

HIMAL

HIMALAYAN MAGAZINE



The New Lhasa

Kailash Trashed • Dirty Kathmandu



**Northwest makes it easy to go to America.
With a choice of 8 gateways. And connection to 200 cities beyond.**

Choose a connecting city that suits you best :
Bangkok, Hong Kong or Singapore.

Northwest has daily 747 flight via Tokyo or
Seoul straight to the U.S.A.

Be sure to ask about WorldPerks, the most

generous free flight plan there is.

General Sales Agent in Nepal :

Malla Treks,
Malla Hotel Arcade,
Kathmandu, Tel. 418 389

NORTHWEST AIRLINES 
SOME PEOPLE JUST KNOW HOW TO FLY.SM



*The Abode of Gods, King of
Mountains, Himalaya
You bound the oceans from
east to west
A northern yardstick
To measure the Earth
— Kalidasa (Kumara Sambhava)*

Editor Kanak Mani Dixit
Associate Editor Manisha Aryal
Photography Bikas Rauniar
Manager Kiran Shrestha
Administration Balaram Sharma
Mamata Manandhar

Subscription Rates

Only Bank-drafts acceptable for subscription orders made to *Himal* in Nepal. Do NOT send cash in mail.

Individual	1 year	2 yrs
Nepal	NRs 220	400
India	IRs 140	260
Bhutan	Nu 175	330
Other S. Asian Countries	US\$ 12	20
North America	US\$ 22.50	40
Germany	DM 50	90
United Kingdom & Ireland	£ 20	35
Netherlands	Dfl 45	80
Elsewhere	US\$ 25	45

Institutional

Nepal	NRs 600	1100
India	IRs 260	500
Bhutan	Nu 330	640
Other S. Asian Countries	US\$ 25	45
North America	US\$ 35	60
Germany	DM 70	120
United Kingdom & Ireland	£ 30	50
Netherlands	Dfl 100	180
Elsewhere	US\$ 45	80

Send subscriptions & related correspondence to:

South Asia: P.O. Box 42, Lalitpur, Nepal
(tel 977 1 523845, fax 977 1 521013), or
Central News Agency, 23/90 Connaught
Circus, New Delhi 110001

Japan: Akio Horiuchi,
P.O. Box 9, Kiyose, Tokyo, 204 Japan.

Australia: Indra Ban, 12 Norfolk St.,
Paddington 2021, Sydney, Australia.

North America: Barbara Bella & Associates,
500 Sansome Street, Suite 101, PO Box 470758
San Francisco, CA 94147

United Kingdom & Ireland: Joti Giri (Ref: H),
221 Ashly Gardens, Emery Hill Street, London SW1 1PA

The Netherlands: C. F. de Stoppelaar,
Foundation Himalaya, Keizersgracht 463,
1017 DK Amsterdam

Switzerland: Helene Zingg, Tannerweg 18,
CH-3073, Guemligen, Switzerland

Europe: Durga Press (Himal), Luitpoldstr. 20,
D-82211, Herrsching, Germany

Himal© 1995 is published every two months by
Himal Association, PO Box 42, Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur, Nepal
Tel: 977 1 523845, Fax: 521013, email: himal@mosnepal.ernet.in
Library of Congress Card, Catalogue Number 88 912882
ISSN 1012 9804

Printing: Jagadamba Offset Pvt. Ltd. Tel: 521393.



Modernise, Or Else! Building the New Lhasa

by John Grey

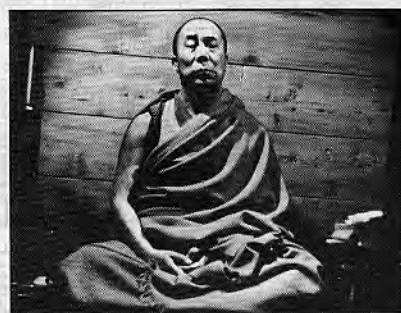
The modernisation offensive in Tibet today has largely bypassed the Tibetans themselves.

Cover picture by Kevin Bubriski shows a Lhasa child with a mock Chinese military headgear.

20 An Elegant Return

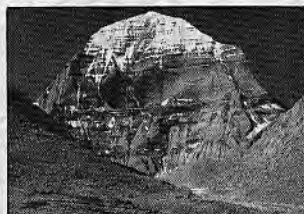
by Roger L. Plunk

The Dalai Lama's presence in Lhasa would help the Tibetan people face their day to day problems with confidence and resolve.



23 Kang Rimpoche Trashed and Commercialised

by John V. Bellezza



Asia's holiest place is turning into a dirty Disneyland.

29 Kathmandu, Mallo Kathmandu

A Photo Essay

41 Citizenship Made Simple

Katha
by Prem Krishna Gongaju

Departments

- 3 Briefs
Balti Cuisine, Kinnauri Fashion
Biofencing Elephants
Climbing Unopened Peaks
Tourism, Bali Style
Placename: Kanchenjunga
Notes from the Karakoram
- 26 Voices
- 33 Review
- 35 1994 Himal Index
- 36 Himalaya Mediafile
- 39 Know Your Himal
- 44 Opinion
- 47 Abstracts
- 49 Mail
No Sops for Uttarakhand
Intellectual Challenge
Gurkha Sorrow
- 52 Abominably Yours

Newsstand Rates

NRs 40 IRs 25 Nu 30 DM 9 £ 4 US\$ 5
United States \$ 4.75 Canada \$ 5.75



Vajra (literally--flash of lighting), is an artists' condominium, a transit home for many, providing a base during months of hibernation and creative inspiration. Its isolation, graphic splendour and peaceful ambience, make an ideal retreat from the clock of pressure.

Ketaki Sheth
Inside Outside

I stayed a week at the **Vajra**, by which time I had become so fond of it that I stayed another.

John Collee
The London Observer



in Kathmandu, the Vajra

Swayambhu, Dалу Bijyaswori, PO Box 1084, Kathmandu
Phone 271545, 272719 Fax 977 1 271695 Telex 2309 HVGHPL

Himalayan Chic for the Upper Crust

Balti cuisine is all the rage in London, and Kinnauri fashions have caught the imagination of Delhi's beautiful people. The Himalaya is suddenly coming in from the cold as far as the Upper Crust is concerned. Should we be worried? Or should we just have fun?!

Sunday of Calcutta reports that "the Balti curry is sweeping the British Isles in the 1990s the way tandoori did two decades earlier". Balti restaurants have sprouted all over, and at last count there were over 100 in Birmingham alone. The dish is a type of Kashmiri curry which is served hot in *karahis*. It is more Asian nouvelle cuisine than authentic fare from the Northern Territories.

A good question to ask would be: is there a 'Balti' restaurant in Skardu? Would the locals recognise what is put in front of them?

But who cares about authenticity when there is money to be made! Today, even British pubs deign to have the odd Balti lamb or chicken on the menu, and a range of frozen, ready-cooked dishes have been added to Marks and Spencers' curry department.

Scene shifts to New Delhi's Siri Fort auditorium, where the National Institute of Design is presenting its annual collection. Models shashay down the ramp and flashguns go off as the graduating class of India's topmost fashion school showed off their work.

Critics and others in the audience conceded that the most striking fashion statement was that of the burly sardarji Tejinder Singh, whose collection was entitled "Kinnaur—The Dream Revisited". Drawing inspiration from the weaving traditions of the Kinnauri peasants, Singh paraded a summer and winter collection which included a centrepiece which was an adaptation of the *dohru* hill sari. He and included traditionally crafted brooches, with motifs for shawls, caps and shoes borrowed from Buddhist and Hindu symbols such as the swastika and trisul. The natural greys of Himalayan wool without dye



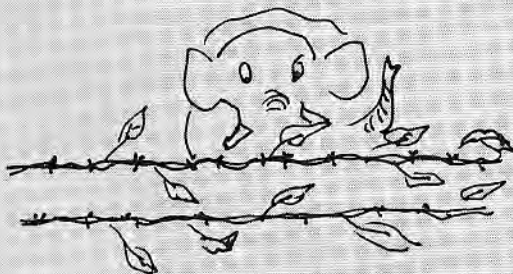
"looks classy and lends sophistication to the costume", explained Singh to the *Pioneer* critic. The designer bagged four awards at the gala.

If Kinnaur and Baltistan have made it, can Dolpo and Lo be far behind?

Elephant Menace? Try Bio-Fencing

"I am enclosing an entirely new concept in controlling the elephant menace," writes Umesh Dwivedi, Darjeeling environmental activist and editor of the magazine *Himalayan Paryavaran*. "I have been experimenting with it in my farm which is in the Bhabar area in Garhwal. It was extremely effective. I have suggested it to the Government of India and the Government

of West Bengal." Dwivedi calls his new concept 'bio-fencing' and it is intended to create a barrier against encroachment into



villages and fields by wild elephants, a problem in West Bengal and Assam.

"I made a fence of the succulent century plant (*Agave americana*). This plant belongs to the family Agavaceae and has a rosette of leaves which have sharp margins. The elephants were not able to cross it as they cannot raise their

feet very high and were scared of the sharp margins. Apart from preventing the elephant menace, this plant is a very good soil binder and has fibre value, which will also promote the rural economy."

Dwivedi also suggests certain "alternative plants" which can be used for bio-fencing: prickly pear, aloe and yucca.

If the Andeans Can, Why Can't the Himalayans?

Cooperation among people's groups strung out across the Himalaya seems harder to start and sustain than in the Andean region, where cross-cultural and exchange programmes appear to happen spontaneously. One such programme, as reported in the United Nations magazine *Cooperation South*, was a recent "women and food technology contest".

UNIFEM, the organisation which supports women's activities, estimates that the Andean women produce, process and sell close to 80 percent of the region's food products and run 70 percent of the small enterprises. Yet they have little or no access to land, credit or technical support.

To highlight the fact that women play a key role in promoting food security and developing small business, a Latin American network of women's groups has already organised two contests, in 1992 and 1994.

These competitions have attracted more than 50 societies engaged in a wide range of activities, from agricultural production to agro-processing, distribution and marketing. One award-winning group from central Ecuador's Tungurahua Province was rewarded for successful cultivation of highland crops and fodder on terraced land, and using indigenous organic farming techniques.

Another award went to an indigenous women's milling and baking group from Peru's central highlands, which concocts nutritious candy bars from local cereals, protein-rich

legumes and indigenous fruits. The Peru group used its prize money to visit women's groups in Ecuador and Colombia. From the peasant women in Ecuador, the Peruvians learned

how to use worms to produce fertiliser and how to dry vegetables. In Colombia they observed the finer points about raising pigs and livestock marketing.

We can only peer over at this sister region of the Andes, and wonder when inter-people exchanges will begin to happen on this hemisphere.

Sunder Lal's Rebuke

Sunder Lal Bahuguna, Chipko guru and Tehri's nemesis, has aimed his walking stick at NGOs and NGOism in a December 12 note entitled "To the Social Workers of Himalaya". Excerpts from his lengthy broadside:

I was fortunate to live with three dedicated souls to the service of the Himalaya, Martyr Shri Dev Suman, Mira Behn and Sarla Behn—and get inspiration from them for awakening the masses living in the remote corners of the Himalaya. Sarla Behn was the last in this trinity of servants of the Himalaya to live amongst us. The new crisis of establishing our identity, which is confronting us today, was not there in those days. We were known as the social activists free from power and party politics, who had launched non-violent struggles to solve the burning problems of society.

The Chinese aggression in 1962 drew the country's attention towards the security of the northern borders. One of the defence measures was khadi village industries and other constructive activities. To carry on these activities a group of institutions and their paid workers came. Though it had no effect upon the small group of activists inspired by Sarla Behn, she became suspicious about the future. She said, "We shall fight the ideological invasion

(communism of China) of the north with the stronger ideology of Gram swaraj, but the invasion of social work controlled by the institutions of south is more dangerous."

The flood of new institutions after 1980, which has certainly attracted the youth desirous to serve, is an unprecedented event. The roots and sources of nourishment of these institutions were somewhere else, so the place of Sarla Behn's hill lifestyle and dedicated work style was taken by NGOs born and bred in the West. The number of these in the Himalaya is in the hundreds, but in thousands all over the country.

(These) NGOs are functioning as supplementary to the governments and organisations like the World Bank. They have played the same role in extending the sphere of influence of state power as was played by the Church in the Medieval Age. Being part of the establishment, they get finances from the government, and the governments of the rich countries now distribute money through these to the



BEHND SHEEL

NGOs of the poor countries. They create a favourable atmosphere for the spreading and thriving of their mercantile civilisation.

These new institutions required a new type of workers, technical and professional, and gradually the place of 'dedication' was taken by 'profession'. It was not necessary that their living standard, life and work style resembled the dedicated workers, because for professionals it is not essential to maintain the oneness of personal and public life.

There is a tradition of voluntarism in this country founded by Gautam Buddha and Gandhi. They were practical revolutionaries who wanted to bring total change in the system. In his daily prayers, Gandhi used to say, "Oh Lord, give me strength and eagerness to identify myself with the common masses of India." This is the source of sustenance of the social activist. In the Himalayan scene, where both poverty and suffering are part of life, adoption of the standard of life of the common people is a practical necessity.

It should not be difficult to decide whether we are

NGOs, or voluntary agencies, or workers of the Gandhi-Buddha lineage. There is a need for hundreds of life-workers in the Himalaya who by identifying themselves with the common people may worship the living idols and make themselves confident about their bright future.

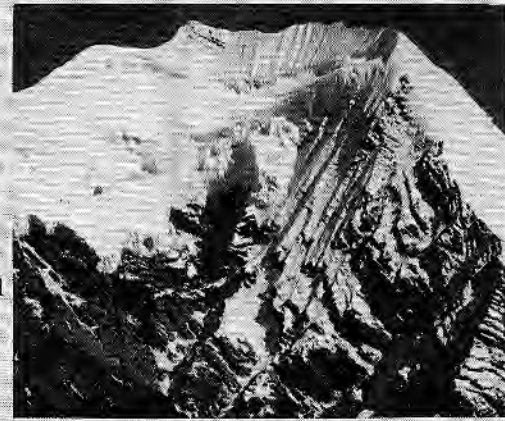
The development policy whose goal is economic growth regards nature as a commodity. It believes in squeezing everything out of it. With the extension of the means of transport, there is not a single corner of the Himalaya left where nature has not been invaded by development in the form of felling of trees or

extraction of medicinal herbs, hunt of wild animals, and mining. With the growing demand for water and electricity, construction of dams first began in the foothills and now has been extended to the middle Himalaya. The governments are promoting luxury tourism in the Himalaya, which is regarded as eco-friendly. For this, air strips and five-star hotels are being constructed. People are being ejected from the limited flat land. This is a conspiracy to demoralise the people.

Mountain people are freedom-loving by nature, but the centralised system has robbed them of this freedom.

Legislation declaring natural resources as national property has been forced upon them. These are exported in the name of national interest. The local people do not get water for drinking and irrigation, but it is exported 300 km away to a big city and to grow cash crops like sugarcane.

Who else will care about these issues if the voluntary organisations and the workers do not awaken the people against these disastrous activities, which are alluring the people with immediate gains? There is no alternative except direct action...



of Drophmo peak (6100m) up the Kangpachen valley.

None of the peaks named above are open to climbers.

If Nepal's climbing regulations do not make sense, and if they actually have the effect of retarding the growth of climbing activities, powerful agencies like the DAV should be in the forefront of trying to change those regulations, not flouting them.

It is intriguing that no eyebrows were raised in the Ministry of Tourism or the NMA over the years that the DAV has been conducting clandestine climbing. It required a tragedy of massive proportions for the public gaze to skim even momentarily over issues important to the healthy growth of guided mountaineering in the country.

The open disregard for Nepal's mountaineering regulations shows insensitivity towards the host country. At the same time, it causes massive loss of revenue to a country that seeks to earn income from mountain tourism as one of its few resources.

There are sure to be other overseas tour agencies as well who are quietly applying the modus operandi of DAV. The German operator just got caught in the act. It is now up to the Nepali authorities to wake up, and either change the laws or apply them.

- Basanta Thapa

Clandestine Climbing

The climbing accident that took 11 lives on Pisang Peak last November (see *Himal Nov/Dec 1994*) had the value of raking up matters that have gone unaddressed in the past. Among the many issues that the Pisang accident threw up was the open flouting of Nepal's climbing regulations by agencies in the business. The Pisang incident indicates that the government is prepared to look the other way while some trek agencies take their clients up pretty much any peak that catches their fancy.

The ill-fated group of climbers that tumbled down the icy slopes of the northwest face of Pisang had a 24-day trek itinerary which included climbing of Pisang and two other peaks, both of which have not been 'opened' by His Majesty's Government. Eight days before tackling Pisang, the group had climbed Rambrung peak (4440m), ostensibly for acclimatisation.

Six days later, they were scheduled to have climbed the 6200m Thorung Ri.

In their press note released in Kathmandu after the tragedy, the company Deutscher Alpenverein (DAV) Summit Club indicated that they had been selling the same itinerary for at least ten years.

Neither Rambrung nor Thorung Ri appear on the long list of 141 peaks open to foreign expeditions, including the 18 'lesser peaks' under the purview of the Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA) of which Pisang is one. Climbing any unopened peak is illegal under Nepali law.

It might be argued that Rambrung is not a peak of substance and Thorung Ri is frequently tackled even by individual trekkers on the way over the Thorung La to Muktinath. And it is true that neither the Tourism Act nor the mountaineering regulations explicitly define

what constitutes a 'peak'. However, no matter how inexplicit, the rules encompass all *himalchuli*, or snowy peaks, of Nepal.

A look at DAV's glossy tour catalogue for 1995 reveals that it plans to continue offering itineraries that are not in conformity with the law of the land. On a 24-day trek to the Langtang region, clients can climb Yala Peak (5520m), Big Surja Peak (5144m) and Small Surja Peak (5000m). Another trek of similar length to Khumbu offers a chance to top Sanu Taboche (5305m).

The round-Manasulu trek includes Larkya Peak North (6065m) and Samdo Peak (5100m). If one is climbing Parchamo, an 'NMA peak' in Rolwaling Himal, Yalung Ri is provided as a bonus. The real highlight of the 24-day trek to Yalung Glacier in the Kanchenjunga region is the climb of 5200m-high Ramze peak. Similarly, a 31-day trek to Kanchenjunga Base Camp culminates with the climbing



BIKAS RAJNIAI

Kathmandu government goes communist and hi-tech. Both Karl Marx and Deputy Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal look the other way as Nepal's new Minister of Communications Pradeep Nepal keys in vital data into his Apple PowerBook during a Parliamentary Board Meeting of the Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist-Leninist) in Kathmandu, Nepal. (Editors' note: five *Nepals* in one sentence is a record.)

PLACENAMES

by Sonam B. Wangyal

gans-cen-mzod-lna
or
gans-cen-rje-lna

Kanchenjunga: (kañ-chen-jung-a) peak on the Sikkim-Nepal frontier.

Geographically, Kanchenjunga forms the natural boundary between Nepal and Sikkim for a short distance. However, the world of tourism recognises it as the mountain of Darjeeling, since the view of the elongated massif from this hill town is magnificently unsurpassed. The people of Darjeeling are given to referring to the mountain as *hamro himal*. The five summits of Kanchenjunga are to Darjeeling what Dharara is to Kathmandu, or Tashicho Dzong to Thimphu.

As if taking the cue from its multiple peaks, Kanchenjunga has been endowed with as many forms of spelling, numerous ethnic names, and their equally abundant interpretations. Scholars have not only been dazzled by the mountain's majesty, they have been

There but for the Grace of Lord Pashupatinath Goes the Himalaya

What to do when the ever-expanding tide of tourism threatens to swamp the core of one's culture? In Nepal, where visitors are allowed to photograph funeral pyres close-up as a touristic draw, this is a question that is not even asked, leave alone addressed. The Hindu Indonesian island of Bali, however, has seen it all before. How Bali has fought and has adjusted to the tourism juggernaut should be educational for budding tourism-and-culture activists in the Himalaya.

Fears that tourism would cause basic changes to Balinese society have been around for long, reports *TWN Features*. The anxiety was heightened in

the 1970s, when the hippies arrived at Kuta beach, and later when unmarried Balinese couples started to live together, and when boys started to work as gigolos in the 1980s. New concerns also arose: drugs, the commercialisation of art for the tourists' sake, and problems with tourists entering temples to 'witness' rituals.

The Balinese regional government reacted with regulations. Nude sunbathing was prohibited, and citizens were exhorted to preserve tradition as the final fortress against the impact of the Western way of life. At the same time, the locals seem to have maintained their ritual and traditional activities if only because this attracted visitors. In major tourist areas such as Kuta, the Balinese New Year, Nyepi, is strictly observed. Thus, outside culture seems to have touched, but not penetrated, the core of Balinese life.

Fears that tourism would

equally baffled by this profusion of names and meanings.

W.D. Freshfield in 1903 (*Round Kanchenjunga*), probably out of sheer frustration, wrote, "The name Kanchenjunga (however it may be spelled) is fairly familiar." In fact in his book of nearly 400 pages, he avoided controversy by not even attempting to explain names, spellings and meanings.

H.H. Risley, in *The Gazetteer of Sikkim* (1894), writes, "In the mountains and passes we have such names as Kanchinjingna = *Kang-chhen*, "great snow", *mDzod*, "treasury", and *lna*, "five". The legend has it there are five treasures to be found in the mountain, but it may have reference to the five peaks forming the mountain."

An elaborate explanation with minor variations in interpretation and spelling is given by Col. L.A. Waddell in *Among the Himalayas* (1899), which reads, "The highest peak of Kanchanjunga and the true summit (28150 ft), is called by the Tibetans, 'The Repository of Gold'. This name, it seems to me, has arisen from the interpretation of the popular name of the mountain in too literal and mythological manner. The name Kanchanjunga is Tibetan and means, literally, 'The Five Repositories of the Great Glaciers,' and it is physically descriptive of the five peaks. When, however, the patron saint of Sikkim wrote the manual for worship for this mountain-god he converted these five 'repositories' into real storehouses of the god's treasures... In this way the loftiest

destroy the moral foundations of the Balinese society have been assessed as being too alarmist and unjustified. As Ida Bagus Oka, the Governor of Bali, says, "Bali will always be Bali."

But there has been no let up as to new threats. In the 1980s, there was a land boom fueled by tourism. Many Balinese became rich overnight as their land was sold for previously unimaginable sums. There was also concern over non-Balinese being allowed to own land for hotel development. Meanwhile, those who sold the land moved into the interior, buying coffee and clove plantations, while those from the interior left Bali altogether and moved to other islands.

The latest focus of controversy are plans to build the Bakrie Nirwana Resort at Tanah Lot in Tabanan. Never before has a tourist resort development been so widely and unanimously rejected, for

Tanah Lot is a sacred site for Balinese Hindus. It is also a major draw for the tourist, with millions of images of the main temple sold as postcards and between coffee table book covers. While no one in Tanah

Lot wants to be described as anti-tourist, they are nevertheless gripped by doubt.

Those who worry about tourism and Balinese culture have begun to ask

themselves: Does the increase in tourism activity have to give birth to a never-ending succession of anxieties? A question that is increasingly relevant in parts of the Himalaya as well.

A Revolving Restaurant on Nuptse

If it happened on this side of Chomolongma, it had to happen on the other side as well: a luxury hotel up close by the mountain. Climber Stephen Venables reports in the October issue of *High* on plans to build a five-starrer at Rongbuk Base Camp. The China Tibet Mountaineering Association has already taken the decision, and the plan is being chaperoned by New Zealand mountain guide Russell Brice, remembered for his balloon flight over Chomolongma in 1991.

Venables is a pragmatist-fatalist. While conceding that traditionalists will balk at the

idea of a hotel at the hallowed site, he maintains that "whatever one's opinion of the place, the fact is that Everest is increasingly a commodity, on sale to ever larger numbers of people, putting ever greater pressure on a fragile desert environment."

He continues, "Brice's view is that, rather than bury our heads in the Tibetan sand, we should accept the reality of the problem and cater for it effectively; if the CTMA wants to build a lodge it might as well be a really good lodge." The entrepreneur Brice is said to be anxious that the hotel be built of local stone and that the

buildings do not project over the moraine, disturbing the famous view southward from Rongbuk gomba.

The hotel's clients will be tourists traveling the overland Lhasa-Kathmandu route. Mountaineers will get spin-offs from the hotel's presence: vehicle servicing, telecommunications, 24-hour monitoring of climbers' radios, and emergency services. Venables reports that Brice is negotiating with Asian Helicopters in Kathmandu to fly its Russian whirlybirds over the border on rescue missions.

Next, obviously, will be a funicular up to the North Col and a rotating restaurant atop Nuptse.

crest, which was most conspicuously gilded by the rising and setting sun, was made the treasury of gold; the southern peak which remained in cold grey shade till it whitened in the rising sun was made the treasury of silver, and the remaining peaks were made respectively the treasures of gems, grains and holy books..."

According to H.A. Jaschke's *A Tibetan-English Dictionary* (1958), there are two names in Tibetan: 1. *gans-cen-mzod-lna*, the five receptacles of the vast glacier ice, and 2. *gans-cen-rje-lna*, the five kings of the vast glacier ice. It is interesting that the above names carry no mention of the Tibetan word *rDzon* (dzong), meaning castle or fortress. In *The Indo-Tibetans* (1954), Hermann's Tibetan version is similar to Jaschke's, where *kang-chan-mdzod-lnga* is given as 'Great glacier ice of the five store-rooms'.

The Lepcha, indigenous people of the Darjeeling hills, have their own names for this lofty mountain. The closest to the Tibetan name is *kong-chen* or *kang-chen* which is borrowed from the Tibetan/Sikkimese pronunciation *gangs-chen*. According to Tamsang's Lepcha dictionary (now in print), the Lepcha name is *king-taum-zong-bu-cu*, in which *king-taum* means fate, fortune or destiny. On the other hand, Fr. M. Hermans claims that the Lepcha name is *king-tzum-song-bu*, meaning 'the highest over our head'. His book, *The Indo-Tibetans* (1954) explains that *king-tzum* = (the highest part of the forehead, and *song-bu* = the highest).

Another Lepcha name *kon lu-cu* (the highest curtain of snow) is cited from Waddell in G.B. Mainwaring's *A Dictionary of the Lepcha Language* (1898). Prof. R.K. Sprigg believes that *kon* is a mistaken reference to *kong/kang* (snow) and *lo* also a mistaken reference to *lho* (a high mountain), while *cu* would mean the snowy range or snowy peak.

According to another researcher, T. Chattopadhyay (*Lepchas and Their Heritage*, 1990) there is yet another interpretation: *kong-chen-kong-lho*, in which the last two words are Lepcha, as given by Prof. Sprigg, and the first two have been borrowed from Tibetan. Hermans and Prof. Sprigg are both of the opinion that Kanchenjunga is etymologically of Lepcha origin with the phonetic reproduction in Tibetan having, co-incidentally, strikingly meaningful interpretations.

In this writer's opinion, the name is of Tibetan origin, and Waddell's explanation (quoted above) has too much in it to be just a striking coincidence. Even Mainwaring, whom many consider to be the father of the Lepcha language, in his dictionary of the Lepcha gives *kan-cen-jon-na* and *gans-can-ljons-lma* as Tibetan equivalent of 'Kunchinjinga'. He even adds for *namen propium* another variant, *kan-cen-dzo-na*, which is also Tibetan.

Dr. S.B. Wangyal Practises medicine in Jaigaon, West Bengal.

Along the KKH

Notes from the Karakoram

Gilgit and Hunza have seen a decade of steady growth since the opening of the Karakoram Highway (KKH) in 1978. Kathmandu-based writer **John Mock**, who was in the Northern Areas recently, shares his notes on Gilgit's development, the accompanying environmental woes, plus some encouraging signs of activism.

Gilgit to the Sea
With the KKH, once-isolated Gilgit was linked by road to the major population centres of Pakistan. Overland trade, which had previously been mostly with nearby Kashgar, shifted to down-country Pakistan, an 18-hour drive through the Indus River gorge.

In 1984, foreigners were allowed on the stretch of the KKH north of Gilgit, through Hunza and over the Khunjerab Pass into China. The number of foreign tourists rose to 4137 annually by 1989, but that was a small number compared to the 24,054 Pakistanis who crossed into Tibet that very year. Drawn by the profits to be made importing Chinese consumer goods and silk cloth for sale in down-country bazaars, Pakistani traders swarmed to the modern-day Silk Route entrepot of Kashgar.

This year, representatives of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan visited Gilgit to study the prospects of establishing a direct overland trade route from their capitals to the sea port of Karachi. This will require the widening of the 1300 km-long stretch between Kashgar and Rawalpindi to accommodate higher volume of heavy traffic. Once-remote Gilgit is well on its way to becoming a centre of Central Asian trade.

Bad Water. In 1993, some Gilgit residents formed the Karakoram Society for Natural and Environmental Rehabilitation (KASNER). The non-profit group wants to promote awareness and education to combat environmental problems before they become irreversible. KASNER has opened an information centre at the Al-

Drivers clean their vehicles here, and stable boys wash their horses. Fertilizer and pesticide runoff from the fields wash directly into the flowing water.

Gilgit does not have a waste treatment system and raw sewage flows directly into the two channels. Even as KASNER is pushing for quick action, the incidence of enteric fever and hepatitis is increasing in Gilgit.

Shallow Polo. The Shandur Polo Tournament is a well-publicised four-day tourist extravaganza that draws up to fifty thousand spectators and merry-makers to the Shandur Pass, at 3800 m and lying between Gilgit and Chitral.

Ashiq Hussain, "The influx of outsiders is commercialising this region faster than we can accommodate. At the same time, the rapidly growing population is disturbing the natural cycles of our sensitive ecosystem."

Khunjerab Clean-Up. North of Gilgit along the KKH, in the region of upper Hunza called Gojal, student activists have formed the Khunjerab Student Federation (KSF). Although initially begun in 1990 to promote education, the group has turned towards green work because of the ecological degradation along the KKH.

The KSF has launched a campaign to ban the use of plastic bags and to stop the

Let's fight pollution!

Khunjerab Students Federation

Kamal House in central Gilgit, held anti-pollution marches through the main bazaar, surveyed the town water supply system, and led a protest action at this past summer's Shandur Polo Tournament.

The Gilgit water supply is fed by two main channels constructed back in 1625. The town has expanded along these channels, which have become the garbage disposal sites for the expanding population. People dump their refuse directly into the watercourses: old batteries, shoes, plastic bags and everything else.

Star polo players from all over Pakistan compete in this high-altitude polo, with even the incumbent Prime Minister occasionally making a guest appearance by helicopter. At the 1994 event in July, KASNER activists protested the lack of adequate sanitation at the tournament site and the trashing of the alpine meadows and a nearby lake by the careless revellers. Police lathi-charged the protesters and removed them forcibly. After the revellers had gone home, the activists remained behind to clean up the paper and plastic refuse.

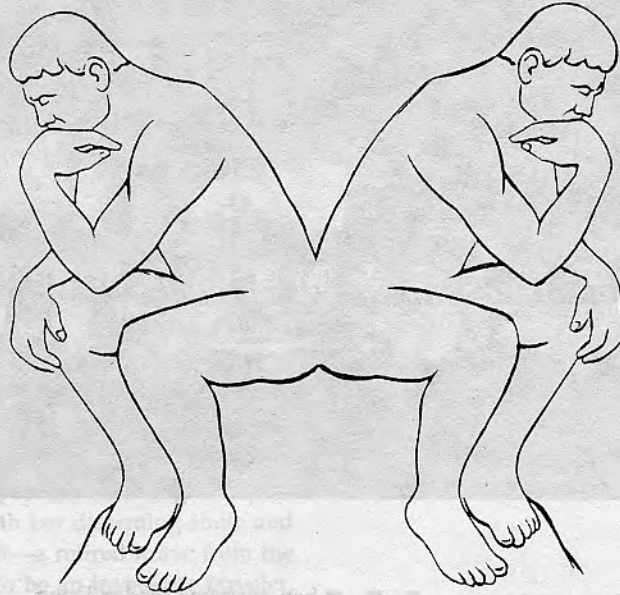
Says KASNER organiser

burning of plastic. Litter containers have been placed in areas where villagers gather, particularly at the customs and border post in Soust village. The group has also branched into eco-tourism, training local guides to be ecologically responsible during treks.

Whether another eco-friendly culture of the South Asian mountains will be overwhelmed by progress will largely depend on the success of grassroots organisations like KSF and KASNER.

Contact: KSF, PO Soust, Village Morkhun, Gojal, Hunza District, Gilgit, Northern Areas.
KASNER, PO Box 551, Gilgit, Northern Areas.

**For once,
Think twice !**



**Are you looking for the cheapest rates ?
Or, do you want value for your money ?**

At Summit Nepal Trekking we design our programmes
that ensure you get full value for your money .

Write or call us at :



SUMMIT NEPAL TREKKING

P.O.Box 1406,Kupondol,Kathmandu,Nepal

Tel:525408,521810

Fax: 977 1 523737

Modernise, Or Else! Building the New Lhasa



Propaganda banner in front of the Jokhang temple.

The 1990s has seen an unprecedented modernisation offensive in Tibet, and an attempt to transform the ancient capital into a frontier boom-town. But how much say do Tibetans have in the future of their country?

Text and picture by John Grey

When supreme leader Deng Xiaoping toured China's southern provinces in early 1992 and launched the now famous 'Spring Tide' initiative, it was a signal of the central leadership's vigorous support for liberal economic reforms. Since that time, many of China's southern and eastern provinces have experienced unprecedented economic growth, with the development of free enterprise and the emergence of domestic consumerism, fuelled both by foreign investment and greater internal mobility of capital and labour.

In the same period, party and government officials in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) unleashed a new 'Socialist Modernisation' programme that emphasised urban construction, improved infrastructure, and development of a market economy while maintaining the ongoing imperative to 'crush separatism' and ensure 'stability'. The now frequently cited 22-character

guideline handed down from the Party Central Committee reads, "Seize the Opportunity, Deepen Reform, Open up Wider, Promote Development, Maintain Stability."

The grandiose language of the socialist planners can be hard to fathom, but TAR's Deputy Party Secretary Raidi (*Rakti* in Tibetan), addressing cadres in the Tibetan capital in early 1994, spelled the policies out in clearer terms. In the *Xizang Ribao* of 2 August 1994, he described 'reform' as "linking Tibet's economic restructuring with the whole country", and 'stability' as "stepping up construction of contingents of troops stationed in Tibet, armed police, judicial, procuratorial and public security workers."

A few days later, Raidi's colleague Danzim (Tib: *Tenzin*) told a visiting delegation from Macao, as reported in *Xizang Ribao*: "We firmly believe that a united, prosperous and civilised Socialist New Tibet will

surely be able to stand firm on the Tibet plateau—the roof of the world.” During their stay, the delegation had negotiated a contract worth 600 million Yuan (Y8=US\$1, approximately) to build an entertainment park on an island on Lhasa river.

In Lhasa city itself, ‘socialist modernisation’ policies since the spring of 1992 have had some highly visible effects. Firstly, a significant increase in the city’s population, principally due to an influx of Han economic migrants from mainland provinces. Secondly, a marked increase in urban growth, including a burst of new construction projects—commercial, residential, official, military—throughout the city.

Neither are exactly new developments. One of the authoritative city planning documents (CCP Central Committee Document No. 31-1980) finalised in 1985 and subsequently leaked to western researchers states that “the population of the city has developed from 30,000 at the beginning of the Liberation to some 110,000 now. The built-up area has increased from less than 3 sq km to 25 sq km. The newly constructed area is ten times that of the old city... By the year 2000 population should be controlled so as to be 200,000. The area for construction should be 42 sq km by this time... (We shall) create a city that is relatively perfect, beneficial for production, convenient for daily life, rich, civilised and clean.”

In fact, official population figures are notoriously unreliable throughout the People’s Republic of China (PRC); official sources still give figures from 120,000 to 180,000 for the Lhasa of today, also claiming that 87 percent are Tibetan. The Han population of TAR is said to be merely three percent. Unofficial estimates of Lhasa’s civilian population range from 300,000 to 400,000, perhaps 20-30 percent Tibetan.

The dramatic increase in the Han population since 1992 is due to the influx of migrant entrepreneurs attracted by the new economic climate and the relaxation of controls on

internal movement. Roadblocks between TAR and neighbouring provinces were reportedly lifted in December 1992, and bureaucratic controls such as residence permits are now waived in favour of such migrants, according to an independent 1994 survey on Chinese economic migrants by a Western group, the Alliance for Research in Tibet (ART). A considerable number of the new arrivals, perhaps 20-30 percent, are Hui-zhou Muslims from the north—western provinces of China, noted for their willingness to travel in pursuit of business opportunities—but the majority, about 45 percent of those questioned in the survey, are from the populous Sichuan province bordering eastern Tibet.

The majority of the new migrants are engaged in the commercial and retail sectors. They have swollen the city’s Han population, formerly composed of soldiers, officials, technicians, engineers and cadres posted here. In 1993, an unofficial head count of shops and businesses in Lhasa found that Tibetan-owned concerns accounted for 10-15 percent of the total, government-owned concerns 8-9 percent, with the remainder being run by ethnic Han or Hui entrepreneurs. The Xinhua news agency reported in August that 1700 new businesses had opened in Lhasa since January. It added: “A series of preferential policies have been stipulated which encourage the rapid growth of the private sector.”

The Four Modernisations

Other effects of ‘socialist modernisation’ in Lhasa are less visible and more difficult to assess, but they are matters of some concern to Tibetan residents. These could be considered in four categories: inflation and price rise, privatisation of public services and increasing official corruption, Tibetan unemployment and economic polarisation, and pollution—both environmental and spiritual.

Inflation. Tibet is increasingly linked with the dynamic mainland economy, which has been character-

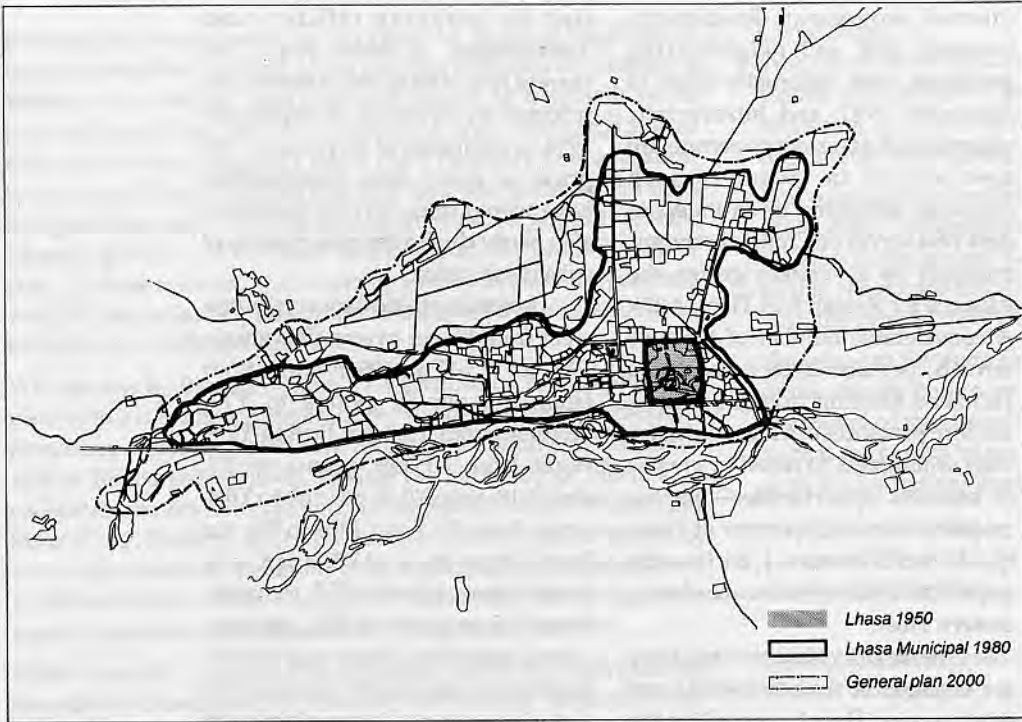
ised by spiralling inflation and ‘over-heating’ in recent years. The current rate of inflation in the PRC, as reported by *Newsweek* in September 1994, is estimated at 30 percent. The prices of many basic commodities have soared since 1991-92, but this is also partly due to the cancellation of subsidised rations.

According to local sources, butter went from Y5 per gyama (500 gm) in 1990 to Y15-17 in 1994; wheat flour from Y30 per 50 gyama to Y77, kerosene from Y0.8 per litre to Y2.8, sugar from Y1 per gyama to Y7.4, electricity from Y0.05 per unit to Y0.4, petrol from Y1.7 per litre to Y3, tea from Y1 per brick to Y3, dried milk from Y4 per packet to Y7.5, tomatoes from Y0.5 per gyama to Y2.7, and blue canvas boots from Y4 per pair to Y9.5. In addition, the costs of rent, transport and consumer goods have increased sharply, as has the need to bribe officials to obtain permits or receive public services.

Privatisation, corruption. Although senior PRC officials frequently refer to the large subsidies lavished on Tibet as a “special consideration”

Hair salon opened by new arrivals from Sichuan. Of more than 50 such establishments in Central Lhasa, not one is Tibetan-owned.





Map of Lhasa, based on official information, shows the size of Old Lhasa, its dimensions in 1980, and the dimensions the site will attain by the year 2000.

to ensure free medical care, education, tax exemptions etc., these benefits have now effectively given way to market forces. Private clinics have appeared on the street corners as health workers desert the poorly-funded and demoralised state hospitals. Nearby, one may find a pharmacy illicitly selling off 'surplus' hospital drugs.

Meanwhile, the legions of regulatory officials encountered in everyday life are by no means always well-paid or scrupulous. It seems that any new business in the Tibetan quarter of Lhasa can expect extortionate demands from tax officials, fire and health inspectors and others for concealed bribes or spurious payments of one kind or another. Citizens may find themselves obliged to bribe officials with sums stretching into thousands of Yuan for anything from reallocation of housing to birth or marriage certificates and residence permits (still mandatory for Tibetans). With the average Tibetan monthly wage at around Y200-300, this can be expensive.

Economic Polarisation. While surveys or statistics are not available, there is little doubt that unemployment is increasing among Tibetans in

Lhasa. The current economic boom has excluded them for two main reasons. First, jobs and advancement in Chinese economic life usually depend on *guangxi* or personal connections, and Han people naturally prefer their own kind. Second, Tibetan workers generally cannot compete on the modern sector's terms—economic efficiency—with their Han counterparts, who are fully accustomed to the cut-throat competition and ruthless commercial ethics of mainland China.

Inability to compete has led to

marginalisation of the traditional Tibetan economy. Tibetan products—whether it is *dri* butter, woollen carpets, wooden tables or leather boots—tend to be more natural and of higher quality than Chinese consumer goods, but they are increasingly unaffordable. Artisans must adapt to competition with the mainstream mass-production economy, while consumers must adapt to cheap and shoddy imported products. Those still engaged in the traditional economy—artisans, shopkeepers, traders, farmers—cannot keep up with the rising cost of urban living. To make ends meet, many have resorted to renting their homes and fields to Han migrants

Pollution. According to official reports (*carried in the Xizang Ribao*) it is only in the last year that Lhasa's municipal authorities have sought foreign contractors to build a sewage plant in the city. Until now, such facilities have remained limited, and the bulk of the untreated sewage has been dumped directly in the Kyichu river. Rubbish and wastes are routinely dumped along the highway east of the Lhasa bridge. A municipal 'clean-up' campaign in August 1993 apparently did not even address the issue of pollution, but concentrated instead on erecting railings and traffic barriers, and on clearing beggars and itinerants from the alleys of the old city.

Nonetheless, the TAR govern-

Pool tables in the Tibetan quarter, where the game is a favourite pastime of unemployed youth.



ment does have a bureau responsible for environmental protection. Its report for 1993 states that discharge of waste gases in Lhasa increased by 40 percent over the previous year, discharge of waste water by 133 percent (including the Yangpachen geothermal plant), and discharge of industrial solid wastes by 17 percent. Environmental noise was measured at above 60 decibels in Central Lhasa, exceeding permitted national levels.

Some Lhasa residents regard 'spiritual pollution' (a communist phrase applied mostly against 'degenerate Western values') as the real downside of modernisation. Lhasa's streets, formerly deserted after nightfall, now buzz with nightclubs, Karaoke bars, video halls and brothels. By day, the young, the idle and the footloose dawdle around pool tables and game machines, or gaze at crude martial arts videos blaring from dismal screens. Alcoholism, street crime, robbery, and violent behaviour are all said to be increasing.

Overall, one has the firm impression that few Tibetans in Lhasa are enthused with the 'socialist modernisation' policies, and that many regard them as official encouragement for Han migration to the TAR and domination of the local economy. A leaflet produced by the underground group Cholsum Thuntsok and distributed in August 1992 reads: "Nowadays China is opening up the whole of Tibet on the pretext of economic development, but in reality it is in order to deny Tibetans rights and work through the endless transfer of Chinese people to live here... Anyone who has eyes can see houses for Chinese being constructed everywhere in great haste."

Patriotic License

It is not easy to get a clear picture of what is happening in Tibet, simply because despite the 'open policy' it remains a tightly closed country in many respects. Information is hard to obtain under a regime that forbids open discussion of public policy, zealously withholds news and

information from the public domain, incarcerates and brutalises dissenters, and brands foreign critics as "enemies". If even the population figures for Lhasa are considered controversial, how much more so are investigation and analysis of public opinion and social trends!

In the prevailing climate of rumour, suspicion and secrecy, documentary evidence of behind-the-scene controversy and discontent is especially interesting. A recent example was the proceedings of the second session of the sixth assembly of the TAR branch of the Chinese Peoples' Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) held in Lhasa in May 1994. The CPPCC (TAR) is largely composed of senior Tibetan 'patriots' such as high lamas and former aristocrats. They are usually called upon to endorse official policy, but they also have some license to articulate the views and sensibilities of the Tibetan nationality in official fora. Documents from the May session show that some delegates availed themselves of this license, using moderate and patriotic language to criticise the excesses of the modernisation drive and to appeal for corrective measures.

Remarks jointly attributed to several deputies in the conference reports of the May session state the following: "...carrying out the economic development reforms is a major task for the Party and regional government and there is no doubt as to the importance and benefit of deepening and strengthening reform work for the national and regional aspirations for economic growth and development. Meanwhile, economic stability cannot be ensured since prices depend on market fluctuation. However, Tibet is a special minority region, very backward in development, and many of its people remain in a condition of poverty. Thus the people's government should act to survey and stabilise prices of items essential to the needs of the Tibetan masses—such as grain, oil, meat,

butter, tea etc..."

Deputy Namgyal, a Lhasa delegate, pointed out that "workers' monthly salaries are very low compared with the rising cost of living. Price rises should be more gradual and carefully planned... there is now a strong tendency for the gap between rich and poor to widen. This is a matter of great concern, and planning must make provision for the income available to the ordinary masses."

Other Lhasa delegates complained: "Naturally we can expect to have the national inflation rate of 10 percent, but while last year a gyama of onions cost no more than Y0.3, this year it is Y5, and that is a severe excess. The cost of staple foods consumed by the Tibetan masses such as tea and butter have risen sharply, and



Lhasa's markets are full of phoney and low-quality products... the authorities should keep a vigorous check on prices and clamp down on illegal market practices in accordance with law."

Other concerns raised by Tibetan delegates included corruption, under-funding and mismanagement of State education and health services, cultural degeneration, and disregard of the Tibetan language. On several occasions during the two-week session, Lhasa delegates issued forthright denunciations of the city's new 'cultural markets'. The spread of bars, karaoke, video halls, dancing

A Khampa woman and a Hui muslim share space in a five Yuan note.

Tibetan
commodities
on sale.



clubs, prostitution and alcohol was described as a new and unwelcome trend, harmful to youth and offensive to Buddhist values.

Lhasa's city government responded to these complaints within three months by introducing yet another echelon of business regulations. According to the *Xizang Ribao* of 14 August, the 'cultural business permit' now requires all operators in the entertainment sector, on pain of losing their licenses, to "undertake to serve the people and socialism, pay attention to social benefits and provide the people with rich, colourful, healthy and beneficial cultural life."

Tibetan Marginalisation

While new regulations have been enacted to control the entertainment industry, it seems unlikely that the authorities will act to redress the more substantive concerns raised by CPPCC (TAR) members—many of which are shared by ordinary Tibetan citizens. In the case of Lhasa, they can be divided into four main areas: housing, health, education and employment.

Housing. A large number of traditional houses in the Barkhor area of old Lhasa have been demolished since 1992. According to the city planning document cited earlier, the majority of traditional buildings still remaining in Lhasa's historic city centre will be gone by the year 2000, with the exception of designated

'cultural relics' such as the Jokhang and Ramoche temples.

Official sources claim that the destruction is necessary to improve infrastructure—facilities such as electricity, water, sewerage and roads in the city centre. However, an ART survey of construction in the Barkhor neighbourhood in 1993, which surveyed 67 construction sites, found not only that many of the buildings being demolished were both attractive and structurally sound, but that provision of modern facilities was minimal, and had even worsened since a similar survey was conducted in 1990. New public housing units were being installed with a meagre electricity supply, and low gauge, unsafe wiring—as little as 200 watts

per family apartment, insufficient for cooking or heating. About 30-40 apartments in each housing unit had to share a single courtyard tap. Commercial premises and privileged housing units, meanwhile, were liberally supplied with electricity.

The new construction employs abysmally low standards of safety and workmanship. As art historian Heather Stoddard points out in *Tibet Transformed: A Pictorial Essay* (The International Campaign for Tibet, 1994), the square, regimented concrete of socialist China that is replacing characteristic Tibetan architecture is not even utilitarian. The new houses, unlike the old, cannot withstand earth tremors, and the breeze blocks and cement used in construction are quite unsuited to the extremes of Tibet's climate.

Tibetan families in public housing are now obliged to pay around Y400-500 in annual rent for lesser space, greater discomfort and poorer facilities than before—roughly a tenfold increase since the demolition project began in 1990. At the May session of the CPPCC (TAR), Lhasa delegate Jampal described the new housing in Lhasa as "unsuitable for local conditions and not in accordance with Tibetan culture" and "an architectural travesty".

Finally, it is significant that 19 of the 67 surveyed sites were private Tibetan homes, employing Tibetan



Chinese
commodities
on sale.

labour and materials—earth, wood and stone. Several of these were found to be well-built, harmonious dwellings, well-serviced with electricity and piped water. Tibetan houses are more costly and time-consuming to build, but they are otherwise unquestionably superior in the view of most Tibetans—and the skills required to build them are still available in Lhasa today.

Health. In recent years, there has been some ambiguity over the provision of state medical care in Lhasa. Official sources still claim that basic medical care is freely available to holders of residence permits, while local Tibetans frequently complain of corruption, exorbitant payments, ethnic discrimination, and lack of care at the city and regional hospitals. A deposit of Y1000 is said to be a prerequisite for serious treatment.

Mismanagement and poor morale among the health care staff seem to be as much of a problem as under-funding. In May, according to conference reports, Thubten Buchung of Lhasa's city hospital told fellow CPPCC (TAR) delegates: "Of the 105 hospitals and clinics in Lhasa prefecture, the majority are not functioning. Some have medicine but no equipment, others even lack medicine due to inadequate funds... I have been complaining about this for years, but nothing has been done."

In June 1994, the authorities seemed to be abandoning the pretence of free medical care when a new official cost structure and booklet issue was announced at a series of local meetings. But there seems to have been no attempt to clamp down on the black-market in drugs and services or on corrupt practices.

About the same time, there was a popular rumour that a Tibetan policeman had shot dead two Han Chinese doctors after his wife died in childbirth in the city hospital's reception area. Despite the woman's emergency condition, she had been denied entry to the building until she produced Y1000—by the time her husband returned with the money,

both the mother and the baby were dead. It is difficult to ascertain the veracity of this report, but even as legend it is indicative of some popular perceptions—ethnic discrimination, intransigent officials, and corruption. And Tibetan anger.

Alternatives to conventional medicine are available in Lhasa—the traditional Mentsikhang hospital was reopened during the 1980's, and there are training programmes in Tibetan medicine in all areas of the TAR. However, few skilled practitioners remain in Tibet—many are in South Asia and in the West—and the limited



Demolition and reconstruction in Central Lhasa.

instruction received by trainee doctors in Tibet represents but a paltry fragment of the traditional medical system. Despite its popularity, the authorities have not conspicuously awarded the traditional sector of the health service with funds or encouragement.

Education. State education in the TAR has been a subject of some controversy, arising from Tibetan allegations of ethnic discrimination and Mandarin linguistic domination, as well as claims that the Tibetan nationality is effectively excluded from the higher levels of the party, government, military, scientific and professional establishments by educational disadvantage. Official sources insist that the Tibetan language is widely taught in schools,

that education is free for Tibetans, and that 'positive discrimination' policies assist disadvantaged minorities to compete for official posts. In practice, Mandarin is the language of instruction at the secondary level and above, and access to higher education is uncommon. Only 45 percent of last year's entrants to Tibet University were Tibetan, according to a June 1994 report of the Tibetan Information Network (TIN).

Lhasa's schools, like its hospitals, suffer from lack of funding, mismanagement and demoralised staff. In theory they are still free,

although some changes have been introduced, such as exam fees, charges for retaking failed exams, and so on. Lhasa delegates at the CPPCC session spoke of inadequate funds, lack of teachers and, among those available, lack of qualification. An appeal was issued for teachers to be given longer tenures so as to provide continuity and allow them to work effectively. Several suggestions were made for augmenting Tibetan language instruction at the primary level.

In the prevailing climate, it is not surprising that private schools—usually running evening classes in language and vocational skills—are becoming popular. Perhaps it is no more surprising that the authorities seem to have treated these schools with suspicion rather than encourage-



Newly constructed 'Night Club'.

ment. In early 1994, one of the more prominent ones—Siljong Keyig Lopdra—was closed down and its director arrested, reports the *Tibetan Review*. The charges were unclear but may have been political.

Employment. Official figures or statements are unavailable, but available evidence suggests that Tibetans in Lhasa suffer unfair competition for jobs in the modern sector. What is more, there appears to be little or no official sponsorship or protection of workers in the traditional economy, including those in construction, artisans, and local commodity traders. In the face of overwhelming pressure from the modern sector,

Lhasa's local economy may soon be extinct.

All this was demonstrated in a dramatic fashion in early June 1994, when 200-300 Tibetan traders from the Barkhor area gathered in front of the municipal government compound to protest against new increases of up to 50 percent in the local business tax. The demonstration was quickly and ruthlessly suppressed, and in subsequent days, the authorities refused to back down on the increase, despite the protester's closure of Barkhor shops.

There seems little doubt that TAR leaders felt emboldened in their hardline positions following the announcement in early June by the United States government that China's most-favoured-nation status renewal would no longer be conditional on human rights issues. A business tax of between Y100-200 per month is a considerable burden for most Tibetan shops and restaurants, but for the small stores and stalls in old Lhasa selling chang, butter, dried cheese, tsampa and so on, it is unpayable.

An October 1992 article in the *Xizang Ribao* actually celebrates the fact that Tibetans are increasingly found in demeaning, unskilled jobs as 'revolutionary'. An educated Tibetan man cleaning shoes outside the Workers' Cultural Palace in Lhasa

was "revolutionary" because "in the past, Tibetan people never would do this kind of very low class work". The piece reflects a more general belief, rooted in Han chauvinism, that Tibetans are inefficient, unskilled and superstitious—"they lack the qualification" to compete in a modern economy.

This was also the view, albeit more elegantly expressed, of Chinese economists Wang Xiaoqiang and Bai Nanfeng in their 1991 study *The Poverty of Plenty* (Macmillan, London). There, it is argued that the Tibetan nationality must develop "commodity consciousness" before it can enter the modern economy as a competitive force. In other words, backward nationalities first have to become proletarianised before they can enter modern socialist society on an equal footing and enjoy its benefits.

Autonomous Tibet

The principle of autonomy for Tibet on the basis of its unique cultural heritage and physical environment is guaranteed by the PRC constitution. However, in recent years at least, the principle has had few supporters and no champions in the Beijing leadership. When the 'socialist modernisation' policy was launched in Lhasa in 1992, it included an attack on local officials who allegedly wished "to dilute the reforms and preserve Tibet's uniqueness."

Tibet Radio, 30 May 1992: "If we only stress the uniqueness of Tibet and are timid in carrying out reform and opening up, the existing gap between us and other provinces and regions...will become wider, we will become more and more backward and Tibet will become more and more unique." In a piece carried by the *Xizang Ribao* in May 1992, the TAR government was ridiculed for lacking ambition when its annual budget fixed the projected growth rate at "only 5.8 percent". The current target is 10 percent.

The appointment of Chen Kuiyuan as new deputy party secretary in the same period was

Notes on sources:

Xizang Ribao (Tibet Daily) is the TAR edition of *Renmin Ribao* (China Daily).

All reference to reportage in the *Xizang Ribao*, Tibet TV and Tibet Radio is sourced to the *Summary of World Broadcasts* from the BBC Monitoring Service in London.

CCP Central Committee Document No. 31 (1980) is an internal Party document leaked to Tibetan interest groups in the West. It is in Chinese.

Documents from the May 1994 Session of the CPPCC (TAR), intended for internal use only, were obtained unofficially by the writer.

The Tibet Information Network (TIN) is a London-based agency that provides news on Tibet from various sources. Its Coordinator is Robbie Barnett.

Tibetan Review is a New Delhi-based journal of Tibetan exiles and is edited by Tsering Wangyal.

Xinhua is the government-owned news agency of China, with headquarters in Beijing.

China's Tibet

China's Tibet is a bimonthly magazine, yellow-bordered like the *National Geographic* and aimed at the overseas English-reading market. It covers tourism, culture and economy-related issues. The latest issue (No.3, 1994) carries a special feature on governmental policy, human rights and "the policy on Dalai Lama". Below are two excerpts.

On Han influx: Raidi, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Tibet People's Congress, referred to settlement of Han Chinese in an interview while attending the Second Session of the Eighth National People's Congress in Beijing:

There are indeed rumours that the Central Government has moved 7.5 million members of the Han nationality into Tibet. However, before expanding my views, I must make it clear that Tibet is part of China and thus it is perfectly proper for the Han to move into Tibet. People in all sovereign countries often move from one region to another. Therefore, what then is wrong of the Han to do the same? Moreover, the majority of Han in Tibet are skilled workers, technicians and scientists. They have come to Tibet to work for specified periods of time, during which they must endure the hardships resulting from the high altitude. They are in Tibet to help us build our economy, with many having contributed their youth, the most precious period of their lives. Some have even died heroic deaths. In order to further develop our economy, culture, science and education, and public health, we need more people like these to move to Tibet. They are by no means what the Western press call "immigrants".

Over the past few years, Tibet has witnessed a huge influx of traders and builders from China's hinterland. They in fact come and go in torrents, and are by no means what the Western media also calls "immigrants". It is therefore groundless for the Western media to make such accusations.

The composition of Tibetans in the Tibetan population also dispels the lies of the Western media and disproves the accusations of the Dalai Lama... The Central Government has never formulated a plan to move members of the Han nationality into Tibet, which in fact is a much less than ideal place for Han to settle.

followed by a clampdown on Tibetan cadres, who began to be openly suspected of disloyalty. Their failure to soften the thrust of the 'socialist modernisation' programme strongly indicates that Tibetan cadres have no substantive influence on the formulation of policy for the region, and that the issue of autonomy for Tibet within the PRC—the issue at the centre of Tibet-China relations since Liberation in 1951—is not being taken seriously by Beijing.

Moves aimed at undermining the unity and morale of Tibetan party

and government workers were intensified during 1994. Although party members always had to accept the commitment to atheism, the liberalisation policies of the 1980s had reintroduced the principle of tolerance for the beliefs of national minorities. Last June and July, however, both government and party workers were told to eliminate even the vestiges of religious faith—shrines, rosaries, incense, hearths, prayer-flags—from their homes and their lives and those of their families, or face losing their jobs. They were also told to recall

Human rights: Basang Norbu, Deputy Secretary-General of the Standing Committee of the Tibet People's Congress, on human rights in Tibet:

In building democratic politics, China has absorbed all the civilized achievements of mankind, including the positive factors underlying bourgeois human rights ideas. In China, the people, and only the people, are the masters of the state and society. The system of people's congresses has proved to be an effective form and functioned as the country's supreme power organ in which people wield their power as masters of the state.

Through deputies elected in a democratic way, citizens exert their sway, organise the government and administer state affairs. They are empowered to supervise and remove government members at all levels. This constitutes primary and fundamental rights, and an embodiment of the fundamental spirit of human rights.

The 1993 elections at four levels in Tibet were conducted in accordance with the Constitution... Statistics for the 1993 elections indicate that there were 1,311,085 voters in Tibet, or 57.36 percent of the regional population and 98.6 percent of citizens above 18 years old. Those stripped of or temporarily denied their democratic rights accounted for only 0.34 percent of potential voters. Specifically, those who had their political rights taken away came to only 0.01 percent...

According to an analysis of the election results, the composition of deputies is becoming more reasonable. Deputies of Tibetan and other ethnic groups amounted to 99.92 percent at town and township levels, 92.62 at county level, 82.35 at city level, and 82.44 percent at the level of the Tibetan Autonomous Region...

Some people at home and abroad have little knowledge about socialist democracy and human rights in Tibet. The truth about the situation there has been distorted. But those who failed to win a post had totally different feelings, saying, "Democracy is truly carried out in the people's congress."



as in the provinces. The insistence on absolute loyalty to the Party, so reminiscent of the Maoist era, has re-emerged, and the witch-hunt is on.

The *Xizang Ribao* of 4 October 1994 states: "We should recognise the fact that the Dalai clique [a phrase referring to the exile government and its supporters in Tibet] is the main source of Tibet's instability and lack of development."

Both the refusal to compromise on 'socialist modernisation' in the TAR, and the effective dominance of Han cadres in the regional administration were firmly underlined in July 1994 at the high-level Third National Work Conference on Tibet, held in Beijing.

Speaking about the meeting on

Tibet TV on 8 September 1994, Chen Kuiyuan said: "In line with comrade Deng Xiaoping's theory on building socialism with Chinese characteristics, the speeches given by comrades Jiang Zemin, Li Peng and Li Ruihan and in the 'Opinion on accelerating Tibet's development and maintaining its social stability' adopted by the CPC Central Committee and State Council analysed the new situation in Tibet and came up with new solutions to Tibet's problems..." These solutions would, he said, "Open a new chapter in the modernisation drive in the snowy plateau."

In fact, the meeting endorsed rapid economic development and renewed attention to religious and

nationalities policy. President Jiang Zemin's speech included remarks on the continuing necessity of Han cadres to develop and administer Tibet. Meanwhile, according to a Tibet TV report of September 1994, the CPC Committee "specifically stipulated that party members must not have religious beliefs."

Much frustration and resentment is developing among Tibetans in Lhasa, and although its expression is for the moment curtailed by vigilant security measures, it cannot remain so forever.

▷

The writer is an independent researcher on Himalayan and Tibetan affairs and a frequent visitor to Tibet. 'John Grey' is a pseudonym.

The Third Work Conference

These occasional events are used by Beijing to mark important moments in Tibet policy—the first followed on Hu Yaobang's reform initiative in 1980 and the second, in 1984, announced a series (43) of mostly prestige projects in Tibet; some were financed by various Chinese provinces in an initiative called the 'Help Tibet' campaign.

The Third Work Conference last July served to reinforce the support of the central leadership for rapid economic growth and hardline positions on religious and nationalities policy. Unlike the 1984 meeting, emphasis was placed on "strengthening basic industries and the improvement of infrastructural facilities". As President Jiang Zemin explained to *Xinhua*, "a relatively longer period of time is needed to lay the foundation of socialist market economy in Tibet, due to the undeveloped commodity economy and other reasons".

In fact, the proposals approved by the July conference, like several already implemented since 1992, represent an unprecedented and ambitious attempt to make Tibet more accessible and profitable for the mainland economy, through infrastructure development. Energy generation and improved facilities for road and air travel will increase the profitability of resource extraction, allow for greater population density and reduce Tibet's remoteness.

The Work Conference unveiled 62 projects as its development flagship, half of them funded or supported by provincial and municipal governments (24 percent of the total 2.3 billion Yuan investment). Included are three high-profile and somewhat controversial schemes, the power station at Yamdrok Lake (opposed by the late Panchen Lama), the Pangda airport renovation in Chamdo Prefecture, and 'China's largest chromite mine' known as 'Norbusa' in Lhoka Prefecture. Also prominent is highway construction on the Nepal and Qinghai routes.

A surfaced road to Tsethang (Lhoka) has already been completed. As reported by *Tibet Press Watch* in October, the US-based pressure group International Campaign for Tibet has also picked up a report that the long-mooted Qinghai-Tibet railway (dreaded by Tibetans, longed for by Beijing planners, and conspicuously absent from the 62 projects) is to be revived at a new projected cost of 20 billion Yuan. However, this has not been confirmed and seems to be belied by the serious investment already committed to road construction.

Among the 62 projects are also included the construction of middle schools, communications development such as telephone exchanges and a TV receiving station, a new Xinhua bookstore in Lhasa, agricultural development, and a water supply scheme in Shigatse. Tourism and food processing are also covered.

Overall, the development aims are clear: generating energy and improving infrastructure mainly for industrial use and fostering an economic climate favourable to economic migration from the mainland. Virtually all of the projects have been awarded to non-Tibetan contractors, and several have gone to the People's Liberation Army and the People's Armed Police (*Wu Jing*).

The first of September, 1995, will be the 30th anniversary of the founding of the TAR, and its official celebration will be used to inaugurate the New Lhasa, with its gleaming modern architecture and wide boulevards. There is presently a construction frenzy in the city as workers struggle to meet the deadline.

For devout Tibetans, however, the wood-pig year (beginning in March 1995) is an inauspicious time for any such undertaking, since it is the *khak* or obstacle year in the personal astrology of the Dalai Lama, a time when the whole country is prone to disaster. The "New Tibet" is founded on such contrasts and contradictions, and the latest series of ostentatiously modern chrome and glass facades in Lhasa will be no exception.

- John Grey

Wilderness in style!



WILDLIFE RESORT
ROYAL CHITWAN NATIONAL PARK

Durbar Marg Reservation Office
P.O. Box 78, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 225001, 227099
Telex: 2522 BODWAY NP
Fax: 977-1-231957/419749

Chessler Books

*Send for our free Mail Order catalog of the world's
largest selection of Mountaineering Books.
New, out-of-print, and rare.
Also Tibet, Nepal, Polar, Exploration.*

Guidebooks, trekking maps, videos and more!

Please write or call for your free catalog today.

Chessler Books

P.O. Box 399-112
Kittredge, Colorado 80457 USA
(303) 670-0093 FAX (303) 670-9727

Karakoram

EXPERIENCE

**Join us on a Trekking,
Climbing or Mountain
Biking Adventure...**

...to the world's most exotic
mountain ranges.

Specializing in the unusual
and unique, as well as the
Himalayan classics.

FOR A FREE, COLOR
"GUIDE TO ADVENTURE" CONTACT:

Karakoram Experience

P.O. BOX 10538 • ASPEN, CO 81612
(800) 497-9675 • (303) 925-8368
FAX (303) 925-6704

Pakistan

Nepal

India

Bhutan

China

Tibet

Russia

South
America

Alaska

An Elegant Return



VIJAY KRANTH

The Dalai Lama's presence in Lhasa would provide the Tibetan people not only wisdom and spiritual sustenance, but also help them face their day-to-day problems with confidence and resolve.

by Roger L. Plunk

Over the decades, the constant stream of writings, seminars, workshops and demonstrations on the Tibet issue—by the Tibetan government-in-exile, various support groups, and interested scholars, journalists, and activists—have all centered around the issue of Tibet independence. In fact, so much so that they have drowned out the one voice that matters most: that of the Dalai Lama.

Over the last 16 years, the Dalai Lama has not advocated Tibet independence. He has advocated the *Middle Way Approach*. The Dalai Lama's motive is pure: the welfare of individual Tibetans. He is not concer-

ned with abstract and antiquated notions of independence and sovereignty. He is concerned with the quality of life of individual persons.

The *Middle Way Approach* seeks to balance and harmonise the interests of the Tibetans and the Chinese. The Chinese are not inherently evil, nor the Tibetans inherently saintly. They are two different cultures which must learn to live together in peace. Not a forced peace, but a natural and just peace: a peace with dignity. As such, this approach could just as well be termed the "*Taoist Approach*", for it seeks to balance opposing forces.

The *Middle Way Approach* can be realized as a consequence of one

simple event: The elegant return of the Dalai Lama. China's main condition for the return of the Dalai Lama is that he accept China's claim of sovereignty over Tibet. The Dalai Lama would be willing to do this. *But*, only upon China's guarantee that the interests of Tibetans will be adequately addressed.

There are, perhaps, as many Tibetan interests as there are Tibetans. Essentially, however, the interests of Tibetans are effective political participation on issues of local concern (self-government); economic and social welfare; religious freedom; and cultural preservation.

Because the Chinese Constitution already provides for these guarantees, China would find it easy to re-assert them. In addition, because of the unique status of the Dalai Lama in the world community—he has followers worldwide—the Dalai Lama must have guarantees for his freedom of movement and freedom of speech. Thus, we have an agreement (or understanding) that must, by implication, evolve out of the simple return of the Dalai Lama: the Dalai Lama's acceptance of China's sovereignty in return for guarantees of Tibetan self-government and the independence of the Dalai Lama.

The most important element of the agreement is the guarantee for the Dalai Lama's independence, preferably through a "Vatican" model arrangement. Otherwise, the actual content of the agreement is less important than the willingness of China and the Dalai Lama to achieve real and lasting reconciliation, versus mere appeasement and window-dressing.

Such an agreement would not be an end to the long drama of Tibet, but the beginning of a new era. It would be the foundation upon which the Middle Way Approach could fulfill itself. After all, social, economic and political development is a process. It does not occur magically at one moment in time through one agreement. It occurs by a constant evolutionary process propelled by persons of energy and vision. The

very presence of the Dalai Lama would act as a catalyst for such a development. Those who believe that Tibetans and Chinese can never live together in harmony and happiness are wedded to the past and have no vision of the future.

There are two basic roles that the Dalai Lama would play upon his return. The first involves economic and social development. The Dalai Lama could utilise his resources and international support to infuse a fresh energy into the social and economic fabric of Tibetan areas. This may translate, for example, into attracting talent and funds for developing Tibetan businesses such as the wool and handicraft industries; for developing Tibetan educational, health, and welfare services; and for promoting public awareness on issues ranging from environment to the arts.

The second role of the Dalai Lama upon his return would involve his 'good offices'. Tibetans would pour out their grievances and aspirations, and the Dalai Lama would communicate these concerns to appropriate authorities at the local and central levels, along with suggestions. He would not be a political activist, but a discreet and responsible facilitator, ensuring that the interests of the Tibetans are being properly addressed.

Among the many 'hats' that the Dalai Lama currently wears is that of the head of the Tibetan government-in-exile. This government has evolved over the decades to become very self-reliant, where the Dalai Lama plays an increasingly nominal role. The Dalai Lama would relinquish this role upon his return. He would return as a spiritual and cultural leader, not a political leader. However, the real power of the Dalai Lama is moral and spiritual, not political. By withdrawing from the government-in-exile, he will be raising his status (not being weighted down by a worldly office), and be equally available to both exiled Tibetans and the non-exiled Tibetans in Tibet (the vast majority, numbering about six million).

Upon the return of the Dalai Lama, the government-in-exile would continue as it is, making its own policy decisions. It can be expected to maintain a wait-and-see position regarding a proposed return of the Dalai Lama; and it would most likely, for some time to come, act as a 'shadow government', scrutinizing the administration of Tibet.

The return of Tibetans in exile would occur over a long period of time, and would be on an individual basis. Some Tibetans, having been born and raised in other cultures may not want to return. Others would return only cautiously. Long term visas could be obtained, allowing Tibetans to establish homes and businesses without surrendering their rights to leave. There can be considerable flexibility in this regard.

The Dalai Lama came into exile 35 years ago. During this time, he has presided over the development of a nation of people, built from thousands of destitute refugees, and sprinkled around the globe. He has continued to effectively head a major religion; has provided an unending stream of inspiration to Tibetans (and others); and has significantly contributed to the world dialogue on peaceful co-existence of peoples and human rights. It is on the crest of these accomplishments and dignity that the Dalai Lama will return, bringing the Tibetan people not only wisdom and spiritual sustenance, but also providing them with practical measures that will help them face their day-to-day problems with confidence and resolve.

It is acknowledged that not only Tibetans, but the world community as well, deeply respects and admires the Dalai Lama. What is less appreciated is that the Chinese people also respect the Dalai Lama. The return of the Dalai Lama will not be a small event. It will be an elegant return that will create ripples of compassion throughout Asia.

R. L. Plunk JD LL.M. is a legal scholar providing independent counsel in public international law, constitutional drafting, and human rights. He is presently practicing in New Delhi.





Vocabulary Lessons



Welcome to Nepal in French is Bienvenue au Shangri-La.
Welcome to Nepal in Spanish is Bienvenido al Shangri-La.
Welcome to Nepal in English is Welcome at Shangri-La.
Welcome to Nepal in Italian is Benvenuto al Shangri-La.
Welcome to Nepal in German is Willkommen in Shangri-La.
Welcome to Nepal in Japanese is いっしょにませ Shangri-La.



Hotel SHANGRI-LA

82 Deluxe Rooms

SHANGRI-LA

KATHMANDU

Your private paradise



LAZIMPAT, G.P.O. BOX 655, KATHMANDU, NEPAL - TEL : (977.1) 412999 - FAX : (977.1) 414184 - TELEX : 2276 HOSANG NP



Kang Rimpoche Trashed and Commercialised

The holiest spot in Asia used to be the unfrequented destination of hardy pilgrims. It is fast becoming a dirty Disneyland.

by John V. Bellezza



"Sell Kailash!" This is the battle cry of the Luyu Chu, Tibet's government-owned and controlled tourism organisation. The Luyu Chu has issued a directive to Tibet Kailash Travel, its branch agency in Ngari Prefecture, ordering it to bring in more tourists to Mount Kailash. The target set for 1995 is 1500 overseas tourists, a 50 percent increase over 1994. The quotas set by the Luyu Chu are mandatory, yet the burden of meeting them falls on the branch department.

Tibet Kailash Travel has had to scramble to fulfil its mission. It has endeavoured to establish better contacts in Nepal. During the last year, its sales representatives met repeatedly with Nepal's Minister of Tourism and various tour operators. A concerted effort is being made to market Kailash as a overseas tourist destination.

It all began in 1984, when a handful of hardy Western travelers made it to the holy mountain. In 1985, a Japanese expedition and a

smattering of foreign individual tourists had the privilege. In 1986, the first tour groups began arriving at Kailash. Approximately 100 people of non-Himalayan countries came that year. The number of tourists visiting has increased steadily since.

By 1989, 300-400 travellers from non-Himalayan countries were visiting a year, and 1000 made the journey in the 1994 season. If the Chinese have their way, 2000 such tourists will be tramping around Asia's holiest place by 1997.

The majority of tourists arrive in organised tour groups, each member paying on an average US\$ 150 a day. Income from Kailash tourism therefore represents a substantial source of revenue for the government.

The Southern Yatri

The situation for Indian tourists and pilgrims is quite different from that of overseas tourists. Indians were first permitted to travel to Kailash by the Chinese government in 1981. From 1981-1992, the number of Indians allowed to visit was doubled to 400 as per a renewed bilateral agreement between India and China. In 1995, 1000 yatris will be permitted to travel to the sacred mountain.

In 1986, it cost an Indian IRs 11,000 to make the journey from Dharchula in Kumaon to Kailash and back. In 1992, the cost was up to IRs

25,000. Next year, it is expected that the cost of the pilgrimage will rise to IRs 40,000 with much of the increase due to fees levied by the Chinese.

From 1981 through 1994, Indians could only enter Tibet from the Lipu Lekh pass in Kumaon. This year, three new routes—Niti La in Garhwal, Shipki La in Himachal Pradesh, and the Demchok border point in Ladakh—are slated to open. Of these, the Demchok border is the most promising as it is the only one with a motorable road link. Using this route, an Indian could reach Kailash from Delhi in three days. The only obstacle to developing this route, which follows the Indus River, is that the Indo-Tibetan frontier was mined during the period of bad relations between China and India. The land mines will have to be cleared in order to make Demchok a viable pilgrim route to Kailash.

Nepalis have had the easiest time making it to Kailash. They are allowed to make their own travel arrangements, which for the poor means walking or travelling in the back of trucks. It is rumoured that even Nepalis will have to form expensive tour groups, but there is no evidence of this as yet. In 1994, the Simikot-to-Khojournath transborder route from Nepal was opened to foreign tourists. This route to Kailash could become popular with those on

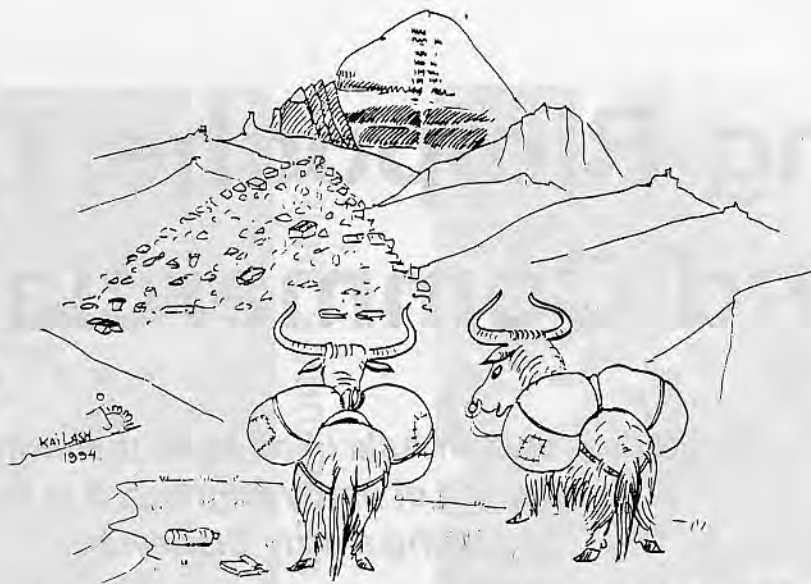
lavish budgets. A helicopter service has been opened from Nepalganj to Simikot, the headquarters of Humla District. Helicopter operators are lobbying the Nepal government to permit flights right up to the frontier, a move that is being resisted by the Central District Officer (CDO) at Simikot, who wants to protect portering and other service jobs for Humla's population. It is unclear which side will win, but what is clear is that Kailash is becoming more and more accessible.

Five-Star Pilgrimage

The Chinese Government's grandiose plans to transform erstwhile inaccessible Kailash into a popular tourist resort area include the construction of a five-star hotel and restaurant at Darchen, at the foot of the holy mountain. There will be two airports, one at Burang and the other at Ali, the prefectural capital. There is talk of improving the three link roads to Kailash, which are presently in a terrible condition.

These ambitious projects remain on the drawing board as there is no commitment on the part of the Chinese government to free up funds to realise them. The objective evidently is to maximise profits without making significant investment. Infrastructure at Kailash remains quite primitive. In 1989, a 14-room lodge was built to handle tour groups, and work will begin next year on a better appointed ten-room facility. Most tourists, however, will continue to camp.

Vendors have lost no time capitalising on increased traffic to the region. In 1985, there were no vendors; now there are as many as 40 operating out of tents. These itinerant hawkers sell sundry foods and household items. The trend unquestionably is for more and more vendors to set up shop. In 1989, the Peoples Liberation Army set up a restaurant to cater to tourists. Also in 1989, to better monitor and control the growing tourist and commercial traffic, a permanent police checkpost was set up in Darchen. Since that time, it has been increasingly difficult for low budget tourists and



pilgrims to visit because these kinds of visitors are officially discouraged.

With increased commerce, environmental problems have burgeoned. Darchen (4800 m), the staging point for visits to Kailash, has an inherently fragile ecology. Just a little more than a decade ago, the only rubbish around was the organic castaways of Tibetans. Since that time, garbage has been accumulating at an alarming rate. The Darchen Chu, a sacred stream representing the central channel or *nadi* of Kailash, is now choked with plastic, glass, metal and other trash.

The refuse around Kailash is not only an eyesore, some of it is also hazardous. One comes across hundreds of discarded batteries containing heavy metals, and there is significant pollution of petroleum products from vehicles. Toilet paper is strewn around the Kailash circuit, an aesthetic distraction and irritant to the local people. There are no cleanup or waste management plans in place, consequently the problem worsens year by year. With maximisation of profits the priority, environmental protection has fallen by the wayside.

Kang Rimpoche

To the native Drokpa, Kailash or Kang Rimpoche is the crown of the world and in it the oceans have their source. Kailash is the fount of all life, they believe, feeding the continents with both precious water and pure consciousness. The Tibetans maintain that to pollute the water at its source

poses a grave danger to the entire world. For this reason, they are unhappy with tourists who leave their refuse behind.

It is true that, contrary to their own beliefs, the Tibetan people tend to be just as sloppy as tourists and travellers. Nevertheless, the Western tourists are the champions when it comes to the volume of waste generated. The holy mountain is becoming a garbage dump.

Unfortunately, some tourists have squandered their welcome in other ways as well. The open sexuality that Westerners are prone to demonstrate shocks the sensibility of the natives. The worst was when back in 1992 a group of Americans tried to make a pornographic film at Kailash. They were prevented from completing the filming, but not without a fight.

Visitors demonstrably lack even basic respect for the sanctity of Kailash. For instance, there is the obnoxious tendency to point the barrel of one's camera at people and holy spots as if it were an assault weapon. A proper cultural orientation should be part of the tour agenda, but neither the government nor tour operators seem concerned. Kailash is sold and marketed, but the local people are being estranged.

Dealing with Scum

Sadly, even darker depths of depravity have been reached, in conjunction with tourism. The last ten years has seen a rash of robberies in the Kailash region, some of it with Western

complicity, which has impoverished local monasteries. Nepali and Tibetan criminal rings have stolen priceless statues from the gombas, sometimes at the behest of Western criminals posing as tourists.

Recently, some notorious European art thieves visited Kailash in the guise of tourists. Wherever they go in Tibet, the priceless heritage of the country disappears. In 1993, five bronzes were stolen from the Zuthulphuk Gomba on the Kailash *parikrama*. The thieves were apprehended along with photographs taken by the Westerner who commissioned the theft.

Nothing has so damaged relations between the natives and tourists as the robbing of the monasteries. As a result, Gomba caretakers are now hesitant to open chapels to visitors and an air of suspicion and mistrust exists where earlier there was a warm and easygoing relationship. Major thefts

in the last few years include Chako Gomba (18 statues in 1992), Tashigang (three large Lokeshwaras in 1989), and Yiri Gomba (15 bronzes in 1991). In 1990, a gang of robbers relieved pilgrims of their money and jewellery in the middle of the night. Kailash has attracted scum along with bonafide visitors and pilgrims.

The goodwill, the coming together of people at Kailash in peace and mutual respect, is disintegrating. Cynicism is surfacing with the increased exploitation. While some might accept this as a normal part of change and modernisation, it is that much more tragic when it happens at the location considered the most sacrosanct on the planet. What are the long-term impacts of mental and physical forms of pollution at Kailash?

With money as the prime motivating force that spurs tourism, there is little regard for cultural or ecological values. Kailash becomes another commodity to be marketed

and exploited, diminishing its religious aura. Visitors could be educated so that they develop a healthy attitude and awareness, but where will the resources for this come from?

The native people and the true pilgrims suffer the most from the commercialisation of Kailash. They have little choice but to watch the debasement of their holiest sites. Dissent is not encouraged by the Chinese. The native people are the losers in every way, for they do not even benefit significantly from the money generated by their holy mountain. How far will this onslaught on Kailash go? How long will the visions and needs of the Drokpa and pilgrims be drowned out by the mushrooming commercial interests? For now, at least, the most strident voice that drowns out all others is "Sell Mt. Kailash!"



J. Bellezza ('Jungli John') is a traveller of the Western Himalaya and Tibet.

<p>Tableware Floormats Bedcovers Cushion Covers Pillows Kitchen textiles Cloth by the meter Clothing Bags Toys</p>	<p>Knitwear X'mas items Clay Copperware Paper Crafts Wooden items Basketry Leather items Sarees Felt items</p>
--	--

A fine range of




Made by low-income women




Retailers :

Dhukuti

Kupondole, Kathmandu
Ph : 523147

Exporters :

Nepali Craft Trading (P) Ltd.

G.P.O Box 3701, Kathmandu, Nepal
Ph : 270721,272676 fax : 521880

Manufacturers :

Association for Craft Producers

G.P.O Box 3701, Kathmandu, Nepal
Ph : 270721,272676 fax : 521880

V O I

THE INDIA OF NEHRU, that poet and romancer, would have been different from the intolerant nation-state that it has become today, writes O.V. Vijayan in the Times of India of 14 January.

Imagine India still a colony and Jawaharlal Nehru editing the *National Herald*. We might have had a different *Discovery*, for the poet and romancer in him would have certainly glamorised the Naga and the Mizo and the Bodo. He would have disapproved of the Hindu hegemony in the Kashmir Valley, and discovered India's ethnicities in their joyful becoming. He kept his tryst with destiny, but it was a lesser destiny, and around him lay the countless unborn embryos of the Indian ethnoses. Panditji was denied this discovery, as he was by then swamped by the regalia of the nation-state.

Yet, where it concerned the tribals he let himself be guided by liberal anthropologists; he went into Kashmir with an eclectic agenda of internal coexistence. We who were a generation transiting into freedom would like to recall not the midnight toll of bells, but the graphic picture of another freedom, another assertion: Jawahar arm in arm with his comrade Sheikh Abdullah. Jawahar wounded by the ragtag guards of Kashmir's Hindu maharajah.

These were pictures of heroic dimension, the stuff of epics and sagas. And yet they were also cameos of innocence, and their hero a poet and romancer. It is only the joy of this romance and poetry that can sustain so varied a polity of ours. But we have instead a sordid mass of imagined subversions and enmities which are met with hysteric reprisals. It has all escalated into something worse than war, and therefore something our war-makers cannot understand. This non-understanding has been written into the statutes, and its application made into something horrendous that demolishes our clumsy accumulation of democracy.

A little reflection, a little humility, is all that is needed to understand that this is a crisis of unknown dimensions, that it is not the work of militants and saboteurs, that a few crumbs of power would not pacify this unrest. This is a crisis of the nation-state. Once the state rested on the nation, now it does not, and as new identities emerge, as the identities proliferate, the state paralyses itself with the very power it unleashes.

True, this is happening the world over, in some form or other. But that is no consolation. What is of concern is the consequences to our federal entity, to the Indian psyche. Decades of suspicion have conditioned our reflexes to the extent of condoning the deployment of the Armed Forces to run parts of the country. We must be regretting that there is no sea in Kashmir, or we would have deployed the Navy as well.

Armed presences are the surest way of ensuring the permanence of bitter memory, and that is precisely what we have done. We have militarised ourselves. These words are written not from pacifist fundamentalism, but from a sense

of waste; we have drained the joy of becoming, the joy in which many a dormant nationality wakes to the awareness of itself...

A MULTIGENIUS PERSONALITY is how "Namrata" in an Indian Express "space marketing supplement" on Nepal of 9 November profiles the Managing Director of Royal Nepal Airlines, perhaps by virtue of the half-page ad from the airline in the previous page.

Nepal the mountain Island in the Indian subcontinent harbouring natural beauty and property is equally rich in MULTIGENIUS personalities. Classical literatures like "Padma Purana, Nepal Mahatma" etc. A richness in culture as well, the entire island is dotted with temples and sculptures of various Divinity, the saying, that a country possessing such natural glamour naturally commands special dimensions in the field of architecture and cultural wealth very well applies to this country.

Naturally in such an environment personalities of multiments crop up and enhance the prestige of the country by their various meritorious contributions. Mr Pradeep Raj Pandey is one of them born in the well cultured, educated and high family of Nepal received his education in Cambridge University, Tribhuvan University and Delhi University.

Reaching the prime age of 42 he has shown his exceptional brilliance in the field of art and administration. A creative mind adorned with polite and charming personality has placed him on such a high dimension which is rarely found at this age.

The credit of organising and managing the Royal Nepal Airlines goes to Mr Pandey despite of this he has represented Nepal in several countries like Japan, Germany, Britain, Hong-kong, former USSR, France and India etc. in different capacities very successfully and thereby he is responsible for raising the prestige of Nepal in the world. Not only this, he has shown his versatile knowledge in marketing, planning, capital budgeting decisions and budgeting verses corporate planning etc.

He was not satisfied with the management of RNAC. He initiated starting of different flights to various countries in the world for effective utilization of tourist potentialities, natural beauties and cultural wealth of this mountain island, which shows his creative and scholarly mind. His capabilities are not limited only to the above contributions, he is equally efficient in the field of sports also. At present, he is a member of National squash team and an accepted sportsman in the field of culture. He is very particular with Indian music and musical instruments. It is no exaggeration in saying that Indian music/Classical music has become part of his life.

Shri Pandey is a rare personality which Nepal has been endowed by nature. We hope Nepal will ever receive perennial impetus and able guidance in the development of Nepal as a whole.

LORD GURU RIMPOCHE will evidently be none too happy with the editors of *Himal* for not sending out this chain letter, which arrived in the mail in late December. Perhaps the fate of Mr. Robertson (before he redeemed himself) awaits us all.

Oma A Hum Bingra Guru Padma Sedhe Hum,
Trust the Lord Guru Rimpoche with most Devotion
The Rimpoche will acknowledge and enlighten your ways.

1. This letter has come to you for good luck from the original course of Lord Guru Rimpoche. You will receive good luck after four days of receiving this letter. Good future awaits you if upon you to receive.

2. Please make 27 copies of this letter and send them out to 27 people who you needs luck. You must not delay in sending the letter.

3. This letter has been received from U.S.A.

4. Since the chain around you, you must make 27 copies identical to this letter and send them to your friends after four days you get a response, this is true.

5. Mr. Ben got this letter in 1958. He asked his secretary to type out 27 copies and send them out. After four days he won 75,000.000.

6. Mr. Robertson, an officer's, got this letter and forget it to send. He lost his job. He found the chain and send 100 copies. Four days letter he got a better job.

7. Please make sure that this chain must not broken to avoid bad luck. You must send them out 27 copies and send them out within four days. Your problems will banish.

8. Lord Guru Rimpoche hear your prayer.

--- Om A Hum Benza Guru Padma Sedhe Hum

--- Om A Hum Benza Guru Padma Sedhe Hum

--- Om A Hum Benza Guru Padma Sedhe Hum

CLIMBING VOCABULARY from a serialised spoof of mountaineering terms by Steve Ashton in the magazine *High*. These selections are from the magazine's September and October 1994 issues.

Talus: Exotic scree. Sounds vaguely Greek, anatomical and rude, doesn't it?

Tenzing Norgay: Went up Everest with Edmund Hillary to keep him company.

Terminal moraine: An incurable and fatal aversion to glacial debris.

Thermal underwear: Under garments which, having been worn for an extended period by a perspiring mountaineer, have exceeded their capacity for odour retention and, somewhat like vegetable matter in a compost heap, begin a process of

spontaneous internal combustion. Underwear having reached this state is said to have 'gone thermal'.

UIAA: Union of Indecisive Alpine Associations. In addition to talking about having talks about talking about safety recommendations and grading matters, the UIAA is also pondering the possibility of promoting harmony among the global climbing community by introducing political correctness into route names.

Vegetation: Plant growth which encroaches upon the climbing line. A climber who has a penchant for exploring overgrown cliffs is known as a vegetarian.

Waterproof: Convincing evidence for the presence of water, such as that provided by the rain which pisses through the seams of your two-hundred-quid mountain jacket.

White-out: Does this mean what I think it means? I'm trying to imagine a conversation between two winter climbers waking up in their mountain hut. One says to the other, "What's the weather like today, Jim?" To which the other—Jim presumably—replies, after rubbing the frost from the window and peering out on to a landscape of glistening snowfields, "It's white out." Hmm. Yes, I'll go for that: white-out means that... er, that's it white, out.

Wind-chill: Not another one. I mean, it's not as if there's such a thing as 'wind-warm'. Winds are chilly, for god's sake. Do I have to spell it out?

ME NEPALI, ME WORK could be the motto of the Nepal Association of Foreign Employment Agencies (NAFEA), going by its slick colour brochure. Comprising of 27 manpower agencies, NAFEA seeks "to legally provide employment opportunities to various categories of labour force and professional personnel to overseas countries."

Categories Personnel: Engineers, draftsman, overseers, mechanics, fitters, mason, electrician, foreman, heavy vehicle drivers, carpenters, crane/forklift drivers, helper and unskilled labour.

Hotel Restaurant Personnel: Trained and experienced managers, executive chefs, cooks, captains, waiters and utility workers, housekeepers, roommates, house boys, cleaners, accountants and clerks, telephone operators, secretaries, drivers, laundryman, electrician, plumbers.

Supermarket Personnel: Managers, accountants, storekeepers, salesman, salesgirls, helpers, butchers.

Hospital Personnel: Doctors, nurses, staff assistants, health assistants, helpers.

Security Guards: Personal bodyguards, presidential security guards, embassy security guards, banks and industrial security guards.

Marine: Security workers, shipyard guards, dock workers.



Vacancy Announcement

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) with its headquarters in Kathmandu, Nepal, was established in 1983 to address problems of economic and environmental development in the Hindu-Kush Himalayas (HKH) covering parts of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan. ICIMOD is an independent organisation governed by a Board of Governors and funded by some 15 countries and donor organisations. Its mandatory activities are (i) Documentation and Information Exchange, (ii) Research, (iii) Training and (iv) Advisory Services. Activities are implemented in close collaboration with partner institutions in the regional member countries. The present annual budget is \$ 3 million. The Centre has 3 thematic divisions and 3 support services :

1. Mountain Farming Systems Division (MFS)
2. Mountain Natural Resources Division (MNR)
3. Area Planning, Infrastructure and Enterprise Development Division (AIE)
4. Mountain Environment and Natural Resources Information Systems Services (MENRIS)
5. Documentation, Information and Training Services (DITS)
6. Administration, Finance and Logistics Services (AFLS)

Of the 26 internationally recruited positions, 14 have been filled at present. During the first half of 1995 the Centre intends to fill in six additional positions for its regular programme and two coordinators for separately funded projects, for which applications are now invited. The common requirements for all of the posts are :

- A. Post Graduate degree in the related field from an internationally recognised university
- B. Good writing, presentation and communication skills in English including knowledge of word processing
- C. Proven capabilities through publications and experience to take up the respective responsibilities.
- D. Willingness to travel frequently in the region and work harmoniously with persons of different nations and cultures.
- E. A major part of the work experience should have been obtained in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region.

Vac.95/1. Head, Area Planning, Infrastructure and Enterprise Development Division/ Enterprise Development and Marketing Specialist - 15 years' experience in economic development work, focussing on income generating enterprises and activities. Demonstrated managerial competence and capacity for intellectual leadership.

Vac.95/2. Head, Documentation, Information and Training Service/Information and Communication Specialist - 15 years' experience in information management and use of modern communication technology. Demonstrated managerial competence and capacity for intellectual leadership.

Vac.95/3. Agricultural Extension and Training Specialist, MFS Division - 10 years' experience in agricultural extension and/or training, including preparation of extension and training material

Vac.95/4. Pasture Specialist, MNR Division - 10 years' experience in analysis and management activities related with pasture and range development

Vac.95/5. Energy Specialist, AIE Division - 10 years' experience in energy planning and management, in particular non-conventional energy resources for rural development.

Vac.95/6. Remote Sensing Specialist, MENRIS - 10 years' experience in the field of remote sensing, preferably with several years in relation to mountain resources of the HKH.

Vac.95/7. Project Coordinator, "Promotion and Development of Beekeeping through conservation of native *Apis Cerana* Bees", MFS Division - 10 years' research and/or extension experience in apiculture, preferably with *Apis Cerana*. Management experience desirable.

Vac.95/8. Project Coordinator, "Mountain Risk Engineering", AIE Division (Pending final approval of project) - 10 years' experience in road construction or other infrastructure development in fragile mountain areas, including some exposure with risk and hazard management related with infra-structure development. Management experience is desirable.

Female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

Remuneration : Salaries and benefits are based on a modified UN system.

Duration : Three years, of which one year is probational, and subject to continuation of present funding levels of ICIMOD.

Starting date : 1st June 1995.

Applications : Applications should be received before 20th March 1995

M.R. Tuladhar, Head, Administration and Finance
ICIMOD, G.P.O. Box 3226, Kathmandu, Nepal
Fax : (977-1) 524509/524317

Detailed Terms of Reference for each position are available on request.

काठमाडौं, मैलो काठमाडौं

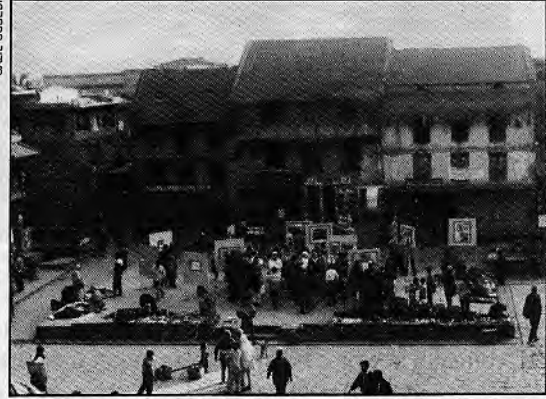


In mid-December, Himal magazine organised a photo exhibition, *Kathmandu, Mailo Kathmandu* ('mailo' = dirty, soiled) which travelled through the public spaces of Patan, Kathmandu and Bhaktapur towns.

We hoped that disturbing 'freeze frame' images reflecting the weakening spirit of Kathmandu Valley would provide shock therapy to the public as well as the political, business and non-governmental bosses. If the Valley is not to choke in its own refuse, our leaders have to dirty their hands. They must understand the here-and-now dangers that a dirty Kathmandu poses to public health, aesthetic and touristic sustainability.

In this photo-essay, we present some of the 42 pictures that were part of *Kathmandu, Mailo Kathmandu*. The chaitya-and-garbage photograph below, by Chandrasekhar Karki, was Editors' Choice for the image that said the most. Himal also held a poll in each of the locations, and the Public's Choice was the picture on page 33 of the tourist memorialising pigs and garbage at Thamel.

SALIL SUBEDI



What Heritage?



CHANDRASEKHAR KARKI

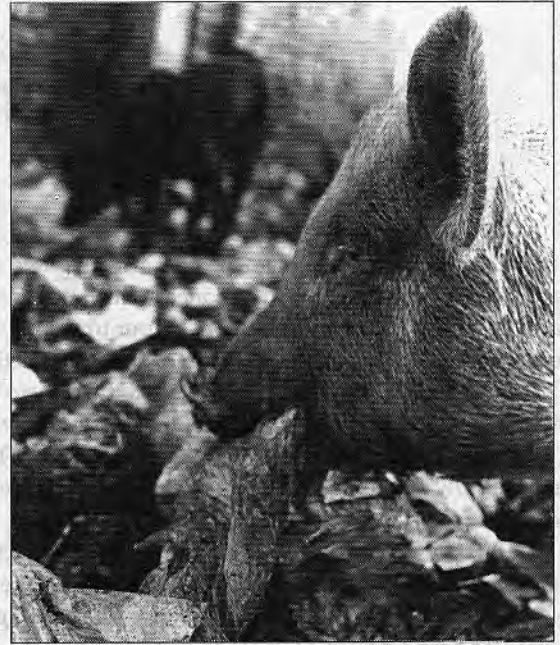
The shame of all Kathmandu in the neglect of one chaitya.



MRIGENDRA S. SHRESTHA

Alternative Tourism

What happens to the economy when tourists begin to aim cameras at pigs amidst garbage rather than the templescape?



JENNIFER JOY

Novel Diet

In the beginning, there was organic waste. Then came plastic. The trusty Kathmandu *sungur* takes it all in stride.

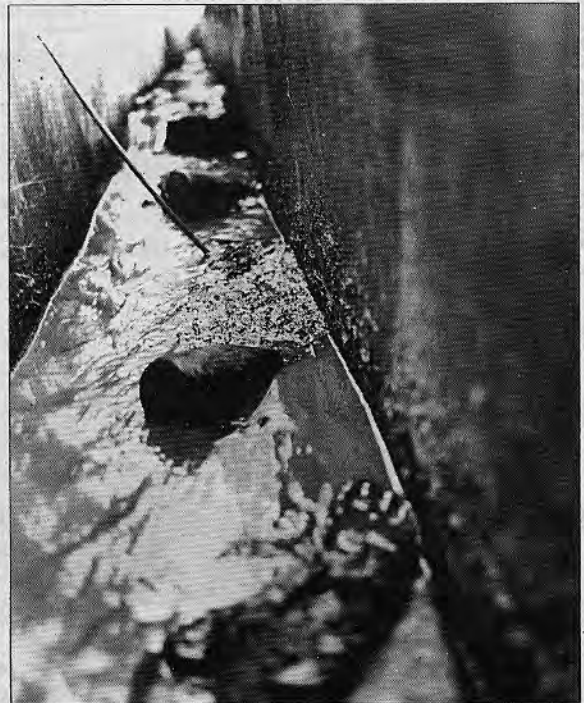


KEVIN BUBRISKI

Ragpickers

The ragpicker underclass of Teku provide some breathing space for a valley that would otherwise already have choked in plastic, rubber and metal discards of over-affluence.

An open drain in Patan carries a thick and fetid brew, a *khichadi* of raw sewage, motor oil from a nearby garage, and urine. Beer bottles mark the passage.



JANANI JOSHI

Patan Drain

The Day Before 4 May 1994, 4:30 pm



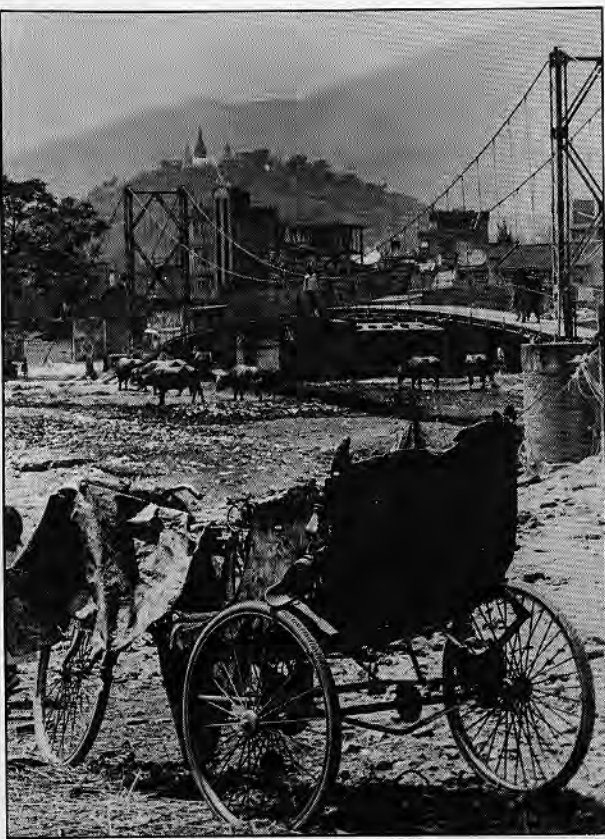
The view from Champadevi hill. An afternoon thunderstorm has just washed Kathmandu Valley's atmosphere, with only the Chobar cement factory's chimney plume indicating that all is not well.

The Morning After 5 May 1994, 9:30 am



both pictures,
RAJIV CHANDRA

The lethal air within this cauldron is what Kathmandu's inhabitants breathe during much of the winter. Temperature inversion keeps the atmosphere socked in, allowing the dust, smoke and gases from industries, brick kilns, motor vehicles, and constructions to generate a witch's brew. The smog could be mistaken for Kathmandu's winter fog, but it is already late in spring.



CHANDRASHEKHAR KARKI

A Ricksha to Swayambhu

From afar, Swayambhu's all-seeing eyes look down upon Bishnumati—a landscape that has become unrecognisable within a decade.



JANANI JOSHI

Orphans of the Road

The worst affected by air pollution in Kathmandu are these young conductors who perch at the back of the Vikram Tempos. As the three wheelers make their rounds, they breathe in carbon-laden deisel exhaust as well as the dust and gases of Kathmandu's busiest thoroughfares.



JANANI JOSHI

In the lean months, the Bagmati is just a sewer. Its flow is so diminished at the Aryaghat cremation grounds that the ashes, spent firewood, and flowers from funeral pyres do not even make it downstream.

Heavenwards Bound

A History of Filth

Kathmandu filth is not a recent phenomenon. The valley towns were already dirty more than a century ago, according to Western travelers' reports. Presented here is a selection, compiled by Abana Onta.

Britisher Daniel Wright documented in 1860: The streets of Kathmandu are very narrow, mere lanes in fact; and the whole town is very dirty. In every lane there is a stagnant ditch, full of putrid mud, and no attempt is ever made to clean these thoroughly. The streets, it is true, are swept in the centre, and part of the filth is carried off by the sellers of manure; but to clean the drains would now be impossible without knocking down the entire city, as the whole ground is saturated with filth... The houses are generally built in the form of hollow squares, opening off the streets by low doorways; and these central courtyards are too often only receptacles for rubbish of every sort. In short, from a sanitary point of view, Kathmandu may be said to be built on a dunghill in the middle of latrines.

In 1880, G.H.D. Gimlet wrote: The filth of the city is abominable. Along the sides of the streets and lanes, which are paved with brick or stone, lie deep gutters, a foot or eighteen inches wide and of about the same depth, filled with stagnant, stinking black mud, into which every sort of refuse finds its way. These gutters are never thoroughly cleansed. The foundations of the city must be saturated with the filth of more than thousand years.

Henry Ballantine, another visitor, reported in 1885: On the opposite side from the esplanade lay the capital city of 50,000 inhabitants wedged in between the Bagmati and Vishnumati, extending up from the point where these streams unite, and presenting a most picturesque appearance outwardly, but inwardly reeking with filth; a city which has dunghills for its foundations, stagnant pools for ornamental lakes, whose streets do duty for drains and latrines, where the widest thoroughfares are narrow lanes wretchedly paved, only fit for inoculated pedestrians. Such is Kathmandu with its ever present effluvia and stench, so that it is no wonder that during the summer just closing ten thousand, or one fifth of its population had fallen victims to cholera.

Being Previous... Doig's Kathmandu

Kathmandu residents have become a little disinterested in their home valley. But ask most visitors or returning natives what it is about the place they find most memorable, and the answer will invariably be the colours.

That explosion of emerald as the aircraft suddenly breaks through monsoon clouds on final approach, the ochre-and-white dolls' houses on the edge of terraces, blinding white cumulus towering over purple hills on the valley rim, terra-cotta temples reflecting the pale sun of a winter afternoon...

Desmond Doig's artist eyes were mesmerised by this beauty and light. It was love at first sight, and his view of Kathmandu is coloured by this affair.

When he died in 1983, the artist and writer left behind a folder-full of sketches and watercolours and the text for a book which languished in a publisher's attic in England. Ten years later, Desmond's friends in Kathmandu have helped retrieve the manuscript and artwork and publish *My Kind of Kathmandu*.

In the text, Desmond is constantly "being previous"—some sixth sense must have told him that by the time it saw the light of day the book itself would document a previous Kathmandu, an ex-Kathmandu. It was a Kathmandu that was already, in the late 1970s, decaying in front of his eyes as its colours faded, to be finally smothered by malignant concrete monochrome. The Valley's transformation in the decade since Desmond passed away has made this book one artist's celebration of what was Kathmandu. The pages of *My Kind of Kathmandu* are like a pilgrimage to the past and a glimpse at the vanishing treasures of Asia's Florence. They fade even as we talk.

Desmond knew what was going on. He fled Calcutta to escape the squalor because, as he said in a conversation in 1981, he was "neither a charity worker nor a revolutionary". But in the late 1970s he saw the blight was spreading to Kathmandu as well. In his text, Desmond grieves for a Kathmandu where the "desire to be modern has hit... and the rich are hurtling to pull down their centuries-old houses and replace them with concrete and glass".

He yearns for a less-concrete Kathmandu of as recent as the 1960s where there were no straight lines, the streets were still flagstoned and the houses were "all mellowed brick and russet tile and weathered wood". Toyotas and Datsuns had not made their appearance and out-of-the-way shrines of Dhum Barahi, Maiti Devi and Kwa Bahal were still shrouded in hoary legends and awaiting discovery.

Call it romanticism. But then Desmond was a



My Kind of Kathmandu

An Artist's Impression of the Emerald Valley

Desmond Doig
Indus, 1994
Pages: 208
Price: NRs 2072

Review by Kunda Dixit

K. Dixit is Asia-Pacific
Editor of Inter Press
Service.

romantic. His drawings studiously avoid the ugly. The loving lines of the portrait of Sweta Bhairav meti-culously detail the tufts of grass growing out of the tiles, but blot out the squalor of the adjoining square.

Elsewhere, Desmond was there before the rot set in. Bucolic scenes of Swayambhunath from the Ring Road capture the texture of the fields, trees and hills that have now been washed away by Kathmandu's trans-Bishnumati sprawl. Ten years after Desmond's eyes and fingers scanned the scene, the spot is unrecognisable. Desmond's roof of the Chobar Ganesh temple still glistens in the afternoon sun, and is not coated in cement dust. The hill beyond does not yet carry the scar of a limestone quarry.

There is an evening view of Patan's old bridge sitting on "a forest of wooden legs" as the Bagmati flows silently below reflecting the sunset off Jugal Himal peaks. The water and colour evoke a languid sky that has long disappeared under Kathmandu's smog. The dream-like quality of bright afternoon light on Ganesh Himal framed in red-yellow cottages and harvests suffused in gold is impressionistic—recording for posterity the light and colours that struck the retina of an artist's eye a decade or more ago. The sepia dawn on a Bhaktapur street is timeless.

Desmond wrote as well as he painted, and does not try to hide that he is looking at Kathmandu with the blinkers of an outsider, tourist-guide's eye. But as a perfectionist he would have frowned at the sloppy editing, distracting proof errors and odd words that appear disconcertingly in bold throughout the book. As artist, he would be pained by the ungainly size, poor layout and uneven printing which stand out despite the publisher's lavish efforts.

The text weaves in the tale of two coronations (Mahendra and Birendra), introduces us to celeb expats like Boris Lissanevitch, Han Suyin, Barbara Adams, Marshall Moran SJ, Col. Jimmy Roberts and local luminaries like Field Marshal Kaiser Shumshere and Prime Minister Tanka Prasad. It reveals the secrets of Thecho village's mustard presses, Taleju's barking bell, the hill of the camphor tree, and a temple where a god lies sleeping...

On the rare clear evening these days when the cement plant is not belching dust, you can still stand below the Bridge to Ye Rang and see what Desmond saw: "The snow ridge to the north turning from silver to gold to rose and fading lavender and the flaming sky reflecting in the shallow river."

Sometimes in the midst of Kathmandu's mad dash into a nondescript future, the past shines through the smog and grime.

Anything, Anywhere, Anytime



Overseas Cargo Service and J.P.N. Exports, Thamel, Kathmandu

P.O. Box 8621, Kathmandu. Phone: 977 1 413391 Fax: 416850

Visit Mandala

for

**Scholarly books, maps and guides on
Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and the Indian Himalaya**

FORTHCOMING

Civilized Shamans
Buddhism in Tibetan Societies
by **Geoffrey Samuel**
Mandala Edition
(Original edition published
by Smithsonian Institution Press, Washinton DC. USA)

Jhankri: Chamane de l' Himalaya
(In French Language)
Eric Chazot

**WE
ACCEPT
AMERICAN
EXPRESS
VISA CARD
&
MASTER
CREDIT
CARD**

RECENT ARRIVALS

**Proceedings of the International
Seminar on Anthropology of Nepal:
People, Problems and Processes**
Edited by **Michael Allen**

**Tales of Turquoise:
A Pilgrimage in Dolpo**
Cornneille Jest

**Nepal: A Guide to the Art and
Architecture of the Kathmandu Valley**
Michael Hutt



MANDALA BOOK POINT

Phone: 977-1-227711 / 216100 (R), Fax: 221129 / 227372
Kantipath, Post Box No. 528, Kathmandu, Nepal

The **1994 Himal Index** makes accessible to readers and researchers information on articles and news items appearing in the last six issues of Himal magazine. Regular departments such as Voices, Himalaya Mediafile, Abominably Yours and Abstracts are not included in the Index. 'Bx' in the list below refers to box-items within larger features.

A computerised index of *Himal* in diskette or printed form (WordPerfect 6) is available at Himal Office. This Index contains details on *Himal's* total output to date—35 issues (Vol 0 through Vol 7 No 6) and has all the tools for retrieval and sorting using UNESCO's CDS/ISIS library package. Data input by **Piush Mani Dahal**.

Jan/Feb 1994 Vol 7 No 1 (Red)

- 745.** Axing Chipko
Aryal, Manisha
Bx1: Forest Policies and the Seeds of Discord
Bx2: The Skeptic's Chipko
Bx3: "Ped Kato"
Chipko/Activism/Uttarakhand/Forest
- 746.** Portraits of Nepal
Bubriski, Kevin
Photography
- 747.** Tenzing Gyatso on Saddam Hussein and German U-Boats
Dalai Lama/Interview
- 748.** Discussing the "Tinkering Approach" and the "Grand Plan"
Prakash, Sanjeev
Tibet/Development/Conference
- 749.** Ladakh on the Schedule
Srinivas, Smriti
Ladakh/Ethnicity
- 750.** Peace Conference in Shillong
Meghalaya/Northeast/Conference
- 751.** Phoenix Journal
Journal/Research
- 752.** Zapping Poop with Solar Power
Conservation/Solar
- 753.** A Native by Any Other Name...
Pradhan, Rajendra
Bx1: The Government vs. the Indigenous People(s)
Tribe/Ethnicity/Discrimination
- 754.** Slave Wages on the Trails
Scott, Doug
Bx1: The No-Pain-No-Gain Trekking Anti-Brochure
Porter/Trek/Wage/Mountaineering

Mar/Apr 1994 Vol 7 No 2 (Purple)

- 755.** On the Way Up
Dixit, Kanak Mani
- 756.** Notes from the festival
Prasad, Anmole
Film/Documentary/Festival
- 757.** ...because they are there
Verma, Sanjeev
Film/Documentary/Festival
- 758.** Delinquent Documentary
Dixit, Kanak Mani
Film/Documentary/Lynx/Critique
- 759.** Tibetan Renaissance
Tibet/Culture/Religion/Amnye Machen
- 760.** Brother to Another Planet
Biosphere/Tharu/Arizona
- 761.** Tourism a Genetic Resource?
Biophilia/Nature/Tourism
- 762.** Himalayan Cyberspace
Tiwari, Ashutosh
E-Mail/Tibet/Dharamshala
- 763.** Gorkhali Honours
Gurkha/Recruitment/World War/Victoria Cross
- 764.** Khimti to Go
Hydropower/Khimti/Water
- 765.** Northern Forests on the Way Out
Ghaley, Padam Singh
Humla/Timber/Forests/Tibet
- 766.** Wealth of Study
Northeast/Rajiv Gandhi Foundation/Fellowship.
- 767.** Rimpoché Wrangle at Rumtek
Reincarnation/Kagyü/Religion
- 768.** The Original Trekker and the In-flight Connoisseur
Toni Hagen/Dubby Bhagat/Flight
- 769.** The Storm Raged All Night Long
Rai, Indra Bahadur

Katha/Story

- 770.** Hostage in Thimphu
Bhandari, Bhakti Prasad
Bx1: The House of Punishment
Refugee/Bhutan/Prison
- 771.** Mistaken Antiquity
Messerschmidt, Don
Antique/Sculpture/Aghori
- 772.** A False Harmonising of Himalayan Experience
Jhaveri, Nayna J.
Degradation/Ecology/Critique
- 773.** Bahuns in the Nepali State
Sharma, Prayag Raj
Brahman/Ethnicity/Janajati

May/June 1994 Vol 7 No 3 (Grey)

- 774.** A Fate Other than Marginality
Gyawali, Dipak
Periphery/Economy/Plains
- 775.** The Next Great Earthquake
Bilham, Roger
Earthquake/Seismicity
- 776.** Tarai with Blinkers
Meyer, Kurt W.
Research/Mithila/Tharu/Critique
- 777.** Teacher
Tseten, Kesang
Katha/Story
- 778.** The Loss of a Mother's Son
Shroff, Satis
Poem/Gurkha
- 779.** Stories from the Heart of Nepal
United Mission/Story/Education
- 780.** Nagas descend on Kathmandu
Northeast/Tourism/Culture
- 781.** Shahtoosh
Wildlife/Antelope/Endangered/Chang Tang
- 782.** Nar Bahadur Bhandari
Sikkim/Election/Assembly
- 783.** Some Tea and Pesticides Please
Darjeeling/Germany/Pesticide/Fertiliser
- 784.** Disastrous Sedimentation
Kulekhani/Sedimentation/Reservoir/Cloudburst/Silt
- 785.** Austrians on Yamdrok Tso
Frimmel, Martin
Darn/Panchen Lama/Reservoir/Tibet
- 786.** Discord in Dharamshala
Gaddi/Dharamshala/Riot/Tibet
- 787.** Are Tame Rhinos Real Rhinos?
Research/Rhino/Tourism/Chitwan
- 788.** Deconstructing Myths About People of India
Tribe/Ethnography/Diversity/Research
- 789.** Dhupi Not Welcome in Darj
Darjeeling/Tree
- 790.** The Value of Dung
Dung/Energy/Cattle
- 791.** Cranes Don't Come Here Anymore
Siberian Cranes/Rajasthan/Migration
- 792.** Cost-Benefit of a Health Care Centre
Healthcare/Research/Garhwal/Uttarakhand

Jul/Aug 1994 Vol 7 No 4 (Orange)

- 793.** House of Cards
Dixit, Kanak Mani
Bx1: Kathmandu and Thimphu
Bx2: Garganda to Beldangi
Bx3: The View from South Block
Bx4: Rongthong Kunley Dorji
Bx6: "I Don't Know"
Bhutan/Refugees/Geo-Politics/Media
- 794.** Lyonpo Dawa Tsering
Interview/Dawa Tsering/Bhutan

- 795.** Shame on SAARC
Gupta, Anirudha
SAARC/Refugee/Bhutan/UNHCR

- 796.** On the way up
Dixit, Kanak Mani

- 797.** When a GLOF Bursts its Banks
Mool, Pradeep Kumar
GLOF/Rolwaling/Tso Rolpa

- 798.** Northeasterners Resist the Lollypop
Tribe/Northeast/Dam/Brahmaputra

- 799.** Snow Leopard Menace
Gurung, Gehendra /Ale, Som
Snow Leopard /Manang/Film-making/Research

- 800.** Meghalaya Coal
CSE/Down To Earth Features
Khasi Hills/Meghalaya/Mining/Coal

- 801.** Elephant Corridors in Western Tarai
Elephant/Tarai/Corbett

- 802.** Dabur wants Taxus baccata
CSE/Down To Earth Features
Taxus/Dabur/Taxol/Yew

- 803.** Trees and the Caste Barrier
Shimla/Forest/Caste

- 804.** PLACENAMES
Wangyal, Sonam
Kurseong

- 805.** Back Breaking Rotors
Upadhyay, Akhilesh
Khumbu/Helicopters/Porters/Tourism

- 806.** The Price of a Rooster
Prasad, Anmole
Katha/Story

- 807.** Writing in Monochrome
Ramble, Charles
Review/Travel Literature/Guides

- 808.** The Northern Passage
Shrestha, Manesh
Peak/Expedition/Mountaineering

Sep/Oct 1994 Vol 7 No 5 (Green)

- 809.** Buddhijibi: Intelligentsia Has No Clothes
Gyawali, Dipak
Intelligentsia/Intellectuals/Society/Change

- 810.** Speak Truth to Power
Shaha, Rishikesh
Politics/Stability/Intellectual

- 811.** A Generation Lost
Tiwari, Ashutosh
Education/Intellectual

- 812.** Contemporary Concerns
Sharma, Pitamber
Nationalism/Liberalisation/Intellectual/Gender

- 813.** "The Road to Nowhere"
Malla, Kamal Prakash
Intellectuals/Scholarship/Caste

- 814.** Hunter and the Hunted
Magar, Ranaprasad Gharti
Hunting/Magar/Dhorpatalan/Tourism

- 815.** Is Khumbu Garbage Tamed?
Upadhyay, Akhilesh
Sherpa/Garbage/Khumbu/Trek/Tourism

- 816.** Rupshu Opens to Its Fate
Gupta, Ranu
Tourism/Ladakh/Tso-Morari/Pollution

- 817.** Blame the Mountains No More
Himalayan Degradation/Floods

- 818.** Broadcasting Tongue Twister
Shrestha, Manesh
Ethnicity/Language/Radio

- 819.** Placenames
Wangyal, Sonam
Bhutan

- 820.** Busing it to Lhasa
Shrestha, Manesh

Highways/Trade/Tibet

- 821.** BLs, RLs, BCs and Sikkim's Communal Politics
Kazi, Jigme N.
Elections/Ethnicity/Sikkim/Politics

- 822.** Uttarakhand out of Uttar Pradesh
Nautiyal, Navin
Uttarakhand/Uttar Pradesh/
Activism/Statehood

- 823.** Kali with Crows
Isaacson, J. Morton
Katha/Story

- 824.** Killing Fields of Kashmir
Bidwai, Prful
Kashmir/Autonomy/JKLF

- 825.** Save the Nepali Tiger
McDougal, Charles
Bx1: A Buffer for the Tiger
Tigers/Reserves/Poaching/Wildlife

- 826.** 'Himal' equals Cluster, Chain, Group
Thapa, Deepak
Mountains/Ranges/Peaks/Terminology

Nov/Dec 1994 Vol 7 No 6 (Blue)

- 827.** Angry Hills/An Uttarakhand State of Mind
Aryal, Manisha
Bx1: Himachali Topi
Bx2: Regional Press
Bx3: Dalit Dabao Andolan
Bx4: You Kumaoni, Me Garhwali
Bx6: Women to the Back, Please
Uttarakhand/Statehood/Activism/Identity/Media

- 828.** Dukka during the World War
Onta, Pratyoush
Bx1: Defending Bharat
Bx2: A Splinter in the Mother's Heart
Gurkha/World War/History/Suffering

- 829.** Thick but Incomplete
Bellezza, John V.
Review/Tibet/Guide

- 830.** How the Crescent Fares in Nepal
Sharma, Sudhindra
Muslim/Hindu/Communalism/Secularism

- 831.** The Soldier ("Sipahi")
Koirala, Bisweswar Prasad
Katha/Story

- 832.** Said the Woodcutter
Rao, Maj. Arun
Poem

- 833.** Chomolangma in b/w
Everest/Photograph

- 834.** At Last, a Population Breakdown
Population/Census/Ethnicity

- 835.** Loba Art
Antique/Photograph/Mustang

- 836.** Placenames
Wangyal, Sonam
Kalimpong

- 837.** A Star was Born
Upadhyay, Akhilesh
Film/UNICEF/Girlchild

- 838.** That Tree Can Do No Wrong
CSE-Down To Earth Feature Service.
Seabuckhorn/Himachal/
ICIMOD/Deserts

- 839.** Is this Rape?
Forest/Timber/Tibet

- 840.** Disaster on Pisang Peak
Ghaley, Padam Singh
Climbing/Accident/Pisang

- 841.** Quiet South Asian Coup
SAARC/Environment/UNEP/Data

- 842.** A Trekking Peak - By any Other Name
O'Connor, Bill
Trekking/Accident/Climbing

Himalayan beauty caught the eye of practically every major Indian daily, when two of the **four first ladies** of Druk Yul chose to alight from an airplane in Patna with the crown prince on a pilgrimage to Buddhist sites in Bihar. Well, if the *Times of India*, *The Telegraph* and *The Statesman* thought it was okay, who is Chhetria Patrakar to act squeamish? Herewith I present the queens. And speaking of pictures, check out the one of King Jigme Singye Wangchuk embracing P.V. Narashimha Rao soon after the Congress Party's devastating showing in the December polls. An ace at public relations, the Druk Gyalpo knows well the importance of friendship shown in times of trouble—he made it a point to visit Indira Gandhi when she was out of power. The dividends are His Majesty's for the reaping.



For three decades we have played around with the term **forest degradation** without really trying to understand what it means. This point is confirmed by forestry scholar Deepak KC, who writes in the latest issue of the newsletter *Habitat Himalaya* that "the deforestation and extent of forest degradation in Nepal are practically unknown". KC is to-the-point, "Although the term 'forest degradation' is widely used, no standardized definition of the term exists to date. In the absence of scientific attempts to quantify and/or classify forest degradation, there is no basis for assessing the extent or rate of degradation of forests, comparing differentially-degraded forests across time and space, and subsequent targeting of appropriate management programs for a certain class of degraded forests." That this is being said in 1995 is a shame on the very discipline of Nepali forestry and all who have practiced it in last four decades.

Hypothesis: if **uranium** is found and is being extracted along the Shivalik range both in Himachal Pradesh and in

Pakistan, then it stands to reason that the radioactive lode is also lurking about in Nepal, which is host to the entire eastern half of the Shivalik range (the Churia). Nepali physicist Binil Aryal, writing in *Kantipur*, considers that this hypothesis is proven. Gamma-ray spectrometer studies along the Tinbhangle Khola in Makwanpur District south of Kathmandu, he writes, indicate that there is extractable quality uranium in Nepal's Churia. Right, so let's call in the IAEA and let Nepal consider signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty for starters.

The letters column of *The Statesman*, more than others, provides esoteric tidbits to sharpen the mind. A 12 December letter, from Kalyan Kumar Datta from Nadia discusses the proper address for the **historic Buddha**. He says that the name should be *Siddhartha Gautam (the Buddha)*, "since Gautam is only a family name and Siddhartha was his personal name." Datta is firm that the common usage of 'Gautam Buddha' is incorrect

Two recent items prove once again that the **American media** just cannot cover the Himalaya with any amount of diligence. Take a look at a January issue of *Newsweek*, which identifies the well-known wooden twosome of Shiva-Parvati peering out of a carved window at the Kathmandu Durbar Square as "Kathmandu dancers". Or how about John F. Burns's report in the 16 December *New York Times* on the death of eleven climbers on Pisang Peak in the Manang Himal (see Himal Nov/Dec 1994). The main question is how all could have died in one incident, and suspicion is that the party was tied to

one rope. But Burns prints the story he has been fed by *interested parties*: "...with bad weather closing in, the party began to descend. Below the summit, with the party roped together in groups of three and four, some members of the party began to slide on a steep, icy slope. In seconds, the entire party was swept 1,500 feet down the slope, then over a sheer 500-foot drop." How?! Sloppy, sloppy, Mr. Burns.

Some **military details** that have caught Chhetria Patrakar's eye this past month. One is the announcement that China and India have agreed to hold joint military exercises this summer in their first combined defence manoeuvres since they fought the border war in 1962. The exercises are planned to be held around Pangong Lake east of Leh, an Indian defence official told *Reuters* in Jammu mid-December. "It's part of a friendly, mutual confidence-building measure," said he. If the Ladakh manoeuvres prove successful, subsequent joint exercises are slated for the North-east. I'm all for renewed bhai-bhaism, as long as we know where we're going.

The other item that caught my eyes is Manoj Joshi's piece in *The Sunday Times of India* on **elite commando battalions** of the Indian Army, which are being reconstituted as a new 'Special Forces' unit. The Special Forces are the outcome of the belief that India is likely to face more threats from low intensity conflicts rather than general war. Meanwhile, there is already a Special Frontier Force, writes Joshi, which is under the Research and Analysis Wing, India's external intelligence arm, but is officered by the Indian Army. This force is successor to the 'Establishment 22' that was set up by the CIA in the 1950s, comprising of Khampas and raised for sabotage operations in Tibet. This force was disbanded after 1962 and reconstituted as the SFF.

Might as well empty my ammo while I'm at it. Here is another **militairesque snippet** from a mid-January *Times of India* piece by O.V. Vijayan, which relates an anecdote narrated by B.P. Koirala concerning his brief tenure as

Prime Minister back in 1960. "Koirala suggested at a conference of his generals, in jest obviously, that the Nepalese army be demobilised. Even as a joke it was taken ill. Then he asked them if they could beat the Indian Army. The answer obviously was no. Could they take on the Chinese army? The answer was an even more embarrassed no. Then what was Nepal spending a fortune building its combat manpower and stockpile for?" More than four decades later, the question remains relevant...

"If the Hindu and the Buddhist belief of the rebirth is true, these brave mountaineers must be climbing somewhere today. Perhaps it is true, the Sherpa belief, that the mountain gods gather to themselves those they love." This is Harish Kapadia's deeply felt **requiem** to three Sherpas who died in an early expedition of which he was part, as described in *High Himalaya, Unknown Valleys* (Indus, New Delhi). Chhetria Patrakar has not met Kapadia, who is Honorary Editor of the *Himalayan Journal*, but from the writing he must be a cut different and above the stuff-shirt military men and former bureaucrats who have a lockhold on Indian mountaineering.

Someone hereabouts should subscribe to **Travel Medicine News**, a quarterly journal that deals with diseases that tourists encounter or *bring into* foreign lands. Our touristifying region is increasingly exposed to viruses, microbes and *kitandus* (say that nasalised) brought in by the Western traveller. In the latest issue of the magazine, Jonathan M. Mann, well known former chief of WHO's HIV/AIDS programme and now at Harvard, writes that "tourism and travel are inextricably linked with the history of infectious agents and epidemic diseases". Historically, travellers have been notorious carriers of smallpox, plague, syphilis and measles, and today HIV/AIDS, various STDs, meningococcal meningitis and others are added to the list. While the tourist might turn up his nose at typically Third World predilections such as the Delhi

Belly, Giardia and Hepatitis-B, perhaps the vectors that *he/she* brings in are more dangerous—just that no one talks about it.

Old news, but interesting nonetheless. Last year, the British Mountaineering Club organised a conference on environmental and social development impact of mountain-related **tourism in the 'greater ranges'**. The term refers to the Andes and Himalaya, home to 55 million. The Conference was chaired jointly by Paul Nunn, Chair of BMC's International Committee, and Peter Mould, Chair of the Access and Conservation Committee, and was introduced by Chris Bonnington. Specialist presentations were made by Doug Scott, Steve Bell, Elaine Brook, Peter Stone (Editor of *The State of the World's Mountains*) and Isobel Shaw from the Aga Khan Foundation. Notice something amiss? Yes, yes! There seems to have been no native Andean or Himalayan present!

Other than the fact that the ADB is in cahoots with Jakarta in trying to dump DDT which the Indonesians themselves would have nothing to do with on Nepal, it would seem that **landlockedness has its pluses**. This is because of the sheer difficulty of lugging low-cost high-volume wastes far inland when there are so many poor coastal countries willing to take in the trash for penny. Check it out: the world waste trade is proliferating as the 24 states of the OECD dump on the non-OECD among us. The Dutch export ten million tons of pig and chicken manure to Gujarat every year, toxic copper smelting furnace dust is shipped to Bangladesh by a US firm as part of a fertiliser consignment, and plastic, cadmium, nickel and zinc wastes, computer scrap, ash residues are finding their way all over the coastal entry points of South Asia, all part of the 300 to 400 million tonnes of hazardous waste that is generated globally every year. Trade and transit treaties be damned, as far as hazardous wastes are concerned, Nepal and Bhutan (and Tibet??) should be pleased that they are *bhuparibestit!*

While on the subject of **gruesome health hazards**, chanced upon an advertisement in an adventure magazine placed by Katadyn Ceramic Water Filters, with claims that it will convert contaminated H₂O into "safe, bacteria-free drinking water". The makers claim that their filter can tackle any of these yuck matters: Sepsis, Giardia, Micro-organisms, Rancidity, Spoilage, Muck, Bugs, Scurf, Decay, Retching, Soilure, Republicans, Bilge, Mire, Slime, Sludge, The Media, Cryptosporidium, Vibrio Cholerae, Schistosoma, Sphacelus, Democrats, Feculence, Sordes, Corruption, Offal, Colluvies, Scum, Flux, Marcescence, Pseudomonas, Pus, Decomposition, Bog, Big Business, Purulence, Gleet, Nastiness, Struwelpeter, Shigella, E. Coli, Gangrene, Mold, Rust, Necrosis, Guano, Putrefaction, Peccance, Slough, Salmonella and Turbidity. *Republicans?*

A massive infusion of **World Bank money** in India's forestry sector just reported: a cool US\$ 54 million in IDA soft loans (35-year maturity period) handed over to the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education in Dehra Dun. The purpose is to reorient forestry research from basic to applied research, "making forestry research more production-oriented and user-friendly" by turn-of-century, fine-tune forestry policies, and enhance "consonance" between Government departments, ecological, wildlife and watershed agencies and the "affected local populace", reports *The Statesman*. That's a lot of money WB has shelled out, but then India is a big country. One major beneficiary of this largesse will be Himalayan woodlands, which make up a good chunk of what remains green in Bharat. But don't expect Sunderlal Bahuguna to applaud.

Khushwant Singh, in his column **With Malice Towards One and All** repeats with approval this proverb, contained in Lhamo Pemba's new anthology of Tibetan sayings translated:
*A big yak doesn't
Mean bigger dung.*

- Chhetria Patrakar

The First Indo-Nepal Joint Venture Bank



**NEPAL
SBI BANK
LIMITED**

An Associate of State Bank of India- India's Premier Bank
Jointly promoted by State Bank of India,
Employees Provident Fund & Agricultural Development Bank

ANNOUNCES **fast & cheapest** **MONEY TRANSFER SERVICE**

With our network in major business centres in India through State Bank Of India, NEPAL SBI BANK offers fast transfer of your money to following places at the cheapest rates.

Be it Trade Account, Personal Account and Capital Account

(subject to the prevailing local laws).

AHMEDABAD CIRCLE	:	Ahmedabad Main Branch; Anand; Baroda; I.P.C.L., Koyali, Bajwa; Rajkot; Surat; Vapi Industrial Township.
BANGALORE CIRCLE	:	Overseas Branch, Bangalore; Dharwad; Mangalore; Mysore.
BENGAL CIRCLE	:	Overseas Branch, Calcutta; Commercial Branch, Calcutta; Calcutta Main Branch, Chowringhee, Calcutta; Darjeeling; Dhakuria; Gangtok; Kalimpong; Kurseong; Port Blair, Siliguri.
BHOPAL CIRCLE	:	Bhopal Main Branch; Gwalior; Indore; Jabalpur.
BHUBANESWAR CIRCLE	:	Bhubaneswar Main Branch; Cuttack
BOMBAY CIRCLE	:	Overseas Branch; Bombay; Backbay Reclamation, Bombay; Commercial Branch, Bombay; International Service Branch, Bombay; Kolhapur; Nagpur; Opera House; Bombay; Panaji; Pune
CHANDIGARH CIRCLE	:	Ambala; Amritsar; Bhilwara; Bhiwani; Chandigarh; Faridabad; Hissar; Jalandhar; Jammu; Ludhiana; Panipat; Srinagar
DELHI CIRCLE	:	Overseas Branch, New Delhi; New Delhi Main Branch; Agra; Ajmer; Bikaner; Central Secretariat, New Delhi; Dehradun; Jaipur; Jodhpur; Meerut; Mussoorie; Nehru Place, New Delhi.
HYDERABAD CIRCLE	:	Hyderabad Main Branch, Guntur, Secunderabad; Visakhapatnam.
LUCKNOW CIRCLE	:	Overseas Branch, Varanasi; Kanpur Main Branch; Lucknow Main Branch; Allahabad; Baharich; Barabanki; Bareilly; Basti; Gorakhpur; Modi Nagar; Moradabad; Nainital; Nanpara; Palia Kalan; Tanakpur, Gonda; Satna.
MADRAS CIRCLE	:	Overseas Branch, Madras; Overseas Branch; Cochin; Calicut; Coimbatore, Coonoor; Karur; Kodai Kanal; Madurai; Pondicherry; Salem; Sivakasi; Tiruchirappalli; Trirupur; Trivandrum/ Udhagamandalam (Ooty); Vellore.
NORTH EASTERN CIRCLE	:	Agartala; Dibrugarh; Dimapur, Guwahati; Imphal; Itanagar; Kohima; Shillong; Tezpur
PATNA CIRCLE	:	Patna Main Branch; Betla, Darbhanga; Dhanbad; Forbesganj; Hazaribagh; Jamsedpur; Jogbani; Kishanganj; Muzaffarpur; Purnea; Raxaul; Sitamari Bazar

If you want us to add other cities for money transfer services, we solicit your suggestions
Our association with SBI, which has worldwide connections,
will enable us to transfer money to any part of the world efficiently

Rock Summit, Snow Summit

KNOW
YOUR
HIMAL

Diehard scientific positivism is confusing the public by constantly revising the height of Chomolongma. On behalf of the peoples of the world, it is time to call a halt to this tomfoolery.

by **Deepak Thapa**

In August of 1994, the China State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping reported its latest measurement of Chomolongma/Sagarmatha/Everest. The venerable mountain, it was revealed, is shorter than the 8848 metres it has been credited with all these years. To be precise, the previous height of 8848.13 m as ascertained by the Bureau in 1975 had not taken into account the depth of snow on the summit. And so, when the re-measurement was done recently using a satellite-aided global positioning system and laser measurement technology, the level of snow was also discounted. Of the 8848.82 m that was calculated, 2.55 metres was subtracted for the snow deposit on the summit. This snow depth was determined by the tried and tested method of sinking a steel rod into the snow. Everest stands at exactly 8846.27 m, the Bureau reported.

One would immediately like to question, when confronted with this assertion, why this micro-specificity down to the last centimetre about a mountain which by its very loftiness makes such an exercise seem slightly ridiculous. As we delve deeper, the exercise actually *does* begin to look farcical, as should any scientific endeavour taken to illogical limits.

In the case of Everest's height, it is certainly important to know the exact height of the mountain. However, it seems that our friends in Beijing have gone overboard in decreeing a specific height when, as we shall see, *the debate has not even begun* as to the approach to be taken to measure the last few inches and centimetres of mountain-tops. If the Bureau had chosen not to go to down to the second decimal point, there would have been no reason to fault it.

As we shall see, the only finding that the Bureau's scientists can justify is the following: "*at a specific time and at a specific*

$$\begin{array}{r} 8848.82 \\ - 2.55 \\ \hline 8846.27 \end{array}$$

Chinese methodology.

point under the snow at the summit pyramid of Everest, not necessarily the highest point, subtracting the snow accumulated (which fluctuates with season, snowfall, wind velocity), the elevation above sea-level was found to be 8846.27 metres."

That would have been the scientist's report, whereas it is the chaps at public relations that seem to have the upper hand. Which is why at every turn we are confronted with banner headlines announcing "new height of Everest". Since the Sagarmatha summit is shared equally with Nepal, perhaps in future the Royal Nepal Academy of Science and Technology should be consulted before announcements are made.

True Height

To state the obvious, all major Himalayan peaks have snow on their summits. This might not be true with certain lower mountains with extremely steep summit outcroppings, but generally it can be expected that there is snow at the top. The problem tackled and inadequately answered by the Chinese on Everest is something that has to be considered as one gauges the height of every other himal. This is as best a place as any to consider the issues that are thrown up.

Since all Himalayan massifs have snow at the top, does the height of the mountain

have to include the thickness of snow invariably found on the summit, or does the 'true' height extend only up to the top of the rock that makes the mountain. Accepting the former is also conceding that practically none of the measurements made of mountain heights are accurate, bearing in mind the fluctuation in the amount of snow that accumulates on mountain tops. The snow's height at the summit would depend upon the strength of the jetstream (that famous plume on Everest and other 8000ers, which is snow being whipped away by the high winds), time of year, angle of sun, level of snow precipitation, and number of climbers tramping about at the top packing the snow. On the day 34 climbers were waiting at the Hillary Step for their turn on the tourist trail to the top, the height of Everest would have decreased by at least five cm.

Those who believe that true height should refer only to the rock tip under the snow have even more explaining to do. True, only the bald know exactly how tall they are, and immovable rock provides a scientific specificity that even packed snow could never match. However, rocks in the natural state do not form perfect pyramids that taper up to a perfect tip. Jagged points vie with each other for supremacy.

Admitting this, how can one be sure the end of the rod used on Everest by the Chinese scientists to plumb the depth of snow came to rest on the highest point of rock? The rod sunk into the snow could easily have missed a higher protuberance (if only by a centimetre) on any side.

Furthermore, where does one begin probing? Snow keeps on shifting following the mood of the winds. The (momentarily) highest point on a snow mound does not necessarily indicate that it is directly on top of the conical tip of the rock underneath,

assuming such a conical tip exists under Everest or any other peak.

There are, of course, ways to find out the highest point of the rock lying under the snow, although the likelihood is that the Chinese did not try them on Everest. An expedition can be mounted with climbers equipped with shovels to clear the snow off the top and having accomplished this, the topmost rocky section of the mountain can be identified. If shovels are too cumbersome, the climber-scientists could demarcate a 10 by 10 feet square on the summit mound and poke (the aforementioned) rod all over to figure out the highest point. Another method would be to take a lateral sonogram of the mountain top.

The sheer impracticality of trying to decide on the true snow summit and rock summit, therefore, encourages us level-headed landlubbers to search for the Middle Path, which shuns misplaced scientific positivism on the one hand and those who couldn't care less on the other.

An Everest Mean

Rather than allow the scientists the leeway to continuously come up with new heights

to confuse the world's public with, it is important once and for all to decree a mean for Everest and leave it at that, at least for a decade, after which we can revise the figure taking into account the rising height of the Himalaya due to plate tectonics.

This mean height must be calculated for the snow on Everest-top, and not the rock, for it is *snow* that makes the summit of Everest. If God and Geology had wanted to measure the top according to the rock height, we would have been given a rock pinnacle where no snow accumulates. Instead, the Third Pole has been endowed with generous snow even though much of the mountain, especially the southern flanks, is mostly dark granite and sandstone.

The exactitude of the Bureau scientists in coming up with the 8846.27 m height is, therefore, to be appreciated but not believed. Since their reading of the snow-laden summit was 8848.82 m, this writer would suggest that we round it off at 8849 meters for the sake of the mass public. Let this figure be reconfirmed by one more look at the mountain, and then let it stand for at least a decade before we decide to confuse the public once more. ▷

Himalayan High Treks



Free Catalog (800) 455-8735

Outside the U.S.A. & Canada please call:

001.415.861.2391 or write to us:

Himalayan High Treks

241 Dolores Street. San Francisco CA

94103-2211 U. S. A. Thanks!



DISCOVER

TIBET

THE ULTIMATE ADVENTURE DESTINATION
&
THE HIMALAYAN KINGDOM OF NEPAL, BHUTAN, SIKKIM

Let TIBET TRAVELS AND TOURS, The leading tour operator in Nepal unfold for you the inner secrets & mysteries of these fascinating lands, people & culture - so different from anything you have ever imagined

For details contact:

TIBET TRAVELS & TOURS (P) LTD.

P.O. Box 7246, Tridevi Marg, Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: 231130, 228986, Tlx: 2672 TIBTVL NP

Fax: 977-1-228986 / 415126



“citizenship made simple”

(Notes to my Brother from Fanueil Hall)

by Prem Krishna Gongaju

(Thinking of you while I sit on the balcony of Fanueil Hall filled with the cacophony of tongues accented in so many rhythms glazed with the great expectation of . . . dreams.)

J.J. sits on a pew, hands folded across his chest, muffling perhaps the beat of Bharat.

And I—a Himali witness to our Hindustani Jason about to duly trade in his native shawl for a Yankee fleece—survey the face of the people.

The official roll call begins: *Tran Van Joo, Soo Young Long, Wilder Pinash, Danielle Dowing, Patrick John Dorvan, Tony Fong Tan, Jean Goo Yu, Soo Fan Yon, Angela Marion Nickelson, Star Inez Dealer . . .*

Five White ladies, holding five certificates each, march toward the people soon to be anointed politically, standing to receive the gift of prized laminated proof of their new beginning, proof of their new life in the New World . . .

. . . Janet Omera Blanco, Jesus Olfrain, Fong Fy Nyan, Galina Patricia Fauboski, Yusef Auf, Salvatore Rousseau . . .

A child in the front row seat, all dressed in a baby Navy outfit, waving a tiny Old Glory, smiled at me; I smiled back at him.

. . . An Qu Lee, Jesel Bassacio, Lasine Vladkor Placida, Natalia Marquez Toralio, Moo Wa Yan, Wilson Matthew Lee, Lin Yang, Upendar Singh, Wi Lee Tan . . .

(Tan, Tan. The Reverend Tan! Of course, the name rings a bell. He is pastor of the Church of All Nations on Tremont Street, whose tower-like architecture belies her pastoral function as a sanctuary to sinners and seekers alike. A converted cleric from the Philippines, Wi Lee Tan is a nice man. However, we failed to see eye to Christological eye when he asked me my thoughts on the divinity of the Son of Man. I said that is nice. The Rev. wanted more. A Hindu who grew up kissing bhat and the Bhagbat Gita, I told him that we are the flickers of the Flame, we are the souls of the Oversoul. He was not moved. Religious conversion tends to seduce human souls with the most addictive holier-than-thou drug. Hence my internship with the Morgan Memorial Goodwill Industries, Inc., Boston, where the diversity of becoming is celebrated in the unity of being.)

Roll call continued, naming names no longer exclusive to the denizens of the Caucasus. Those names, beguiling and beautiful, belonged to the four winds of Mother Earth.

Though herded into the Ellis Island of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, they were far from being sheepish. Unlike Aesop's crow, they came dignified in their native colours: golden, black and

cinnamon brown. And a pinch of white. They were plumes from myriad branches bearing notes of their native songs to *the land of the free and the home of the brave*. All songs lead to the Boabab rooted in the primal loam of our humanity.

America, you, too, sprang from the upturned tree of Africa; America, you, too, have sap black as the primal night in your blood, of Africa. Wasn't your great-great-great-grand-mother's name Lucy?

America, you are a part of the tesserae of humanity. And see in its mosaic your own face. And the faces you disowned and continue to disown are those of your brothers and sisters, those of your kith and kin, culled from the geography of species.

Sing. America.

Sing in the bardic baritone of Grandpa Whitman, while waltzing to different drummers.

To different dreams.

Sing. America.

Sing the lyric of Langston Hughes, while tolling out *wonder and pain and terror* in his *Montage of a Dream Differed*. And celebrate in duet with your Black Brother; I, too, sing America. And live out *the true meaning of its creed*.

Sing. America.

Sing the Negro spirituals, while dipping your hand—stained from picking *strange fruits*—in the Mississippi of repentance. Behold your deliverance when the Georgia clay dons the colour of the *fruits* you picked.

The roll call tolled for my friend: *John John Thatamanil*.

My friend from the southern tip of India stood, smiled. No, he beamed at me, his upturned face receiving my congratulatory nod and smile from the balcony of Fanueil Hall. Our friendship was a splash of Asian pollen upon the blooming brown-eyed Susan of his cherubic face.

I was happy for J.J. Whatever stamp he may bear on his brown skin, his heart—dipped long ago in the Holy Gangajee—will forever beat, I hope, with the rhythm of the East. He may prove to be a reincarnation of Ganga Din—who was a *better man* than his creator—in the West; and, subsequently, he may ennoble our humanity bifurcated by Briticism laced with the *just so* witticism of the peripatetic bard of the Raj.

Left behind in an infant ark of life, six-year-old J.J. waited for his parents to return waving olive branches from the New World.

Holding his younger sister by her hand, J.J. steadied the vessel of his fate unmoored, drifting in the seeming calmness of his father's kith and kin. Assailed with fears and doubts, he trembled. Yet he remained unruffled for his little sister's sake. After all, J.J. is of India, and India commands that a child become a veritable adult the next day. Fate allows so precious little silk to the Indian boys and girls that they are denied the luxury of the warmth of their respective cocoon of boyhood and girlhood. Fly or fall. Swim or sink. J.J. chose to swim. J.J. chose to fly as soon as his father returned with the transatlantic plane ticket to the United States of America to begin his occidental odyssey.

Who he was by the age of nine, J.J. transformed it, transmuted it, translated it into a much larger script by accommodating America's mandates, mores, and madness; by accommodating his dreams as well as his parents' wishes, against the backdrop of Marthomic collective memory. After having had an ample taste of "Mississippi Masala", J.J. chose to adorn the historic Faneuil Hall, reasserting the family boabab by reclaiming the *Thatamanil* name circumscribed by his forefathers under the spell of Marthomic conversion, once upon a messianic time, thousands of historic miles away.

What is true of J.J. must be true in certain individual ways of all the soon-to-be-naturalized U.S. citizens, the adoring subjects of the judge officiating the ceremony. The judge cheerfully acknowledged this one special function of his office that he enjoyed the most. And cheerfully did he greet and welcome the candidates and their families and friends. Attested by his tone and body language, the judge appeared sincere. As was his wont, the judge overdid the bit about "justice, freedom and the pursuit of happiness". (Holy Buddha!, now there's a phrase—the pursuit of *happiness*—which sums up the existential mirage in the materialistic Sahara of America.) Since he was addressing Uncle Sam's newest recruits, the question of his captive audience going bored on him was moot. Besides, there was a sort of alchemic momentum in the air that something was going to happen which would change the participants' lives forever. Hence the presiding judge's mellifluous tone lent credence to his sapiency during the sharing of the choice morsels from the myth-kitty of America. Nevertheless, he overlooked one of the dire dictates of the law of migration: The predators follow you wherever you go. To and fro.

I remember. This country was indifferent to the plight of those hungry, tired and persecuted, permitted to sail on the *S.S. St. Louis* by Paul Joseph Goebbels. Denied moorings by Cuba, by America, the ship returned to the Hadean waters. Save a handful, her human cargo succumbed to the *asvasti* maw of the Aryan inferno. I remember. This country was indifferent.

Commit it to memory!—a must by the sentinelling Belle Bedloe as well as her callers: their adoptive country denied entry to the 937 kith and kin of the Son of their Man, under the deal newly made with *e pluribus unum*. It ought to be tattooed in the linings of *naturalized* lungs, so it may not repeat on their watch. Commit it to memory!—a must.

(Cajoling, compelling, enticing, the songline of the human drama unfolding before me tugged my heart kindred to the novitiates of *novus ordo seclorum*. I may not be one of them. But I am with them.)

Come home
away from home from across the Atlantic,
from across the Pacific. You are the salmon of variegated humanity.
Migration is a movable feast. For some
this country is the deep, for others the shore.

You come ashore heeding the wisdom
of the deep; you come ashore seeking
the altar in the stream. Come home away from home
so that the oceans be replenished, renewed,
with the cyclical certitude of creation.

You come to the deep singing the song
of the stream: you come to the deep carrying
the missal of the stream. Come home away from home
so that the oceans be sanctified, purified,
with the latitudinal liturgy of *one great Nation*.

I, too, am a salmon.
I dream of the pebbled streams fed by the melting
snows of *Sagarmatha*.

Finally, the anticipated moment arrived: the administering of the Oath of Allegiance.

Right hand raised, Uncle Sam's adopted children intoned after the judge:

I hereby declare, on oath,

I HEREBY DECLARE, ON OATH,

that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure

THAT I ABSOLUTELY AND ENTIRELY RENOUNCE AND
ABJURE

(Though merely a witness to others' *renunciation and abjuration*, those two words stung my heart, stung my soul. Subsequently, I was somewhat hindered from being carried away by the momentous current of the ceremonious occasion for *naturalization*. Besides, I felt nothing unnatural about my self, about my soul.)

all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty,

ALL ALLEGIANCE AND FIDELITY TO ANY FOREIGN PRINCE,
POTENTATE, STATE OR SOVEREIGNTY,

of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen;
OF WHOM OR WHICH I HAVE HERETOFORE BEEN A SUBJECT
OR CITIZEN;

Votively, hundreds of yearning mouths gave voice to their newfound allegiance.

A *greencarded* man whose back is neither wet nor dry, I am more amused than amazed by any domestic or foreign prince or potentate. Or president. Nehru's *Letters from a Father to His Daughter* had immunised me during my scholastic infancy at Shanti Nikunja Vidyalaya, against the affliction of falling prey to trumped-up powers of prince or potentate or president invoked under the aegis of the divine, demonic or democratic right. *To allegiance and fidelity to state or sovereignty* I, therefore, answer with the conviction of E.M. Forster: . . . *but I shall fight for one human being*.

I cannot go against the milk that sustained me during my infancy;
I cannot go against the bosom that housed me against the cold.

If I did I am nothing but a shell of a man devoid of the spirit
of my native soil, devoid of the esprit of my Nepali soul.

If I did I am nothing but a gong
hollowed out of my natal vitals.

I shall merely be an echo of
the birth of a nation, whose pang

wasn't my mother's pang,
Nor her joy my mother's joy.

I can not go against the imprint of
my mother's lactating breasts.

I seek the musk rising from the
bosom of my native land.

'Tis not for me, I realise, to be bottle-fed
on homogenised milk and be *naturalized*.

. . . and that I take this obligation freely without any mental
reservation or purpose of evasion;

. . . AND THAT I TAKE THIS OBLIGATION FREELY WITHOUT
ANY MENTAL RESERVATION OR PURPOSE OF EVASION;

The onlookers were treated to the plangent promissory accents
rising from the hall below in their adoptive land of Canaan. The
crescendo appeared nigh.

To my right and left were two ladies from Guatemala and Ireland,
respectively. The cinnamon sun poured out of the plump, youthful
skin of the Guatemalan lady. And the salt and the sea from the Irish
face imprinted with crows's feet. Shy, sparse with Anglo tongue,
the lady to my right buffered me with her disarming smile and
dignified silence. The lady on my left—a retired nurse from the
Brigham and Women's—happened to be an inveterate traveler.
"O. I have been to your country," she said with a bit of nostalgic
glee. I told her that the Ireland I knew came from the Yatesian
metier and the Joycean might, as well as the swords of Sinn Fein.
"O!" And her sea-green eyes looked away briefly. "Are you a
citizen?" she asked, tilting her head toward me. "Neither am I," she
said with a splash of green pride.

Gradually, my mind took measure of the issues of *mental reservation*.
It is humanly inconceivable, I profess, not to entertain *mental
reservation*, especially in natal matters concerning one's love and
land, concerning one's blood and bond. (Is the United States of
America, then, the benign equivalent of Albionised Australia, for
mental *Artful Dodgers*?)

The monarch flies away enchanted by the migratory call of Mother
Nature,
but it retains the potency of the milkweed that sustained it during
its larval stage.

Nepal! My *janmabhoomi*.

She sits unfurled from East to West—Nature's silver shawl
hemmed by the henna of the south and the crimson of the north—
helping to separate a pair of giant flanks
often at odds with each other in the stride
for Asiatic peace and progress. I will
forever entertain one thousand thousand percent *mental reservation*
when the integrity and honor of my motherland is questioned.

I am amazed by the horde of people
from the four corners of the world down below

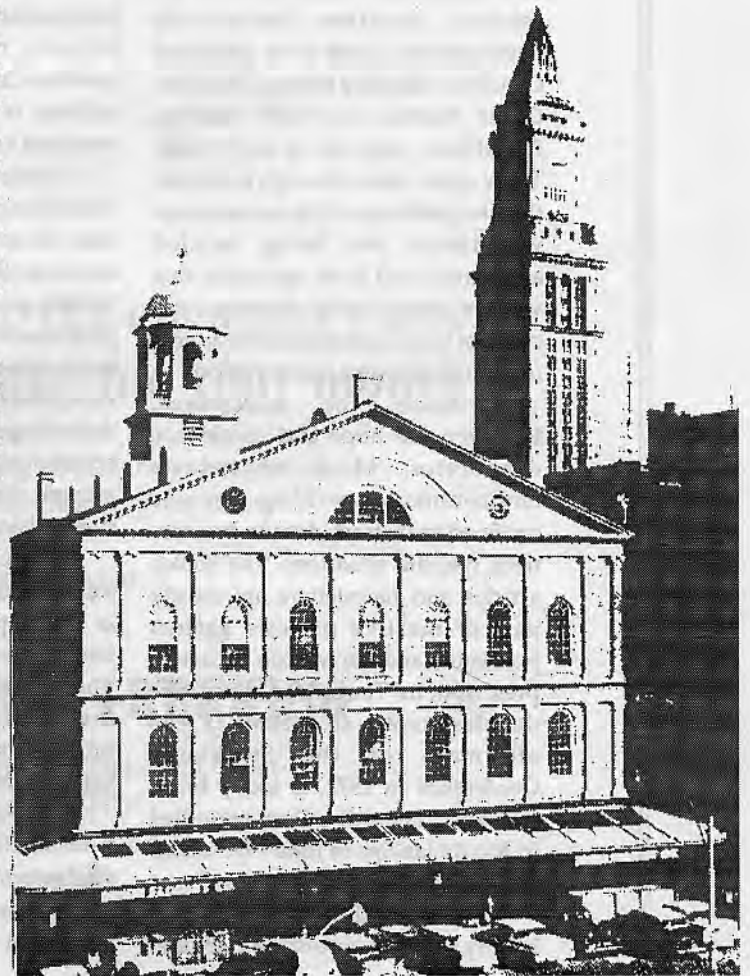
the balcony in Faneuil Hall, not entertaining even a sliver of
mental reservation! Even R-2 D-2 would
stumble on such a monumental mission. Impossible!—
my soul cried out.

However hallowed, Faneuil Hall is
a holding cell for chosen flock, where they are shorn
of their heritage and stamped with the Seal of
Good Housekeeping. Never having been asked once
what cultural richness and native gifts do these seafarers bear,
they are sent out on the conveyer belt of Capitalism
capable of dashing one thousand thousand labouring souls,
who are to this behemoth "as flies are to wanton boys. . ."

. . . so help me God.

. . . SO HELP ME GOD.

P.K. Gongaju is a student of literature and theology He lives in Boston and serves
as a counselor at a home for persons with psychiatric disabilities. The historic
Faneuil Hall in Boston's old quarter is used today for naturalisation ceremonies.



Failed Environmentalism

Southern governments are not well-prepared for the international environmental negotiations that are taking place, and the non-governmental organisations have not been of much help either.

by Jayanta Bandyopadhyay

The volume of environmental literature coming out these days is quite impressive. In bookstores all over, environmental publications—the mild, the strong and the provocative—from the countries of both North and South vie for the readers' attention. Sustainable development quotes from Mahatma Gandhi to Maurice Strong, and from Chief Seattle to Gro Harlem Brundtland, pop out of every page. There seem reason enough to believe that the problems of the environment worldwide are being tackled adequately and to be optimistic that we are about to make fundamental changes in our unsustainable patterns of natural resource consumption.

Outside the bookstores, however, the hope and confidence evaporates. Much of today's environmental writing remains confined to abstract ideas and remote from real-life situations. The books, articles and newsletters are mostly part of reactive protests against problems, and carry little proactive prescriptions. The call for 'alternative development', so strong in the aftermath of the Stockholm Conference in 1972, is today but a whimper. The enthusiasm rekindled in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 is also being wasted.

Yet, in no other period of human history has the future of the globe and

all its living beings been so much in need of alternative lifestyles based on our environmental knowledge and wisdom. Action taken or postponed today will cast a long shadow into the next century. One may think that these changes are relatively easy to identify and prescribe, but that does not seem to be the case. Transformation is required at different levels, from changing of personal habits to changing the 'global habits'.

Data? What Data?

In a world which is becoming economically integrated and in which global negotiations have already become powerful instruments of decision-making, effective access to information is essential in order to support respective negotiating positions. Indeed, how do you bargain without information on what you want and knowledge of how to get it?

While a few countries of the North have access to this information base, the countries of the South are by and large ill-equipped for discussion. Neither governments nor NGOs have paid heed to the need for information and databases to support the Southern viewpoints. As a result, the job of defending southern interests tends to be taken up by interested Northern groups, which is not the same, and surely risky.

The scientific gap is serious. And it extends to many country delegations at the important decision-making inter-governmental forums in New York, Geneva and elsewhere where the environmental policies and programmes of the next century are being charted.

Representatives, particularly from small Southern countries, lack vital information on the scientific and policy dimensions. Unfamiliarity with the global and local issues extends

across the board, from the law of the sea, to intellectual property rights, and biodiversity. Many do not even have basic data, say, on global climate change, or in-country genetic resources of flora, fauna or micro-organisms. Without an information base of their own, the delegates of many Southern countries are reduced to looking over the shoulders of other country representatives, whose interests need hardly coincide.

The South Asian sub-continent is a good example of a region which, due to lack of expertise as well as the constant need to respond to natural disasters, finds it impossible to focus on the global environmental issues that will have a direct bearing on the lives of its population in the next century. What little expertise does exist, and the lobbying clout that the region would enjoy if it were united, is frittered away due to geo-political suspicions and rivalries.

In a period of accelerating global and regional integration, South Asian governments have managed to keep the walls of mistrust and hostility intact. Himalayan rivers, one of the richest water resources of the world, are made the cause of political disunity while other regions which have seen major water conflicts, like Europe and West Asia, are moving fast towards economic integration. Under existing circumstances, South Asian governments can hardly be expected to collaborate to get the best out of global bargaining on the environment. And if the situation is not corrected South Asia will become less and less capable of bargaining globally. The result is marginalisation in the negotiations of today and in the world of tomorrow.

South Asia's challenges are also those of the southern hemisphere as a whole. Referring to the signing of the

Uruguay Round of the GATT in Marrakesh last year, Julius Nyerere, former President of Tanzania and presently Chairman of the South Centre, conceded that many of the signatory countries of the South were not even aware of the implications of GATT for their economies.

Many of the environmental activist groups which have taken it upon themselves to speak up for the South have not prepared themselves for the arena of international negotiation and decision-making either. One basic weakness is that advocacy groups have progressively released themselves from the need to understand the science behind environmental problems. Many fundamentalist groups of the North prefer to approach the media with sensation rather than sense. Their Southern NGO counterparts, propped up with liberal international funding, are following suit. The voice of the independent Southern NGO can today barely be heard in international platforms.

Culture of Consumption

On the whole, the few NGOs which do take part in global meetings as representatives of the South present a sorry spectacle. There is little interest in building competence on specialised issues. A few 'permanent representatives' have emerged among these NGOs, who are seen in most global platforms, be it in the population conference in Cairo, GATT and the environment in Geneva, women and development in Beijing, biodiversity in Bahamas, etc. etc.

These groups are capable of producing reams of generalised polemic, but a topic-by-topic and point-against-point argumentation on behalf of the South against a well-prepared North is beyond them.

The problem is not, however, merely the inability of governments and groups to access and use database and information. The central issue is of altering the culture of the consumption society in both hemispheres. Can the governments

of the South, unable to change the wasteful consumption patterns of their own elites, put any pressure on the North to do the same?

The communication revolution has suddenly exposed the low consumption societies of the world to the images, real or otherwise, of the high consumption Northern countries. Commercials and advertisements do not encourage austere lifestyles and reduced consumption. While Northern governments will find it very difficult to move towards policy changes and structural transformations in their own societies, governments in the South seem powerless against the social forces that are pushing their countries relentlessly towards the mechanical duplication of Northern lifestyles and consumption patterns.

The core of the global challenge lies in changing the existing paradigmatic lifestyles and searching for alternatives. In this search, a complex web of relationships have to be addressed, among them dichotomous issues such as national sovereignty and global responsibilities, and liability for damage to the global commons, the rights over intellectual properties and the question of biosafety, the transfer of technologies, and so on.

Without waiting for their governments to take the lead, environmental movements of the South must wake up and begin to play a key and independent role in the search for the alternative paradigm. In a future that will increasingly be influenced by global conventions and agreements, there is an urgent need for *proactive environmentalism* all over the South.

Environmentalism in a country like India has been very successful as a reactive mechanism, as much as it has been conspicuous by its inability to be proactive. This weakness has been most vividly exposed in the post-GATT anti-GATT debate in India. Notwithstanding some exceptional proactive steps in rural India, like the formation of *pani-panchayats* in Maharashtra or forest protection commi-

tees all over, the more visible and more propagandised environmental mobilisations have been reactive.

Even the movement that arose from the industrial disaster in Bhopal has remained reactive for over a decade. The focus has been almost exclusively on the question of compensation, and there has been no proactive movement demanding an open assessment of all industrial technologies and free and prior availability of information on the hazardous technologies.

The consistently reactive nature of Indian environmentalism indicates the hold of the middle class intellectuals who otherwise live a comfortable urban life but rush to take a stand against plans and proposals that threaten other peoples' lives. This characteristic has dominated the intellectual movement in India on 'alternative development' over decades. The dynamism of the integrated global economy and its enormous reach today have made the erstwhile mode of 'alternative development' concepts outdated. Time has come for less abstract environmental movements to move into the future as positive actors and not consistent reactors.

South Asian groups who would represent the population from the Himalaya to the southern-most point of Sri Lanka and from Baluchistan to Tripura must think for themselves and not be guided by reactive protests, on subject as varied as tourism and modern agriculture, GATT and climate change. This, of course, applies not only to South Asia, but to all the South.

▷

J. Bandyopadhyay is an ecologist with special interest in natural resource conflicts and sustainable mountain transformations.

Announcement of Subscription Agent

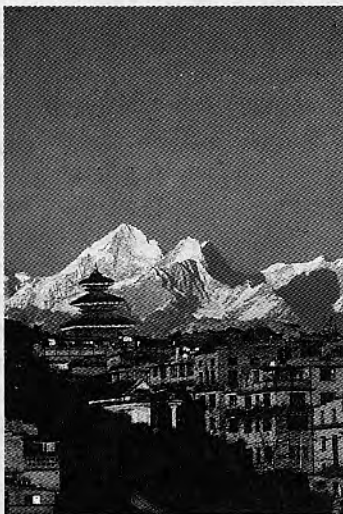
Himal announces the appointment of Mahashakti and Tirupati Enterprises as its subscription agent for the Kingdom of Nepal. Individuals/institutions wishing to subscribe may henceforth write to, call or fax their offices at: P.O. Box 168 Kathmandu. Fax: 01 415401, Tel: 413009



FALL UNDER THE
SPELL OF

MYSTICAL

NEPAL



Kathmandu. The very name evokes exotic temples, incense aromas and the towering Himalayas. And to add to its lure, there is now the Soaltee Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza Kathmandu. Built in traditional Nepalese style, this magnificent hotel will welcome you with impeccable service and the city's finest facilities — four speciality restaurants, a Beauty Salon and Health Club, a Tennis Court and outdoor Swimming Pool...even an in-house Casino.

SOALTEE

 **Holiday Inn**
CROWNE PLAZA™
Kathmandu

THE BUSINESS CLASS HOTELSM


FOR RESERVATIONS CALL SOALTEE HOLIDAY INN CROWNE PLAZA KATHMANDU, TEL: 977-1-272 555, FAX: 977-1-272 201/205, OUR BOMBAY RESERVATION OFFICE ON 022 22 1378/22 1581, NEW DELHI RESERVATION OFFICE ON 011 3755501/3755502, YOUR TRAVEL AGENT OR ANY HOLIDAY INN HOTEL

ABSTRACTS

Essays on North-East India

Milton. S. Sangma, Editor
Indus Publishing Company, Delhi, 1994
ISBN 81 7387 015 2
IRs 400

Published to commemorate the life and works of the late V. Venkata Rao (a Gujarati scholar who researched identity, nationalism and sub-nationalism in India's northeast), this volume contains 16 essays on planning, development, historical economy, tribal life, frontier policy, tradition, leadership, insurgency, etc. It also contains B. Pakem's essay on application of tribal research studies in planning, development and administration; R. Gopalakrishnan on political regionalism and development; T.B Bhattacharjee on pre-colonial political structure of Barak Valley; and T.B Mukherjee on the early history of Koches of North Bengal. The volume also carries Sajal Nag's "Withdrawal Syndrome: Secessionism in Modern North-East India". People who demand secession from the Indian Union, writes Nag, have specific grievances against it. That their grievances are not being addressed has caused them to reject the political community of which they form such a marginal part and fueled their desire to withdraw from it and form new alliances among themselves. Secessionism, according to Nag, is only a revolt against such marginalisation.

Kirtipur: An Urban Community in Nepal

Mehrdad Shokoohy and
Natalie H. Shokoohy, editors
Araxus Books, London, 1994
ISBN 1 870606 02 7
£ 43

This book is the result of a University of Greenwich project to study the historic heritage and present condition of the Kathmandu Valley town of Kirtipur, with a view to its conservation and development. A team of experts, many from Nepal and some from Kirtipur, present detailed studies covering a wide range of subjects including the vernacular and monumental architecture, art and antiquities, history and epigraphy, social organisation and community, and recent changes in the urban fabric.

Ama in America

A Pilgrimage of the Heart
by Broughton Coburn
Anchor/Worldview Books
Pub date: May 1995
ISBN 0 385 47417 2
US\$ 22.95

Coburn, when a Peace Corps volunteer in Central Nepal, lived in Vishnu Maya Gurung's hay loft above her water buffalo shed. Over time, friendship developed between the two which Coburn

celebrates in his *Nepali Ama: Life Lessons of a Himalayan Woman*, a photographic book containing Coburn's accounts of living, working and travelling with Vishnu Maya. Fifteen years later, Coburn returned to Vishnu Maya's village with an invitation for her to join him and his future wife, Didi, on a trip through the United States. What results from the 25 state, coast-to-coast adventure is *Ama in America: A Pilgrimage of the Heart*. "An offbeat American travelogue", according to a promotional flier the book is also "an exploration of beliefs and values and a rediscovery of the spiritual that lies beneath the surface of America... A singular account of the meeting of the two widely divergent cultures."

Indian Forestry through the Ages

by S.S. Negi
Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1994
ISBN 81 7387 020 9
IRs 300

Written by an Indian Forest Service Officer from Himachal, the book records the history of forest conservation in India and follows the development of scientific forestry. Forest conservation started in India with Emperor Ashoka, writes Negi, when certain trees were declared protected and their felling was forbidden; the appointment of Dietrich Brandis as the Inspector General of Forests in 1964 heralded the era of scientific forestry in India. The book discusses the history of forestry in states and the union territories; lists the people associated with the history of Indian forestry and their contributions; history of forest policy, legislation, management; and forestry research, education and training. Classification of forests according to various scholars over the last century is also included. The annexure lists the forest cover situation in the different states (1988 and 1989).

Lahoul: The Mystery Land in the Himalayas

by Ram Nath Sahini
Indus Publishing Company, 1994
ISBN 81 9387 017 9
IRs 395

Sahini explores "the beauty and the development potential" in 300 pages of a book that is divided into four sections—the mountains and glaciers of Lahoul; history; social customs, occupation, festivals and languages; and religious beliefs, temples, monasteries and mythological stores. With two annexes—on folksongs of Lahoul and family trees of local Ranas and Thakurs—the book is a useful guide for people looking for more than just touristic treatment of the valley. Lahoul has a great potential for building itself and becoming a model, states the epilogue. "The sincerity, hard work and intelligence of the people who live here can lead Lahoul towards this direction."

North-Eastern Frontier of India Structural Imperatives and Aspects of Change

by A.C. Sinha
Indus Publishing Company, Delhi, 1994
ISBN 81 7387 009 8
IRs 300

North-Eastern Frontier of India looks at the structural imperatives and the components of social change in the Indian Northeast. The volume is divided into two parts: the first provides geographical, historical, ethnic and religious background of the region, and the second records the agrarian, urban and environmental transformations taking place. "It is high time that we realize that the Indian union does not belong only and even mainly to the mainstream and the frontiers are to be ruled and subjugated and treated as supplicant," writes Sinha. "It must also be borne in mind that frontiers do not need paternalistic proppings, but a recognition that they are trusted to take significant decisions affecting national life and that they are capable to continue in the national common-wealth as equal and proud partners."

Consolidated Index to The Himalayan Journal

(Vol 1 to 50, 1929-1994)
Dhiren Toolsidas, compiler
The Himalayan Club, Bombay, 1994

This index to the Himalayan Journal makes it possible for mountaineers, journalists and researchers to access to people, events, mountains and information appearing in Volume 1 to Volume 50 of the hallowed mountaineering publication of the Himalayan Club. The index is user-friendly, with articles, expeditions and notes listed under author, peak and region.

Nepal: A Guide to the Art and Architecture of the Kathmandu Valley

Michael Hutt with David Gellner, Axel
Michaels, Greta Rana and Govinda Tandan
Kiscadale Publications, Oxford, 1994
ISBN 01865 67575
£ 25

This guide begins with an overview of history of Nepal, followed by an introduction to religion and architecture. The rest of the book consists of descriptions of specific sites within the Valley. There is a chronology and a full glossary of Nepali, Newari and Sanskrit terms. Written by academics, the book is intended for a general readership, and seeks to give "more information than is imparted by the average tourist guidebook."

Younghusband: The Last Great Imperial Adventurer

by Patrick French
HarperCollins, United Kingdom, 1994
£ 20

Sir Francis Younghusband spent his early years as a leading player in the battle of wits for control over the unknown territory of High Asia. Yet, he was also a soldier, explorer and philosopher, often compared to Marco Polo and Lawrence of Arabia. In 1903, he single-handedly turned a small diplomatic mission to Tibet into a full-scale military invasion; found a new route to India from China;

Wanted: Staff Writer

Himal magazine is looking for someone who can write, edit and report in flawless English. S/he will be based in Kathmandu but must like occasionally rugged travel. We prefer applicants to be from South Asia or Tibet. Apply with biodata and writing samples by 20 May 1995. Mark 'Staff Writer' on envelope.

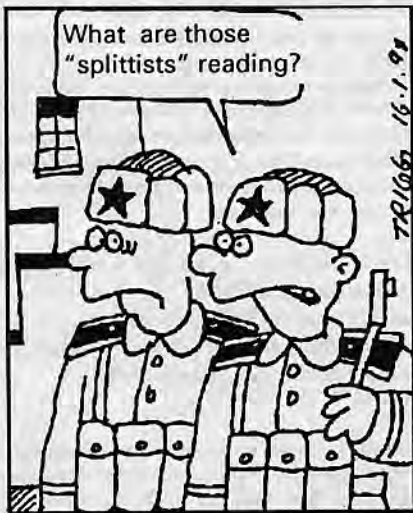
and in the post-First World War era, led the way in religious and sexual free-thinking. He was also *The Times'* correspondent during the siege of Chitral and held the world record for 300-yard dash. French travelled in the Gobi, Sikkim and Tibet to research Younghusband. He weaves his own adventures with Younghusband's exploits, and using his subject's letters and papers—many previously unseen by historians—pays tribute to this remarkable personality. In a blend of historical biography and travel writing, the book celebrates the last of the great imperialists. The Manchester Guardian critic says this is an "excellent and entertaining biography".

Cairn

No.1 October 1994

Amnye Machen Institute
McLeod Ganj

Cairn is a newsletter of the Amnye Machen Institute, the independent research centre established by Tibetans in exile in Dharamsala. This first issue contains information on lectures and seminars on Tibet, plans to open a Centre for Occupied Tibet Studies, and information of books in Tibetan just released (including a translation of *Animal Farm*). Contact: Amnye Machen Institute, McLeod Ganj 176 219, Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh. Email: ami@cta.und.ernet.in.



Mountain Research and Development

Vol 14 no 4, November 1994

Jack and Pauline Ives, Editors
University of California Press

This issue of MRD takes a look at natural hazards and catastrophic geomorphic events in mountain terrain. While most of the papers concern the Alps, there are also contributions on the Andes, the Himalaya, the Hengduan mountains and New Zealand. The editors have sought to "present our collective experience relating to a series of mountain events that occurred during the past 10,000 years or so, and that are occurring today." An article on the growth of a lake on the Imja Glacier (below Ama Dablam in Khumbu) states that there is rapid expansion of the lake toward the west. "As this proceeds, the possibility for catastrophic outburst will

become greater, even if the lake is lowered... The potential for a major outburst is much higher than previously anticipated." (Subscription: US\$8 annual. University of California Press, 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94720 USA.)

Indigenous People: Mobilization and Change

by Ganesh M. Gurung

Hisi Press, Kathmandu, 1994,
NRs 160

Sociologist Gurung presents a collection of seven papers on the various ethnic groups of Nepal, providing descriptions of the customs and traditions in the light of social change, mobility and development. The author also discusses the questions of ethnic identity, politics and inter-ethnic relationships. Among the papers presented are ones on: the adaptation of polyandrous practice to local conditions; the process of identification and sanskritisation among the Duras of West Nepal; the formation of 'mothers groups' among the Gurung in the Annapurna Conservation Area Project region; economic modernisation among the Chepang; socio-economic networks among the Rana Tharu; and the phenomenal rise of ethnic forums and parties since 1990. Critic Saubhagya Shah says this book is "a useful handbook for students of Nepali society and culture".

Bhutan: Perspectives on Conflict and Dissent

Michael Hutt, Editor

Kiscadale Asia Research Series
Oxford, 1994
ISBN 1 870838 02 5
£ 17.50

Since 1990, the 'last Shangri-La' kingdom of Bhutan has been undergoing political crisis. Camps in neighbouring Nepal now accommodate thousands of refugees and a dissident movement in exile is calling for radical changes in the political system. There is increasing insecurity in the country's southern districts. In order to discuss these and other questions, a conference on contemporary Bhutan was held at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London in March 1993. The authors of the ten essays presented in this book (239 pages) include academics, journalists and a representative of the Bhutanese government. There are also summaries of reports produced by the Royal Government, human rights groups, and refugee organisations.

Bhutan: Aspects of Culture and Development

Michael Aris, Michael Hutt, editors

Kiscadale Asia Research Series
Oxford, 1994
ISBN 1 870838 17 3
£ 17.50,

Since Bhutan turned away from isolation in the 1960s, the kingdom has consistently pursued "the worthy but difficult goal of harmonizing a programme of modern development within the country's traditional Buddhist culture". This 239-page volume, which considers a selection of issues relevant to this policy, is the second to result from the SOAS conference on Bhutan, mentioned above. Eight specialists focus in on the decentralisation of

development, the growth of diplomacy, language policy, context of religion, and the material culture embodied in architecture and textiles.

Himalaya Today

(An Indian Quarterly)

Vol 5 no 3, Oct-Dec 1994

Mahendra P. Lama, Editor
New Delhi, IRs 15

The latest issue of *Himalaya Today* features the Uttarakhand movement for statehood in its cover, with articles by Navin Chandra Joshi and Annapurna Nautiyal. Also featured are articles on "the ethnic cauldron in Bhutan" by Matthew Joseph C.; Mizoram in geopolitical perspective by S.N. Singh; tourism in Himachal Pradesh by Manoj Jreat; the Gaddi heritage by S.N. Sachar; and on the Himalayanist Rahul Sankrityayan by Rattan Lal Bisotra. The issue also carries articles on the vegetational wealth of Uttarakhand, agriculture in Ladakh, Kedarnath shrine, and the monal pheasant. (Subscriptions: IRs 55 annual. 145 South Avenue, New Delhi 110 011.)

REFLECTIONS

Vol 1 No. 1 and 2

Raina Nakari, Kanchan Verma Lama, editors
Society for Partners in Development and
Utthan, publishers, Kathmandu

This journal has been brought out to clear up "confusion and misunderstanding of the concept of gender and development in the context of Nepal". The latest issue contains articles on the girl child in South Asia by Kamla Bhasin, women's perspective on a sustainable future by Arja Vainio-Mattila, the status of women in the Hindu religion by Sangeeta R. Thapa, women's life in Nepal by T. Nakari and "Reminiscences of a Rural Nepalese Woman" by K.V. Lama. (PO Box 2594, Kathmandu)



Hard Livelihood

Conference on the Himalayan Porter
3,4 August 1995, Kathmandu

Himal is organising a two-day meeting to discuss portering in the mountains. Topics will include: portering life and changing economy; impact of roads and air cargo; health, nutrition, physiology; load, muscle and bone; equity and collective bargaining; future of portering; etc.

Contact: Kanak Mani Dixit

P.O. Box 42, Lalitpur

Phone: 977 1 523845, Fax: 521013

email: himal@mosnepal.ernet.in

No Sops for Uttarakhand

Manisha Aryal's "Angry Hills: An Uttarakhand State of Mind" (Nov/Dec 1994) should be accepted in *Dev Bhoomi* as a good chronology of our loss of innocence, laced as it has been with the deadly ingredients of government intransigence and ambivalence, peddled propaganda, rumour-mongering, damaging exaggerations, opportunistic leaders, irresponsible press, puffed-up egos, haywire priorities, and ill-considered demands. The good and gently brave people of these hills have been deflowered.

In many ways, we only have ourselves to blame for being so poorly informed about the world around us today, and for not knowing how to participate in it. Of course, we hope that history will not judge us too harshly, but will consider that by our very nature, we mountain people are hermits—aloof as are our peaks from the rush and tumble of life down there! One cannot be blamed for believing that, somehow, we are untouched by travails of the cut and thrust of today's society.

All of this now seems to have changed, and the silver lining to the apparently dark cloud of the past few tumultuous months in Dev Bhoomi is a growing pragmatism—god willing!

Instead of the unplanned, angry and single-point agenda of a demand for statehood, which saw us led like lambs to slaughter, people everywhere in Dev Bhoomi have begun to sit down to explore what we 'know' we want—economically and culturally. In the larger scheme of affairs, the Dev Bhoomi may be geographically too small to counter overriding interests and concerns of the Uttar Pradesh State and Centre, but the emotional and spiritual support it has throughout the Subcontinent can give it a clout that could surprise many a Goliath!

A dominant and spontaneous theme of the agitation has been the total rejection of current political leadership and a disenchantment, expressed

vociferously by the young, of the goals and values of the sort of progress they stand for.

In the process of getting to know what kind of Dev Bhoomi we want (and currently there is a great deal of introspection going on), it is just possible that this 'Abode of the Gods' may lead the way—inspiring the rest of the apathetic national policy to think and act for themselves in partnership with the leaders of the country. The UP hills, historically famous for not taking things lying down, could usher in an era of genuine participation all over the country.

It isn't time to be fooled anymore by the politics of subsidies. It is time to move away from the economics of welfare towards the economics of empowerment. The UP hills will not be interested in accepting truncated sops to 'bachao' its 'izzat'. They will speak and negotiate through a group of representatives (recently agreed upon at a meeting in Kausani, Almora) with earthy wisdom which appreciates the constraints of its tormentors. We will demonstrate that the *andolan* in this pristine, last-bastion of peace and good neighbourliness is not just another fanatic effort of a region trying to splinter the nation asunder, but is rather a movement of sincere nationalism designed to achieve the goals of equity and justice in a world that has for too long forgotten what such a concept means anymore.

Cyril R. Raphael
Hill Employment Labour
Production Academy
Anjanisain, Tehri Garhwal

Stagnant Grief

Your timely issue on intellectuals ("The Intelligentsia Has No Clothes", Sep/Oct 1994) brings to mind many thoughts. In a world in which modernisation has been equated with Westernisation, our Nepali intellectuals, as well as many of their counterparts in other 'Third World' countries, have rushed to embrace ideas of rationalisation and the universalisation of social life. Whilst primordial ties have been portrayed as merely prolonging the agony of traditional societies, paradoxically, Nepal's dependence on tourism has ensured the commodification of a narrowly conceived and a historical 'Nepali' culture that appears embedded in the past.

Moreover, it has been intellectuals, quick to become part of the tourism and development bureaucracy, that have served to categorise or more glaringly 'help', 'feed', or 'guide' the



'Other'—the poor natives with whom they have imagined themselves to have so little in common. In the same breath, they have lamented the onslaught of Star TV, capitalism and globalisation in general. To lament over the loss of 'our culture' in this manner is to grieve over a stagnant concept of culture, which is ever-changing. Culture has never been and can never be frozen in a timeless manner.

The challenge for intellectuals should thus be not the internalisation of Western goods and ideas, but a *reconstituting* of them in a selective manner. 'Ideals' of secularisation and all of its modernisation baggage must be balanced within the context of our history of tolerance and pluralism. Indeed, much can be learnt from the experience, both successes and failures, of our South Asian neighbours. To be a copy-cat appears to have worked remarkably well in economic terms for the NICs. Culturally, this has been more problematic.

Whilst globalisation cannot be reversed or halted, our interpretation of it need not be linear, or 'Western'. The role of intellectuals must be, as it has always been, to question, interpret and reconstitute that which is old with that which is new, without losing sight of what we *collectively* imagine ourselves to be.

Seira Tamang
Washington DC

Refugee's Lament

The rhythmic singing of our sweet national anthem sung by the students during assembly time brings back peace to their fragile and rather wounded hearts. Thinking of Bhutan early morning makes us Bhutanese even outside Bhutan.

The serene atmosphere and the sky painted in peaceful colours within the camp territory makes us realise the we come from a place where milk used to trickle down rather than tears. Our heart brims with contentment, silently wishing to go back home which gives a hidden gesture and emphatically beckons us. Heaven help us to keep the flame of progress burning.

Lila Ballab Dahal
Beldangi Camp
Damak, Jhapa

Brain Drain to Brain Gain


Even by the consistently high standard of journalism for which HIMAL has now come to be known to mountain-lovers worldwide, your article "Dukha during the World War" by Pratyoush Onta (Nov/Dec 1994) stood out. As a longtime trekker in Nepal with a special interest in the Gurkhas and Gorkhas, and as a longtime reader of HIMAL, I found the article to be an eye-opener.

The research is ground-breaking, the de-mythification and de-mythification of Nepalese mercenarism is devastating and complete. Gurkha heroism was not glory, it was gory. But it was sanitised and ruthlessly used, like Sagarmatha, Tenzing Sherpa, *danfe*, *monal* and *guras* as a unifying symbol for your nascent nation. It was used by your slavish Anglophile feudocrats as a sop for sovereignty.

At best, Nepal's soldiers fighting for foreign governments can be seen as overseas contract workers who bring in revenue to the national exchequer. They are in the same category as Nepalese sex slaves in Bombay's Falkland Road or their brothers in the sweatshops of South Korea or the garages of the Gulf.

At worst, the Myth of the Brave Gurkha, glorified in countless songs and speeches can lead to a dangerous romanticism of conflict—especially when ascribed to a particular ethnic group or nation. A nation whose collective conscience is not pricked by the misery of its men used as cannon fodder or its women used as rags is a nation numbed by fatalism.

I found Onta's article especially poignant since I had just finished reading *The Sorrow of War*, the brilliant anti-war book by Vietnamese war veteran and author, Bao Ninh. In his own way, Bao breaks




HIMALAYA

EVEREST · K2
ANNAPURNA
MUSTANG
MANASLU
LADAKH
KAILAS
RUPSHU
ZANSKAR
SPITI
TIBET
BHUTAN

Walk in small groups to unaffected places hidden in the world's highest mountains. Live in pure culture. Walk back.

801-355-6555
FOR A FREE CATALOG

 **SNOWLION**
EXPEDITIONS



Disinformation

An item in the *Himalaya Mediafile* column of Himal's Sep/Oct 1994 issue refers to an article in the *Calcutta Telegraph* alleging that Dr. Michael van Walt and myself have helped Mr. T. Muivah of the NSCN to establish links with the United National Conference on Indigenous People. Just for the record, I would like to categorically state that as far as I am concerned I have never even met Mr. Muivah nor any of his associates at any time.

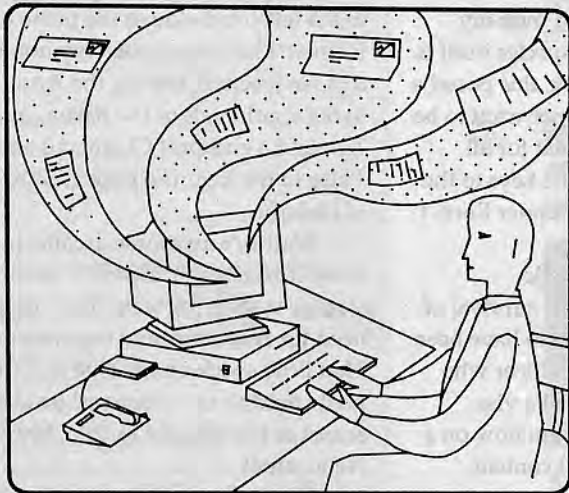
The Telegraph has been misinformed and I would not be surprised that this act of disinformation was done on purpose by certain vested interests. I read Himal faithfully and find it very informative. I do hope that you will verify stories you carry in the future, in order to maintain the integrity of your journal.

Lodi G. Gyari
Special Envoy of
His Holiness the Dalai Lama
Washington DC

his country's taboo on the war by puncturing the myth of the great Vietnamese war machine that used bicycles to defeat B-52s. The semi-autobiographical book shows that the Vietnamese soldier was as frightened, homesick and demoralised as the American enemy — or for that matter the Gurkha soldiers in Flanders Field whose censored letters Onta has brought to our attention.

As 1997 draws near and the brave *lahureys* head home from the further reaches of our erstwhile empire, it may be a good time to see how Nepal can use this 'brain gain'.

Ronald Burroughs
Edinburg, Scotland



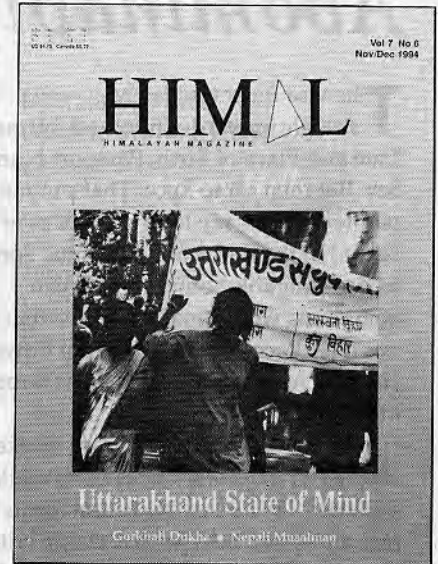
**Get Connected to the
Information
Highway !**

**Now you have a local access into
the *Internet in Kathmandu*.***

Call Mr. Kiran Gautam or Mr. Deependra Basnyat at **Mercantile Office Systems** (9:30-17:00HRS); Tel: 220773

Fax: 225407 or e-mail: Postmaster@MosNepal.ernet.in

* Currently E-Mail Services available.



Readers are invited to comment, criticise or add to information and opinions appearing in Himal. Letters should be brief, to the point and may be edited. Letters which are unsigned and/or without addresses will not be entertained. Include daytime telephone number, if possible.

email: himal@mosnepal.ernet.in

Abominably Yours,

The visa form was fairly straightforward. I filled out Name, Date and Place of Birth, Passport Number, Sex. But then came Race. That put me (as perplexed yaks say here in the Upper Barun) in the horns of a dilemma. Some fellow Bangkok-bound Himalayan hominoids were equally flummoxed: what was their Race? One of them put down: Human. Another chuckled as he wrote: Marathon.

Not since African migrant workers chained to the lower decks of transatlantic sailboats filled disembarkation forms have race and creed been such a strong criteria to choose those who can or cannot cross national frontiers.

Name: Obinna Okonkwo
 Place of Birth: Ferkessedougou
 Destination Port: Baton Rouge, Louisiana
 Type of Visa:
 Tourist
 Transit
 Business
 Slave ✓
 Profession: Cotton picker
 Race: Hunh?

The Buddha said existence is *dukkha*. And among the various *dukkha* memories that tried to distract Keanu Reeves as he sat crosslegged under the bo tree was the excruciating torture of getting a visa. As the

cosmic special effects died down, it dawned on Reeves that if young Siddhartha was alive today and if he had a Nepali passport, Buddhism perhaps would never have reached Japan and Thailand. For a start, what Race would he say he was in the visa form?

And when he applies for his US visa this fall before his New York trip to attend the regular session of the General Assembly, what is Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikari going to write down where it says: Are you or have you ever been a member of a Communist Party? For that matter, how is Chakra Bastola going to answer: Have you ever hijacked a plane in your life? (Tick one.)

- Regularly
- Occasionally
- Once
- Never

Not being a frequent flier myself, I was caught in the dilemma of the earlier-referred-to horns as I mulled over my Race. For a primate whose species itself is a taxonomical question mark, this posed a conundrum. And yet, I did not want to be untruthful on a document that for all intents and purposes held the keys to the Kingdom of Ayutthaya. So, under Race, I wrote: Against Time.

The symbolic ambivalence on the survival of the species seems to have been lost on the visa officer who promptly issued a visa.

So, here I am now on a window seat contemplating the dog on the tarmac wolfing down Business Class lunch discards. Miss

Prangtip closed the hatch, welcomed us all to her "Loyal All-Kid Service" and gave purple all-kids to us

women on board and anyone else who wore an ear-ring—regardless, I am glad to add, of race or ethnicity.

"The pleasure in this cabin is automatically controlled," Prangtip whispered in her delightful Indochinese lilt. "If the pleasure should fall, pull the oxygen mask to your face, clobber your nose and mouth and bleed normally."

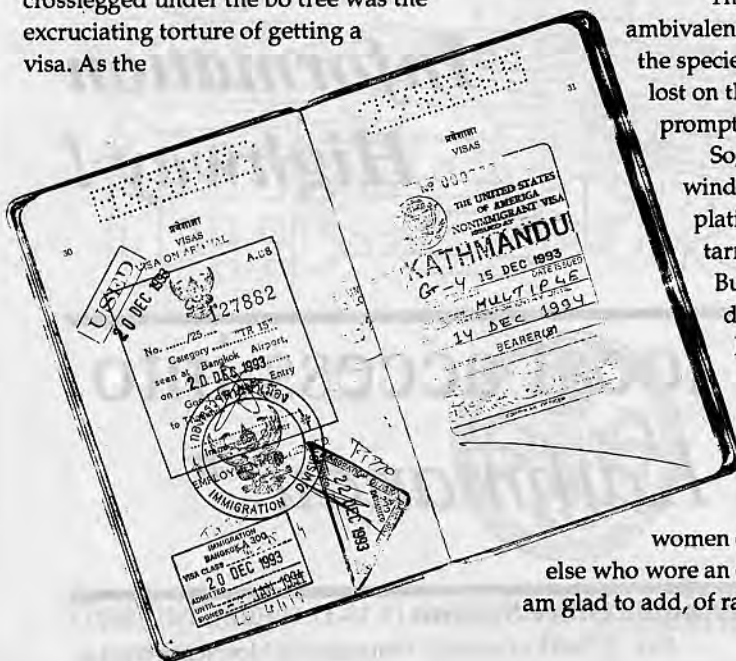
Now, I know exactly what you are thinking: you are thinking that our feminine, feminist columnist has finally succumbed to the temptations of Asia's foremost fleshpot and is flying Thigh to get there. Was the promise of carnal tourism too much for her to resist?

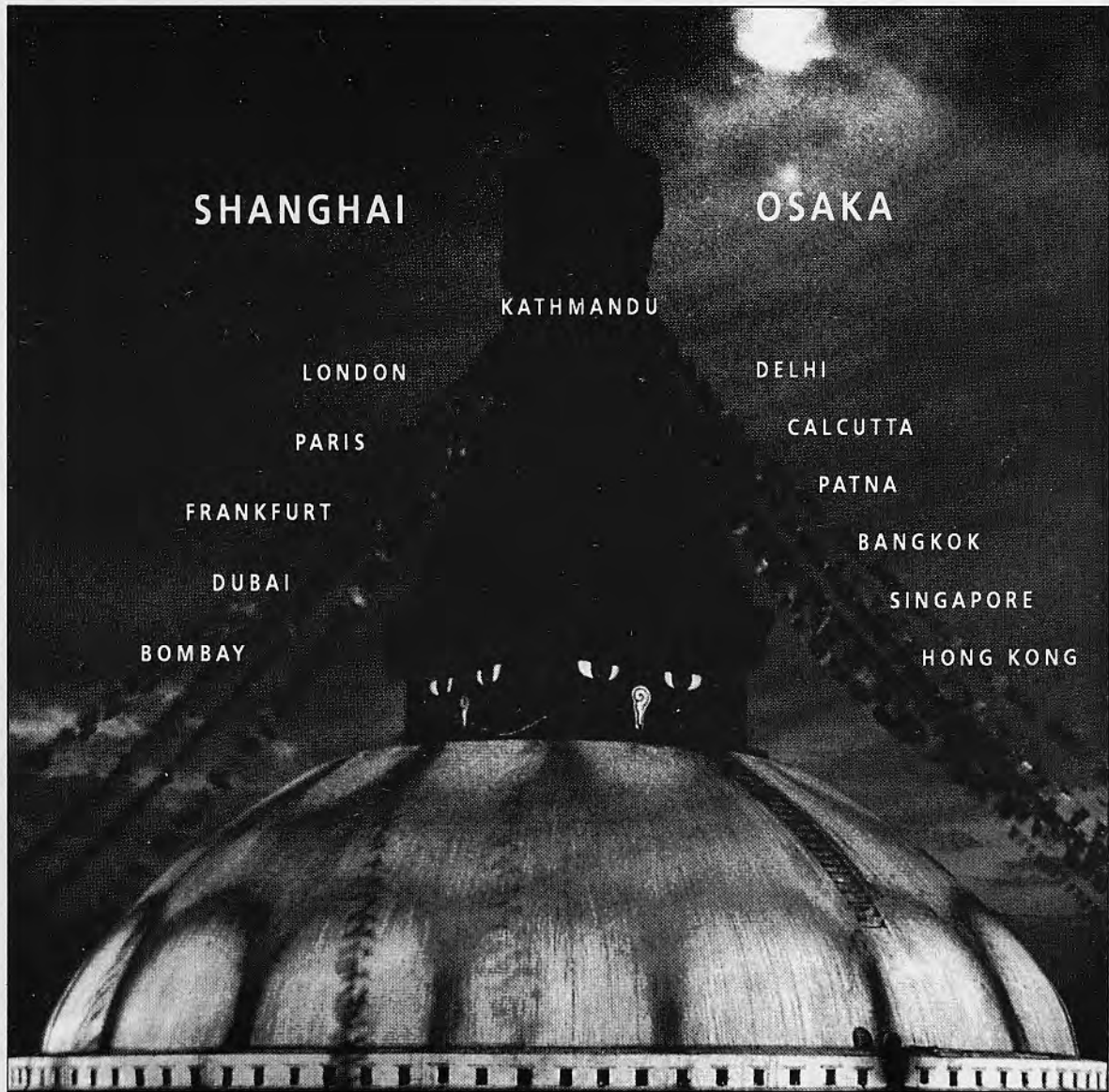
Rightaway let me put all rumours to rest, I am on a fact-finding mission to discover for myself how a country where golf courses regularly steal water from drinking water reservoirs has become Nepal's latest donor—funding a water supply project for Kathmandu.

By this time, the pilot was leaning on his right aileron trim to balance the bank caused by passengers migrating en masse to the left-hand side of the plane to see Mt Everest. I had never seen my home from this perspective, tracing the Arun Valley to the confluence of the Barun, up Tilman La and past Chamlang and tiny Tutse to the looming pink granite of Makalu.

Nature's awesome architecture made these frozen water towers a natural storage system for water that negate the need for reservoirs and expensive dams. That little speck on the side of Baruntse — no it couldn't be — but yes! just below the seracs of the western saddle. My cave. Hello, ama!

We flew over Bangladesh, then SLORC-desh. They brought around the arrival forms as Prangtip came on once more to tell us to be careful when opening the "oval-head rockers". Thigh will mail this column for me while I hightail it into the City of Flesh, from which I may or may not emerge, given my race and sex.





SHANGHAI

OSAKA

KATHMANDU

LONDON

DELHI

PARIS

CALCUTTA

FRANKFURT

PATNA

DUBAI

BANGKOK

BOMBAY

SINGAPORE

HONG KONG

NOW DIRECT TO SHANGHAI & OSAKA

Royal Nepal-Nepal's own international Airlines operates regular flights to Kathmandu from 13 cities. You can warm to the gentleness of Nepali culture, tradition and the authentic spirit of Nepali hospitality aboard.

Royal Nepal
Airlines

RNAC, Building, P.O. Box: 401, Kathmandu, Nepal Tel.: 220757, Fax: 977-1-225348

Hongkong
3759151

Singapore
3395535

Osaka
2292545

Bangkok
2333921-4

Kathmandu
220757

Shanghai
2558899

Marmot.™ For Life.

Regd. No. Lalitpur 65/045-46

You've just spent hours
inching around a space barely
enough to accommodate
the human body.
Odd, that's what climbing in
most sleeping bags is like.

The New Sleeping Bag Collection

For our free catalogue call 707 544-4590