduate of UCSC. Here I met three professors from the math department of the Indian Institute of Science (IISc). I packed to depart home on the morrow before going to sleep.

DAY #40 Tuesday, January 24, 2006

At breakfast, I got to speak again with Adam Koranyi, refreshing my memory of our days together in Berkeley and Princeton in the 1960s. Then to NIAS for my lecture on the history and significance of agent based models (ABM), for which I had prepared new material on the mathematical formalism. The audience was again small, but the most sophisticated, mathematically, so far. Then I visited the math department at IISc, which has a very large and impressive campus, including some 50 departments, of which math is one. NIAS occupies a small corner of the IISc campus. And at last, off to Bangalore airport, and the 36 hour journey home.

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