

An Interesting Story about Taking the Train on Republic Day in India

Sara Mazumdar [Horsfall]
January 26, 1976



Photo date and location unknown

I have an interesting story I don't think you could read about anywhere but from India. January 26 was Republic Day. To celebrate, public buildings were lighted so many people went to see them. Did I say many people? I think nearly all of Bombay went. If you look at the map you will see that Bombay is an island and the main city is on the tip of the island. So there is one way to go and one way to come...

We left for downtown around 10 p.m. Upon arriving at V.T. (comparable to Grand Central Station in New York City) there were millions of people—really! Every street was jammed with trucks all filled with people in the back maybe 100 in each truck. All were shouting etc. It was like a traffic jam after a big parade or baseball game. In addition to all the trucks there were people and people and people. All different sizes and shapes and dress but all going in the same direction as the trucks somewhere!

Suddenly it was 12 midnight. I checked the train schedule to see the last train back. It was at 1 a.m. so we took a bus. On the way it dawned on me that all those people walking were also going to be going back by train. Then I became nervous—wow—how could they all fit? It would be really miserable, closer than packed stuffed, with one person practically lying on the next. Really bad.

That's when your purse gets stolen, etc. So we rushed back and somehow we found a train and sat down waiting to go. It wasn't so bad. But our train never left. Finally, after dozing, along with all the other passengers in the compartments of the train we found out it was the wrong train...

Two other trains left, but we were not among the cheering passengers. We changed trains, but all the trains were full and waiting until morning. What a sight -- 10 trains full of people sleeping, singing, dancing, talking, whatever and waiting for morning. It was like rush hour at 3 a.m. We finally arrived home at 6:30. I guess some of us will never forget Republic Day.