

Hi boys, girls and grownups,

Today, I've brought a "guided meditation" with me. It will take us to a village in Khasi Hills, India where there are many Unitarians, like us. This area is half a world away. (show map of the world). Can someone show me the United States? Can someone else show me India?

Please make yourselves as comfortable as possible. Close your eyes, and take a deep breath. Feel your body relax into the floor. Take another deep breath. As I read, imagine it is late spring in a village in the Khasi Hills. You're surrounded by mountains, lush green vegetation, streams and waterfalls.

It's early in the morning and you dress quickly in your school uniform and pack your lunch in your "tiffin", a small shiny metal container. As usual, you have rice and vegetables for lunch today. You're lucky because the school is in your village, just a short walk from your house. Some kids live much farther away, in villages that don't have schools. They have to walk a long way to get to school. Your village school does not go through high school. When you are old enough, you will live with your relatives in town and go to the high school there. Kids who don't have relatives in the city either live at the school or rent a room so they can go to high school.

In school, you practice reading and you take "copy", or notes, in your copybook. At night your parents will help you if there is something you don't understand. When the school year is over, you will have to pass a test to go on to the next "standard" or grade.

After school you run home to join friends in a game of football or cricket. Football is like American soccer and it's your favorite game. Today is particularly hot, so you and your friends go for a swim in the stream after your game. Your mother has asked you to help her with washing the clothes. Since you don't have running water in your house, you bring the clothes with you to the stream and wash them after your swim. Yesterday you had to help in the fields after school, which isn't nearly as much fun, so you're happy to be washing clothes and getting cooled off at the same time.

This was a good day and as you head back to your house from the stream, you notice all the beautiful flowers in bloom along the footpath and think about the weekend ahead. This Sunday, you and your friends are in charge of the early morning worship service for children. You always look forward to Sundays because you are with your friends all day: first at early morning worship, then in Sunday School classes where you learn about being a Unitarian, and then again at family worship in the afternoon and evening. Your family is hosting the home service this week; everyone will come to your house for a shared meal. Tomorrow you will work along side your mother cleaning the house and making it ready. You feel lucky to belong to such a tight-knit and happy Unitarian community.

Thank you for listening, and as they say in Khasi, "Khublei" or God Bless You.