

Go Against the Flow

Description

Swimming upstream, or running (jogging really) *uphill* like we did today on our way back from the park. (Gotta get the old heart rate up!)

But as the thought came Wednesday morning, it was “going against the flow”. We were playing badminton when (as often happens) a young man comes up with a hopeful look. We offer to let him play, so Taunya usually gives up her racket first, then after a while playing with me (quite energetically — which gives me a run for my money), another one comes up, and I offer him my racket. They go at it with their youthful vigor, and after watching the show for a few minutes, I follow Taunya’s lead and go walking around the park (after all, we came to exercise, not to watch others exercise). She had a head start and I didn’t know which of the many paths she took, so I just trusted that we would meet up eventually, and so we did. Then we started walking together and noticed that going counterclockwise we were against the flow of foot traffic. Everyone else was walking clockwise around the outer path. It was noteworthy because we had just been talking about traditions, and how they can be good or bad.

We humans have a lot of inertia and subconscious (and conscious) resistance to change, especially when the change challenges tradition. “My Way” or “The Traditional Way” is THE way things ought to be, but sometimes that way turns out to be problematic.

The tradition here is to have the Sabbath on Saturday, the day most people have off. We have been in Nepal for 5 months and it still feels strange, and we still mistakenly say Sunday when we mean Saturday. It is so engrained!

A different example: On Wednesday we ate lunch at Le Sherpa, a very nice Kathmandu restaurant we’ve eaten at once before. How was this bucking tradition? New on their menu was braised beef steak, which I just couldn’t resist, so I ordered it! Tender like a pot roast, it was delicious! (Oh, how I miss a good burger!)



The Hindu tradition of not eating beef was what I was thinking about. I don't feel at all bound by it, because I was raised eating beef and it was not frowned on (except in excess)! So while this is not my tradition I can appreciate the fact that many others accept the bondage of it. With Tevye, we believe that good traditions keep our lives steady, and we are shaky without them. Religious and cultural traditions, like the holidays we celebrate (today marks the start of *Dashain* (pronounced "duh say" or "duh sigh", depending on who you ask), the two-week-long celebration of the triumph of good over evil in the Hindu tradition, about which there will be more to relate), are the most binding and stabilizing, but stability can be rigidity and rigidity can ossify, in which case growth and development cease.

Cultural appreciation outing of the week:

We visited the World Heritage Site in Kathmandu called Hanuman-Dhoka Durbar Square (or just Durbar Square). Home to dozens of Hindu temples and shrines to Lord Shiva and other Hindu deities, we only spent about 90 minutes there but could easily have spent 5 or 6 hours (maybe just in the Museum alone)!



Standing sentinel together



This huge stone image represents deity Shiva in his destructive manifestation



Deity with devotee



Serene strength



Heritage conservation work is ongoing, and is being funded by the Chinese, which I find interesting.



Another fascinating fact:

There is a tradition here of a living goddess (“Kumari”) who is considered to be an incarnation of the goddess Taleju. The brochure says her residence (the Kumari Ghar) “is a three storied quadrangle lavishly decorated with fine woodcarving. It is the third story of the building that is especially attractive with its five bay windows, in which the Kumari appears from time to time in the company of her guardian priestess to see and be seen by her admirers.” We got there at one of those times to see a chosen-when-three-now-nine-year-old girl (no photography allowed) who neither looked happy to see nor be seen by us curious spectators.



Waiting for a chance to see
the Kumari

(BTW, it was not just the two of us on this outing to Durbar Square. There's a story behind who accompanied us but I'll leave that for Taunya to tell.)

The most tradition-bucking example this week is finalizing the proposal for the Kevin Rohan Memorial Eco Foundation's new training facility. Traditionally, enthusiasm by our supervisory decision-makers for new building projects is rarely generated. We are definitely swimming upstream by pushing for it to be approved!

I'll close with the best example of going against the flow of our fallen world and its Telestial ways. With our Prophet leading the way, we will *Think Celestial*, and act accordingly. Pressing forward and upward "in the path of [our] duty" we enjoy the liberating and enlivening flow of *living waters*, drawn to, bound to, and stabilized by our dear Savior. May it increasingly be so for us all!

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