

In front of the cathedral we saw the imposing monument containing the remains of Father Hopfenmueller. The Catholics in the area continue to revere his memory to this day. We also visited a Christian cemetery where we were able to see the graves of the other pioneers, both male and female. Back at our lodgings we discovered that a number of trees had fallen over in the storm and that we had to help with the problems that this caused. One tree was caught up in the power lines and could only be chopped down on the following day when the storm was over. Although the situation was rather dangerous, the students happily set about felling the trees that were causing most worries. Father Prasad, Head of the Study House, directed operations and said that he had seldom laughed so much, even though the manual work was very tiring for everyone involved.

In the afternoon we went to the Don Bosco Cultural Museum and this was followed by a genuine candle-lit supper, there being no electricity.

On the following day we were able to get a view of the wide-spreading town from Shillong Peak. Father Prasad managed to get us through to the viewing point without the usual passes. We then went to a Khasi village where there is a station run by Salvatorian sisters. They work in the school, visit the local families and teach the women how to sew and do embroidery. A chance meeting with four village children was both amusing and informative. On our return journey we stopped to have tea with the sisters in the town of Shillong.

That evening was special because we celebrated the Hindu Festival of Light (Diwali), which the Christians translate as 'Christ, the Light of the World', with sparklers and fireworks. Before we left Shillong we had the opportunity of walking through part of the town and picking up impressions of everyday life there.

We returned from Guwahati to Germany via Kolkata where we experienced the 'special' style of driving of one of the local taxi drivers and also got an impression of the Festival of Light in a huge city. Having survived the taxi ride, our return to the Eifel passed off without further incident.

We can look back on a wonderful and extremely interesting trip to a world which is totally unlike our own, and which has a lot to offer us. This visit was the first step on the road to cementing a genuine relationship between our Salvatorian schools. We would like to find means of intensifying our partnership with the Fathers in India. The first reactions to our visit, which we have already had from Nagaon, show that we are not alone in our wish to establish this partnership.

Father Heribert Kerschgens, SDS - Heinrich Latz