

NRs20 IRs12 U\$6

3

ISSN 1012-9804

NOV/DEC 1988

HIMAL

FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT



Dharma The Changing Landscape

FLOODS, EARTHQUAKES
MOUNTAIN MAGAZINES
GLORIOUS POTATO

HIGHWAY HAVOC
GUESS WHO'S IN FIJI
WILDLIFE WATCH

10 COVER

Dharma: Changing Landscape
Mountain Mystics

6 Who Flooded Bangladesh?

8 Bhutan Electrifies

9 Nepalis of Fiji

17 INTERVIEW

Mohan Man Saiju

22 PHOTO ESSAY

Tremor in the Hills

27 Super Potato



35 VIEWS

Selling Development

No to Highways

Marketing Everest

Leave Glaciers Alone

3 BRIEFS

19 REVIEWS

25 MEDIA

29 TECHNOLOGY

30 GRASSROOTS

31 ABSTRACTS

33 PARKS, WILDLIFE

34 CHILDCARE

40 FOLLOWUP

44 ABOMINABLY

YOURS

Acknowledgements

This issue was made possible by grants from The Panos Institute, and the Royal Norwegian Ministry for Development Cooperation. Thanks also to: Hari Bantabas, Gopal Chitrakar, Robert Cohen, Claus Euler, Padam S. Ghale, Khagendra Gharti Chhetri, Jeanne-Marie Gilbert, Douglas Hand, Kiran Raj Joshi, Mana Ranjan Josse, Louise Laheurte, Sanomaiya Maharjan, Bruce Owens, Adhiswar Padarath, Anita Pandey, Anjali and Mohan Peck, Miriam Poser, Laverne Prager, Shoba Rao, Linda Sachs, P. Sudhakaran, Kiran D. Tiwari, Bharat Upreti. *Himal* logo designed George McBean.

Cover Picture by **Kevin Bubriski** shows the pilgrimage mountain, "Chayanath" for the Hindus and "Yablang" for the Buddhists, at the confluence of the Mugu Karnali and Langu Khola in northwest Nepal.

महत्पुत्रस्यां दिशि देवतात्मा
हिमालयो नाम नगाधिराजः
पूर्वापरौ तोयनिधी वगाह्य
स्थितः पृथिव्या इव मानदण्डः

Edited and Published by
Kanak Mani Dixit
for Himal Associates

Contributors to this issue:

Rosha Bajracharya
Binod Bhattarai
Anil Chitrakar
Rupa Joshi
Prakash Khanal
Sudhindra Sharma
Sudhirendar Sharma
Rajiv Tiwari

Advisory Panel

M. Abdhullah, International Center for Integrated Mountain Development, Kathmandu
Adlai Amor, Magasasay Foundation, Manila
Anita Anand, Inter Press Service, Rome
Kinley Dorje, *Kuensel*, Thimpu
Harka Bahadur Gurung, Kathmandu
Corneille Jest, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris
Prem Shanker Jha, *Commerce*, New Delhi
Bharat D. Koirala, Nepal Press Institute, Kathmandu
Ram Chandra Malhotra, International Fund for Agricultural Development, Rome
Hemanta Mishra, King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation, Kathmandu
David Sassoon, *Unicef Action for Children*, New York
Kumar Khadga Bickram Shah, Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Kathmandu
Donald Shanor, Columbia University School of Journalism, New York
Ambica Shrestha, Nepal Business and Professional Women's Club, Kathmandu
B.G. Verghese, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi
Brian Welsh, *Development Forum*, New York

Himal (ISSN 1012-9804) is published six times per year by Himal Associates, P.O. Box 42, Lalitpur, Nepal. Tel: 5-23845 © Copyright 1988. Please turn to Page 42 for subscription and other information.



MAIL

VOICE FOR A REGION

The July issue of *Himal* tells with many voices the dilemma of a region and a people. It took Hillary years before he came closer to Tenzing Norgay. And I doubt if he ever really understood him. As the poor of the mountains descend to the plains to survive, and those on the plains head for the high country to make money, who is to say what is the right way? Your publication captures in print the dilemma and in so doing bears witness. So many earthly tragedies go unrecorded -- this one has a voice.

Christopher G. Trump
Toronto, Canada

I found *Himal* lively and easy to read. The two articles that appealed to me most were the cover story on highlanders on the move and the remarkable essay on portering. Your "Follow Up" section is outstanding and original. I have never seen another magazine with such a section. One of the successful sections of the West African magazine *Famille et Development*, is called "la question du lecteur", in which we reply to questions put by readers on any topic of general interest. Do you think that might work in your region?

Peace, strength and joy to the whole *Himal* team and congratulations for daring to get off the beaten track.

Pierre Pradervand
Geneva, Switzerland

The writer is a Swiss public education expert who founded the successful development magazine which he mentions.

I read *Himal* with great enthusiasm. It has the potential to be one of the best journals of South Asia. It should be able to play a crucial role in familiarizing political leaders and policy makers with vital ecological and development issues.

Kabir Mohammad
Dhaka University, Dhaka

AFTER OZONE, RADON?

Thank you for the warning on depleting ozone over the Himalaya and what it might mean for the mountain people's health. I know of no other publication that would do an article of that depth for our region. For that very reason, I would suggest that you probe into another odorless gas that might hold a threat for public health in the Himalaya. It is the gas radon. In the United States, radon has been put on the same footing as cigarettes and toxic wastes. In many countries, it is now acknowledged as the second most important cause of lung cancer, after smoking. The gas "bubbles up" from ancient uranium bearing rocks and can seep into houses through cracks in the floor and walls. Who knows how many thousands are affected in our region by radon attacks on their lungs. Someone should study this threat.

Narayan Prasad
Kathmandu



NOT BY RHETORIC ALONE

Though it is difficult to fault Shekhar Pathak for championing the anti-alcohol agitations in the hill districts of Uttar Pradesh, his report betrayed the same morality which he identified as the weakness of earlier movements. During campaigns, it is customary to hear slogans such as "give us employment, not highs", but I expected the large

number of educated professionals who participated in the anti-alcohol drives to reach a more conclusive consensus on possible alternatives.

It is not enough to criticize others for making no attempt to "link the liquor trade to the underlying economic and political questions" when the writer too can be charged with the same fault. The historical review presented by Pathak does not substitute for analyses he demands from others. What does he mean by a "more fundamental restructuring of hill society"? If this demand were to be properly qualified, I would imagine that a revolutionary vanguard exists in the Uttar Pradesh hills.

And does not Pathak's demand for a "viable cottage industry" to replace the liquor trade constitute one more "simplistic solution" in which he has expressed little faith. And does it not militate against his arguments for "fundamental" changes in hill society? Is there even one example of a cottage industry functioning as it should in the hills?

One of the inherent perils of issue-based activism is that it is long on rhetoric but often falls far short of comprehensive analysis. I hope that *Himal* will appeal to its readers' minds, not their hearts.

Viraat Swaroop
New Delhi

On my passage through the Central Himalaya in India -- from Kashmir to Himachal Pradesh and then onto pilgrim-ridden Uttarkhand -- I found that the liquor business was flourishing in Himachal but was exasperated that I could not buy even a pint of brandy in either Garhwal or Kumaon. I was told this was because neither meat nor liquor is sold in the routes going to the Hindu religious shrines of Badrinath and Kedarnath.

Which is why when a friend from Dehra Dun told me that *Himal* says the entire Uttarkhand is sinking into alcoholism, I found it a bit hard to

swallow. After a long hike from Pindari Glacier to Gwaldam which overlooks the Trishul peak, we felt like celebrating our return. Not only could we not find any inebriate in Gwaldam but the locals sent us off on a wild booze chase to Ranikhet, where too we remained "dry", as it's called in India. Will you oblige us by giving directions to any grog shop between Dun and Nainital?

Tom Duncan
Camp Mussorie

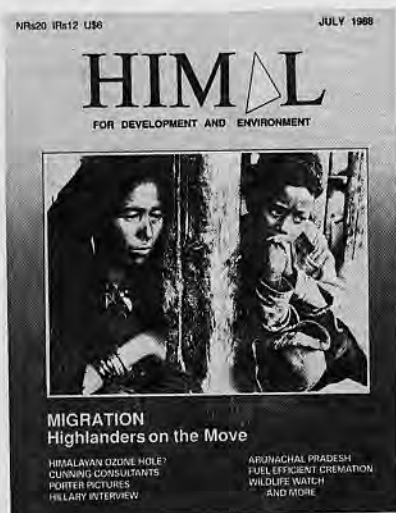
KHUMBU AND HILLARY

I read with interest your interview with Sir Edmund Hillary. Considering the many years of his involvement with the Khumbu region, I feel that he has to bear some of the blame for the developments within that region. Any person who has observed the evolution that has taken place within Khumbu during the past two decades has to admit that the negative aspects of the "tourist boom" affect the entire region and not just Namche as observed by Sir Edmund.

It is quite disheartening to see the complete mutilation of Tengboche Monastery, which was at one time considered the scenic highlight of the entire region. What used to be a beautiful meadow with a couple of chortens and the monastery complex has been turned into a commercial enterprise with lodges, inns, latrines, barbed wire fences, wall-to-wall tents and tourists' garbage littering the surroundings.

I have enclosed a 1979 picture with a view of the monastery that is history now (*below*). A well-meaning woman from Alberta, Canada, has constructed a Sherpa museum smack in front of the monastery so that only its roof is now visible from this classic angle.

Michael R. Rojik
Nepal School Projects
Kabhre Palanchok



DIDN'T SAY IT

The July issue of *Himal* was very informative and readable, and I wish the magazine great success. However, I must note that the "Briefs" section misquotes me as attributing much of the criticism of the Tropical Forestry Action Plan to a "vocal minority with a narrow point of view". I have never made such a statement, and it certainly does not represent my views on the subject. All viewpoints on the complex issue surrounding the continued destruction of tropical forests are valid.

Peter Hazelwood
World Resources Institute
Washington DC, United States

HIMAL's report was accurate, but we do agree that all viewpoints must be considered.

RETURNING MIGRANTS

The cover story on migration missed one important aspect, that of the returning migrant. It is taken for granted that this process of re-entering and adjusting to old lifestyles is painless. It is not.

Individuals and families make compromises in order to find room back in the societies of their birth. The retirees from the British Army, for example, after a long absence, come back with great hope and optimism. Within a few years, they find themselves back where they started before they left for Dharan or Hong Kong. Their savings are depleted; their knowledge and skills erode; they cannot find a social role matching their new identity. Their children often face even greater trauma as they are forced into roles their parents tried so hard to leave behind.

Today, traditional societies of South Asia are facing a new breed of returnees, those coming back after many years of stay in western countries. Though few in number and existing at the higher end of the economic scale, these "foreign returns" face essentially the same problem as their rural cousins. Having gained professional and economic success abroad, these Nepalis or Indians want to share their skills and resources with their mother societies. These societies, however, seem to be demanding the same kind of submission and compromise as they did with the traditional returnees of the past.

Many returning migrants get the cold shoulder from their peer groups and the bureaucracy. Jobs are hard to find. This condition could be brushed aside as the frustrations of the privileged but the problem is genuine. Institutions have to be more receptive and provide

appropriate roles to migrants who will otherwise live out their productive years in alien environments benefitting other societies.

Jagadish C. Pokharel
Boston, United States

SOUND FAMILIAR?

With reference to your article on plummeting standards in Nepal's higher education, I reproduce a news item from *Africa News*, if only to reassure you that we are not alone.

"The higher education boom, which lasted for over two decades and saw a 20-fold increase in the numbers of Africans attending university, is over. The universities face overcrowding, poor teaching, impoverished research and frustrated, embittered students and staff. To alleviate the problem, the World Bank recommends that universities cut the number of students and faculty, curtail academic programs that don't directly contribute to development, charge more university costs to students, tighten admission standards, close some campuses, and merge duplicate programmes."

N.P. Khadka
Lalitpur

BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME

Himal's objectives cannot be questioned but its presentation must be fine-tuned or it will collapse like so many other similar publications of high purpose. As a student of journalism, I feel *Himal* has already attained that elusive editorial balance which allows it to cover serious topics in a readable fashion. However, this editorial maturity is not matched in the layout department. The general get-up is unlovely. It seems to be a deliberate policy of the editors to look "sober", supposedly because the magazine covers development and environment. But if you can countenance a column written by the abominable snowman on the last page, which is a welcome step, surely the magazine can be made to look more "jazzy", even in black and white.

Murlidhar Sharma
Lucknow

We ask readers to use the "Mail" section to comment, criticize or add to information appearing in this magazine. Letters should be concise, to the point and are subject to editing.

BRIEFS

A Gulmarg For Garhwal

The Uttar Pradesh government has abandoned plans to develop the Gangotri area into a tourist resort because of protests led by religious leaders who consider the source of the Ganges as too sacred to be polluted by pleasure seeking skiers. However, this has not deterred the Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam (GMVN) from going ahead with its own ambitious plans to develop the village of Auli into a resort.

Auli is near Joshimath on the way to Badrinath. It has ski slopes of more than 15 km which are said to rival Europe's finest gradients. The Indian Army's ski training outfit in Auli has helped instruct the increasing number of tourists arriving here from Bombay, Delhi and Calcutta, and there are plans for an aerial ropeway. Tourist cottages are already dotting the landscape.

The government's intent has been to use Joshimath's natural beauty to spin income for GMVN, a corporation actually meant to develop agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry in the Garhwal hills. Instead, GMVN has increasingly become a tourism-promotion venture.

Critics of the GMVN's drift worry that the tourists' conspicuous consumption will demoralize the inhabitants, who live in the poorest of U.P.'s eight hill districts. They fear that instead of income generating opportunities opening up to them, local youngsters are likely to end up in the service sector, as drivers, waiters and busboys. -- **Rajiv Tiwari**

Mountain Mud All Over

It used to be thought that eroded Himalayan soil was creating low islands off the Bangladeshi coast. It turns out that the process has been

going on for 20 million years and that Himalayan mud actually covers half the Indian Ocean floor.

German geologists studying core samples from the seabed south of Sri Lanka found that they contain fine Himalayan sediments pushed out from the Ganga and Brahmaputra deltas millions of years ago, which traversed the Bay of Bengal and settled in the ocean depths. They found layer after layer of Himalayan sediments over the hard basalt which forms the underwater Central Indian Ridge, reports UNI.

It was thought that the Himalaya, at 10 million years, is the youngest mountain range in the world. But the German scientists, basing their study on sediment samples, now think the mountains are twice as old. It might have been 20 million years ago that "India" collided with the Eurasian landmass, leading to the Himalayan uplift, they say.

TOURISM Bhutan Goes One Way, Nepal Goes Another

In October, Thimpu announced that it will make it even more expensive for tourists in the new year. Bhutan is strengthening its "high cost, low density" tourism policy in order to limit the number of visitors to 2400 a year. In stark contrast, Kathmandu has drawn up a tourism development plan to quadruple tourist arrivals from 250,000 presently to one million by the turn of the century.

Bhutani officials, who pride themselves for "having learnt from Nepal's mistakes" in almost everything from ecology to fish farming, say they want to make tourism pay its rich dividends with minimum cultural dislocation. Since 1980, Thimpu has



Wangdiphadrung in focus.

charged tour companies a fee of US\$ 130 per person per day, or a daily trekking fee of US\$ 95. As of 1 January tour group rates for the peak tourist season, April to October, will be US\$ 250 for tourists and US\$130 for trekkers.

The equation is different for planners of the troubled Nepali economy. Touringst presently bring in US\$ 51 million annually. Multiplying the number by four is a tantalizing exercise. Nepal plans not only to bring in more visitors, but also to earn more per visitor. This will mean having them stay longer than the popular three day "Kathmandu and mountain flight" packaged circuit. The tourism plan calls for developing more resorts and selling locally produced goods and services. As things stand, Nepal imports virtually everything the tourist needs, except firewood, which burns brightly in tourist campfires amongst denuded hillsides.



Low water at Pashupati.

Water For A Thirsty Valley

Early in the century, so the story goes, a Rana Prime Minister toyed with the idea of bringing water to Kathmandu from the holy lakes of Gosainkunda, but gave it up as a pipe dream. A British engineering firm has now suggested making the idea a reality.

Actually, the source would not be Gosainkunda, but the Melamchi Khola, which waters the adjacent Sherpa valley of Helambu. In a "pre-feasibility report" to UNDP, the British engineering firm Binnie Partners proposes a gravity tunnel 2.5 metre in diameter which would burrow 27 km under the mountains and deliver the water at Sundarjal in the north of Kathmandu Valley. The intake would be near the main Helambu village of Tarkeghyang.

Why is extra water needed at all? Because the Bagmati, Kathmandu's main watercourse, is spring-fed and does not carry enough volume to support the Valley's exploding population. Every source of surface and underground water has been tapped and what is available is dirty and dangerously polluted with organic and industrial effluent. The water supply presently available from all sources is 65 MI a day, while the demand is 140 MI, and expected to rise to 285 MI by the year 2011.

That the capital of a country with such abundant

water can be left so dry is a geographic curiosity. The raging torrents of the snowfed Trisuli and Indrawati rivers, just outside the Valley perimeter, are of little use because they are 1000 metres and 700 metres lower, and the pumping costs would be prohibitive.

The British engineers say they studied 20 alternative schemes before settling on Melamchi. At US\$ 157 million (1987 prices), their project would ultimately provide a maximum flow of 5 cubic metres per second, which should supply Kathmandu's water needs well into the middle of the next century.

The engineers propose a water treatment plant at Sundarijal and want to release water to augment the flow at the holy ghats of Pashupatinath, which runs dry for months every year. They also promise "guaranteed irrigation water" for Kathmandu farmers during the critical transplanting period for rice paddy.

If the project is approved, construction could start as early as 1992, and snowmelt river waters would reach Kathmandu taps in 1997.

Asan: A Model For Others?

Who could have believed it? Just when everyone had given Kathmandu up as one fearful garbage dump, the Asan market right in the middle of the congested city has become the role model for cleanliness. For years, the merchants of this commercial thoroughfare had waited for what is known as the Solid Waste Management and Resource Mobilization Centre to come to pick up the trash. A few months ago, they finally woke up and organized.

The renaissance of Bhotahity, the heart of Asan, began with Gyanendra Tuladhar, proprietor of the venerable Nepal Wool House. Increasingly disgusted with the

ever growing pile of garbage outside his store, which stank to the heavens and ruined business, Tuladhar called together a 17 member cleanup committee which promptly began work.



No more dumping at Asan.

The cleaning up campaign has not been easy. For one thing, there are too many leaders and no followers, says Tuladhar, but the merchants have seen that a cleaner street enhances business and they are committed not to slide back into the rubbish pile. The committee raises NRs. 6000 every month from the 130 shops in Bhotahity for the clean up. It has lined the street with red buckets into which goes the household garbage. These are picked up thrice daily by two sweepers. The committee also makes sure that the Solid Waste Management Centre sends in a waste container and water tank on alternate days.

Today, Bhotahity is sparkling clean even on rainy days, when sticky slush and filth used to be the rule. Watching Bhotahity spruce up, other neighbourhoods too have been jostled out of their "let the Nagar Panchayat do it" attitude. Litterbugs are intimidated with pointed stares. Youths keep tabs on upper floor windows to catch whoever empties the baby's bathwater onto the marriage procession on the street. Asan's cleanup is catching.

— Rosha Bajracharya



Gets New Chief

He was born in Venice, is Italian by nationality, a resident of France, and has worked extensively in the Chilean Andes. Francesco di Castri has taken a rather roundabout route to get to Kathmandu. He arrives in spring to replace Englishman Colin Rosser as Director of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).

Following a six month search, finalists from nine countries were interviewed before ICIMOD's Board settled on di Castri, who is 58. The Centre's newsletter cites di Castri, presently head of a scientific research centre in France, for his "exceptional scientific experience and strong commitment to international scientific cooperation".

Di Castri has been closely associated with many of the major international environmental programmes of the past two decades, including the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment and UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme, which he led from 1971 to 1984. His particular speciality has been developing the study of "comparative ecology" and the applicability of research results from one continent to another. His published works, including 11 books, focus on environmental research and management, specifically soil ecology, use of arid lands and bioclimatology.

Di Castri's scientific background and his experience in Latin America and the Mediterranean region contrast sharply with that of Rosser, a sociologist and former officer of the British Gurkhas, who started his academic career as a researcher among the Newars east of Kathmandu. Will this difference mean a dissimilar approach?

The Board will want the new Director to lead ICIMOD towards its goal of becoming

the principal international centre for integrated mountain development. That goal has remained elusive because of the distance between mountain regions, the resistance of researchers outside ICIMOD, the often ambiguous nature of what is or is not "integrated mountain development", lack of funding, and the political dynamics among the Centre's six regional member countries. These are the challenges for di Castri.

No Money For Glaciers

Everyone's talking about Himalayan glaciers this year, but there is a need to put the money where the mouth is. While some "experts" are proposing to melt Himalayan snow and ice to provide more irrigation water for the plains (see "Viewpoint" section), others are worried that these great rivers of ice, which cover 17 percent of the Himalaya, are receding. Preliminary research by the International Mountain Society indicates an urgent need to monitor glaciers in order to prevent catastrophic glacier dam bursts like the ones that have occurred recently in Nepal.

Unfortunately, as the need for research grows, a vital Government of India programme to measure, monitor and understand glaciers is facing a financial crunch. Because the Seventh Plan (1985-1990) provides only IRs 20 lakhs for the programme, it has not been able to carry out even basic activity, such as glacial inventory and mapping, and there is a severe shortage of people to carry out research.

The programme, coordinated by the Ministry of Science and Technology, involves five institutions: the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology to examine glacier movement; the Physical Research Laboratory to study "ice dynamics" and analysis of chemical pollution and trace elements; the Space Applications Centre will

provide expertise on remote sensing; the Defence Terrain Research Laboratory will study glacial and subglacial land forms; and the Jawaharlal Nehru University will conduct hydrological research on a selected glacier. All this, if somebody finds more money than what has been allocated so far. — C.P. Jayalakshmi, EEG

Asia Disarmament Centre In Kathmandu

The United Nations has chosen Kathmandu as the base for its Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia. The new office will open early in the new year, but without an international staff. The financially strapped United Nations has been unable to find the money for the Centre and has therefore decided to "make full utilization of the existing infrastructure in Kathmandu with a view to full employment of the available resources". That is UN jargon for "there's no money to hire".

When staffed, the new Centre is expected to study the complex matters relating to arms control and disarmament in Asia. It could have a role in coordinating disarmament efforts in Asia, from the two Koreas through the ASEAN region and South

Asia to the Persian Gulf. Nepal's envoy to the United Nations, Jaya Pratap Rana, who was instrumental in bringing the Centre to Kathmandu, said that in view of the financial difficulties of the United Nations system, the Centre will be totally dependent upon voluntary contributions by states and interested organizations.

Cleaning Up Kangshung

Up in the Kangshung Glacier, on the remote east side of Mount Everest, there is nobody to see you if you dirty the snowfields and campsites. Which is why the members of Everest '88 expedition are to be congratulated for their clean hands while on the mountain. The team was led by Robert Anderson and included Norbu Tenzing (Tenzing Norgay's son), Paul Teare, Stephen Venables and Ed Webster.

For nearly four months in and around Everest, the members scrupulously resisted the temptation to hack down juniper bushes for campfires. Climber Venables, who was the only one to reach the summit, had teammates scurrying after candy wrappers discarded along the trail.

As they broke camp, the climbing party not only carried away their own garbage but also cleaned up after two earlier expeditions that had messed up the base camp area.

Mountain Institute In Almora

The Govind Ballabh Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development was finally established in the fall at Kosi Katarmal, in Almora. It is to serve as a centre for research, education and public awareness, and will prepare "holistic development strategies" for the Indian Himalaya.

According to the Indian Minister for Environment and Forests, Z.R. Ansari, the Institute has IRs. 300 lakhs to spend for the period of the Seventh Plan (1985 to 1990). It is expected to hire 60 professional staff. Its "core programmes" will deal with resource management, sustainable development of rural ecosystems, ecological economics, environmental impact analysis and biological diversity.

Prof. P.S. Ramakrishnan, the ecologist from the North Eastern Hill University in Shillong, is the Institute's first Director. He spoke recently with Sudhirendar Sharma.

SS: What are the Institute's first priorities?

PSR: We hope to use existing information to identify critical areas for research and provide the perspective so vital for development activity.

SS: How will you tackle existing controversies such as

Tehri Dam and Limestone quarrying in Dehra Dun?

PSR: The exploitation of resources cannot be stopped, but development must be made compatible with the environment. Environmentalists often talk emotionally. The Institute will base its work on sound research.



Ramakrishnan

SS: How will you actually begin work?

PSR: After choosing a priority subject for research, we will identify the location and the collaborating institution. The Institute's scientist will supervise the project so that there is constant monitoring.

SS: How do you expect to attract scientists to your corner of Almora?

PSR: We are looking for commitment and capacity to contribute. We hope to develop credibility fairly soon so as to attract the best.

SS: There are already so many institutes active in the Himalaya. Where will this one fit in?

PSR: Our mandate is different from those of others, but we are not an apex body. The Institute will work in close collaboration with other agencies, both governmental and non governmental.

The Ginkgo Roundup

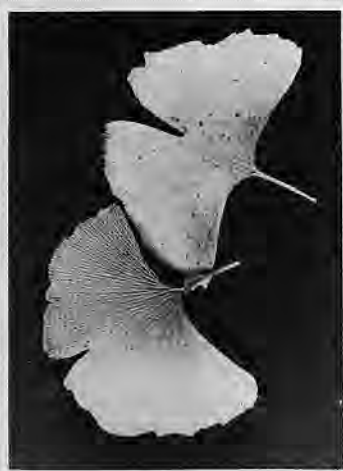
The ginkgo is the oldest species of tree in the world. Dinosaurs munched on its fan shaped leaves 180 million years ago. A ginkgo, standing alone amongst a clump of deodar trees was spotted recently in the Himachal town of Manali. One of these "living fossils" is also said to grow on the grounds of the Forest Research Institute in Dehra Dun.

The *Ginkgo Biloba* is native to Japan and China and is valued in western countries as a graceful addition to elegant city boulevards. The hardy qualities that have allowed it to survive for eons, also make it adaptable to modern city life. The ginkgo is exceptionally tolerant of smoke, temperature extremes and drought, and is resistant to insects and disease.

Obviously, the ginkgo should be the tree of choice for Himalayan towns, rather than the eucalyptus, the

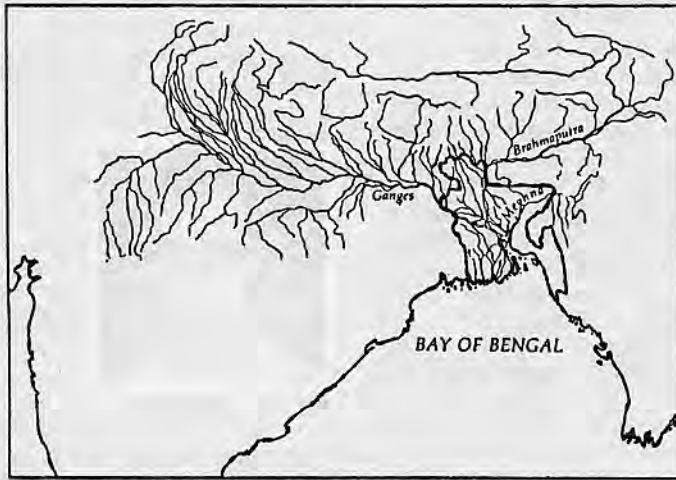
Australian import currently in fashion which grows fast, dies quickly and looks emaciated throughout its short life. A Ginkgo tree grows slowly, but its luxuriant leaves and branches provide beauty and shade for as long as 1000 years.

Himal will print all confirmed sightings of the ginkgo. In the next issue, we follow the odyssey of the three leaf clover, which came to Nepal in a flowerpot in the 1920s.



P. Sudhakar

BANGLADESH FLOODS: WHO TAKES THE BLAME?



The international concern was immediate and genuine, although of short duration. While the Bangladeshi Government struggled to cope with what Foreign Minister Humayun Rasheed Choudhury noted was "the worst flood in memory", the United Nations called for a unified international response and for appropriate measures to "assess, predict, prevent and mitigate" floods.

Experts at the Floods Information Centre in Dhaka began to get concerned towards the last week of August because of heavy rainfall in Bangladesh and in the catchment areas of the 23 tributaries of the Brahmaputra, Ganges and Meghna. On 31 August, flood levels rose dramatically and vast sections of the country went underwater. By 14 September, the flood was at peak, submerging 80,000 sq km of low-lying land, two thirds of the entire country.

The losses were staggering, far worse than the cyclone of 1985 and the floods of 1987. Thousands died. Millions of hectares of crops were damaged. Nearly 45 million people, over 40 percent of the population, lost something: a house, land, crops or cattle. This included 1.2 million homes, one hundred thousand cattle, 61,483 kilometres of roads, and 8,393 schools. The quantifiable loss alone was put at a staggering US\$ 2 billion.

Even as the rescue and rehabilitation efforts began, the search was on for the cause of the floods and a possible remedy. And the Himalayan region loomed large on both counts. Was the land erosion in the hills of Nepal and India to blame, or was this a freak once every 70 year occurrence, against which there was no protection? Should there be high dams built in Nepal and India, a link canal to connect the Brahmaputra to the Ganges, more levees, or vigorous reforestation of the high slopes?

The need for an answer to these questions was urgent. The big fear was that the media would soon lose interest and that the administrators would find it politically expedient to lie low and forget the emergency.

Diplomatic Offensive

President Hussain Mohammed Ershad went on a diplomatic offensive through Kathmandu, New Delhi and Thimphu, urging joint action. Not successful in getting Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to agree to a regional approach, Ershad opted for second best, which was to set up task forces with each of the three countries. Nepal and Bangladesh, in deciding to jointly assess measures for multi-purpose water schemes, agreed that any durable solution would have to involve all the countries of the region.

While the cumulative work of the separate task forces cannot substitute for a regional study, it might provide enough reliable crossborder data to begin work on a viable flood warning system. But beyond that lies the need for a regional flood control strategy, which is where the boat of regional diplomacy runs aground. Uncomfortable questions of national sovereignty arise and the fuzzy laws governing the use of international rivers are of little help.

Apportioning Blame

Generally, during an average monsoon, over a fifth of Bangladesh, 29,000 sq km, gets submerged. To what extent was this year's greater flood a natural phenomena and how much was it manmade, up river?

There is general agreement that deforestation in the Himalaya, caused by peasants in search of fuelwood and fodder or by timber merchants, has robbed the slopes of vegetation, increasing rainwater runoff. But opinion is divided among climatologists and ecologists and soil scientists as to whether that additional runoff is significant enough to explain increased flooding. "Deforestation is the obvious culprit for those who like pat answers,"

says an Indian environmentalist, "but questions of the natural elements, the environment and human impact are complex by nature and blame not so easily apportioned."

However, the complexity of the subject did not hold back some Dhaka newspapers, which carried a rash of "blame the mountain" commentaries. "Bangladesh is being destroyed by its neighbours," said B.M. Abbas, a former minister for water resources, whose idea it was to build 12 large reservoirs in the Himalaya, most of them in Nepal. International experts such as M'Hamed Essaafi, the United Nations' Disaster Relief Coordinator, also seemed to have little doubt. He blamed the floods on deforestation upriver, as did Tom Elhaut, director of projects in Bangladesh for the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Elhaut predicted that catastrophic flooding was bound to recur because of the destruction of the Nepali forests.

"It is not that simple. Deforestation has increased water in the rivers, for sure, but not enough is known to blame Bangladesh's woes entirely on Himalayan peasants," says a Nepali ecologist. In his view, the Nepali Government had set the stage over the past decade by overstating the deforestation scenario in order to receive more foreign aid, "and now the world is pointing its finger at us".

All Soil, No Rock

Among those who think that the case of deforestation is being oversold is Steve Bricchieri-Columbi, a British consultant with many years of experience in Bangladesh. He says the real focus should be on planning long term river and flood control strategies. Others say poor land and water management within Bangladesh is exacerbating the problem and that flood control programmes have been on the desperate "mend and patch variety".

To begin with, flood control measures are inherently limited in a country that is a huge, flat flood-plain just a few feet above sea level. Since Bangladesh is all soil and almost no rock, it is difficult to build embankments and dikes that can withstand a river in spate. But even the embankment schemes that exist have been built in relative isolation and there is no integrated national approach, according to the London based Panos Institute. Diversion of rivers like the Gumti, Khowai, Muhuri and Feni have raised the flood level through increased siltation.



David Sassoon

Although the rivers originating in Bhutan, India, Nepal and Tibet did exacerbate matters, some climatologists believe that the main cause of the disaster was torrential rains within Bangladesh itself, reports the *New York Times*. Others are reaching beyond the region to propose a link between floods in the Sub-continent and changes in the global climate brought about by the "greenhouse effect". A few even think that the climatic phenomenon known as *El Nino* in the Pacific Ocean off Chile could be precipitating "active" monsoons in South Asia.

Experts also say that embankments and other construction along river banks constrict flow. Water then backs up upstream, inundating low-lying land. Another reason why floods might seem more critical now than before is that national governments assign a monetary value whenever a calamity occurs. The reporting by regional and international media is also better than a even a decade ago.

In the absence of regional data, it is not even clear which river is more to blame, the Ganges or the Brahmaputra. While Bangladesh has proposed high dams to block the tributaries of the Ganges, the *Economist* reports that the real culprit might be the Brahmaputra, whose average flow is said to be more than that of the Ganges and the Indus put together.

Silt, Dams and Tremors

Ironically, says a Save the Children Fund advisor, for all the devastation this past summer, Bangladesh will probably reap a bumper crop in the spring because of the life giving silt brought down by the rivers. In fact, there is fear that storage dams, while holding back floods, could also retain enough silt to deprive the populous Ganges-Brahmaputra delta of its annual

replenishment of nutrients, as has happened in Egypt's Nile delta below the Aswan Dam.

The international development agencies think they have an answer to the flood problem and want to get started. The World Bank says it is ready to conduct feasibility studies for a dam and barrage system once the regional countries agree to cooperate. According to an estimate, such a system would cost US\$ 24 billion. Some have suggested a cooperative arrangement such as exists between countries of the flood prone Mekong delta. Foreign

Minister Choudhury, who has called for a water authority among the five regional countries, recently spoke of getting technical help from the Netherlands and West Germany, "which have cooperated successfully in taming the Rhine".

Cost and Benefit

As early as 1982, noted Nepali geographer Harka Gurung made a plea to leave the Himalaya in its natural state. "Building of large dams is questionable owing to the excessive silting of the rivers and the high seismicity of the region," he said. The tremors that rocked eastern Nepal and Bihar state in late August acted as a reminder of the unstable Himalayan geology. Some experts point to the Idukki reservoir in Kerala state, which has reportedly induced frequent earthquakes since it was constructed in 1978.

Amidst all the talk of expensive dams and canals, the question of cost and benefit is paramount in the mind of Peter Witham, a UNDP official who served in Bangladesh during the 1987 flood and has also worked in Nepal. "You have to ask to what extent to invest in preventive measures for a disaster that might happen once every 70 years," he told a reporter.

Dipak Gyawali, a Nepali engineer and economist, deplors the exclusive focus on "technical fixes". He says, "This almost reflex action thinking, which equates flood protection with engineering works, has prevented other perhaps more sustainable approaches from being considered. Non engineering solutions, both biological and social, must be explored to see if better results can be obtained."

All the proposed infrastructures for flood control would be highly visible measures. But if *deforestation* is the problem, then the answer perhaps is *reforestation*. Unlike big dams, barrages, canals and artificial reservoirs to name national personalities after, reforestation has no glamour to it. Its impact is not immediate and it does not require international credit in the billions. Reforestation is difficult and "messy" because it involves people and politics at the grassroots. Ultimately, it involves turning the hill economy around. It is always easier to build a dam. Δ



UNICEF

CHUKHA ELECTRIFIES

By the time Indian President R. Venkataraman inaugurated Bhutan's massive Chukha Hydro Electric Project on 21 October, it had already become the nation's leading employer and exporter. The project commissioned its first generator in September 1986 and the fourth and last one in August this year, generating a total of 336 megawatts. Thimphu has kept five percent of this output for itself and sold the rest through high tension lines to power-hungry industries in Bihar, West Bengal, Sikkim and as far south as Orissa.

With Chukha, the Bhutanese economy has taken a leap forward. The abundant electricity that will see Thimphu well into the next century also allows its planners to implement their environmental policies more confidently. The Bhutanese economy has taken a leap forward.

Cementing A Friendship

The inauguration of Chukha was notable in other respects as well. Its sheer size and logistical complexity dwarfed all other public works projects in Bhutan combined. It was also a milestone in the regional co-operation, with an amicable deal worked out to share the renewable hydropower resource for the benefit of both countries.

At the inauguration, President Venkataraman said the Project symbolized the firm friendship between India and Bhutan, first forged between King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in the 1950s.

According to HM King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, Indo-Bhutan relations had reached "a state of full maturity" with the power project. The national weekly, Kuensel stated that as the largest and most successful venture between the two countries, Chukha cemented India's role as a partner in Bhutan's development.

The Ultimate Industrial Exercise

It was in the early 1960s that plans were formulated to try and exploit the abundant energy of Bhutan's rivers, which drop precipitously from the Himalayan glaciers to the Duars of Assam. Indian surveyors calculated that the Wangchu (Thimphu River) had a potential of 420 megawatts over its length. The Chukha Project agreement was signed in New Delhi in 1974, and construction began almost immediately through loans and grants provided by the Indian Government, which ultimately amounted to IRs. 2440 million.

The project became the ultimate industrial experience for Bhutan as a giant complex took shape in Chukha valley, which is about half way on the national highway between the border town of Phuntsholing and the capital. The size and variety of trucks and equipment that plied the roads were a source of constant amazement to the local people. In a country which has never had large public works, the project had 10,605 workers at one stage in 1983. Today, with 2,400 workers in its payroll, Chukha remains the largest single employer after the Government.

The highway to the capital looks down upon the town where the Chukha

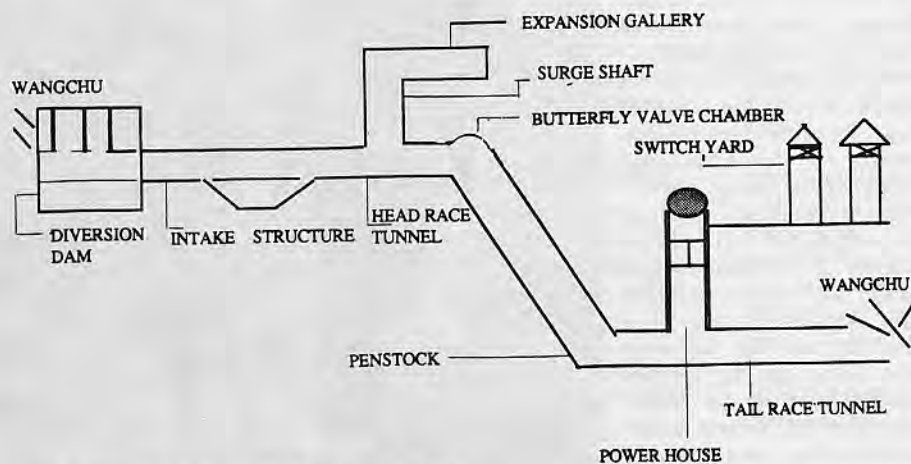
staff lives, but there is nothing else to show for the project. That is because the entire power generation complex is dug under the 3000 feet of mountain. The little township is the domain of Karnataka-born G.N.Rao, 66, general manager of the project. Before starting work at Chukha in 1977 as superintending engineer, Rao worked in building the Farakka Barrage. It is with some amount of parental pride that he shows the visitor around the project.

Music To The Ears

A dam holds back the water of the Wangchu with four tall gates and channels it through a 6.5 km headrace tunnel. This water is fed into two steel-lined pressure shafts which drop 1,500 feet at a 50 degree angle, gaining the furious momentum required to turn the four turbines at 300 rpm so that they produce 84 megawatts each.

The powerhouse under 3000 feet of mountain and contains the only elevator in Bhutan. It is adorned with religious motifs and paintings of the Buddha and Tara. At the far end, a dragon reaches for the ceiling. Only the metal domes of the turbines are visible, with flashing lights and more religious motifs on their side. Only the deep vibrations on the concrete floor indicate the electricity being generated below.

Bhutan earned Nu 280 million from power export in 1987 (Nu 1 = IRs 1). By the end of August, the figure for 1988 was already Nu 470 million, due to Chukha. The vibrations in the powerhouse floor was music for any planner's ears. Δ



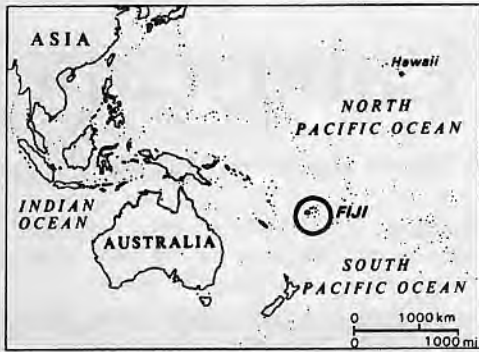
CHUKHA UNDERGROUND HYDEL PLANT

Kuensel

Chukha's Statistics

River: Wangchu
 Catchment Area: 6,854 sq km
 Length of Dam: 105 m
 Dam Gate Height: 12 m
 Pressure Shafts: 528 m, 50 degrees
 Powerhouse Cavern:
 141x25x38 m
 4 Generating Units:
 84 MW each
 Transmission:
 Two 220 KV lines to Birpara, India, and one to Thimphu. One 66 KV line each to Thimphu and Chukha.

FOCUS ON KAVANAGASAU



United Nations

jungle warfare training. During their off duty hours, these Nepali soldiers head for Kavanagasau to enjoy the unfailingly warm hospitality, Nepali talk and perhaps a sip of rum in the middle of the Pacific.

The Nepalis of Fiji tend to be clannish despite considerable intermarriage with women from the Indian community on the island. The fact is that there were no Nepali women in the early days, only men came as labourers. The Nepali identity has nevertheless remained intact and traditional festivals continue to be observed. They have strictly segregated themselves from the native Fijians, feeling a greater kinship for their counterparts in the Indian population. Lately, particularly among third generation immigrants, the distinction between the Nepalis and Indians has begun to fade.

Originally from Uttar Pradesh, the Indians of Fiji also came to the islands as immigrant workers, although in larger numbers, around the same time as the Nepali influx. Over the years, they have prospered and since independence in 1970 they have played a dominant role in the political and professional life of Fiji.

During the past two years, native Fijians, fearful of losing their political power, moved to curb what they perceived as the Indian march towards political supremacy. The native Fijians saw the Indians as a privileged group enjoying life at their expense. In May 1987, the Fijian military ousted an Indian backed civilian government. They conducted another coup in September of that year and remain in power today. Indian professionals began to emigrate to Australia, Canada and other Western countries, taking with them their expertise and capital.

The Nepalis of Kavanagasau, traditionally uninvolved in local politics and less visible than the Indian community, at first were not affected by the unsettled situation. Nonetheless, the recent upheaval devastated the country's economy to such an extent that the Nepalis have suffered as much as other islanders. Although they have for the most part maintained a very separate identity, in the perceptions of the native Fijians, there is not much difference between a Nepali and an Indian. Hopefully, as the Republic stabilizes, ethnic hostility will diminish and the peaceful life down among the palms will resume for Nepalis. △

One Person's Journey

The accompanying article on Nepalis in Fiji is based on information provided by Charolette Ram Padarath, a 70 year old Fijian of Nepali descent. She was an English teacher near Suva, until retirement a few years ago, when she immigrated to Vancouver, Canada.

Mrs. Padarath's father, Ratan Bahadur Singh, was a soldier in the Nepali army at the turn of the century. He heard that the British were recruiting labourers in Uttar Pradesh for the cane plantations in the Pacific. The Rana Prime Minister had asked the British not to recruit Nepalis. Ratan Bahadur left disguised as a *sadhu* and changed his name so as not to give himself away.

The immigrant workers left by ship from Calcutta. Conditions on board were subhuman and many died during the passage to Fiji. When they arrived, the island was far from the paradise that the British had promised. Life was hard and the rewards few.

Ratan Bahadur married a lady from U.P. They had five children, two boys and three girls, including Mrs. Padarath, who was born Shiva Kumari. Disillusioned with life in Fiji, Ratan Bahadur returned to the Sub-continent with his two sons, Dal Bahadur and Nar Bahadur, promising to be back.

Little is known about what happened to them. The family heard that Ratan Bahadur had died during the time of Partition, as he was making his way on foot back to Nepal.

Mrs. Padarath's parents and siblings are all dead, as is her husband, who was a headmaster in Fiji. Her two daughters, both nurses, live close by in Vancouver and her two sons in Australia and New York. She keeps busy as a volunteer with the elderly and campaigned for John Turner, the Liberal candidate for Prime Minister who lost to Brian Mulroney in November. △



Mrs. Padarath with younger daughter.

Nepali's living under palm trees and close to long white sand beaches? A contradiction in terms, one would think. Yet 10,000 Nepalis live on an island in the Pacific, Viti Levu, the largest island in the Republic of Fiji.

Nepalis immigrated to Fiji in large numbers around the turn of the century. Fiji was then a British Crown Colony and the English overlords were looking to populate their farflung empire with subject people slated for work on the plantations and in menial labour. Although a few Nepalis came as free settlers, most were part of the "girmit", the indentured labour system. At the time, however, the authorities in Kathmandu ruled against the recruitment of its citizens for such purposes. Those who wanted to join the British work force had to do so clandestinely.

The Nepalis settled first in Suva, the capital of Fiji, and then moved around the island to Navua, another large town, and eventually to Kavanagasau, now home of the largest Nepali community in the islands.

It is not difficult to understand why the trail ended where it did. Situated in the "Sand dunes of Singatoka", Kavanagasau is the one place in Viti Levu with mist-shrouded hills and valleys, landscape guaranteed to appeal to anyone homesick for the Himalayan foothills. Ironically, like much of the Nepalis' home country, Kavanagasau is not favoured with large tracts of productive land. Here they lease farmland from the native Fijians and grow sugarcane and vegetables for the market. Most children end their studies after getting a basic high school education and the majority follow in their parent's footsteps as peasant farmers.

Far from their country of origin, the Fiji-born Nepalis hold on to their way of life. They celebrate Dasain with particular gusto and keep their khukuris sharp. The only contact they have with the old country is through Hong Kong based Gurkhas who come to Fiji for

Dharma in a Changing Landscape

By Sudhindra Sharma and Kanak Mani Dixit

In the chill of the evening by the banks of the Bhagirathi River near Uttar Kashi, the stars are beginning to show as Mahant Shankar Puri raises his voice in high pitched praise of Shiva, lord of the snows. It is time for *arati*, to mark the moment of cosmic transition from day to night.

Three hundred and fifty kilometres to the east, a pilgrim is on his way from the bazaar town of Doti for *darshan* with the eminent sage who lives in the high and isolated Khaptad plateau of west Nepal. He quickens his pace to get through the dense jungle.

A further 300 kilometres east of Khaptad Baba's ashram, Shanta Maya Majarjan, 45, is returning home to the Kathmandu suburb of Thankot in a crowded evening bus. She has just been to Nagthan, where she propitiated the serpent deity that, she says, has been responsible for the severe pain in her chest and arms.

Hira Lal Tamang, 27 from the village of Khopasi east of Kathmandu, is engaged in another kind of daily religious ritual. He is assisting his elder brother, a fully initiated *jhankri*, invoke the patron deity Mahadev to exorcise the demons that are causing a young girl to suffer from severe pneumonia.

Further east still, it is already dark in Tengpoche monastery in the heart of Khumbu. Just a tint of orange remains at the top of Mount Everest, known to the Sherpa monks here as Chomolongma, Mother Goddess of the World. The abbot of the monastery leads monks through sonorous prayers beneath electric lights, installed only this past year.

As night falls all across the ragged Himalayan landscape, when the mind turns, even if momentarily, to the eternal, millions of highlanders in the remote *gumbas* and bustling towns and sacred precincts are given to their particular variety of religious observance. The sadhu, the pilgrim, the housewife, the *jhankri's* helper, all outwardly hold differing beliefs. Depending on locality, caste, ethnicity, upbringing and vocation, the practice ranges from the asceticism of the hermit through the philosophical



Pundit in Doti, West Nepal.

erudition of the abbot to the unquestioning ritualism of Mrs. Maharjan. Perhaps the one thing these diverse practitioners of faith hold in common is that they all inhabit the Himalaya, doubtless the most revered region in the world, regarded by more people as holy than are the Alps, the Andes and the Rocky mountains of North America put together.

As the world approaches the Third Millennium, some would ask, why this unchanging belief on mysticism and religion? The holy lunar surface has been "defiled" by the footprints of astronauts and the sacred summits by mountaineers' crampons, and yet religion continues to rule over the Himalaya. What relevance do religious percepts and practices gathered over thousands of years have for a people who have been asked to sign on to the latest religion, "development", whose very premise is material progress? Can mystic beliefs be exploited for the purposes of social and economic advancement or are they to be discarded as hangovers from the past? Or should religion and ritual simply be left alone, unchanneled, because they should

not be "used" for any purpose?

These questions elicit as many differing responses as there are sects of *sadhus* in the sub-continent, for religion is inseparable from daily life in the Himalaya, and every attempt at changing that life affects someone's spiritual being as well.

Holy Slopes

As the closest links between the earth and the heavens, mountains have always attracted awe and reverence. The mysterious ridges and inaccessible summits became religious icons for societies all over the world. The Vikings of Scandinavia regarded Helgafell Mountain of Iceland with reverence just as Ik tribesmen of Uganda today revere Mount Murongole. Moses took delivery of the Ten Commandments atop Sinai. The Hopis of North America, the Maoris of New Zealand and the people of the Andes all regard mountains as the abode of ancestral spirits. In Japan, members of the Shugendū sect climb sacred peaks as purification exercises. For the Hellenes, Mount Olympus was a realm of divine bliss, inhabited by Zeus,



Apollo, Aphrodite and other gods and goddesses.

While the Greek gods have long since been declared dead, the deities in the Himalaya continue to receive the homage of the millions. Shiva, deity of destruction, the original yogi, sits meditating atop Mount Kailash. The gods of the Sherpas reside in Khumbila, a relatively minor peak which nevertheless towers over the Khumbu. The Lepchas of Sikkim trace their mythical origins to a primordial couple born from the glaciers of Kanchenjunga. The pre Buddhist Bon nature worshipers believed that some of the peaks were places of spirits who were worldly beings. It is said that Padma Sambhava, or Guru Rimpoche, came to Tibet in 749 and converted the mountain deities, who then became the protectors of the Tibetan Buddhists.

Perhaps the Himalaya is the most revered simply because it is so big. It is the longest and the highest range, and its jagged precipices protrude dramatically from the Indo-Gangetic basin. These highlands would have not been as defined if it had been a slow-rising plateau. Mount Kailash, holiest mountain of the Hindus and the Buddhists, is the archetypical sacred mountain because it stands alone and rises so majestically. It is for the Himalaya what the Himalaya is for the rest of the world.

The Puranic progenitors of Hindu mythology even created a mythical mountain to be the epicenter of the cosmos -- Mount Meru. With such

reverence for the mountains, enthusiasm for the Himalaya can be catching. "Like the important nerve centres of the body which contain latent energy, the Himalaya mountains are vital geographical energy centres of the globe," says Chos-Kyi-Jyima, head of the Ka Nying Shedrup Ling Monastery in Baudha, outside Kathmandu.

Yogis, Tantriks and Pundits

In their isolation, the Himalayan people developed and preserved the rich tradition of the past. Says John K. Locke, who has studied Newar Buddhism for over a decade, "Across the Himalaya, you have pockets of people who have retained cultures that have disappeared or become blurred elsewhere. For instance, the Newar community of Kathmandu is really the only surviving community practicing Indian Buddhism. The same is true of the tantrik Hindu cults that have been preserved here."

The system of mental and physical control known as yoga, though not practiced by the populace at large, is an underlying element of Himalayan mysticism. Khaptad Baba is said to practice yoga prescribed by Patanjali. Tibetan Buddhism follows more closely the system of yoga laid down by Naropa, a twelfth century tantrik. The tradition of tantricism has deep roots in Himalayan Buddhism and Hinduism.

"Although tantra may conjure up apprehension in the minds of most people because of its association with eroticism and sexual imagery, it is

basically a yoga," says Locke. "It is a combination of various techniques to achieve the yogic goal, which is the union of *Shiva Shakti* (Consciousness Energy)."

The yogic and tantrik initiation is not reserved to the ascetics; among the few laymen who have reached deep into these traditions is Sridhar Rana, a teacher at a tourism training institute in Kathmandu. He began experimenting with the Hindu Tantra two decades ago and completed the prescribed series of mantra in eight years. For some of these, he spent nights on end at the cremation grounds. Rana then progressed to what is known as the "Witness Exercise" of the Vedantic school. He devoted the next six years to Zen Buddhism. For the past three years, he has been practicing *dzog chen*, an advanced form of Tibetan tantra.

While Rana might be the exemplary seeker, there are few like him among his urban peers in the Himalaya, and fewer still among the millions whose chief concern is to get through another day. In the mainstream Hindu tradition, especially among the emerging middle class, few engage in yoga or tantra themselves. Instead, the village pundit, the shaman and the lama step in, officiating for them to a multitude of deities and spirits. Rather than personally practice the deeper rituals, the majority of the population "practice religion by proxy", says a Nepali sociologist.

Across much of the Himalayan midhills, the brahman holds sway. His function is to represent the Hindu pantheon, to man and the local temple, to direct all ceremonies and celebrations, and to collect *dakshina*. The pundit often plays an important role as an anchor of the community, dispensing advice on secular matter, dealing with governmental authority, and reading and writing letters. At the same time he is also the guardian of superstitions and myths, and of the caste system that pervades the Hindu hill society.

Solace in Festivals

For the mountain peasant, his life bound to the elements and the environment, religion is a source of inner strength. With negligible cash income, the hard work in the fields, inadequate access to health facilities, and the constant threat of disease and death, the peasant has little to fall back upon in difficult



Mark Feishenthal

Prasad at Matsendranath.



times. The kind of religion practiced by the Himalayan peasant has its psychological and sociological roots in his lifestyle, say some social scientists. It is the spiritual equivalent to the social security that exists in the western countries.



United Nations

Temple steps, Kathmandu.

G.S. Nepali, Professor of Sociology at Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu, says, "Religion as practiced by the Himalayan peasant is not other-worldly but this-worldly. Life is hard and he is not so much concerned with salvation, communion with God or life after death as he is with solving the day to day problems like hunger, misery and sickness. He therefore worships this god to get rid of certain diseases, that god for timely rain, another god to ensure a bountiful harvest, and so on. It is a completely utilitarian concept of God. Religion is a tool for adjusting to the environment."

Adjusting to his own environment with nary a qualm is Asha Ratna Tuladhar, 32, from Gabahal in the town of Patan. Tuladhar is not quite sure whether he is Buddhist or Hindu but that does not keep him from actively participating in the festival of Rato Matsendranath. The festival is one of the most joyous collective activities in the Himalaya, in which the heavy, ungainly *rath* of the deity known also to the Newars as Bungadya and Karunamaya is hauled through the narrow lanes of Patan. At the end of the festival, Tuladhar and his family light up butter lamps and participate in *bhoj*, in which everyone eats and drinks to the celebration of life. "This is all in the worship of Karunamaya," confides Tuladhar, "He gives us timely rain and good harvest."

Nepali anthropologist Dipak Raj Pant is among those social scientists who feel that festivals are essential because

they renew the life of a community. They believe that festivals, religious ceremonies and rituals do not have a mere mystical function, but also fulfill many other needs of people within a community. A traditional *mela*, for example, not only marks some religious event, but also provides opportunity for entertainment, exchange of information, commerce and even match making.

The Rationalist Approach

This view is not shared by journalist and political analyst Hiranya Lal Shrestha, who professes atheism. "Religious outlook is detrimental to modernization, too many resources are being spent on festivals. It has become impossible to disentangle religion from superstition," says Shrestha. He is of the opinion that Nepal should be declared a secular state "to ensure the involvement of the various ethnic groups in national development."

Those who agree with Shrestha say that religion has been one of the millstones around the neck of the nation, lulling the mind of the populace with promises of an afterlife and diffusing productivity by channeling its energies towards sacrifice, ritual, and self denial. They point to religion related rituals such as ostentatious weddings, which are often carried out by taking out loans, usually with precious land as collateral.

Others see religion as playing a subtler and useful role. "This is not the Shangri La that so many westerners would like to see," says a Tribhuvan University professor who asked not to

be named. "The peasants live harsh lives because of their poverty. But do they have a choice? Absolutely not. So at least grant them their religion, their festivals and their beliefs. Without religion, you would need a hundred thousand barefoot psychiatrists just to keep the nation standing."



Heaven can wait.

Anthropologist Pant disagrees with the notion that a religious outlook is detrimental to modernization. He points out that in Europe, the Protestant Ethic helped pave the way to capitalism in the 16th and 17th Centuries. "In India, the process of religious awakening initiated during the 19th Century by Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Tilak and continued by Gandhi in the 20th Century brought about not only decolonization and independence, but also development."

As for the call for secularism, Pant says it has "no meaning among the Hindus because their religion, if

properly understood, is actually a conglomerate of ideas, values, norms, customs and beliefs fabricated in a chaotic manner. In fact this chaotic cosmos is Hinduism's most unique feature." Regarding the claim that festivals lead to waste of precious resources, Pant responds, "A single political celebration like



David Sassoon

Which way to Shangri La?



Gopal Chitrakar

The Shankaracharya at the world Hindu conference.

Independence Day consumes more national resources than several festivals put together."

Aum, the Common Mantra

While defending the role of religious practices in the life of the Himalayan people, anthropologist Pant is concerned of the tendency to impose a simple generic form of Hinduism on the people. "This homogenization is injurious to the traditions of national integration," he says, adding that each community must have freedom to practice religion in its own way.

Such worries do not trouble the proponents of *sanatan dharma*, who are glad to see practices such as tantricism and other "divisive" practices fall by the mountain trail. The more orthodox back to the Veda proponents are gaining ground in the mainstream middle class and they received a significant boost at the Fourth International Hindu Conference, held in Kathmandu last May. A positive effort was made during the Conference to broaden the scope of Hindu religious belief, and to incorporate all traditions that have grown around Hinduism, says Khem Raj Keshav Sharan, Professor of Sanskrit and President of Nepal's Sanatan Dharma Seva Samiti. "The Conference was successful in bringing together Baudhas, Jainas and Sikhs alike. They all can be regarded as belonging to one family because they share *Aum* as a common mantra," he says.

Lost in all the talk of the social scientists, anthropologists, rationalists, and orthodox standard bearers is yet

another perspective. Beyond the world of the religious texts, rituals, sermons and analyses, is there something else, intangible, that makes the Himalayan people spiritually unique? What, after all, has attracted the plainsman and the foreigner to these mountains for centuries?

Abraham Joy, self-professed "seeker" from the United States, says he perceives that uniqueness. "I grew up with a vague sense that a higher force that created everything exists and requires respect. Yet I grew up in a godless world and found this sentiment constantly disproved. Nevertheless, it never went away and in Nepal I was happy to be around people who recognized and lived by it. Next to just about any Nepali villager, Americans seem like egomaniacs, with respect for nothing but power, money and rationality."

Yet the irony of his search is not lost on Joy. He sees the modern man's search for religion paralleled by the religious man's search for modernity. "Somewhere between the two may lie the answer," he says.

A Changing Landscape

Already, in the pilgrimage spots in Uttarakhand, the roads blasted in the wake of the 1962 Indo Chinese war have changed the meaning of a pilgrimage. A week's ticket in a "semi deluxe video coach" takes the "pilgrim" through all the major sacred spots, leaving him little time to contemplate the grandeur of the hills, the meaning of penance, and life itself. Pilgrims to

Kailash from far west Nepal walk a week to reach the border, whence they are whisked within hours to the banks of Manasarovar.

With creeping modernization, a growing cash economy, increased mobility, environmental dislocation and demographic changes the religious life of the Himalayan population is bound to change drastically within a lifetime. With that will also change the role and function of sadhus and mystics.

Hira Lal Tamang's brother, the shaman, is being asked by Unicef to help popularize the use of oral rehydration salts by village mothers. When the Rato Matsendranath chariot gets bogged down in monsoon mud, it is a motorized crane that comes to the rescue rather than the willing hands of hundreds of devotees. Shanta Maya Maharjan might soon start taking asthma medication rather than trying to appease the serpent god. And now that the monks at Tengboche are reading by hydropower, will the electric light of modernity replace the inner light promised by the practice of religion? Δ Rajiv Tiwari assisted in reporting this article.



Mami Lama

To the Buddhists and Hindus alike, Mount Kailash is the centre of the universe. The mountain stands so completely isolated in the centre of the Trans Himalayan range that it is possible to circumambulate it within two or three days; its shape is regular like the dome of a gigantic temple. And as every Indian temple has its sacred water tank, so at the southern foot of Kailash there are two sacred lakes, Manasarovar and Rakastal. -- Lama Angarika Govinda, *The Way of the White Clouds* (Shambhala).



Mystics of the Mountain

By Rajiv Tiwari

There would be no way to count them, but across the Himalaya mountains there are thousands upon thousands mystics. They come in all hues and traditions, from seekers who live in complete isolation in remote dwellings to those who actively work to enrich the lives of hill communities. At the same time, there are the high flying godmen who invoke the Himalaya and claim to be spiritual ambassadors to the plains and to the West. Then there are those operating in the fringes of the mystical tradition, charlatans in saffron waiting to rip off the innocent believer.

As in any other segment of humanity, among the Himalayan mystics too there are the mediocre and the brilliant, the selfish and the selfless, the cheats and the true sages. For the villagers, the sadhu can either be a Shiva incarnate or a fraud, and so they are careful when a sadhu comes amidst them.

Gangeswor Mahadeo

At first, the local inhabitants did not take kindly to the sadhu who came and set up a ramshackle shanty upstream from Uttar Kashi. Shankar Puri spent three precarious years by the rushing torrents of the Bhagirathi river, through freezing winters and without regular access to food, before the populace was

convinced that he was worthy of reverence.

What brought him to this remote corner of Uttarakhand, says Shankar Puri, was the search for independence of action (*swatantatra*) and the bliss to be derived from it (*ananda*), which can only be found "far from the settlements, in the mountains, and close to Mother Ganges".

Having proved his spiritual worth, the ascetic then became the villagers' mentor and a process of give-and-take began. A stream of worshipers pass through his ashram, known as Gangeswor Mahadeo, bringing everything from flowers for his early morning *arati* to milk for his evening tea. The supplicants gather around the sacred fire and receive little nuggets of wisdom from Shankar Puri or one of his *gurubhais*, Hardwar Puri and Niranjan Puri, all from the *akhada* (tradition) of Dasanamis. Occasionally, a larger spiritual point emerges from extended village gossip. Today's session begins with talk of a proposed extension to a local highway and a road accident below Uttar Kashi.

Naga Baba Bihari Giri, a guest at Gangeswor Mahadeo, adds his own insight, gained from 60 years of asceticism. "*Ramta jogi, behta pani*," he says: the roming seeker does not rest in his search, like water which flows towards its own sublimation. Bihari Giri

is on his third pilgrimage to Uttarakhand -- probably his last, he says -- from his chosen seat in the Western Ghats outside Bombay. During his Himalyan wanderings, the ascetic picks up wild herbs and minerals which he will use to treat the Warli tribals among whom he lives.

Up From The Plains

Many of the sadhus who inhabit the high Himalaya, like Bihari Giri, actually come from the plains. Such a plainsman is Khaptad Baba, who lives in the 13,000 foot Khaptad plateau in west Nepal. The sage is a botanist by training. He keeps deliberately aloof and descends to Kathmandu every four years or so during the festival of Shivaratri.



W.J. DeBoeck

Khaptad Baba.

Among the most famous ascetics to reside in the Nepal Himalaya was Govindanda Bharati -- known as the Shivapuri Baba after his seat in the Shivapuri forest north of Kathmandu. Born in Kerala in 1826, he took his monastic vows in 1844 and spent 40 years walking through North and South America, Australia, Japan and China. At the end of his travels he settled down in Shivapuri, it is said, at the age of 100. He died 38 years later, in 1963.

The forest of Shivapuri now claims another ascetic, Swami Chandresh, who was born to a Kshatriya family in what is now Bangladesh. At the age of 20, he received his initiation into the Patanjali yoga system from a renowned Indian yogi at an old British graveyard near Calcutta. With a longing to visit the Himalaya, he arrived in Kathmandu 16 years ago and has been meditating in the quite caves of Shivapuri since.

Babas at Gangeswor Mahadeo. From left, Niranjan Puri, Hardwar Puri, Shankar Puri and Bihari Giri.



Rajiv Tiwari

Separate Paths to Wisdom

Swami Chandresh, Khaptad Baba, Shanker Puri and Bihari Giri, as well as thousands of other sadhus whose ashrams dot the hills, share in their renunciation of daily life. However, they come from widely differing arms of the Hindu spiritual ethos, which is not monolithic in character. After the primary division between the Shaivite "yogis" and the Vaishnav "bairaagis", who belong to two of the three principle deities of the Hindu triad, the greater traditions break out into a vast number of sects and sub sects. They observe different rituals and take separate paths to divine wisdom.

Bihari Giri, for instance, is a Naga from the Shaivite Dasanami Juna Akhada, headquartered in Varanasi. He represents the oldest form of the forest dwelling Hindu mystic. The mahantas of Gangeswar Mahadeo are also Dasnamis, but from a different *akhada*. The Nagas demand strict adherence to vows and traditional norms, but impose no restrictions on entrants related to their caste, region, regional origin or religion. The Shaivite Niranjani Akhada, on the other hand, grants entry only to Brahmans and emphasizes the study of the scriptures.

Wayward Paths

Many aspirants are drawn towards mysticism by an inner compulsion. Others seek solace in sadhuhood to escape the widespread rural poverty. Many may never finish the 12 years or more of apprenticeship with their gurus. Some get turned out of their akhadas for disobeying their vows. Many of the dropouts become *phakkads*, an aggressive lot of beggar-mendicants who can neither return to domesticity nor complete their spiritual journey.

The sadhus themselves are acutely aware of the black sheep in their midst. "See child," says Bihari Giri, using the form of address babas use for their lay devotees, "Sadhus are no different from the world in which they live. There are *gidhs* (vultures) and *sidhs* (realized souls) amongst us, just like among everyone else."

Apart from the charlatan sadhus who have traditionally waylaid pilgrims along the pilgrimage trails, today there are godmen who would own factories that produce guns, babas who invoke the Himalaya purely for effect in climate controlled ashrams in Western



Swami Chandresh at Shivapuri.

countries, and others who use scientific jargon to beguile the gullible.

The larger ashrams belonging to internationally known spiritual celebrities such as Sai Baba, Maharshi Mahesh Yogi, Dhirendra Brahmachari, Swami Muktananda and Bhagwan Rajneesh provide a steady stream of controversy. The ability of some to produce sacred ash and gold wristwatches out of the thin air are believed to be sleights of hand. The Indian Rationalists Association has demonstrated how many of the so-called miracles are performed using a bag of simple magic tricks.

A departure from the tradition of selfless asceticism is to be found in the pseudo scientific rhetoric of Basudeva Baba, who claims to be from the tantrik Shaivite cult of Aghori. His audio cassette tape, marketed under the title "Harmonic Rectification through Radiative Sound Energy Vibration," recently surfaced in Kathmandu shops.

As the tape unwinds, a soft feminine voice announces in melodious English that Basudev Baba "descended" from Kailash in 1962 to deliver the holy message derived from many years of yogic practice. "During his *sadhana*, his holiness realized the technique of penetrating the paravibration ozone. With this realization c a m e t o h i m spontaneously as a gift from the divine level:

Geeta Rimal

the art of rediversifying this regenerative energy in the form of vibrations to heal human suffering." Basudeva Baba then comes on to announce that his music will cure a multitude of illnesses ranging from high blood pressure to diabetes and asthma. What follows is a poor recording of an indeterminate *raga* played on a modern electronic organ.

A Descent Into Wooliness?

In a just published book, Stephen W. Hawking, regarded as the greatest among living physicists, calls for exposing those who would invoke the name of science to support the claims of parapsychology and mysticism. Hawking, who specializes in the study of "black holes", time, and the origins of the universe, describes the ever ambitious claims of some mystics as "a gradual descent into wooliness".

While Basudeva Baba might represent a particularly egregious departure into scientific mumbo jumbo, other swamis also claim the power of mystic thought to control and channel the human mind beyond normal physiological limits. Swami Rama, founder of the Himalayan Institute of Yoga Science and Philosophy in the United States claims to have used "stress testing and psycho physiological measurement" to have proved "positively beyond doubt that yoga can have a direct effect on brain waves, patterns of respiration, heart rate changes, and muscle tension".

A brochure published by the Institute states that Swami Rama, who comes from "the noble heritage of Himalayan sages", left his "beloved Himalaya



Karnacharya

Sadhu conference at Pashupati, 1934.



Mountains" to come to the complex technological culture of the West in order to "bring science and spirituality together into a harmonious synthesis."

Madan Mani Dixit, a veteran Nepali man of letters who professes scientific materialism as his faith, challenges the claim that yoga can transcend the basic laws of matter. "The human brain has immense potential without having to rely on supernatural support," says Dixit.

"The stories of hidden gods, levitating yogis and other supernatural phenomena associated with the Himalaya are like the stories of the Yeti," says Keshav Ram Joshi, an astronomer who is also a learned Sanskrit scholar. "Prolonged research has produced no conclusive evidence to show why we should believe them any more than we should the Abominable Snowman."

Invoking the Mountain

"A hundred lives are not enough to tell of the glories of the Himachal. As the dew before the Sun, so does everything base vanish at the sign of the eternally pure snows," says a Sanskrit verse in the Vedas.

These peaks and snowfields have served as mystical symbols down through the ages. However, the element of exoticism and drama that comes from association with the mountains are often crudely exploited.

Some swamis zero in on the urban elites or on the westerner in search of quick religious fixes. However, there are thousands more -- swamis, babas, mahantas, sadhus and sanyasis -- who man the spiritual barricades across the Himalaya and bring higher knowledge and inner strength to its people. For them, there is something in the Himalaya that cannot be corrupted. Δ *Sudhindra Sharma assisted in reporting this article.*

THOSE WHO PERCH LIGHTLY

"Through celibacy, community isolation, and the long, sober intoxication of prayer, the monks in old age develop the kind of eccentricity that Oxford dons used to exhibit before they were permitted to marry. Old monks are wild as well as simple. They perch more lightly on the globe than the rest of us." -- Peter Levi, in *The Frontiers of Paradise: A Study of Monks and Monasteries* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson).



Mark Felshenthal

Fall from Grace

By Mark Felshenthal

Vishwanath Giri, a sadhu, occupied a small room off the main shrine at the Dattatreya temple in Bhaktapur for several years. Men from the neighbourhood came to sit, talk and smoke tobacco and hemp. Giri sat on a mat, shirtless, a rough cotton shawl around his slumped shoulders. A single log smouldered as the neighbourhood men passed time with their resident holy man. Outside, children played hopscotch, men trudged by with sacks of grain hanging balanced from poles.

He was born into an Upadhaya family from Siphali in Kathmandu. He was a truck driver until an accident left him lame; he then became a mechanic. Giri talked softly, but without sadness, about how he became a sadhu. "My wife and my only child both died, and I was alone, with nothing," he said, "So I left the everyday world and started wandering." Giri went to Benaras to study with a guru, Mohan Basant Giri, who taught him mantras and yoga. He had been a *sanyasin* for ten years and was now 61 years old. He was preparing for the most significant date for sadhus in Nepal: Shivaratri. "It is the last of three holy nights," he said. "Kalratri, at Dasain, Maharatri, at Tihar, and now Shivaratri, to honour the birth of Shiva. I will sit all night by this fire, chanting mantras and covering myself in ash. In the morning, I'll go to Pashupatinath and bathe in the river there, and then sit with the other

sadhus.

Giri lived the austere, penitent life of a holy man. His room was perhaps four feet by eight. A large latticed window took up one wall, and together with the tiny door, allowed a draught of air to ventilate the smoky room. There were a few tattered books and on a shelf a few pots, several tomatoes and an aubergine. People from the neighbourhood brought him food.

In keeping with his role as a wanderer, Giri was fatalistic about how long he would stay at Dattatreya. "That is not for a sadhu to think about -- it makes no difference," he said. "When it is time to go, I will take my stick and my bundle and go where I have to go, sleeping outside, going without food."

Two years later, Giri would no longer be at Dattatreya temple. The head priest found him drunk one morning, asleep on the steps in front of the temple. Ashamed, Giri left Bhaktapur. A year later, the priest ran into the *baba* at a celebration in Panauti, to the east. He said he asked Giri to forget the incident and return to Dattatreya, but he refused.

His Bhaktapur friends would continue to meet in the little room off the shrine at Dattatreya. But Giri, whose efforts to come closer to the divine were interrupted by a detour into the profane, would be elsewhere. A holy man picks up his small bundle when it is time to go, and leaves nothing behind. Δ *additional reporting by S. Sharma.*

INTERVIEW

Mohan Man Saiju

Starting as an official in the Nepal's Ministry of Economic Planning in 1963, Mohan Man Saiju has been intimately connected with Nepali development policy over the years. He was a member of the National Planning Commission for almost 13 years, the last five at its helm. In September, he was named Ambassador to the United States. What follow are excerpts from conversations with Promode Bahadur Shrestha in Kathmandu and K.M. Dixit in Washington DC.

HIMAL: If there is one lesson you have learnt during your years of planning development, what is it?

SAIJU: Despite 25 years of effort, we are not yet where we want to be. The lesson I take is this: the people have to be the focus of the process of development. Their participation is the answer. They must be involved in the decision making process. An elitist topdown approach clearly will not work and has not worked. People should be involved not after but before formulating programmes.

HIMAL: But by now we all know that decentralization cannot happen by mere decree.

SAIJU: The Nepali villagers are quite capable of reaching a decision once they are given the responsibility. In recent years, particularly since the beginning of the Seventh Plan (1985-1990), local institutions have been revitalized. District, village and town panchayats have been given more say. Of course, that responsibility also gives rise to accountability. The bureaucrat must re-evaluate his own attitudes, which should no longer be those of chief and master.

HIMAL: Are you optimistic?

SAIJU: Every year, people are more aware of the opportunities offered by development and more willing to question decisions taken for them by others. A pressure group is being created.

HIMAL: But what was wrong with the system that it could not deliver?

SAIJU: Well, in the 1950s and the 1960s, the received wisdom was to go for "growth". There was little infrastructure to distribute the gains of progress. Today, there is transport, and organizational entities to deliver services like never before. The challenge now is to use what has been created.

Infrastructure is not an end in itself. There are now highways to Pokhara and Kodari, but their potential has to be harnessed.

HIMAL: What are the main roadblocks?

SAIJU: Development will not happen until we know how to manage the numbers. By that I mean fertility rates, the distribution of the population and the migration problem. It is clear that coercive population control methods will never work with Nepali society. The only way is to enhance awareness, but not through a "change agent" sent from Kathmandu, because the villager will listen to him but never really believe him. Awareness must be spread through local institutions.

HIMAL: What about the question of equity?

SAIJU: The problem is enormous. About 42 percent of the population remains outside the economic mainstream, isolated and incapacitated. Destitution exists regardless of caste, ethnicity or region. But the Government is responding and trying to match growth with equity. The total growth rate has to be translated to *per capita* growth.



Mark Felsenthal

HIMAL: Are you concerned about the failure to raise internal resources for development?

SAIJU: Very much so. We have yet to succeed in that sphere. Domestic resources can be mobilized in various ways. With the extent of the landed aristocracy in the country, it is interesting that we have not raised the level of land revenue for two decades. Meanwhile, the focus has been on indirect taxation, which hits the poor. Also, more efficient tax collection through administrative streamlining

would add to the national coffers. Unfortunately, as things stand, our resource base is dependent on custom duties on imported goods. This shows poor productivity. I look to the day when excise duties will overtake custom duties. That will indicate some progress.

HIMAL: How do you rate foreign aid?

SAIJU: Foreign aid *per se* is not bad, but it must be used to complement our own efforts and not as a panacea for all our development difficulties. It is Nepalis and Nepalis alone who will prove whether Nepal can develop. Like it or not, however, foreign aid will continue to play an important role for at least another two decades.

There are some areas where, provided we increase our absorptive capacity, foreign aid should even be increased, as for example in large capital investments for building dams. On the other hand, projects such as minor irrigation canals must be financed domestically.

HIMAL: What are the problems of agriculture?

SAIJU: A breakthrough is needed in irrigation. Because the targets were never met in the past, today we have only 400,000 hectares under irrigation. The projection now is for nearly 800,000 hectares to be irrigated by the year 2000. It is an ambitious task, but not impossible to achieve.

The farmers definitely need more incentives. It is getting difficult to motivate them to go for higher productivity because theirs is the only sector that has not received the benefit of spiralling inflation, even as the price of machinery and fertilizer continue to rise.

HIMAL: What model should Nepali planners strive for?

SAIJU: We must look for a way to help the people to earn more. The fiscal policy of the day serves as a disincentive on that score. The entrepreneurial genius of the people must be released and the private sector made more productive. I personally feel that the South Korean model, in which growth is encouraged but through strong state intervention, is the one to study.

HIMAL: Are not the goals of the basic needs strategy as articulated by the Planning Commission too utopian?

SAIJU: How can you say that? A goal of 2200 calories for an adult person, is

that too much? The provision of 11 metres of cloth per individual should be within reach. A family income level of NRs. 10,367 cannot be considered outrageous. If we cannot achieve even these targets, where do we hope to be?

HIMAL: The basic needs programme presupposes a village level effort to alleviate misery. But the Government has also embraced the IMF and World Bank's structural adjustment loan strategy, which is macro-economic and "trickle down". Is there not a contradiction here?

SAIJU: I do not think so. Because the structural adjustment package alone would undercut our societal goals, we have simultaneously put into effect the basic needs strategy. Nepal is one of the few countries to have such complementary programmes. The important point is to insist on their simultaneous implementation, or else the

result will be skewed against the needy.

HIMAL: Nepal seems to be relying increasingly on loans from international partners.

SAIJU: Fortunately, we are not in a debt trap like so many other developing countries. But it is true that our dependence on foreign assistance, including loans, is increasing. We must be very cautious and think twice and even thrice before agreeing on loans. Many of the debt ridden countries are resource rich and can in the future overcome their problem with relative ease. When a country like ours is down in debt, however, we are sunk.

HIMAL: The Planning Commission has to monitor the crucial areas that we have talked about, but it has no teeth. It is ineffective.

SAIJU: Firstly, it is not supposed to have "teeth". It is the apex body that

advises the Cabinet. Certainly, there are some institutional constraints, but the Planning Commission is not part of government bureaucracy, which allows it to be more independent and objective. We can provide a better perspective not because we are fine people but because we do not get involved in executing recommendations.

HIMAL: But Kathmandu circles rate the Commission's reports poorly.

SAIJU: No doubt, there have been some lapses, but by and large our output has been good and critical. We are not paid to be populists and our reports are not written for the press. I must say this, though: we often do not receive the cooperation of what I call the "sleeping intelligentsia", those very people who are so quick to criticize. As we prepare documents, we send them all over for review and comments but receive very little feedback, which is unfortunate. ▽

INTRODUCTIONS

Himalayan Research Group

The Himalayan Research Group is an inter-disciplinary forum for those engaged in study and research in the Himalaya. Its goal is to further the exchange of ideas in what its brochure calls the "greatest highland region in the world", and to promote "meaningful collaboration" so that a proper understanding of the environment can lead to appropriate development.

Not limiting itself to the Indian Himalaya, the Group has lately extended its activities to other parts of India, particularly in areas where there are common environmental concerns.

The society publishes a twice yearly journal, *Himalayan Research & Development*, which is dedicated to research and investigations that help correct misperceptions, and identify and analyse problems in the Himalaya. Besides the journal, the Group also publishes region and problem specific books.

Two recent studies take a "geo ecological perspective" on the Nepal Himalaya and on mining and the environment in India. Two new books are planned, one on the dimensions of

environmental change in the region, and the other on ecological, economic and environmental aspects of Himalayan forests.

The Group is a self-sustaining society which is largely dependent upon membership subscription and funds generated from its publications. Membership is open to all, and the annual fee for regular membership for individuals is IRs. 60 or US\$ 20. Write to: Post Bag No.1, Tallital, Naini Tal 263 002, Uttar Pradesh.



Nepal Business and Professional Women's Club

The Nepal Business and Professional Women's Club is a lobbying group for working women in Kathmandu, but it is also much more than that. It was established in 1974 as a forum to articulate the interests and problems of professional women in Nepal, but now it has turned its attention to other complex societal matters. Says the Club's President, Ambica Shrestha, "We

want to see women join the mainstream of the work force and become full participants in the economic life of the country. But we also feel it important to work to enhance the lives of our less fortunate sisters."

The Club has had notable success in establishing free day care centres in the industrial districts in Patan, Balaju, Pokhara, Hetauda and Birganj, where working mothers can leave pre-school children. Initial skepticism has turned into enthusiasm, even among the factory owners, and two of the centres have now been handed over to industrialists to run and maintain. Plans are being made to hand over the rest.

The club offers fortnightly classes to educate working mothers on the use of local foods, the spacing of children, immunization, hygiene and breast feeding. It selects "motivators" in communities and trains them to be more effective in enriching others' lives. The Club also imparts skills training and provides small loans for women to start their own businesses. The Club is getting ready to start a family health clinic in downtown Kathmandu.

The Club has about 350 members, with chapters in Pokhara, Birgunj, Hetauda and Biratnagar. Contact: GPO Box 459 Kathmandu.

Nepal: A State of Poverty

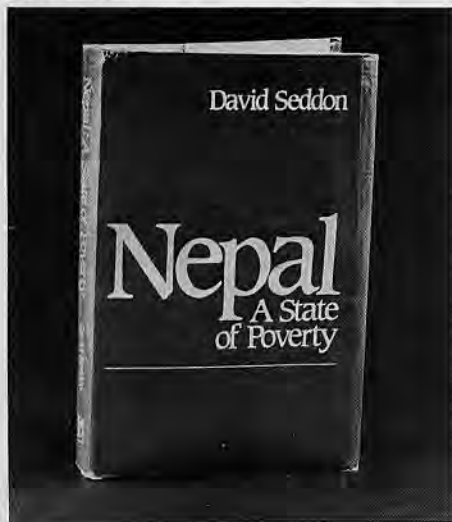
David Seddon
Vikas Publishing House 1987

Review by R.S. Mahat

This is the latest in a series of published works on Nepal by the author (including *Nepal in Crisis*, 1980). A common theme through his works has been that the state of under-development, poverty and crisis in Nepal is not purely an economic phenomenon and should be understood in the broader context of the political economy and class relationships. In his analysis of these issues, the author's contributions on the Nepali economy differ from those of other individuals and national and international agencies.

Seddon starts by reviewing the political economy of the population growth in the historical context. Population increased as a result of state policy to encourage immigration to augment the labour force. Increased population resulted in land reclamation to increase agricultural output and raise state revenue. While the balance between fertility and mortality changed drastically for the better in the second half of the twentieth century, agricultural production failed to keep pace with population growth, both in the Tarai and hills.

The author explains economic inequality and poverty in terms of unequal ownership of land and social inequality based on caste, ethnic and gender factors. Another theme the author repeats in this book is the environmental deterioration caused by population growth, deforestation and land erosion.



Against this background of rapid population growth, failure in the agricultural front, the deteriorating ecological balance and economic inequality, the author analyses the increasing poverty of the Nepali population as evidenced in food shortages, malnutrition and indebtedness. Seddon concentrates on those most vulnerable: landless labourers, sub-marginal peasants and small craftsmen relying on wage labour.

The widespread poverty and deprivation of basic needs is an accepted fact which has been supported by a number of studies, both official and unofficial. Seddon's explanation of the problems that exist in the political-economy of Nepal will receive wide acceptance.

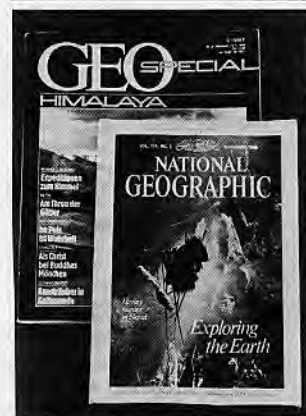
In point of fact, no anti poverty programme, whether target group oriented or redistributive welfare measures, will have much chance of success as long as the present sociopolitical power structure based on property relations continues. However, one should be careful not to extend this logic to explain all facets of under development and poverty. There are thousands of villages in Nepal where poverty cannot be explained just in terms of class relations. It is deeply associated with low productivity resulting from shortages of productive assets, modern inputs, technology and market.

Another impediment is the present land tenure system, which allows a separation between ownership and cultivation, resulting in a serious "incentive trap" to produce more. Interestingly, the author does not seem to have analyzed this important aspect.

The final chapter contains Seddon's message for the future. He rightly regrets the limited scope for articulating the views and interests of the poor within the present political system. In the event, the government and bureaucracy have a virtual monopoly of decision making over all areas of economic and social policy. Curiously, he pleads for more active and interventionist role by the international donor community, whose ability to influence official policy is assumed to be proportional to their substantial contribution to the economy. He believes that with more activist donors, the cleavages and contradictions within the socioeconomic and political structure could be sharpened to open up new possibilities for social transformation.

While the sincerity inherent in such an approach is beyond question, it is pertinent to note its pitfalls. Firstly, this

theory conveniently ignores the role of external assistance itself in strengthening the economic power and consequent bargaining position of the economic elite over the last three decades. Secondly, even if the donor community departs from its past practice and offers radical prescriptions to give more economic and political power to the underclass, it would be naive to believe that such prescriptions would be readily accepted. This would at best lead to weak compromises which will only prolong the status quo. The "new conventional wisdom" as reflected in the integrated rural development projects (IRDPs), the Decentralization Act, and the basic needs approach are only parts of such a compromise. In short, external pressure is not without limitations as an alternative to effective internal pressure.



The National Geographic

November, 1988

Geo

April, 1988

Review by Satis Schroff, K. Dixit

The Himalaya has always been a good source of stories for international glossy magazines, but most of their reports have tended to glamorize the region's "Shangri La" aspects. With time, and the ecological decline of the region, that stereotype has begun to change. Things have come full circle this year with the *National Geographic* and the German magazine, *Geo*, both doing special issues on the Himalaya that are puff pieces no more.

Both publications peer under the rug and take a look at what's really going on, including environmental destruction, the conflict between subsistence living and nature conservation, and the physical and cultural pollution wrought by tourism.



HM King Birendra receives Everest map from Washburn.

Royal Palace Secretariat

The coverage of the two publication differs significantly, reflecting the demands of their European and North American audiences. The *Geographic* touches all the bases but skims over them in its text, letting the pictures talk. *Geo*, on the other hand, intermixes its well known two page colour spreads with detailed information on cultural, environmental, and political affairs (this last, the *Geographic* shuns like it were a bumble bee).

Talking of bees, the cover feature in the *Geographic* is a stupendous effort by photographer Eric Valli, who records the story of a honey hunting Gurung patriarch who dangles from towering cliffs on slim ropes to get at beehives. The photo essay depicts life on the edge of survival and its haunting images will serve to remind us of the reality in the hinterland.

Departing from practice, the *Geographic's* November issue has not one but six pieces on the region. In a lead article entitled "The Mighty Himalaya: A Fragile Heritage", *Geographic* staffer Barry Bishop mulls over how the landscape has changed since he traversed Everest in 1963.

Another article takes the reader down the Tsang Po (Brahmaputra) from Mount Kailash to the Sunderbans. There is a report on the "woeful harvest" of wood in the still pristine Kama Valley in Tibet. The pride of place is reserved for the most detailed map of Everest ever made. The 300 sq mile map was prepared under the direction of cartographer Bradford Washburn, who used geodetic data from the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India (1849-50) as well as infrared imagery recorded by the American space shuttle.

On the flip side of the map is a

computer generated three dimensional perspective of the Eastern Nepal Himalaya as seen from an imaginary point 100 miles south southwest of Everest and at a height of 60,000 feet. Since the *Geographic* has produced fine perspectives of the Alps, it is unclear why this one is so unsatisfying. Also, the perspective does not seem to serve any purpose, especially because the elevations have been exaggerated four and a half times, and Everest looks more like nearby Pu Mori.

Without the hi tech resources of the *Geographic*, *Geo* in its own special issue has opted for a watercolour perspective which folds out into four pages and ranges from Afghanistan to Arunachal. Unfortunately, it is as disappointing as the *Geographic's*.

In terms of content, the Hamburg based magazine leaves the *Geographic* far behind. It is *Geo* at its best: a messy hodge podge on the disparate Himalayan cultures, culled from 32,000 colour slides and 500 books, we are told. As Editor Peter-Hannes Lehmann puts it, the objective was "not to print everything about the Himalaya, but the best subjective report by the Himalayan experts". This subjectivity is what is refreshing.

Geo has managed to coax the likes of Christoph von Fuhrer Haimendorf, Heinrich Harrer, Reinhold Messner, and even the Dalai Lama to join in celebration of the Himalaya. In this pantheon, Edmund Hillary is conspicuous by his absence.

Elsewhere in the issue, German lawyer and long time Kathmandu resident Jurgen Schick documents the organized robbery of idols in Nepal. Franz Alt, a television moderator from West Germany, follows the story that Jesus, the carpenter's son, took the old

silk road from Palestine to Persia and wound up in Kashmir for a midlife hiatus. Michael Heuss appreciates Bhutan's policy of not allowing hippies and rucksack trekkers.

Harrer, 75, swears that without the trusty yak, he would never have made it out of Lhasa in 1947 after his *Seven Years in Tibet*. Likewise, without the help of the Sherpas, the European climbers would not have got as high as they did, suggests Messner, who himself has gone quite high climbing solo. At the end of the book, *Geo* also has an "Info" section that contains solid tourist information and maps.

There is only one problem for those who are thinking of putting down DM 13.50 for this issue of *Geo*. It is in German. The English *Geo* died a few years back. \triangle

Look Down Not Up

Karna Shakya
Sahayogi Press Kathmandu 1988
NRs 130

Review by Rajiv Regmi

After reading Karna Shakya's new travelogue/nature guide/biography/diary, *Look Down Not Up*, it is difficult to decide which way to look.

The book is about the author's quest of the shy, elusive and near extinct Pygmy Hog, the tiny jungle swine that doesn't grow more than a foot tall. It is obviously so small that the author had to look down and not up, hence the title.

The call of the wild takes Shakya from the ex-jungles of Chitwan and Kosi Tappu to national parks in India, including one in Assam. We can feel the Pygmy Hog lurking in the undergrowth, as it were, and what holds the reader spellbound is the author's adventures and flashbacks as he goes about trying to find it. Shakya's description of the people he meets (expat ecologists, Indian sepoy on the Assam Mail, Nepali game wardens) are sharp sketches that bring the characters leaping out of the page.

One character that really leaps out is Jungli, the Tharu girl who entices workers to help the author plant teak trees near Bhairawa. Shakya's delicious description of Jungli is a cross between Rudyard Kipling and Harold Robbins, and is interesting enough to distract the reader from the hog hunt.

Shakya, the forester turned hotelier turned naturalist, gave us one of the

few written chronicles of Nepal's remote and mysterious Dolpo region in his 1978 book, *The World Behind the Himalayas*. A valuable publication, if for nothing else than the load of information on the geography and natural history of that arid trans Himalayan region. The book also tickled the non native, English speaking readership with the quaint tone of its narration and the author's carefully detailed chronicle of ordinary everyday things and snippets of mundane conversation.

Many who lapped up the Dolpo book will be glad to see that Shakya still has a sharp eye for recording every detail, no matter how slight or unconnected to the book's drift. *Look Down Not Up* is on a stylistically higher plane than the earlier book and the author's penchant for subjective asides on what he sees around him is intact.

The Pygmy Hog had been declared extinct by naturalists in 1964, but Shakya found five in captivity in Gauhati Zoo and saw two others briefly at Kasim Daha. Another one was kept as a pet by a forester and Shakya was able to observe it closely and debunk the myth that Pygmy Hogs have only three pairs of teats. They have four.

But in Nepal itself, the species seems to have become extinct because of shrinking forests. Shakya thinks the barrage on the Kosi river has flooded out the main Pygmy Hog habitat at Kosi Tappu Wildlife Reserve.

Look Down Not Up is endearing reading. You get to know almost as much about Karna Shakya as the Pygmy Hog itself. For many in Nepal, Shakya is a celebrity, a conservationist who helped chart out national parks and a tourism wunderkind who single-handedly

developed a whole new concept of a Nepal holiday.

It is doubtful if Pygmy Hogs will be around for much longer. Shakya's quest for this tiny fragile creature is symbolic of the long hard fight ahead. ▲



NEW PUBLICATION

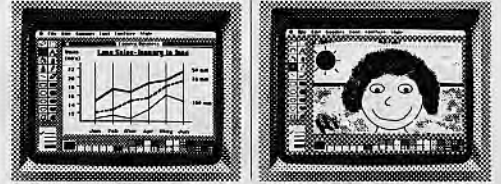
WATER NEPAL

This new quarterly is, in its own words, "a forum for sharing experience among technologists, engineers and scientists engaged in different aspects of water resource development in Nepal". The need for a publication such as this is obvious, especially during times of earthquakes and floods.

The latest issue contains articles which warn of dangers posed by industrial waste, how to improve water quality in seepage springs (*kuwa*), and the need for research into sedimentation. There is a very authoritative description of water management in Kathmandu Valley during the Lichchhavi Period (pre 900 AD). From ancient inscriptions, it is clear that the Lichchhavis knew a thing or two more than we do today about proper operation and maintenance of water systems. Subscription to *Water Nepal* is NRs. 300 for regional institutions and US\$ 25 for others. Write to: Post Box 2221, Kathmandu.

Macintosh™

Come in for a screen test.



As these screens indicate, Macintosh™ can do all the things you'd expect a business computer to do. A lot of things you wouldn't expect a business computer to do. And some things no business computer has even done before.

If that strikes you as amazing, prove it to yourself. Come in for a screen test. Because only seeing is believing.



Apple and the Apple logo are registered trademarks of Apple Computer, Inc. Macintosh is a trademark licensed to Apple Computer, Inc.



Bagh Bazaar
P. O. Box 2502
Kathmandu
Phone: 2-22277
Cable: MICRO
Telex: NP 2233 THT

WE ARE THE BIGGEST BOOKSELLERS IN TOWN

Drop in at our showroom in downtown Kathmandu or write to us for our detailed catalogue.

We carry a wide variety of publications on the Himalaya, including large selections on Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan, Sikkim.

We also carry guide books and maps in addition to our regular selections on anthropology, commerce, management, economics, history, culture, language, folklore and politics.

Through the Bibliotheca Himalayica, you have access to current and classical works on natural history and civilizations of Central Asia and the Himalaya.



Ratna Pustak Bhandar

Bhotahity
Kathmandu

CREATIVE BUILDERS COLLABORATIVE (P) LIMITED
ARCHITECTS, ENGINEERS,
PLANNERS AND BUILDERS

Post Box No. 926 Baluwatar, Kathmandu, Nepal.
Phone Office 411458, Res 410870 Tlx: 2321 BRSS NP.

PHOTO ESSAY

A TREMOR THROUGH THE HILLS

Pictures by Kevin Bubrisky and Gopal Chitrakar

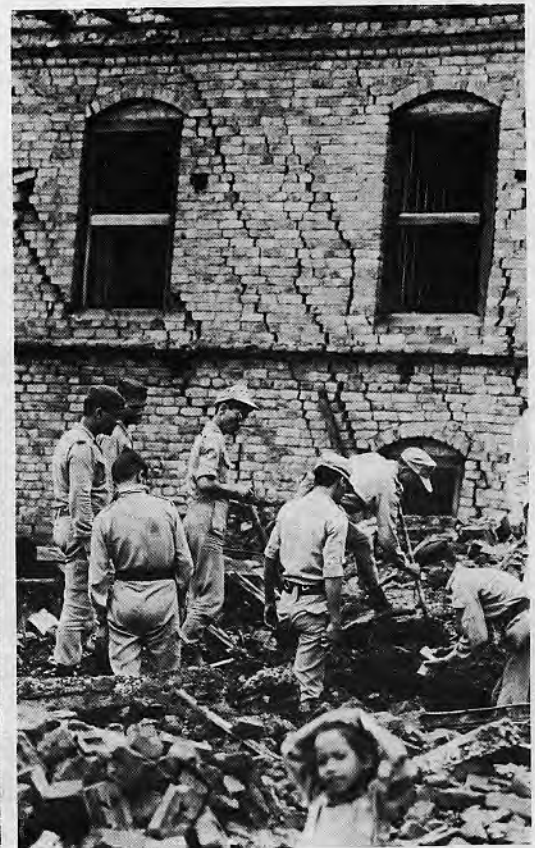


CC

4:54 a.m., 21 August.
Dharan town and the hill villages of East Nepal were in deep slumber. Then came an ominous rumbling, followed by violent jerking of the ground. Amidst collapsed houses and landslides, there were cries of pain and sudden death. As the dust subsided, neighbour helped neighbour and children dragged their parents out of the rubble. While strongly built dwellings survived with only cracks, thousands of others collapsed.



KB





KB



KB



KB

For days afterwards, rescue and health workers toiled heroically. Fortuitously, the quake's worst impact was felt at the home base of the British Gurkha camp, whose medical facilities helped save lives. While it was the stricken people of east Nepal who paid the price this time, the message was there for the millions across the Himalaya. The Sankhamul bridge in Kathmandu, weakened by the quake, collapsed a few days later.



GC



KB

In Bhaktapur, a survivor is dwarfed by the destruction of the night before. Elsewhere, rescue workers dig through the rubble. Sooner or later, the rock strata underneath the Himalaya will turn yet again, perhaps to shatter the city center of Kathmandu, Srinagar or Peshawar, or send crashing entire villages. Urban space and housing must be designed to withstand earthquakes. Those who would build highways and high dams must first understand geology.



GC



GC



Karnacharya

Occasionally, the earth sends a message and that message is best heeded. As this historical picture of Bhaktapur after the 1934 earthquake shows, it could have been much, much worse in 1988.

MEDIA

Criers In The Wilderness

Scanning the newsstands in Darjeeling, Dehra Dun or Kathmandu, one would not know it, but there exists a variety of periodicals devoted exclusively to the Himalaya. Some target the grassroots, others the urban elite; some are meant for academics, others for tourists and mountaineers. A few are in English, the rest in the vernacular. Some do original reporting while others favour armchair analysis.

Most periodicals available in the hill towns are published in the plains for a plains audience. Thus, even articles about the hills are simplified and lose their specificity. The Himalaya is not a market to attract publishing moguls from Delhi or Calcutta, even though there would seem to be enough to write about 35 million mountain people and their cultural, economic and physical environment.

The problems that confront editors of mountain magazines come with the territory. Unreliable mail and difficult terrain make distribution difficult. The

non-homogenous Himalayan population, divided as it is by boundaries, watersheds, dialect, attitude, altitude, class and caste, further diminishes the readership pie. The methods of payment -- money order, certified check, bank draft or cash -- all involve hassles which require of the reader a determination to subscribe almost as great as the editor's to publish.

Editors' Woes

For this report, *Himal* asked editors about the challenge of publishing in the Himalaya. Most of them work with Herculean dedication but without pay or help. They face unreliable printers, elusive writers and a seemingly apathetic audience. "We do this only because we love the mountains and its people. As a job, it is not to be recommended," one editor said.

Kamal Prakash Malla, a linguist, has edited *Contributions to Nepalese Studies* since 1983. The tri-yearly journal of Tribhuvan University tends to print

articles on sociology and anthropology, many from foreign scholars. Malla has tried to expand the journal's reach to cover culture, history and linguistics, but with limited success. He expresses frustration that native scholars are unable to obtain new data and reluctant to provide fresh analyses.

Malla's journal is unique because it has no funding worries. Such is not the case for Krishna Murli Gupta, editor of *Himalaya: Man and Nature*. "I do not have the money to pay for a staff," says Gupta, in his spartan office across the street from Raj Ghat in Delhi.

Himalaya: Man and Nature, which is "devoted to the cause of people, forests and environment", is published bi-monthly by the Himalaya Seva Sangh and carries articles in Hindi and in English. It seeks to alert the grassroots hill audience to the issues of the day, relating to activism, environment and the economy.

Continued

The Demise Of

Development INTERNATIONAL

Learning about the rise and fall of Development International has been instructive. DI tried to do internationally what Himal is attempting regionally. Mark Felsenthal, Associate Editor of DI until its collapse, describes how good intentions were not enough. Felsenthal has worked in Nepal as a writer and photographer for UNICEF.

There was one question the editors of *Development International* were always ready for. "A slick, glossy magazine about development? Isn't it a bit incongruous?" people asked. But was the implication that because the magazine was about the Third World, it had to look like it was printed in the basement? It was time for an independent publication to cover development, and the magazine should be as professional as the people it was addressing.

DI published a prototype issue in October 1986 and a premiere issue two months later. It sent out tens of thousands of copies to readers in developing countries. It published reports on topics as diverse as AIDS in Africa, the over abundance of foreign aid in Nepal, and the setbacks Nicaragua has

suffered as a result of its civil war. It ran stories critical of dam construction in Madhya Pradesh, pesticide spraying in the Caribbean, and a controversial immunization test in the Philippines.

But *DI* barely published a year's worth of issues. Tension with USAID and an odd bureaucratic imbroglio caused funding to dry up, leaving the magazine casting about unsuccessfully for alternative funding sources. The last issue appeared in early August 1987.

The magazine was conceived in 1985 when USAID offered a grant to initiate a publication that would provide information exchange for development professionals. The grant was sizable: US\$ 3 million over five years, during which time *DI* would have to become self sufficient.

The editors sought to make the magazine genuinely international by recruiting non western writers. Aware of the implications of being based in Washington DC, they deliberately limited articles about USAID.

But the first problems began precisely when *DI* tested the limits of its independence. An article on rehydration therapy in the prototype issue did not mention USAID and this upset the administrator whose section had made the grant. *DI* was committed to remaining independent and left the story as it was.

Then the editor of a magazine published in Hong Kong which happened to be named *International Development* felt threatened by *DI*. No matter that his journal was devoted to the construction industry and had next to no interest in "development" other than real estate development. He complained to his congressman that USAID was undercutting a private initiative and contradicting the very philosophy of the Reagan Administration.

The publisher's complaint was sufficiently embarrassing to USAID, which decided to wash its hands of the matter. The five year grant term was cut in half, ostensibly for reasons of "budgetary restraint".

Ironically, the magazine was just hitting stride, breaking new ground in writing about development, getting away from cliches and providing a broad selection of readable articles. Word about *DI* was getting out, but it was not enough. The money ran out.

Did *DI* shoot the moon in trying to produce an attractive, presentable publication on development? Development work deserves journalism that goes a step beyond communicating the agendas of development agencies. *DI* simply did not have enough time to find a way to make that kind of journalism pay. Δ

Publish Or Perish

John K. Locke, who edits *Kailash* in Kathmandu, says his main problem has always been with the printers. After a local press took seven months to publish one issue, he tried printing in Varanasi, then back again in Kathmandu, and is now planning to typeset in Kathmandu and print in Delhi.

Kailash bills itself as a journal of Himalayan studies, but so far has concentrated on Nepal. "We do want to cover the whole region, and all areas of academic discipline, from botany to history and anthropology," says Locke. Most of *Kailash's* contributors are also Western academics who have to "publish or perish". Such imperatives do not seem to drive Nepali scholars nearly as much.

Unlike the Kathmandu journals, those in India do attract a fair number of local talent. Indian scholars contribute to publications such as the *Journal of Himalayan Studies and Regional Development*, published by Garhwal University in Srinagar, which emphasizes study of the hill economy, the environment and development issues. *Himalayan Research and Development*, now in its seventh year, in a bi-annual

interdisciplinary journal that is the mouthpiece of the Himalayan Research Group in Naini Tal.

Looking at the region from abroad is *Mountain Research and Development*, from the University of Colorado. It is a technical journal that emphasizes the hard sciences such as mapping, climatology and geology and deals with mountains regions worldwide, but in doing so covers the Himalaya thoroughly. The South Asian Institute at Columbia University in New York publishes the *Himalayan Research Bulletin*. Bruce Owens, a coeditor of the journal, says it serves as a bulletin for researchers on the Himalaya. He says the goal is broaden its reach by publishing theme oriented issues.

Emotional Attachment

Pahar, a Hindi annual published by the People's Association for Himalaya Area Research in Naini Tal, is decidedly grassroots in its orientation. "Publishing a journal in the vernacular is very difficult, but essential for people's awareness," says its editor Shekhar Pathak, adding, "Mere publication is not enough. We always interrelate study, publication and action. Ours is a very collective kind of work. *Pahar* is made

possible by the curiosity, hard work and research of people who love the Himalaya."

Unfortunately, sheer emotional drive is usually not enough to maintain a magazine in the undeveloped media market. Many periodicals have bitten the Himalayan dust in the past decade, the only indication of their passing to be found in yellowing cards in library catalogues. Thus it was that *Himalayan Culture* expired after only a promising first issue. A consistently high-quality journal on Himalayan plants, from Kalimpong, similarly seems to have given up.

Despite the failures, however, many continue to struggle and survive, providing space for debate and provocative writing. In the latest *Kailash*, Dutch geographer Wim van Spengen tells everything anyone would want to know about the Manang-Bhot region of central Nepal. The *Himalayan Research Bulletin* has lately carried an illuminating give-and-take on Tibet. And the latest issue of *Contributions* has an article that questions the Rajput lineage claimed by Jung Bahadur. It argues that this doyen of the Rana clan in Nepal was a Khadka. A Chhetri, that is, but not a Thakuri. -- **Kanak M. Dixit**

**A DEVELOPING COUNTRY NEEDS TO INDUSTRIALISE,
AND IT MUST DO SO THOUGHTFULLY, CHOOSING
APPROPRIATE SECTORS AND THE RIGHT STRATEGY.**

**AT NIDC, WE ARE DEVELOPMENT BANKERS FIRST AND
FOREMOST. WE PROMOTE APPROPRIATE AND
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

WE STARTED NEARLY THREE DECADES AGO IN A COUNTRY WITH VIRTUALLY NO INDUSTRIAL HISTORY +++ SINCE THEN, WE HAVE HELPED NEARLY A THOUSAND INDUSTRIAL ENTREPRENEURS SUCCESSFULLY ESTABLISH AND RUN INDUSTRIES +++ WE PROVIDE TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO ESTABLISH, EXPAND OR MODERNISE PRIVATE SECTOR ENTERPRISES +++ IF YOU ARE AN ENTREPRENEUR IN NEED OF ADVICE OR ASSISTANCE, CONTACT US.

**NEPAL INDUSTRIAL
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

POST BOX NO. 10
KATHMANDU
TEL: 411-322
TLX: 2369NP



FOOD

SUPER POTATO!

By Prakash Khanal

The potato is taking root in Nepal like never before, and Kulbir Vyanjankar will be the first to tell you why. This 45-year-old farmer from Sankhamul in Kathmandu Valley is enthusiastic about the potato variety known as "MS-91", which allows him to have two harvests



Scientist Rajbhandari.

instead of one. Moreover, he can use small easily transported seedlings rather than whole seed potatoes. Another important plus is that he can now grow varieties that are resistant to disease. For his agricultural leap forward, Vyanjankar credits scientist Saman Bahadur Rajbhandari.

Rajbhandari, 52, is the Deputy Director of the Government's Department of Botany and it is his team that over the last five years developed a novel method of growing potato seedlings in the laboratory and transferring it to the field. A graduate of Lucknow University, with a PhD in tissue culture from the University of Wales, Rajbhandari received the prestigious King Birendra Science and Technology Academy Award for his pioneering work in developing high-yielding plants, including potatoes, through the culture of cell tissues.

Rajbhandari says he began work on the potato believing that tissue culture could provide enormous opportunity for developing agriculture and forestry in the region. "In Nepal, we already have enough trained people to perform research in this field and we are not really that far behind the developed countries in tissue culture work."

The technique perfected by Rajbhandari was to grow potato seedlings in the lab and then to transplant them outdoors in sand so that

rooting and "hardening" of the stem take place directly in the fields. The seedlings are then ready to be transplanted yet again in the farmer's plot. Compared to lab intensive work elsewhere, Rajbhandari's technique produces seedlings at very low cost. More importantly, the seedlings turn out to be hardy and adaptable to new soil. An Indian biotechnology company has shown interest in importing the techniques developed by Rajbhandari's team, which works out of a herbarium in Godavari on the outskirts of Kathmandu.

While his tissue culture methods have expanded the production of some, like the Sankhamul farmer, Rajbhandari cautions that the country is not about to be inundated with high yield seedlings. "With available funds, we can barely produce 100,000 seedlings a year. That does not go very far," he says.

The team at Godavari focussed on the



potato seedling.

potato because of its increasing importance as a source of nourishment to the growing Nepali population. Unlike other crops, the potato thrives in the fertile fields of the Tarai as well as on rocky soil at 14,000 feet. The plant is increasingly grown throughout the country, and in the higher climes it sometimes seems that the locals eat nothing else. In Namche Bazaar, the visitor is offered potatoes prepared in a variety of ways: fried, boiled, baked, stewed, stuffed, mashed and pickled, for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

It is not difficult to understand why the humble *alu* is so well regarded. It has exceptional nutritional value. A field of potatoes produces more food energy per hectare than any other crop. It is probably the world's most efficient means of converting plant, land, water and labour into palatable and nutritious

food. The potato is recommended for its fibre content, carbohydrates, and Vitamin C. It is fat free and is 80 percent water.

It seems clear that the potato will continue to gain as a Himalayan staple. According to Janak Dev Sakya, Deputy Chief of the Swiss aided National potato Development Programme (NPDP), there are 80,000 hectares under potato cultivation in Nepal today, up from 50,000 in 1973. Despite the growth in acreage, on a global scale, Nepali production is minuscule. The country produces under 500,000 tons of the crop yearly, compared to 300 million tons worldwide. India produces three percent of the global output.

Nepali farmers, like farmers the world over, have traditionally planted potatoes from tubers, which are identical "clones" of the parent plant, rather than from seeds. Vyanjankar is excited to receive the Godavari seedlings because till recently he regularly lost 40 percent of the tubers he had stored for planting. Using seedlings provided by the Godavari herbarium, the Lumle Horticulture Farm in Kaski District has been able to produce 40 tons of potatoes from one hectare, which is double its previous output from traditional varieties planted in the traditional way.

The lack of uniformity and the weak nature of seedlings limit their acceptability for large scale commercial use. Except for the high altitude communities in Himalaya, where the extreme cold freezes viruses and bugs in their tracks, potatoes are notoriously disease prone. Consequently, the Department of Botany and the NPDP

B.L.Shrestha



Farmer Vyanjankar.

have spent considerable time trying to fight diseases with exotic names such as net necrosis, hollow heart, brown rot

and potato scab. NPDP's Sakya says farmers prefer strains of potato named NPI 106 and T5T4 because they tend to be most resistant to two diseases which are common in Nepal, late blight and wart.

It is difficult to imagine the hills of Nepal without the potato, but the Lichhavis and the Mallas certainly did not know the potato. When Prithvi Narayan Shah's soldiers set out to blockade Kathmandu Valley in 1744, theirs was probably a potatoless diet. The potato was domesticated in the Andes of southern Peru and northern Bolivia more than 5000 years ago. It remained there till just 400 years ago when it spread to Europe and then onward to the colonies, arriving in Nepal westward from the Darjeeling area around the mid 1700s. potato cultivation is mentioned in Kirkpatrick's "An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal", published in 1793.

The International potato Centre in Lima, Peru, maintains the World potato Collection in Huancayo, the very heart of the potato's ancestral territory in the Andes. Some 8000 strains and varieties of potatoes are preserved in a living state and planted each year. After the centuries long trek from the Andes to the Himalaya, 81 varieties are found in Nepal today. The red potato, poor yielding and disease prone, is believed to be the oldest variety in Nepal. It is finally losing ground to better varieties introduced by NPDP.

So what is in store next for the potato? The race is on to produce the "true potato seed" (TPS) to replace seed tubers so that potatoes can be planted like any other vegetable, says Rajbhandari. In Nepal, research on the potato seed has been going on since 1976 and has gained momentum from recent breakthroughs in China, Sri Lanka and India. The International potato Center is also actively conducting research into the true potato seed. Presently, seeds are rarely planted except in China. Otherwise, they are used primarily for seeding purposes.

One 50 kg sack of TPS would be enough to sow 400 hectares, which now require nearly 1000 tons of seed tubers. The benefits in terms of storage and transport are obvious. The production of disease resistant and easy to transport potato seeds would revolutionize hill agriculture and there would be better and more potatoes for a country that is steadily growing hungrier because of faltering productivity of traditional crops such as rice, wheat and maize. ▲

MILLET, AMARANTH AND T'EF

Old Mountain Crops

By Peter de Groot

The world's food supply is precariously based on seven major crops -- wheat, rice, maize, potato, barley, cassava and sorghum. We now cultivate fewer species of plants than did the pioneering farmers of Neolithic times. Such specialization and uniformity of our crops is the price we pay for the astonishing increase in the productivity of food crops over the past 50 years.

But the miracles produced by the plant scientists and agricultural technologies are mostly confined to the foods of richer countries, particularly cereals. The staple crops of the rural poor, particularly those in highland communities in the Andes, the Himalaya and in Africa, remain largely unchanged and are ripe for research work. The catch is that the impetus for improving the under-utilized staple crops of the poor will not come from the established international food industry, for transnational companies are not concerned with the development and improvement of subsistence crops. The industry looks for crops that require less processing, for "crops without seeds and chickens without feathers". For development of subsistence crops, we must rely on independent initiatives from the international agricultural scientists.

Nazmul Haq, of the International Centre for Under-utilized Crops in England, argues that millet is one of the most promising candidates for study. Millet has been cultivated since ancient times, and the small grained proso millet (*Panicum miliaceum*), is not known in the wild. It gives a stable yield even under harsh climatic conditions, grows well in poor soil and at high temperatures, and requires less water than any other cereal. It is adapted precisely to those environments where food shortages are often greatest.

However, the proso millet's relatively low yield compared to the established grain crops, has relegated it to the role of a subsistence crop, grown mostly in shifting cultivation. Making plants such as proso millet more productive is a prerequisite for improving the nutrition of the poor.

T'ef (*Eragrostis t'ef*) is another cereal overlooked by western science, but it is the most important crop in the highlands of Ethiopia. The t'ef grain, which is so small that you can fit seven seeds onto a pinhead, is first ground into flour, then made into a batter and fermented. The mixture is then shaped into a thick pancake called injara, which people eat with salt, or a spicy sauce.

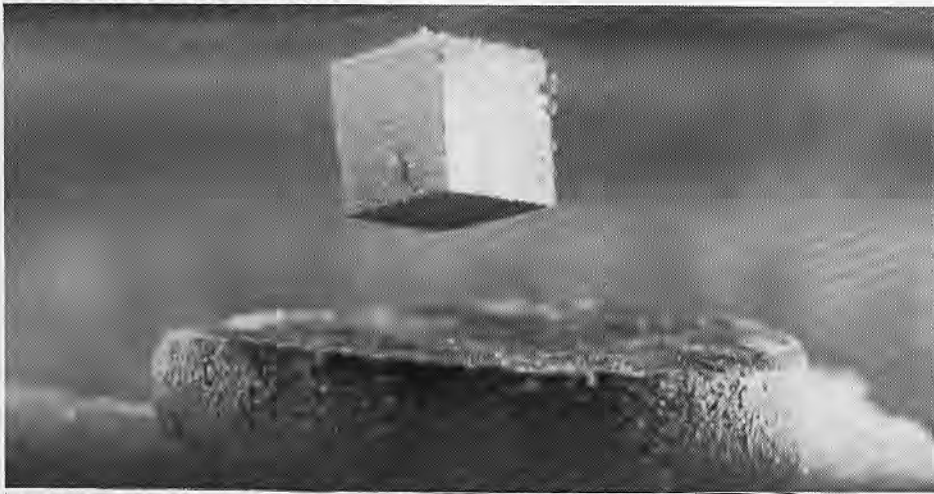
Cultivation of t'ef grain is labour intensive; the land is ploughed three times to give a fine tilth, and the whole family is needed to weed the crop in the early stages. Yields average 700 kilograms per hectare, which is low by western standards. But t'ef is highly adaptable to climate and soil, is resistant to waterlogging, and can mature in as little as 45 days. T'ef is also nutritious: the grain is about 13 percent protein, and pregnant women on a diet of t'ef apparently never suffer from anaemia. British scientists who are working to produce more productive and



Ethiopian farmer with T'ef harvest.

drought resistant varieties suggest that t'ef is where wheat was 100 years ago. They hope to telescope its development.

Coordinated programmes could speed the development of another ancient crop, the grain amaranth (*Amaranthus spp.*). Amaranth is one of the few crops whose eminence was curtailed through legislation. At the peak of the Mayan and Aztec epochs, amaranth was revered as the staple food in the Andes. In certain Aztec rituals, worshippers ground amaranth grain into flour, mixed it with



A magnet levitates above a superconducting disk.

Superconducting Potential

The specialized research into superconductivity by physicists in hitech laboratories in the United States, Europe and Japan is setting the stage for bold advances which could result in great economic benefits for the region.

Scientists predict that within ten to twenty years they will have produced superconducting power lines to transmit electricity without loss of power. Even more important, they expect to develop a means to store electric energy indefinitely as a circulating current.

Superconductors are materials that conduct electricity without resistance. Until recently, achieving superconductivity required freezing materials to temperatures close to absolute zero (-494 degrees Fahrenheit). Starting with a series of advances in 1985, scientists have discovered materials that would become superconducting at higher temperatures. As a result, superfast computers and computer chips are now expected within the next five years. Other early applications of superconductivity will be in electronics and those functions for which no current need be carried, such as frictionless bearings that would float, suspended by magnetic levitation.

The main problem to be overcome in making the transmission and storage of electricity possible is that the superconducting material has to be able to carry a large quantity of electricity.

If superconductivity's energy storage potential is realized, the countries of this hydro power rich region would finally have the means of utilizing the full economic potential of their resources. At present, electricity has to be used even as it is produced, and the

only kind of storage feasible is holding back water in the few Himalayan power projects that have reservoirs.

Software To Develop By

In Kathmandu, computers have become status symbols to prove that an office is at the cutting edge of technology. For those who actually use their IBMs, Apples and Bananas (a popular Hong Kong brand), there is a lot of development software easily accessible to enhance the productivity of their RAMs and ROMs.

A considerable amount of software is freely available in the public domain. For example, the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) offers more than 1100 computer programmes through its Computer Software Management and Information Centre (COSMIC) which are of use to small businesses, universities and government agencies.

International development agencies have produced software for personal computers. The World Bank's "Economies in Curricula Choice" model is used to test the effects of changing educational policies. Software for evaluating policies, standards and schedules for road construction can be obtained. "WHAZAN" is a programme of hazard assessment for industrial facilities to prevent future Bhopal-type accidents. Together with UNDP, the Bank has also developed 10 programmes for computer aided planning and design of cost-effective water supply and waste disposal systems.

Two books should be of interest to readers. *Managing a Nation: The Software Source Book*, is a review of

applications for a wide range of national administrative activities, including programmes for rural development, energy, water, agriculture, forests, population, environment and ecology. *The Guide to Software for Developing Countries*, by IBM, contains hundreds of programmes which are available free or at nominal cost to support development projects. -- Robert Schwere, *Development Forum*.

IBM Research

MOUNTAIN CROPS, continued from previous page...

human blood, shaped the mixture into the images of gods and sacred animals, and then ate them. These rites proved too much even for the blood thirsty Conquistadors, who banned amaranth's cultivation in an attempt to stifle native religions. But for the squeamish Spanish, amaranth might well have become one of the world's major crops. Instead, it is now an obscure crop in Central America. In upland parts of Asia and in Africa, it is cultivated as a leaf vegetable.

The grain amaranth is an adaptable plant, resistant to drought, pests and tolerant of salt. It can thrive on poor, arid soils where cereals would curl up and die. The grain is highly nutritious, with protein content similar to wheat. Unlike wheat, this "super grain" is high in lysine, an essential amino acid. Collaboration between research centres in Africa, Asia and Latin America has enabled breeders at the Rodale Research Center in the United States to select plant lines that tend to be uniformly short in stature, mature early, and upon ripening do not scatter the seeds.

Quinoa, another Andean crop with ancient origins, is grown for its grain. Although it is now confined to the marginal lands of the Andes, quinoa (*Cenopodium quinoa*) was also a cherished crop of the Andes until it was banished by the Spanish. It has more protein than other cereals and like amaranth, contains essential amino acids.

The list of deserving crops is almost endless. There is an abundance of species, new, known or merely forgotten, that could help feed the world's hungry, provide a better diet for others and broaden the base of our food supply. Δ

Peter de Groot is based in London and writes on agriculture and biomass issues. This article is adapted from a longer one which appeared in the *New Scientist*.

GRASSROOTS

Sharing Mountain Water

Sociologist Ujjwal Pradhan takes a look at the give-and-take among the villagers of two hamlets in Central Nepal as they jockey for rights to precious irrigation water.

South of the town of Tansen, near the Kali Gandaki river, there are four Magar villages which are tied together in their dependence on the Barangdi rivulet. From upstream to downstream, they are Taplek, Pokharia, Cherlung and Artunga.

In 1928, Cherlung villagers financed the building of Thulo Kulo (*kulo* = canal). As partial compensation for right of way, they agreed to give some water to the two upper villages, but not nearly as much as the latter wanted. The single canal could not irrigate both the upper and lower villages, so a second canal, Tallo Kulo, was built in 1938 to provide water for Taplek and Pokharia.

In 1978, the District Panchayat approved a project to extend Tallo Kulo all the way to Artunga, which had thus far remained out of the picture. The extension project was supervised by the Panchayat and Local Development Ministry. A meeting was held between the canal members of Cherlung, future beneficiaries of Artunga, the Village and District Panchayat members, and the engineer who had carried out the survey. A "Cherlung-Artunga Irrigation Reconstruction Canal Committee" was constituted. The District Panchayat was asked to provide for "proper, just allocation" of irrigation water based on land area.

The total cost of the extension was NRs. 150,000, with NRs. 95,000 provided by the District Panchayat and the rest supplied by Cherlung and Artunga in the form of labour. The work was completed in 1981. Then it came time to decide how much water should go to Artunga, and on that touchy issue there was stalemate for over two years between Artunga and Cherlung. (Taplek and Pokharia wanted to be left alone, maintaining that the dispute was between the two lower villages. The residents of Cherlung purposefully kept the District Panchayat members out of the negotiations.)

The Cherlung villagers maintained that Artunga could take water only after fulfilling the irrigation demands of Cherlung. However, Artunga's irrigators claimed that the development activity had been undertaken for the benefit of



Douglas Hand

Tallo Kulo users.

all, and that they too had contributed to the project. They had as much land as Cherlung, and so were entitled to at least one quarter if not a third of the water supply.

For their part, Cherlung residents felt that for nearly half a century, they had given their sweat and toil, life and risks, money and labour for the system. It was a private *kulo*, not a state constructed one. It was thus quite inappropriate for Cherlung to give water to Artunga "simply because of some development programme". Cherlung felt that it had a duty to take all measures to safeguard its ownership of the canal system.

If an unambiguous formal agreement had been made at the outset, the two years of deadlock would have been avoided. The dispute had its origins in the water allocation clause, which had been kept deliberately flexible by the members of the District Panchayat. They had tried to keep everyone happy in the short term. Artunga residents were kept at bay by letting them know that until other projects materialized they were entitled to the water. Cherlung's villagers were pleased when they heard that "some water must be given but of course they could not give too much".

Finally, in 1983, an agreement was reached, which stipulated that the grant from the District Panchayat and labour contribution of Artunga irrigators now entitled Artunga to be canal co-shareholders. The water that arrived in Cherlung was divided into 59 units, with four units of this to be given to Artunga. Under the agreement, Artunga was to provide 16 labourers during maintenance work for the four units of water. But Cherlung was to provide only one labourer per unit of water.

The residents of Artunga were to allocate the four units amongst themselves and register their individual water rights with the Canal Committee. If Artunga wanted to increase its share, it could purchase water from Cherlung at the going price. If Artunga managed to arrange for a separate canal, it would have to unconditionally forego the four units of water.

An effective organization, controlled and operated mainly by the Cherlung members, today manages the Thulo Kulo and Tallo Kulo system.

Ujjwal Pradhan is a Nepali researcher specializing in rural sociology.

No More Free Gifts

The Sirsia Project, built over 30 years ago by the United States Overseas Mission (now USAID) in Chitwan Valley, was the first agency managed irrigation system in Nepal. It flopped miserably because it was handed down as a gift to the farmers of Chitwan.

Having taken the lesson to heart, the Nepali Government is now extolling the virtues of selfhelp among villagers. Instead of giving irrigation systems away as gifts, Kathmandu is asking farmers to be involved directly in planning, implementing and maintaining irrigation works.

The Government is collaborating with UNDP and the ILO in the Special Public Works Programme (SPWP) to rehabilitate or construct irrigation schemes using labour intensive methods. The SPWP tries to make full use of local skills and techniques and often hires local contractors from the villages. The largest equipment used is the portable rock drill.

Over 136 small and medium scale schemes have been completed under SPWP, irrigating 5,700 hectares. "In all modesty, the SPWP concept has proven very appropriate for rural community infrastructure works. Projects are formulated in consultation with beneficiaries, who form users' committees and associations," says W.H.W Drenth, an ILO engineer in Kathmandu.

The experiment has drawn the attention of irrigation experts in other developing countries, and now FAO, the Danish International Development Agency and the World Bank are lining up to join SPWP. -- Jan Sharma, Depthnews

ABSTRACTS

HUMAN IMPACT ON MOUNTAINS

Nigel J.R. Allan (Editor)

Gregory W. Knapp and Christoph Stadel
Rowman and Littlefield US\$ 42.50

This comprehensive examination of the effects of human civilization on various mountain regions of the world was written by a distinguished international group of mountain geography experts. Part One surveys the development and scope of the science of mountain geography and introduces the concepts of geo-ecology, altitudinal zonation, and ecosystem approaches. Part Two examines expression and effect of traditional livelihoods, such as agriculture, forestry, and mining, upon the mountain environment in non-industrial societies. Part Three deals with the transformation of the mountain ecosystems, relating both to land and people, and the profound impact of modernization and its socioeconomic considerations, improved accessibility, and advanced industrial techniques.

THE GREAT TANGSHAN EARTH- QUAKE OF 1976

by the State Seismological Bureau
People's Republic of China
Pergamon, Pounds 20

This book describes the massive recovery effort mounted after the 1976 earthquake in northern China. Relief workers who rushed to the scene lacked special training and equipment and so were helpless when confronted with fallen concrete slabs and heavy wreckage. As for the social consequences, earthquake phobia seized the nation, and millions of people left their homes to live in makeshift shelters. In Beijing, 700,000 residents stayed in tents for days, the fear spreading to foreign embassies. The details of the earthquake have been meticulously studied, and the authors make clear that the physics of such shocks is not yet understood sufficiently even for short-term predictions to be made with any kind of confidence. Chinese scientists had thought that some empirical rules could be applied to all earthquakes. Tangshan proved them wrong. The Chinese rebuilt Tangshan and on the same site. By 1986, the only signs of its destruction were the buildings left as monuments. (*New Scientist*)

REPORTING ON THE ENVIRON- MENT: A HANDBOOK FOR JOURNALISTS

The Asian Forum of Environmental
Journalists 1988

The Handbook contains hard information

on how to go about gathering and presenting environmental news. Though aimed primarily at the print media, the information will also prove useful to television and radio journalists. The first part contains guidelines for reporting on environmental issues and the role of environmental reporting, preparation and interviewing. The second half contains brief guides to current environmental concerns such as acid rain, desertification, the use of pesticides, the greenhouse effect and radiation. (*The Rising Nepal*)

THE TIBET GUIDE

by Stephen E. Batchelor
Wisdom Publications 1987
US\$ 13.95

The latest of a number of guidebooks on Tibet, the focus of this one is on the religious culture and history of Tibet, but the choice of language and style is that of the popular western Buddhist press. The book lingers over central Tibet, the route to Nepal, and the Mt.Kailash/Manasarovar areas. Some scholars and general readers will be uneasy with the parts of the text that deal with Buddhist philosophy, ritual and human psychology. The book could benefit from a fuller treatment of some themes and more tabular presentation of other material. It is not the ideal introduction to the country and people for all travellers. (*Himalayan Research Bulletin*)

THE POWER-PLACES OF CENTRAL TIBET: PILGRIM'S GUIDE

by Keith Dowman
Routledge and Kegan Paul 1988
US\$ 16.95

This book provides practical information on the location and significance of major religious sites of Central Tibet, most of them within 250 km of Lhasa. About 170 "power places" are described, including cave sites, temples and monasteries, chortens and sacred rocks. Dowman notes that about 40 sites remained in ruins in 1985 (though there are plans to renovate many of these sites). At 40 other sites, new temples or chortens have been rebuilt since 1980. At almost 40 additional sites the structure of at least one pre-1950 temple remained, though usually defaced and stripped of its sacred ornamentation. Dowman finds reason to be optimistic about the status of Buddhist dharma in the high plateau, arguing that "today the pilgrim finds a youthful and resurgent culture relying on its own inner strength". (*Himalayan Research Bulletin*)

OCCASIONAL PAPERS IN SOCI- OLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY, VOLUME ONE

edited by James F. Fisher

Central Department of Sociology and
Anthropology
Tribhuvan University 1987

This is a collection of writings by Nepali scholars and the editor, an American Fulbright scholar at Tribhuvan University. The subjects discussed are the role of sociology and anthropology in the country's development, forest management by hill communities, poverty in the Tarai, as well as a cutting analysis of "development" by sociologist Chaitanya Mishra. Overall, this publication is meant to mark the coming of age of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. We look forward to Volumes Two and Three.

RIVER GANGA: AN OVERVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH

Edited by S.N. Sinnarkar, S.K.
Kesarwani and S.G. Bhat
National Environmental Engineering
Research Institute 1987

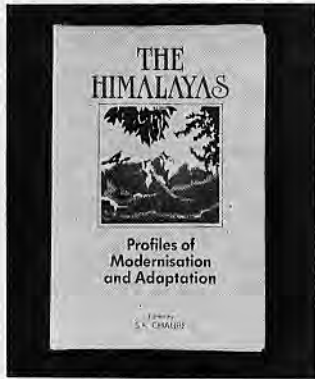
This is a comprehensive compilation of works on pollution of the Ganga. The contributions include important research conducted on the subject since the 1970s. Points of view often differ from one section to the next. There is also some repetition in the text. Ongoing research programmes are highlighted and there is an exhaustive bibliography. Two meager paragraphs is all that community participation and health effects of pollution receive in this book, perhaps indicating the bias of scientists who rarely give due regard to social and cultural parameters of pollution. This is all the more glaring when the subject is the Ganga, which is much more than just another watercourse. (*The Times of India*)

ECSTASY AND HEALING IN NEPAL An Ethnographic Study of Tamang Shamanism

Larry Peters
Undena Publications US\$15.50

This book is the result of the author's fieldwork in the Tamang village of Tin Chuli, on the outskirts of Kathmandu, in the course of which he apprenticed himself to a Tamang shaman named Bhirendra (*sic*). One of the eight chapters is devoted to Peters' experience as a shaman's disciple who did not really believe in the spirit world which was being introduced to him. The rest of the book contains information on Tamang religious roles, native medical beliefs and the nature of trance among

Tamang shamans. The book contributes to the ethnography of Tamangs, a group less extensively documented than the Magars, Gurungs or Sherpas. However, the quantity and quality of the ethnographic research is disappointing. (*American Ethnologist*).



THE HIMALAYAS

Profiles of Modernisation and Adaptation
S.K. Chaube (Editor)

Sterling Publishers, New Delhi

Much of the academic literature on the Himalaya tends to concentrate on Nepal and the Indian hill districts to its west. For a change, here is a book that deals with Nepal and the rest of the Himalaya to its east. This volume is a compilation of papers presented at a seminar in the Centre for Himalayan Studies, University of North Bengal. The contributions by prominent Indian and Nepali social scientists deal with the impact of tourism in the Nepal Himalaya and the Uttar Pradesh hills; the ecology of tea plantations; demographic trends in the Darjeeling hill areas; adaptation of Nepali castes in Darjeeling to their new social status; problems of the tribal peoples of the Eastern Himalayas; and recent processes of nation building in Nepal and Bhutan.

NEPAL: PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Leo E. Rose (Editor)

University of California, Berkeley 1987

This compilation starts with a thoughtful address given by HM King Birendra at the University of California, Berkeley, on the principles and objectives underlying Nepal's political system. What follows is the gathered wisdom of a 14 Nepali and American scholars on Nepal, including Gerald Berreman, Dor Bahadur Bista, James Fisher, Merrill Goodall, Harka Gurung, Judith Justice, Yadu Nath Khanal, Kul Sekhar Sharma, Bhekh Bahadur Thapa, Rita Thapa and Ram Prakash Yadav. A revealing and sometimes provocative portrait of Nepal emerges in discussions on disparate subjects such as the impact of

modernization on ethnicity, changes in Newar urban living, Nepal's economic performance, the population explosion, land use in the Tarai, and "human poverty" as the central problem of the hills. There is also a section on US-Nepal relations, though it is unclear how this fits in a book on development issues.

THE DYNAMICS OF POLYANDRY

Nancy E. Levine

The University of Chicago Press

1988

This book examines polyandry, as it is practiced by the Nyinba, a Tibetan people who live in Humla, in far northwest Nepal. Levine argues that polyandry cannot be explained by economic and demographic factors alone, but is, in part, an expression of values emphasizing fraternal solidarity, identity and political strength. Levine also presents a comprehensive and insightful analysis of the interrelationships between polyandry and Nyinba social organization, political life, kinship, identity and economics. She shows the complex interplay between individual decision making and wider sociocultural processes, as well as the contradictions inherent in the institution of polyandry. The author is also careful to place her discussion of polyandry firmly within the wider context of Nepali society. (Tom Cox)

Name in brackets indicates the source of the abstract, if originally reviewed elsewhere.

THE FOLLOWING ABSTRACTS ARE CARRIED BY ARRANGEMENT WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES GROUP, NEW DELHI

Jackson, Peter

THE MOST ENDANGERED TWELVE ANIMALS AND TWELVE PLANTS.

HOW THEY HAVE FARED

Newsletter of the Species Survival Commission No.8 Feb 1987

A fresh list of 12 most endangered animals and plants was prepared in 1986; this includes the Relict Himalayan Dragonfly *Epiophlebia laidlawi*, occurring in Nepal and India. The dragonfly co-existed with the dinosaurs but is now endangered by human impact on its Himalayan habitat.

THE LESSER CATS PROJECT IN EASTERN INDIA; PROJECT 1357

World Wildlife Fund-India Newsletter No.59 Winter 1986

Little is known of the "lesser cats" because of their secretiveness and the dense vegetation among which they live. The scientists of the Zoological Survey of India, led by Biswamoy Biswas, have been carrying out surveys in northern West Bengal and Sikkim. They report habitat destruction and diminishing numbers of the cat species, and recommend measures such as preservation of specific areas, captive breeding, and the introduction of certain species in sanctuaries.

Nautiyal, Prakash

STUDIES ON THE RIVERINE ECOLOGY OF TORRENTIAL WATERS IN THE INDIAN UPLANDS OF THE GARHWAL REGION: FLORISTIC AND FAUNISTIC SURVEY

Trop Ecol 27(2) 1986

The study describes significant differences in the ecology of the Alaknanda and Nayar rivers and states that the extent and nature of aquatic life is determined by the current velocity, turbidity and water temperature. A classification applicable to all the streams and rivers of the Indian uplands of the Garhwal region has been proposed. Placid "eurythermal" streams such as the Nayar can support high primary and secondary production, and the turbulent "stenothermal" streams such as the Alaknanda are less productive. (Dept. of Zoology, University of Garhwal, Srinagar 246 174, U.P.)

AERIAL SEEDING A FLOP

The Times of India, 6 July 1987

Aerial seeding operations in the Chambal ravines of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh have success rates of 0.4 to 9 percent. They have largely been "panic operations", a desperate bid to achieve the high national target of reclaiming 5 million hectares of wastelands annually. In the Chambal operations, 30 percent of what was passed off as seeds was just chaff and dust. The seeds were not adequately prepared for germination and were air-dropped before the monsoon so their chances of survival diminished even further. In to order set the programme right, assistance of the Food and Agriculture Organization was sought and an Indian forester and a pilot sent to Canada to learn the latest in seeding technology.

A Bi-National Park For Everest?

For a while, it seemed that the plan to expand Sagarmatha National Park and to connect it to an even larger park in Tibet was foundering. The plan for a bi-national park around Mount Everest was being pushed by the US-based Woodlands Mountain Institute and reportedly called for cross-border management of the unique mountain ecosystem.

But what seemed a sound environmental concept did not take sufficient account of geo-political concerns.

And so things remained until last August, when a task force was created to examine the possibilities of enlarging the park on the Nepal side and asked to submit a report within two years. It is now likely that two "contiguous" parks will be developed north and south of Everest in order to preserve one of the most rugged landscapes in the world.

The Woodlands Mountain Institute's Heart of the Himalayas Conservation Programme, begun in 1983, is to pay for the expansion efforts in Nepal and Tibet. It has ambitious plans to raise US\$10 million over 12 years to provide "parallel support" to the two park systems.

On the northern flanks of Mount Everest, Chinese authorities have reportedly outlined a huge nature preserve extending from the Arun river valley westward to the Langtang area north of Kathmandu, reaching sixty miles into Tibet.

Botanist Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha is a member of the Nepali task force. He says the proposed extension on the Nepali side will cover an additional area of about 1382 sq km, which will link the alpine ecology of the high-Himalaya to the dramatic cloud forests of the Barun River at elevations that reach as low as 1000 metres.

"It does not matter that the parks north and south of the Himalayan divide are separately managed, as long as they exchange notes occasionally," says a Nepali conservationist.

As it is, the management schemes are bound to differ, he says, "because the wet alpine conditions and severe population pressure in Nepal contrasts with the fragile environment north of Everest, which is more prone to disruption." — **Binod Bhattarai**



Upper Barun Valley.

Kaziranga Under Water

In September 1987, floods hit wildlife in Nepal's Kosi Tappu Wildlife Reserve. This September's much more devastating deluge wreaked havoc among fauna in Assam's Kaziranga National Park.

According to Forest Department officials, as many as 41 rhinos (including 23 calves), 1,050 deer, 69 wild boars, three baby elephants, two tigers and numerous small animals drowned because they could not find high ground. The actual figures are thought to be somewhat higher. The officials say that although the park experiences periodic flooding, this year's was the worst in memory.

The Brahmaputra, which flows to the North and East of the park, submerged nearly 70 percent of its 430 sq km area this year. Although the Forest Department had created some "high ground" for animals to seek refuge, the exceptionally high level of waters rendered them useless.

Jawans For Janawars

The World Wildlife Fund-India is using help from an interesting source in monitoring and protecting wildlife in India's high frontiers -- the armed forces. WWF-India's President, General Eustace d'Souza, told the BBC in September that Indian Army personnel, in co-operation with wildlife departments in the individual states, were participating in conservation efforts. The

Northern Command was especially active and had recently organized a workshop in Kashmir's Dachigam Sanctuary. Officers of the three services had discussed ways to enhance wildlife protection.

In the Indian Air Force, it is standard practice to report unusual wildlife sightings. For example, said General d'Souza, a cargo plane had recently spotted a feral Bactrian camel and another a snow leopard and some Himalayan ibex. Each soldier in the Northern Command area now had a booklet to help him identify animal and plant species. They are also training local inhabitants on how to preserve forest cover and prevent landslides.

A Biosphere Reserved In Meghalaya

The Indian Environment and Forest Ministry has set up the Nokrek Biosphere Reserve in the Garo Hills district of Meghalaya. The new reserve, covering nearly 50 sq km, is one of the least disturbed forest tracts in the Himalaya midhills and hosts a rich collection of flora and fauna. The undulating terrain of the reserve ranges in height from 300 to 1400 metres, the highest point being Nokrek Peak.

The Zoological and Botanical Survey of India has begun research on the flora and fauna at Nokrek. The Institute of Rain and Moist Deciduous Forests Research in Jorhat, the North Eastern Hill University and Guwahati University are also to undertake detailed study of the area.

New Delhi is said to have plans to set up ten more biosphere reserves, in addition to Nokrek and the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve. The new reserves will include ones in Namdapha in Arunachal Pradesh, Kaziranga and Manas in Assam and Sunderban in West Bengal.

Himal has finally been told the difference between national parks, sanctuaries and biosphere reserves in India. Says an informed wildlife source, national parks are for maintaining the integrity of an entire habitat. A sanctuary's focus is primarily on protecting species. Biospheres are meant to "represent the entire ecosystem in a biogeographic area as well as its genetic diversity".

Swami Manmathan

Ten years ago, Swami Manmathan, known across for his crusades against religious superstition, illiteracy and environmental degradation across Garhwal, stopped by at Anjanisain, a small village some 50 kilometres from the district seat of Tehri Garhwal.

Manmathan caused a stir with his arrival among the villages lying in the shadow of a temple devoted to the fierce goddess Chandrabadni, who was customarily propitiated by animal sacrifices. The Swami saw the custom as an expensive gesture which served only to deepen the poverty among the hill families of Dapoli valley. The women from the villages led a protest and the custom of sacrifice was abolished, but only after the Swami agreed to stay on at Anjanisain to lead a broader movement of social reform and development.

Like elsewhere in the hills, the men of Tehri Garhwal go down to the plains by the thousands in

search of employment (see July 1988 *Himal*). The women stay at home to work the fields, care for the babies and the elderly, and run the household. Some mothers, in desperation, are reported to have tied their children to the bed for hours while they completed their chores.

In response, Manmathan started the Bhuvaneshwari Mahila Ashram and encouraged the women of the valley to form a string of "mahila mangal dals", a self-support group to assist their empowerment. He also created the unique system of "balwadis", or children's nurseries, which have now become the vanguard of social change in Anjanisain. In association with the mahila mangal dals, the Ashram today runs over 70 balwadis in the valley. Here at last, unique in the Himalaya and rivalling the childcare ideals of more prosperous societies, is the opportunity for the mother and child. -- Rajiv Tiwari



UNICEF

other lands, peoples, cultures, literature, music and history. After our children outgrow the balwadis, they are encouraged to enter the Pariavaran Vidyalayas, which are our primary schools.

When a teacher stands in front of a class and tells the children what they "ought" to know, that is not true education. Instructors think they have to pour whatever they have learned into the children, so they can pass exams, get degrees and become qualified for employment. This kind of education produces human beings whose whole focus is to take all that they can from life, with no idea of giving.

For us at the Ashram, education is a drawing-out process and we try to be innovative without changing the existing curricula. We try to humanize education, make it more meaningful, and neutralize the dreadful boredom that exists among so many of our young. Our teachers look at the child as an equal. They teach from the textbooks, but provide the missing elements, be it in maths, physics or geography. Take botany, for instance. The usual procedure in the study of plants is to take a flower and cut it to pieces, draw it and try to classify it. Before dissecting the flower, we encourage the child to feel the flower, its texture, to note its curves, its colours and its smell. The child considers its uses, for decoration, in medicine, and its existence simply as part of nature. This is not an intellectual exercise, but knowledge by identity and experience.

Some might say that we are too ambitious with what we are trying to do here in Anjanisain, in the poor hills of Tehri Garhwal. But as Oscar Wilde said, "We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars."

Cyril Raphael assists Swami Manmathan in Anjanisain.

Thoughts From The Bhuvaneshwari Mahila Ashram

By Cyril Raphael

Through its childcare programme, working through our balwadi centres, the Bhuvaneshwari Mahila Ashram is trying to protect the "rights of the child" in every respect. Our programme therefore emphasizes health, education and future opportunity.

In health, we have tried hard to move away from the "outpatient syndrome", in which only the illness is treated and no thought is given to nutrition, immunization and child-spacing. In the under-five clinics that we operate in the balwadis, the supervisors are trained to instruct mothers on matters such as personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, child safety, vision testing and dental care. Mothers are also shown how to deal with day-to-

day ailments such as cough, cold, fever or diarrhea. We have "feast-days" to promote supplemental feeding for the children. The Ashram doctors and health workers periodically instruct the balwadi supervisors and counsel individual families with specific problems.

While the Ashram is equipped with audio-visual aids, we feel that our volunteers are more important for spreading health awareness. After all, personality, knowledge, dedication and tact are qualities that can never be taught to a slide projector.

In education, we stress "values" more than "techniques", because the child is first taught to identify with his or her roots. The learning commences within the child's immediate environment and spirals out to encompass learning about



Communications For Its Own Sake

By Manorama Moss

Communication strategies are undeniably important for development, but we must ask: are we truly communicating or merely talking to ourselves? Are we using media mindlessly? Little is known about the impact of development communication, yet more and more aid agencies are allocating sizeable sums for "project support communications", money which might otherwise be used for drugs, food supplements, extension workers, and so on.

Instead of studying the cost-effectiveness of image-building, the average project officer goes shopping and buys as much media as he can afford and the more sophisticated the medium, the more he wants it.

The real experts in communications, the advertising agencies, cannot afford such a careless approach to media planning. Their efforts must stimulate a rise in product awareness, or the client will abandon them. True, the effects of development campaigns cannot be measured as readily as the sale of soap or Coca Cola, but there must be measurement and testing at all stages, else we may shortchange the beneficiary by giving him expensive media when what he needs is Vitamin A.

Communication must lead to awareness and action. But the suggested action must be feasible; there is no use telling people not to defecate on the roads if they have no latrines. Some time ago, a leading UN agency in Kathmandu produced a poster which depicts a mother and child. The message is complex and authoritarian, exhorting the mother to stimulate her child. If she needs to be told, the chances are she does not know what that means and there is no attempt to explain. This is communications for its own sake.

The "formula" approach must be abandoned: X is unhappy because she has too many children, Y only has two (a boy and a girl) so she can afford more goodies and is happy. Take the family planning commercial on Nepal TV where happy Dad romps with his children and a little girl is shown kissing her mother, who is driving a car! The product in question is dramatically revealed locked up in a steel cupboard. What a wealth of cliches.

The formula approach also leads the communicator to concentrate on women. Posters tell her about diseases, flipcharts about nutrition, films about child care. The focus is on the woman not because we believe her to be mistress of her destiny, but because she is viewed as more docile, easier to pin down. It is a sad indication of how far off the mark we are that all campaigns are directed at women regardless of the low female literacy rate, and the fact that she can rarely initiate new action.

The July issue of *Himal* reported that UNICEF had teamed up with a private manufacturer to print the "noon-chini-pani" (salt, sugar, water) oral rehydration message on traditional Nepali cloth. That may be communications for its own sake. Do we seriously think that a mother will look at the blouse and remember what to administer to her sick child? We seem to

be confusing her with westernized women who like to buy sloganeering tee shirts.

People charged with delivering the development message must be trained as their task is highly complex; there is no homogeneity of symbols and language, no shared background. There must be ruthless evaluation of all development materials. We must stop churning out media if all it manages to do is to make us look and feel good.

Since the field of development communication is still relatively new and expensive, there must be more pooling of effort. Two rival bars of soap might not adopt the same advertising strategy, but it can be done for "selling" nutrition, sanitation or family planning. The sharing of creative ideas would preclude wasteful and sometimes amateurish efforts. If there is a good idea, it should not remain as a feather in the cap of some agency. Let us co-ordinate, evaluate and communicate in order to take full advantage of what is a powerful instrument for development. \triangleleft

Manorama Moss' book, *Lilies That Fester*, has just been published by Writers' Workshop (India).

Nepali Highways A Hazardous Strategy

By Werner Thut

The World Commission on Environment and Development in its celebrated report called for "economic growth that is forceful and at the same time socially and environmentally sustainable." But how can this general principle be turned into concrete objectives so that the Commission's work is more than a new chapter in the long history of development rhetoric? Road building in Nepal provides an interesting case study.

Of all development activities, roads probably have the most impact in socioeconomic terms. But is the building of roads and market integration the panacea against decreasing living standards and over exploitation of resources? Several studies indicate that it is not. In the late 1970s, a British team concluded that roads in the Nepali context might even be counter productive.

A recent study on the new road to Jiri in Dolakha District east of Kathmandu comes to a similar conclusion. It reports that the highway has led to substitution of locally produced goods, and reckless exploitation of local resources by outsiders. Improved accessibility has rendered the region more dependent on policies made by an urban elite. The region had been exposed to rapid social change, economic exploitation and superior economic competition. The study blames the unrealistic ideas on the part of development planners regarding the process of agricultural transformation. The ongoing process of change for the worse is easily observable in villages along the Jiri road. Jobs in Kathmandu have become more attractive than hard spadework in the little rewarding hill terraces. People are increasingly reluctant to contribute their share to communal irrigation systems. Family ties are loosening. Local communities are under stress.



Claus Euler

End of the road in Jiri.

The road does reduce the price of some consumer items, but it also brings in new prestige goods which replace traditional handicrafts and food items. At the same time, large amounts of magnesite from a mine near Charikot are exported with no gain for the region. During the night, trucks can be observed transporting illegally felled timber.

The impact of roads is a matter of decades. For that reason, highway planners should no longer remain satisfied with post-mortem analysis of social and political consequences of their handiwork, after the damage has been done. The worst possible scenario of future development may be a more accurate point of reference than optimistic expectations and visions of successful hill agriculture exporting fruits, vegetables and dairy products. Development planning *must* consider possible negative eventualities.

What could this mean in the Nepali context? Coherent alternatives to the concept of regional integration do not exist and there has been little independent research. As Chaitanya Mishra of the Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies says, everyone is enchanted with "feasibility and impact surveys". Sponsored research is booming, but the priorities are being distorted as researchers succumb to development organizations.

Nevertheless, there are some tentative steps towards "another development", challenging the topdown approach in Nepali infrastructure planning. Though completely ignored by scholars in Kathmandu, they show ways to a balanced development of hill agriculture. These include developing regional pockets instead of a national market based on a large expensive road network that results in uncontrollable social and economic consequences. Agricultural technology which emphasizes the effective use of locally available resources rather than on fossil fuels must be encouraged.

Such policies would not prevent the peasants' future hardship, but might allow sustainable progress. The rapid development of a national market through roads and more roads is not likely to allow economic growth which benefits the most needy, without irretrievably destroying natural resources. As another expert said recently, policy must focus on increasing the standard of living at the grassroots level. It must only indirectly be concerned with economic growth at the aggregate national level. Δ

Werner Thut is a Swiss researcher. This report was based on a study carried out for ICIMOD in Kathmandu.

Indian Highways Havoc In The Himalaya

By Vir Singh and A.K.Saxena

Environmentalists and social workers have for the last several years been criticizing the "development of the Himalaya through roads" strategy. The people of the region have seen with their own eyes the tragedies wrought by roads. The villagers of Berni hamlet in Tehri Garhwal, who are 10 km from the main roadhead, recently refused a project, saying "we can walk on foot for 50 kilometres but don't want a road".

Kumaon University geologist K.S. Valdiya calculates that the construction of one kilometre of road requires removal of 40,000 to 80,000 cubic metre of debris. There are 45,000 km of roads in the Himalayan areas. Dr. N.Patnaik reports that the Border Roads Organisation has been clearing debris at a annual rate of 724 cu m/km in the Jammu-Srinagar Highway, 411 cu m/km from the Tanakpur-Tawaghat road in Kumaon, and 691 cu m/km in Arunachal Pradesh. All this is in addition to debris already removed during the construction of the roads.

The debris which is thrown down the mountain slopes crushes small bushes and destroys grass and valuable herbs. Soil erosion increases above and below the roads. No river remains free from mud pollution. The Bhagirathi, as it flows past Tehri, takes on a chocolate colour from the soil it carries. In Rudra Prayag, the water of the Alaknanda becomes so dirty that even the animals refuse to drink it.

Along the roads, the regeneration of natural flora has ceased as "pioneer" species invade, plants such as the *Lantana camara* at the lower altitudes and *Rumex sp.* and *Eupatorium sp.* at higher altitudes. Appearance of "climax" vegetation like mixed oak forest is virtually ruled out due to biotic interference on the roadside areas.



Kunda Dixit

The roads have also changed the socioeconomic and cultural scene of the Himalayan areas. As the free market system enters the self reliant and self sufficient social structure, major changes occur in the life support system of the hills.

That roads are synonymous with development is a longstanding and dangerous assumption. However, the construction of roads in the Himalaya cannot be completely ruled out. A new and scientific system should be developed so that after construction the wounded land can be revegetated. Highways should be built only where they are urgently needed, and only in geologically stable areas. Δ

The writers are from Hill Campus in Ranichauri in Tehri Garhwal. This article is excerpted from the August issue of *Himalaya: Man and Nature*.

Who is the Typical Garhwali?

By Bill Aitken

The sudden crop of urbane books on Garhwal have brought forth strident criticism from certain locals, indignant at outsiders daring to say more about this neglected corner of the Himalaya. For some reason, Japanese, American and German writers who have produced picture books on Kashmir, Nepal and Sikkim never got around to doing justice to Uttarakhand. Three Indian names have now completed the panorama, the photographers Gurmeet Thukral and Ashok Dilwali and the well known author Ruskin Bond.

The general criticism about their books is that they are of the "coffee table" genre, a valid point in view of the prohibitive cost of such glossy productions. But to damn them for highlighting the beauty of the Garhwal and for using the best in printing technology seems unreasonable. The authors deserve praise rather than blame for seeking to expose the sublimity of the scene in high quality publications.

If they had focussed on the deplorable social conditions obtaining in the hills, perhaps an outcry would have been understandable. These books, obviously meant to attract the foreign market, do not wash dirty linen in public. One detects in the criticism more political ideology than honest appraisal of the publications.

Both Thukral and Bond are for all practical purposes Garhwali, having been born and brought up in the area. In what way are they "outsiders"? Dilwali spent excruciating nights on the mountains taking memorable photographs out of a great love for the area and its people. How can his tactful playing down of their poverty be viewed as exploitation? As it happens, Dilwali takes great pains to honor local customs wherever he goes. He also makes a point of sending those villagers he has photographed a copy for themselves. It is mischievous to bracket all photographers of the village scene as "interlopers" just as it is tendentious to assume that every tourist is a "cultural threat".

No one is happy at the way tourism has been haphazardly introduced in the Himalaya, but the fact remains that the officials responsible for developing the trade are largely local men. They are the ones who designed and promoted scandalous projects like the Kasauni tourism complex costing IRs 80 lakhs, where there is not a drop of water for miles around. The argument that the U.P. hills could become another Himachal or Ladakh is not helped by the terrain or the attitude of the people.

Ladakhis are unique with the twin virtues of self help and cheerful survival. Kumaon and Garhwal are so caste ridden and fatalistic that many young men deliberately seek risk free jobs primarily for the pensions. To travel in Ladakh (and Nepal) where the land is not caste-ridden is to find flourishing tourist situations with both locals and visitors happy with a minimum of official intervention.

In Garhwal and Kumaon, however, local initiative is unknown and the Government is expected to provide everything. When outsiders do show enterprise, like the Punjabi *dhaba* owners or Bhotia hoteliers, they are accused of ripping off the local

people. It is this same dog in the manger attitude which seeks to put down books designed to honor the land. Neither will they publish books of the hills themselves nor allow others to do so freely. ◀

Bill Aitken is a writer from Mussorie. This piece first appeared in *The Statesman*.

Charcoal Plan Must Be Put On Ice

M.A. Chitale of India's Central Water Commission does not give up. Yet again, there is a flurry of consternation over his proposal to cover Himalayan snows with charcoal dust, the idea being that charcoal absorbs solar heat, which helps more snow to melt, which increases the flow of the north-Indian rivers, which, supposedly combats drought. "The threat of drought could be eliminated if the vast frozen ocean on the high mountains were tapped," says Chitale. Our research, however, reveals the following:

-- there are inherent dangers in fiddling with the complexities of nature. Glaciers, such as Pindari and Gangotri are already receding, and artificially accelerating this trend with charcoal could be ecologically costly. Glaciers play a crucial role in controlling climate and water level in the major river systems. The sub-continent does not need man-made catastrophes to supplement natural calamities.

-- under Chitale's plan as reported, the snow can be melted only in summertime, which overlaps the monsoon. Even without accelerated melting, the rivers are in spate almost every year. This year's floods must give all would-be snow melters pause.

-- breathtaking are the logistics of spraying charcoal by helicopter over the Himalayan snow fields. An experiment proved that spraying just one square kilometre is daunting enough, and a computer simulation showed that covering 128 sq km with the finest grade dust would require 400 metric tons of charcoal, which is many, many helicopter trips.



David Sassoon

To melt or not to melt?
Ngozumpa Glacier, Everest at the back.

-- incidentally, we presume the charcoal would come from burning Himalayan woodlands. This is a great idea, because the resulting deforestation would lead to immediate runoff of rainfall, which would certainly augment the flow of river water to the parched plains. This is called killing two birds with one big block of ice.

-- we seem to have read somewhere that the worst droughts are not in north India but in Rajasthan and Gujarat. If so, it might be a good idea to first invest in a canal linking the Ganga to the Narmada before casting covetous glances at the high slopes.

-- a 1976 study by the Department of Science and Technology reportedly found that "the pollution and logistic problems involved in charcoal dust spraying are very considerable". Indeed, what is the physical, chemical and other ecological fallout from yearly doses of charcoal dust. Will there be additional turbidity in the rivers lead to reduced fish catch? And what else?

Amidst a storm of criticism, we hear that Chitale has backtracked, maintaining that the scheme is at a "conceptual" stage. Until we know more, the glaciers must be left alone to melt at their own pace. -- **Editors of Himal**

A Marketing Coup On Everest

By Ram Pradhan



On 5 May, the television watchers around the world were served with live coverage of the China-Japan-Nepal Friendship Expedition to Everest 1988 conquering the highest real estate in the world. A dozen mountaineers climbed up from one country, traversed the summit and descended down into the other country. The sponsors in Beijing, Kathmandu and Tokyo expressed themselves satisfied, but the story does not end there.

In terms of mountaineering achievement, the exercise was hardly noteworthy. The northern and southern routes chosen had little challenge left in them. The Nepal route, in particular, leading up the Western Cwm and the South Col, has become a tourist passage that can be climbed by any expedition with time on its hands, adequate logistical support, and moderate weather.

Even the live broadcast from the summit was not really pioneering, for American climber David Breshears already did that on 7 May 1983 without hype and hoopla. What the Japanese did was to relay the microwave transmission via satellite to TV stations, which is hardly a technological marvel in this day and age.

The trination bonanza was a massive 252 member affair. Never before had Everest been subjected to an assault of this magnitude. The siege style climbing strategy harked back to the expeditions of 1950s. Veteran mountain watchers were aghast, as were some environmentalist. Everyone else was awash in talk of friendship and more friendship.

Money talks, especially in mountaineering. Which is why,

while there is no reason to doubt international amity up on the mountain, it was the Japanese who called the shots. The entire US\$ 2.3 million cost was paid for by Nippon Television, the newspaper Yomiuri Shimbun and the Japanese Alpine Club. The Chinese and Nepalis were "requested to participate" by naming their climbers and helping transport equipment and



Tri-partite bearhugs at base camp.

locally procured provisions to base camps on either side. All expenses paid in yen and no questions asked.

Having picked the tab, the Japanese got the most mileage out of the enterprise. The live broadcast from the summit, and not the traverse, was their primary goal, and that was achieved spectacularly on the promised day. But someone should calculate the boost received worldwide by this marketing coup for made in Japan camcorders, television sets and satellite products. In addition, it seemed that all the heroics on the television screen seemed to be reserved for the Japanese climbers, as Nippon Television's 39 member camera crew single mindedly trained their lens on their own kind.

The Japanese and the Nepalis had sent along veteran Evereststeers, but the Chinese were all first timers. These recruits got valuable exposure and experience on the mountain. What did the Nepalis get besides abundant friendship? The Nepal Mountaineering Association insists "we got this, we got that", but the decorations, junkets and cash did not go to the foot soldiers who had guaranteed the expedition's success.

The spectacle is long over. The climbers are on other mountains and the cameramen are back at their Tokyo beat. But the lessons of the so called epoch making 1988 tripartite friendship expedition must not be lost. The first thing is that mega expeditions are *passé* and should be relegated to the history books. The goal of any climbing expedition must be to attain the summit as a challenge. There should be no hidden agenda.

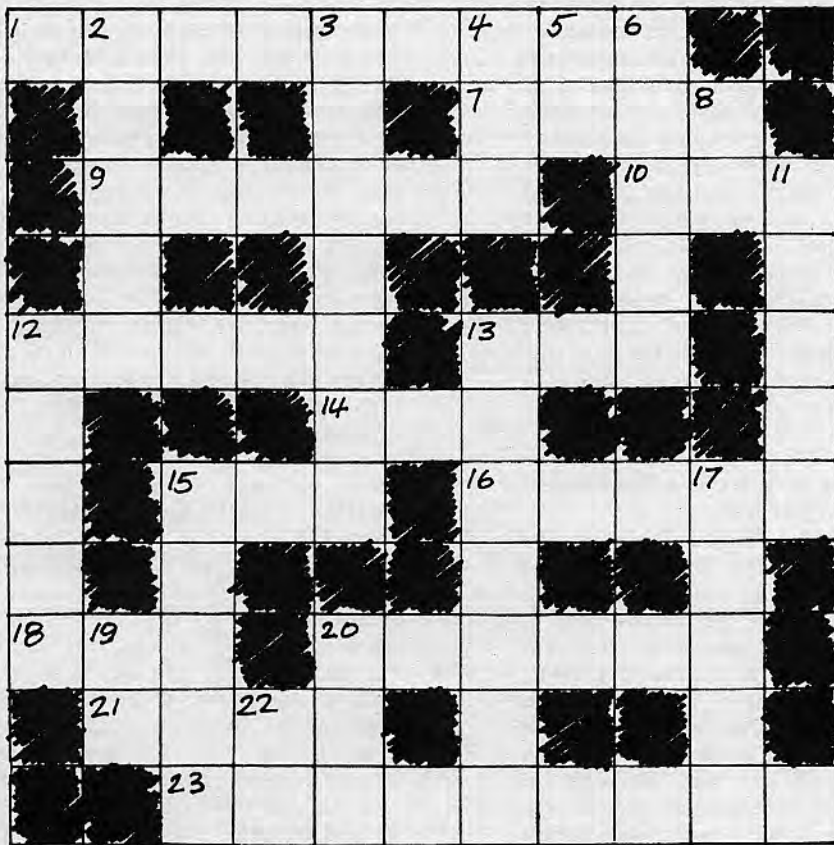
Most importantly, the kind of expedition in which one party calls virtually all the shots and the others serve as semi surrogates must never again be attempted. If one of the partners has to, for example, ask even for passage money for its delegation to attend victory celebrations in another capital, the national pride is the first casualty. Let us remember that climb is first and foremost a sport for the proud. ◀

Ram Pradhan reports for the international press from Kathmandu.

The Viewpoint section is a forum for debate and dialogue. Contributions are welcome. Opinions appearing here do not necessarily reflect those of Himal's editors.

PUZZLE

By Karas Warad



ACROSS

1. Ranging past K-2 and Khunjerab (9)
7. Its ___ turn! (4)
9. Higher altitudes in Europe (6)
10. Stupid resin! (3)
12. First name of mountain goddess (5)
13. Playing o and x like clockwork (3)
14. Susan takes the short-cut to court (3)
15. A lay-over in Ladakh (3)
16. Friendly country in the panel (5)
18. Talkative ungulate (3)
20. A chip of the old environmental block (6)
21. Elusive primate (4)
23. Idyllic land beyond that pass (9)

DOWN

2. There's ___ in the *gumba!* (1,4)
3. Winds lash pilgrims on this holy mountain (7)
4. Catchers of whiskey in East Nepal? (3)
5. Incomplete Mao (2)
6. Hills alive with it (5)
8. First part of Himalayan lake, hurrah! (2)
11. Fourth Ganesh (5)
12. Still natty at fifty (5)
13. Ten Norgays on Chomolongma (7)
15. Manasarovar, Rara, Phoksumdo (5)
17. Pay to enter Maldivian island (5)
19. Yes, ya! (2)
20. See eye-to-eye at Langley? (3)
22. Think what ends 4th (2)



Pabil 7102 m

Karas Warad went beserk with 11-Down. The fourth peak in the Ganesh Himal chain is "Pabil". Good luck with the rest of the puzzle. A free inaugural-year subscription of *Himal* for the first correct answer to arrive by mail at our Nepal address.

Inverted Commas

"Sometimes I call out planet 'mother'. Because of the planet, we human beings came into existence. Now it seems as though our mother planet is telling us, 'My children, my dear children, behave in a more harmonious way. My children, please take care of me.'" The Dalai Lama, speaking at Oxford University in April.

"Development can only come from the Government, not from ourselves. If cinnamon seedlings came from His Majesty's Government, it is 'development', if we (villagers) plant them ourselves, it is not 'development'. If we get something from HMG, then only can we develop, we ourselves cannot develop anything." Woman of Koldana, a Magar village in Palpa District of Nepal, when asked to define "development" by Swiss researcher Vera Christine Lenhard.

"The average British cat eats twice as much animal protein every day as the average African citizen, and a third more than the average person living in the Third World." -- Llyod Timberlake in his book, *Only One Earth*.

THOSE WHO STAND by Bishnu Bibhu Ghimire

Those who stand
will stand anywhere
those who must wake up
have awoken anywhere
like mountains
that can stand
even in the middle
of the plains
like mornings
that can break even out
of thick darkness
for, time is time
no brave person can
shoulder time to a halt
as history proceeds
to take a turn

(taken from *Bangladesh Quarterly*, translated by Abhi Subedi.)

FOLLOW-UP

In this page, we report on significant developments and new ideas relating to articles which appeared in past issues. What follows concerns *Himal's* coverage in the prototype issue (May 1987) and premiere issue (July 1988)

OZONE HOLE OVER HIMALAYA? (July 1988)

There is now even more evidence to suggest that the decline in atmospheric ozone is larger than had been expected at the beginning of the year, and scientists are now certain that the ozone hole over the Antarctic might be a precursor to similar depletions elsewhere. While no new research has come to light about the impact of ozone depletion in the high mountain regions in the temperate latitudes, there is fear of a significant ozone decline in the Arctic region, where depletion is accelerated by a cloud of ice crystals that develop in the stratosphere during the frigid, months long winter night. The possibility that gaps in the ozone layer may be opening in the relatively populous Arctic regions of Canada, Scandinavia and the Soviet Union and perhaps even over temperate regions of the globe, has heightened fears that human beings and wildlife may soon face grave health hazards.

While elsewhere scientists are studying chlorofluorocarbons and wind vortexes around the poles, as far as Soviet scientist Nicolai Korovyakov is concerned they are barking up the wrong tree. He proposes in the magazine *Sputnik* that the ozone hole in the Antarctic is due to the uneven rotation of the Earth. He says there is a "two minute lag" in rotation of the earth in the southern hemisphere with respect to the northern hemisphere, which produces the gap in the ozone layer. His thesis is unique and has not been studied elsewhere.

SWAPPING DEBT FOR NATURE (July 1988)

Advocates maintain that debt-for-equity or debt-for-nature swaps are win-win arrangements in which commercial banks, transnational interests, debtor nations and environmental conservation all benefit. However, the Center of Concern, a watchdog group in the United States, warns that the existing

Third World debt is unpayable and immoral and that the swaps are nothing but "palliatives to safeguard the present system". Debt swapping, it maintains, transfers ownership and a significant measure of control of assets to foreign hands and represent "a pattern of attempted cooptation" which will ultimately hurt the poor in developing countries. Structural conditions responsible for international imbalances must be the focus of private groups in the west, which must work at reducing the level of Third World debt rather than transferring ownership of the debt from commercial banks to themselves, says the group.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN CRISIS (July 1988)

Responding to *Himal's* investigative report, Chhabilal Gajurel, Member Secretary of the National Education Committee, says that improvement in Nepal's higher education must start at the school level. He says HMG has already taken some corrective measures, such as raising the pay of school and university teachers by 25 percent. Of the four categories of teachers in the primary, secondary and high school levels, the highest level is now equivalent to a HMG First Class Officer. These measures, says Gajurel, will lead to better qualified teachers which will inevitably raise the standard of university entrants.



Tribhuvan University has also restricted the number of student enrollments, hoping to graduate fewer but better students. Admissions to the intermediate level at Padma Kanya Campus, for example, is down from 1400 last year to 1100 this year. The introduction of the "10 plus 2" system is also expected to enhance quality by phasing out of the "certificate" level, allowing the University to concentrate on improving the quality of instruction at the Bachelors, Masters and PhD levels.

THE VALLEY CHOKES (May 1987)

In order to carry out planned expansion in the three towns of Kathmandu Valley, the Kathmandu Valley Town Development Committee decided for the first time in June to begin "guided land development projects" in specific areas in the three town panchayats. No construction works were to be allowed in those areas till December 1988, after which it is expected that construction work will be sanctioned by the respective Nagar Panchayat, as authorized by the KVTDC. Meanwhile, the Asan market has cleaned itself up (see "Brief" section).

TEHRI: TEMPLE OR TOMB? (May 1987)

The anticipated costs of the Tehri Dam on the Bhagirathi has escalated almost 15 fold to IRs. 2930 crore since it was first mooted in 1972. The latest hike in estimates resulted from a suggestion to broaden the width of the proposed rockfill dam from 1100 m to 1500 m, taking into account region's seismicity.

These and other claims are made in a 139-page report by Vijay Paranjyape of Pune's Ness Wadia College, who was sponsored by the New Delhi based INTACH group. Paranjyape says the dam authorities have been able to get the Planning Commission's sanction by "overstating the benefits and understating the costs". He says the useful life of the dam will be no more than 61 years; that while the installed capacity of the Tehri power plant was to be 1000 MW, only 346 MW of power could be produced on a continuous basis; and that the number of persons displaced would not be 46,000 as claimed, but 85,600, including 20,000 from Tehri town.

M.M.L. Khanna, Chief Engineer of the Tehri Dam Project has accused Paranjyape of "deep prejudice against high dams" and of faulty cost benefit analysis. He claims that the June 1988 figure for the dam was only IRs. 1464 crore and that the useful life of the dam reservoir, on the basis of silt data collected by the Ganga Discharge Organization, is 190 years. An alternative runoff scheme proposed by Paranjyape would not be efficient, says Khanna.

Additionally, Tehri Dam would go a long way in solving Uttar Pradesh's power problem, he says.

On The Way Up



Kanak Mani Dixit

Like mountain people elsewhere in the world, Himalayans have limited access to information. Radio stations and newspapers from from La Paz to Calcutta beam titillating news-of-the-moment up to the hills, but there is clearly a need to supplement the voices from the plains.

This is where *HIMAL* steps in -- for the Himalaya. We carry news and ideas which you have perhaps wondered why no one covered. We are a thinking person's magazine and we intend to make a difference.

HIMAL is evolving as the needs of the region and our readers become more keenly felt through feedback. Issue after issue, we walk a fine line between readability and bookishness. How do you get the point across without sounding egg-headed? *HIMAL* is not an academic journal, it is not a newsletter that goes out to the already-committed, and it cannot be a Himalayan version of *Geo*. You, the readers, are our guide.

A prominent Kathmandu surgeon told us he liked our premier issue, but would not subscribe. His reason? *HIMAL* would be short-lived like all the other magazines that had come and gone, he said, and he did not want to lose a full year's subscription. Fair enough, as long as the good doctor will subscribe when we are a year old.

Should a development journal have a sense of humour? Should a yeti be allowed to write a column? Are not specialised crossword puzzles *passé*? In future issues, we may expand our "Viewpoint" section, or we may emphasise features written by journalists and not "experts". We may decide to have a theme for each issue.

Have a hand in *HIMAL*'s evolution. Stay with us, and write in.

Environment — Our Collective Responsibility

HELP CONSERVE IT



HOTEL NARAYANI SAFARI



Bharatpur Chitwan Nepal. Phone: 30

YOU CAN EITHER LAZE AROUND
OR YOU CAN READ *HIMAL*



If you want to keep informed,
turn the page for subscription information.

HIMAL ASSOCIATES

Himal Associates is a non profit group of professionals whose objective is to provide a citizen's forum for discussion and action on all areas of Himalayan development, including public health, the economy, environment, education and culture.

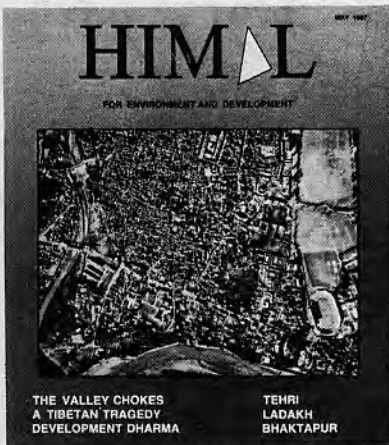
The organization emphasizes the use of indigenous knowhow. It supports smallscale research and applications which directly help improve the quality of life.

Himal Associates publishes the magazine *Himal* because it believes communication is a critical aspect of development. Public information is one of the scarcest commodities in the mountains and its lack hinders progress of the Himalayan people.

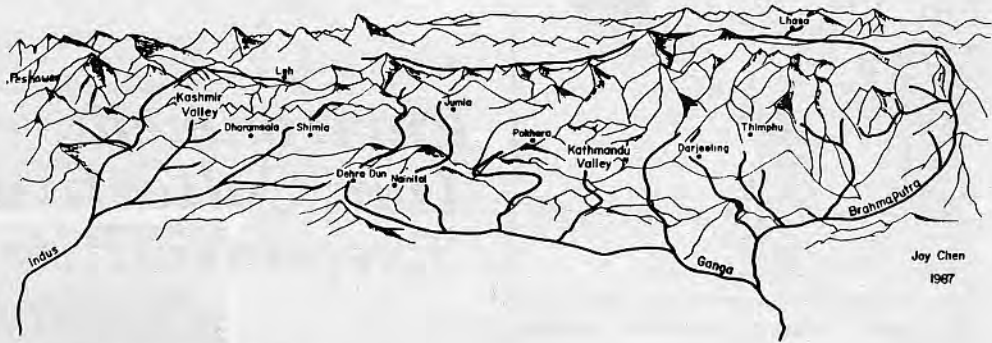
Even though *Himal* is not a political newsmagazine aimed at the mass market, we expect it to ultimately earn its keep. Till then, as publisher, *Himal Associates* will welcome contributions from individuals and foundations to help support this publication.

For further information, write to:

Himal Associates
P.O. Box 42
Lalitpur
Nepal **Tel: 5-23845**



Limited back issues of *Himal* are available. Please write for information to any of the adjoining addresses, citing institutional affiliation, if any.



JOIN HIMAL !

Himal is an open minded, independent publication devoted to the Himalayan region. Its news beat extends from the Pakistan Hindukush through Kashmir, Ladakh, Garhwal, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, the Indian northeast, and Tibet.

At last, you have a magazine to turn to for objective reporting and incisive analysis of trends and events affecting Himalayan society. In covering the life and times of the 35 million highlanders of South Asia, *Himal* espouses practical approaches to the social and economic challenges in the Himalaya. It emphasizes the need to use and preserve the fragile environment for the Himalayan people.

Himal is current. It is readable. And it is serious. It is indispensable, if you want to keep in touch with the region.

Join us. Please send back the attached slip with the appropriate amount to receive a year's subscription to *Himal* (six issues). Send *Himal* as a gift to a friend or colleague.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES

	Individual	Institutional
South Asia	NRs110/IRs65	NRs500/IRs300 (or equivalent)
Elsewhere	US\$25	US\$45 (or equivalent)

Personal checks acceptable, bank drafts and money orders preferred. Address subscription orders and correspondence to:

In South Asia: PO Box 42, Lalitpur, Nepal

In North America: 4 South Pinehurst Ave. #6A, New York, NY 10033

In Europe:

- B. Welsh, Holos Centre 139-A, Battersea High St., London SW1 (for UK)
- L. Debruck, Donaust. 38, D-4100 Duisburg, W. Germany (FRG, NL, B)
- A. Odermatt, Winterthurerstr. 112, CH-8006 Zurich, Switz. (rest of Europe)
- C. Euler, Hagelerweg-7, CH-8055 Zurich, Switzerland (general info)

Please enter a subscripton for me. I have enclosed payment of ___ as a year's subscription to *Himal*.

Name _____

Street _____

Town _____

Country _____ Postal Code _____

CLASSIFIEDS

PERSONAL

Eligible Tibetan bachelor, 32, living in the United States seeks Tibetan match from Nepal, India or Tibet with Bachelors, around 5', worldly, sensitive, affectionate, attractive. Write "Personal", mail to *Himal*.

PUBLICATIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES ABSTRACTS Quarterly journal monitors and abstracts information from Indian and overseas publications on conservation, renewal energy, wildlife, human settlements, pollution, marine resources, agriculture, appropriate technology and health. IRs 200 annually. Write to ESG, B/1 LSC, J-Block Saket, New Delhi-17.

SERVICES

MEDIART PHOTOGRAPHICS. Track record in photography, writing and audiovisual production in all areas of social interest, health, education, culture and the environment. Address: B-231/F, Greater Kailash-I, New Delhi-48. Tel: 64400275

DEVIJI'S DAIRY. Milk, yogurt, cottage cheese supplied as per order in Lalitpur. Tel: 522614.



Since 1968, the only English monthly to cover all aspects of Tibetan affairs, including news from Tibet, commentaries on recent happenings, and authoritative articles on Tibetan history, culture, Buddhism, medicine, astrology, and personalities.

Annual subscription rates:
India, Bhutan and Nepal -- IRs. 48
All other countries (airmail) --
IRs. 190, US\$ 18 (or equivalent)

For a sample copy, please write to:

The Editor
Tibetan Review
D-11, East of Kailash
New Delhi 110 065

HIMALAYAN RESEARCH BULLETIN

An international forum for scholarly exchange among those interested in the Himalayan region. Listings of recent and upcoming publications, notices of conferences, abstracts and book reviews featured in every issue.

Membership in the Nepal Studies Association includes a subscription to the *Bulletin*. Annual membership dues are US\$ 18 for individuals and US\$ 40 for institutions. Please direct correspondence to:

Southern Asian Institute
School of International and Public Affairs
Columbia University
New York, N.Y. 10027
United States

FOR RENT
PHONE: 223019
HOUSES OFFICE and APARTMENT
NEW KATHMANDU REAL ESTATE SERVICE (P) LTD.
KAMALADI (CLOCK TOWER)

HOUSE RENTAL SERVICE
HOUSES OFFICES APARTMENTS
DIAL 221325
KANTIPUR REAL ESTATE
KANTIPATH, KATHMANDU.
NEXT TO THE BRITISH COUNCIL

Building Design Associates
Sanepa, Lalitpur, Nepal.
Tel: 2270 NP NATRAJ, Tel. No: 522456

Comfortable tourist bus service is now available from Tribhuvan International Airport to downtown Kathmandu. No more headaches!

Route: Airport - Hotel Sheraton - Hotel Blue Star - New Road - Hotel Yellow Pagoda - Thamel - Durbarmarg - Hotel Woodlands - New Road Gate.

The one-way fare is NRs15



We are always at your service.

SAJHA YATAYAT

Pulchowk Tel: 521064, 522146



NEPAL PRESS INSTITUTE

Our job is to develop professionalism in Nepal's communication media. We offer the following services:

TRAINING: A ten-month diploma in Journalism, workshops for managers of small newspapers, seminars on population and development reporting, special fellowships for rural reporting, and training for mid-career professionals.

CONSULTANCY: On all media-related issues.

PUBLICATIONS: A quarterly journal in Nepali reviewing developments in communications around the world, and an annual number in English for those interested in communications development in Nepal. Several monographs on media-related topics.

Post Box 4128
Kathmandu
Tel: 215158

Abominably Yours,

Us animals are doing all right. Dogs are gods one day in a year during the Diwali festival and on November 7 crows woke up to a sumptuous breakfast of jilebis. Cows never really had to worry. Perhaps the Khumbu yaks suffer a bit, 'cos they have been regularly nudged off cliffs to make instant steaks for trekkers.

But in Sweden, it seems animals are only now emerging from the long winter of repression. Chicken unions are cackling for their right to be electrocuted before being decapitated. Cows are saying they don't want hormones in their chow no more, and are demanding better living conditions.

After fighting a long-drawn battle in the Swedish parliament, animal welfare activists there have established a rights programme for barnyard animals, according to recent newspaper reports. They are being freed from "factory-farming methods" and may no longer be kept in cramped quarters. Swedish cattle now even have grazing rights under the law -- cows and pigs must have access to straw and litter and chicken must be let out of crowded coops and allowed to range freely.

"Sweden is now the leader in this field," exulted Madeline Emmervall, first secretary in Sweden's Ministry of Agriculture. "It is the best law internationally -- the best for animals." Emmervall should take a stroll down Kathmandu's Asan Tole and see the freedoms that animals here enjoy. Cows can go just about anywhere, eat anything and mate with anybody they

wish. Chicken are free to explore until such a time as they have to lay down their lives at the feet of Dakshin Kali. Every year, Tibetan mountain goats undertake scenic trans-Himalayan treks to Kathmandu. And once there, they hop into taxis or three wheelers to homes where the khukuris are being sharpened. They won't even feel a thing when they lose their heads.

It is still difficult to gauge the impact of this landmark Swedish legislation on animal liberation movements in lowlying Third World regions. But it has already created a stir. I understand hardy Indian bullocks have petitioned the Patna High Court for mandatory ball bearings in the carts they pull. And frogs in the Sunderbans are so hopping mad they picketed a Khulna cold store recently with placards that read: "We Don't Want to Go To France", "Give Us Back Our Legs" and "Ban Frog-eat-Frog".

Despite the far reaching implications of the new pro-animal laws, the Swedes seem to have forgotten one thing -- the fundamental right of every animal to choose his or her mate. No problem on that score around these here parts. Chicken on Olangchunggola's Main Street do it, water buffalos in Siam do it, double humped Takla Makhan camels do it, even educated yetis do it.

But hold it. Did you see that first page item in the *Kuensel* recently that said Bhutan was importing yak semen from Mongolia? It seems 1000 doses of spermatozoa (costing US\$ 10,000 and donated by Helvetas) will be imported by the Animal Husbandry Department in Thimphu. Says the news item: "Until



now the source of breeding yaks has been Ha. But without new strains being brought in inbreeding can occur with adverse effects on size and production." Ha ha, you may say. But it is no laughing matter for the yak wives who are right now chewing the cud in the green meadows near Tongsa Dzong. What the Husbandry Department has in store for them is nasty.

More on yaks. Chinese yaks are getting a hair cut this year. News item: The British Army has discovered that yak-hair is best for the inner lining of helmets and bought US\$ 300 worth of the stuff from China in 1988. The decision seems to have come after the frosty reception the British Army got last month during war maneuvers on the Rhine from Germans who didn't fancy battle tanks churning up their cabbage patch. If the results of yak hair-lined helmets are satisfactory (and a detailed report is expected soon) then the international spot market price for yak curls is expected to hit the roof. Our hirsute Himalayan brethren better hang on to their fur, the Pommies are out to skin them alive. And even if they are forcibly sheared, yaks of the region should take the cue from Swedish parliamentarians and demand compensation for being made bald -- two pairs of woolen underwears, flannel dungarees, turtleneck pullovers and a down jacket.



The most fantastic range
this side of the
Himalayas!



Pasal – Kathmandu's top shop for high quality home products and fun fashions. Linen, crockery, dharis, lamps, stationery, toys, brie-a-brac and oodles more. Whatever you're looking for, Pasal has a nice surprise in store for you. Drop in today for a great new shopping experience.



naya pasal

Sakya Arcade, Darbar Marg, Kathmandu, Nepal

WHERE DINING IS A FINE ART . . .

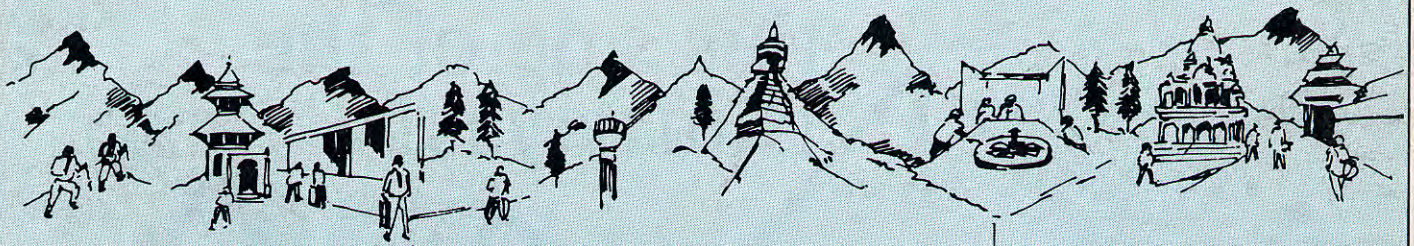
EVEN IN KATHMANDU

Because you deserve the best- especially good food, we got French, Cantonese and Nepali chefs to give you that cuisine which is becoming so rare these days. Come, make dining an art at the SHANGRILA.



HOTEL SHANGRILA

LAZIMPAT, GPOBOX 655, KATHMANDU, NEPAL
TELEX: 2276 HOSANG NP/2257 CMXTM NP
TEL: 412999/410108, CABLE: SHANGRILA



Experience the subtle difference

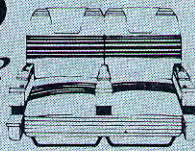


An exclusive experience of 'Shangrila' awaits on board our new BOEING 757.

'Shangrila' Executive Class, as the name suggests, is for the people who look upon travelling as a fine art. Where everything has been so meticulously selected that it will give a new flying experience amidst tranquil setting.

The subtle decor and distinctive inflight services perpetuated from the famous Nepalese tradition, will be a classic experience you shall enjoy on destinations between Hongkong-Kathmandu-Delhi-Bangkok & Singapore.

Shangrila
Executive Class



**Royal Nepal
Airlines**

The way to Nepal