



Dear Friends and Students,

As we approach this Christmas and New Year, we want to share some Passage news from 2007 with our alumni, future students and friends around the world. Passage is now registered and headquartered in Centennial, CO. USA. Tina Rai is working in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Sam Chapin, Passage's co-founder is now based in Kolkatta, India.

Yanik Shrestha joined us as a coordinator. Yanik's cross cultural upbringing, warm, friendly nature and "can do" attitude is a great asset to Passage. Michael Smith, a Fulbright scholar is our coordinator for Tibet programs. He helped translate a meditation course for our students. They toured the ancient 8th century Samye Monastery and visited a politically notable nunnery in Lhasa. Some of the students trekked to the ancient meditation caves. The students attended the Dalai Lama's birthday celebration. They were guests at Vidhea's cousin's colorful traditional wedding. They were also treated to Mike's native southern Louisiana dish of spicy red and black beans, black-eyed peas with okra and rice! Our 2007 Personal Passage students included an intrepid student who lived in a Sherpa village for a number of weeks in winter, students who participated in holistic health fields, language and culture, trekking and volunteership. Some attained credit for their internship and others participated in the programs for their own interests. One of our alumni included a medical doctor from North Carolina. He recently completed an 8-week Custom program, and this is what he had to say: "...In travel, it is essential to have efficient local contacts who can make limited travel time most meaningful. Vidhea and Yanik have smoothed those rough travel edges in Nepal with grace, courtesy and efficiency ... Coming to a place like Nepal with its rich culture and history requires the profound local knowledge of Vidhea and the Passage organization."

We were thrilled to have some of our alumni visit us here in Kathmandu. Jacob (2002) is currently in Nepal visiting his parents, who are here as Fulbright scholars. Nick (2005) now attends a chef school in New England. Lee (2005) continues to pursue Buddhist studies in the US. Leah (2006) returned to do some volunteer work and deliver medical supplies. As part of their internship, many of our students participated in volunteer programs. These were so popular that we have introduced programs exclusively for volunteering for students and other adults, with side trips and treks for those interested. Passage has many associates working in various sectors of this field, including poverty alleviation, education, women's rights, democracy building, nutrition, medical care and refugees. We especially thank students who have given their time and dedication as volunteers to help those most in need. Among those students, Leah Bomesberger really stands out. Leah and her best friend and fellow Passage student Loy Maierhauser volunteered at the Sewa Kendra Leprosy Relief Center in 2006 during their Tibetan Summer program. After returning to the USA, they raised money to send back to the Center. In August 2007, Leah and two other friends returned to Nepal and India. They did some volunteer work and delivered medical supplies to Sewa Kendra and a clinic in Daragaon, (near Darjeeling,) located about 8 miles from Eastern Nepal in India.

Passage strives to instill in our students the commitment to develop knowledge and skills to further their personal growth and career goals. Passage aspires to teach our students to think globally and help make the world a better place.

Wishing you a beautiful holiday season and a new year of peace and happiness.

