

NAMASTE
GHANA'S STORY

Namaste Ghana's story

Keiron Galloway and Ghana

Keiron gratefully acknowledges the support of 26TEN and TCAL



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Namaste

Ghana's story

How can I from my seat remove
And leave my ever devoted home,
And the dear garden which I love,
The beauty of my native home?

George Moses Horton - "*The Southern Refugee*"

Dear Ghana, may you and your family be safe, well, and happy in
your new home



Ghana

Namaste. My name is Ghana. I was born in Bhutan in 1971. Bhutan is a very small country bordered by India, Nepal and Tibet.

Life in Bhutan

I grew up in Goshi, which is in the south of Bhutan.

We had twelve children in our family. I am the second eldest of six girls. I also have six brothers.

Two of my sisters died when they were young. They died when they became sick and there was no hospital or medicine to make them well. We did not live near a hospital or doctor.

I lived in a big house with a big garden. In our garden we grew rice, maize and vegetables.

I worked in our family garden every day. I did not go to school. Two of my brothers walked a long way each day to school but the rest of the family helped in the house and large garden tending rice and vegetables and fruit.



Ghana in **Hobart** 2014

When I was sixteen it was time for me to marry. In Bhutan it was the custom for your family to choose a suitable husband. You met the man chosen by your family and if you liked each other you married.

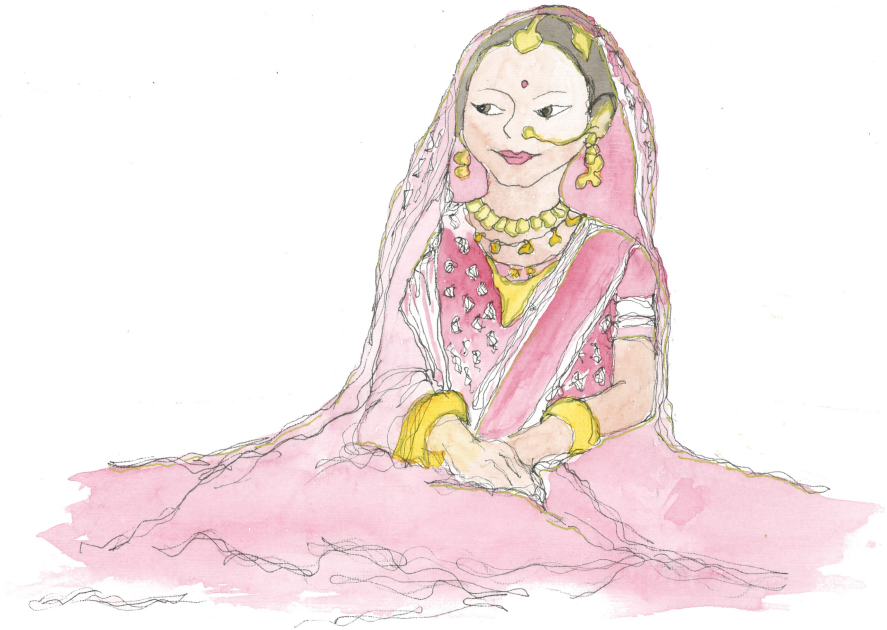
My husband, Chabila, came to my home to meet with me and my family. Chabi was twenty two years old. We liked each other and we married.

Chabi lived in a town a long way away called Tashiding. There were no buses or cars in our towns. Chabi walked for two hours to reach my home.

When Chabi and I married, I wore a beautiful new sari. It was pink. I also wore a special mela. This is a gold necklace worn by brides. I also wore bangles and earrings and rings. I was given many pieces of jewellery as wedding gifts.

We celebrated our wedding for two days. On the first day we were married. The second day was a big party. During the two days there were feasts of different kinds of food and drinks. There was also music made with guitars and drums. There was much singing and dancing.

Family and friends came to the wedding and brought gifts of pots, glassware, watches, jewellery, necklaces and clothes.



Ghana wore a beautiful pink sari when she married Chabi

After we married we lived with Chabi's family at their home in Tashiding. We shared a big house with Chabi's mother, two of his brothers and one sister-in-law. We lived with Chabi's family for four years.

During that time we would visit my family home. Sometimes we would stay for one day and sometimes longer.

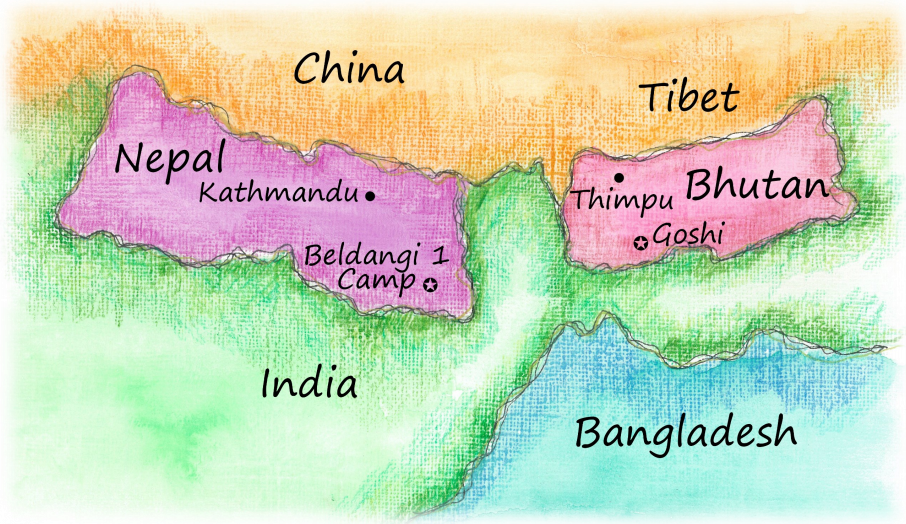
After four years our first son Khem was born. Khem is now twenty two years old.

From Bhutan to Nepal

When Khem was a baby we had to leave Bhutan because it was unsafe due to the political situation. We went to live in the Beldangi refugee camp in Eastern Nepal. Living at the camp was very hard. We lived in a tent for eighteen years.

The weather was sometimes very hot. We did not have good medicine or health care.

We were given rations of basic food like rice, oil and vegetables. As time went by and more people were living



Bhutan is a very small country, surrounded by ***India***, ***Nepal***, and ***Tibet***

in the camp our rations were reduced. We did not have a garden.

Some of the people at the camp were not good.

While we lived at the camp our son Shiva and our daughter Mina were born.

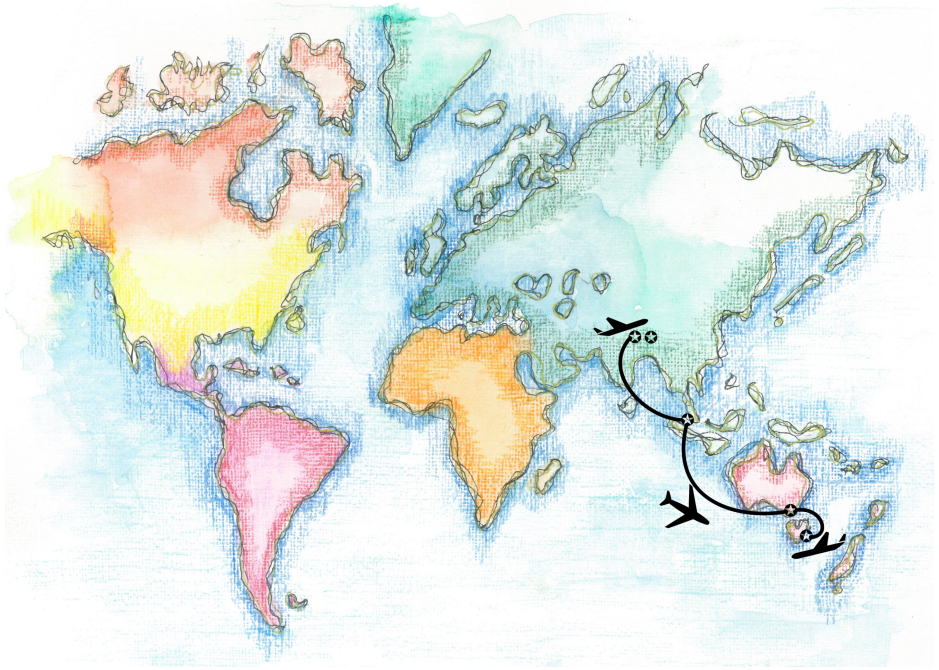
Nepal to Australia

In 2010 we left the camp in Nepal. We arrived in Australia on 22 April 2010.

It was a long trip. We travelled from the camp in Nepal to Kathmandu. Kathmandu is the capital city of Nepal. We stayed there at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) facility for five days. This is where we were prepared for the journey and our new lives.

We flew from Kathmandu to Singapore. We had never been on a plane before.

The IOM had given us special plastic bags to carry. When people from the IOM or volunteers at the airport saw this bag they knew that we were refugees and they helped us with our travel. They did not speak our language. They



*Ghana and her family took their first ever aeroplane flight from **Kathmandu** to **Singapore**. Then they flew via **Melbourne** to **Hobart***

smiled and were friendly. They took us by the arm and gave us food and helped us to get to our next plane.

From Singapore, we flew to Melbourne in Australia. When we arrived more people were waiting to help us. They took us to a room at the airport where there were cakes and biscuits and sandwiches for us to eat. There was a lot of food.

We had been travelling for a long time and we were very tired. We waited for several hours to catch our plane to Hobart. Chabi's brother Krishna met us at Hobart airport. We were so happy! There was hugging and kissing and laughing. It was very good.

Living in Hobart

When we reached Hobart there was a home waiting for us. It was filled with everything we needed. There was furniture in every room. There were beds and tables and couches. There was also everything we needed to cook with. There were pots and pans, plates and bowls and cutlery. We were very happy.



*Rural life in **Bhutan** 2013*

Khem and Shiva and Mina started school fifteen days after our arrival in Hobart. Mina started grade eight and Khem and Shiva went to college. None of the children spoke English so it was very hard for them. They had special English lessons at school. They made friends and started to play sports.

Mina's cousin also went to her school. It helped to know somebody. At first Mina didn't understand how to play basketball or netball. As she learned how to play she started to enjoy these games very much. Now Mina has started college.

After one year our youngest son Bashu was born. He was born in Hobart on 1 June 2011. He was born at the Royal Hobart Hospital at 3:15 in the afternoon. We caught a bus to the hospital and Bashu was born two days later. The doctors and nurses were very nice and very helpful. I stayed at the hospital and after four days Khem drove us home in the family car.

Our family were very happy to have a new baby and all of our children wanted to help care for and play with Bashu.

We lived in Chigwell for 20 months and then we moved to Glenorchy where we still live.



*Ghana and her family are happy living in **Hobart***

Chabi and I went to the Polytechnic in Hobart to learn English. We started in May 2010. We caught a bus to the Polytechnic. A volunteer helped us for the first two weeks.

We had two volunteers who helped us for one year after we arrived in Australia. Their names are Maria and Rick and they are married. They helped us catch the bus, find the Polytechnic and to find our classroom. They waited for us while we were at the Polytechnic and then helped us catch the bus home.

Rick and Maria first came to help us two weeks after we arrived in Australia. They showed us how to get to the supermarket, the bank and Centrelink. They showed us where and how to buy food. They helped us to find a doctor. They also helped us go to Mina's school.

Maria and Rick still come to our house to visit. They are our friends.

It has taken a long time to learn English. I still do not feel confident having a conversation. I can say my name and speak and understand a little English. When I go to the school or hospital I often have an interpreter.

Chabi does the shopping and goes to the supermarket and the fruit market. The children also help me to do day-to-



Left to right: Ghana, Chabi, Mina, Shiva, and Khem (seated)

Taken soon after their arrival in Hobart

day things where I need to speak English. The children also try to help me to learn English.

Bashu is learning to speak English and Nepali. Bashu calls me Mum.

The future

In the future Khem would like to be a mechanic and work with cars.

Shiva would like to work in IT. He wants to be a computer programmer.

Mina is now studying at college and she would like to be a pharmacist.

I wonder what Bashu will do when he is grown up! He will start school in two years. He will go to kindergarten near our house.

I like living in Australia. My family have opportunities to work and study. We are studying to take our citizenship tests. We are happy that our family are safe and we look forward to the future.



*Ghana's youngest son Bashu, born in **Hobart***

Resource list

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

www.iom.int

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

www.unhcr.org

Tasmanian Council for Adult Literacy (TCAL)

www.tcal.org.au

The Department of Education Tasmania

www.education.tas.gov.au

TasTAFE

www.tastafe.tas.edu.au

26TEN

www.26ten.tas.gov.au

Migrant Resource Centre

www.mrchobart.org.au

Refugee Council of Australia

www.refugeecouncil.org.au

Ghana's story is the first book
in the Namaste Book Series.

This book tells Ghana's story
of her journey from Bhutan to Australia.

