



Pole, Kili



By Gopal Nemana, MD

The author, a retired cardiologist, sends this poem and the following letter after working with Cross Cultural Solutions, in Rau Village, Tanzania:

Vijaya and I were... near the Kilimanjaro range and volunteered there. The poverty, high HIV rate and the orphaned children there gripped me and my feelings. We complain a lot in our country but most of East Africa is going hungry. The Masai and other tribes still practice old rituals of circumcision and female genital mutilations and discourage their children from going to school.

The locals call Mt Kilimanjaro "Kili." The word "Pole" in the language of Kiswahili means "I am sorry"...

Oh, Angels of yonder land,
Do not descend,
With i Pods and digital cameras
To capture our plight and project
It to the rest of the world, blight abject .
Just bare your hand,
Reach out, touch, and say you understand
That our souls, albeit shrouded in ignorance,
Sing of a bygone era,
And are cherished by almighty God.
The red splashed landscape of Maasai Mara,
The colorful head dress of the Chagga woman,
The dust covered Maasai faces,
And the forgotten children of Upendo,
Share a common soul that longs for
Love and understanding, sadly lacking

In practiced handshakes from Heads of mighty Nations,

Or the glare of television and flashes of cameras.

Here cries Kili looking over

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