

The Kohla Project 2000 -The First Season Of Excavation-

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In April two weeks excavation was undertaken at Kohla. Aside from the project's co-Directors (Evans, Pettigrew and Tamu), and employing 6-8 local villagers throughout, the core staff consisted of A. Oswald (English Heritage), M. Abbott (Cambridge Archaeological Unit), U. Acharya and his assistant B. Thapa (Dépt. of Archaeology, HMG Nepal). Camping on site, the working and living conditions proved arduous. There had been little melt-off on the Himalayas and, as a result, most nights the temperature dropped below freezing. On the whole, this exercise can only be counted as a complete success and the team knitted well together. It is clear, however, that in the future to sustain proper professional scientific work in such conditions will require considerably more infrastructure (e.g. dedicated office and finds tents with heating facilities).

As the first excavation in this area of the Himalayas our approach was necessarily cautious. With the depth/complexity of the strata unknown, until our 'eye' was into the archaeology we had no wish to open large areas in plan and, instead, concentrated upon section-controlled sondage

exposure. At the same time, from the outset it was obvious that the interior of at least one of the buildings had to be tested. Therefore, it was decided to focus the investigations in the northern middle of the central settlement, thereby avoiding the main, potentially 'public' buildings to the south, whilst trying to achieve coherent results from one area. (This is as opposed to dispersed small test pits across the settlement's three 'quarters' in a belief that - given the overall paucity of context - the basic principles of the site's layout need be grasped before formalised sampling procedures can be adopted.)

Work centred upon Structure 27 - a simple square-plan building - which was excavated in opposed quadrants. Beyond this, and in order to comprehend the dynamics of what was evidently the settlement's terraced hill-side layout, trenches were extended along both the north-south and east-west slopes from Structure 27's central axes. Whereas the latter only interlinked that building with its two 'neighbours' (Structures 15 & 28; Trenches IV-VI), the north-south trench line was much more extensive (Trenches I-III, VII-IX). Eventually extending over

more than 60m and covering a c. 8.00m drop in slope - from the crown of the northern hill down to the southern central courtyard/plaza - it also interconnected with Structures 23 and 25. (To avoid unnecessary disturbance to their floor strata, the interiors of the latter were not trenched, and only the exterior wall faces were exposed.) Finally, a small sondage was cut at the foot of the large standing stone within the southern central courtyard beside the putative 'King's House' in order to simply prove whether it was 'old' (i.e. deeply embedded) - which indeed proved to be the case. In the course of the fieldwork, 121 contexts were excavated and 48 major structural features were identified and recorded.

Somewhat surprisingly, the sub-soils consist of heavy tan/brown clays, and not stone. This is quite fortunate as it seems quite a sensitive matrix viz. stratification and means that vast amounts of time need not be given to the cleaning of a bedrock natural. Although discrete stratigraphic horizons were recovered, the sequence proved to be quite shallow with no more than 0.75m strata encountered. (The as yet uninvestigated deposits within Structure 25 must obviously exceed this depth, but it is unlikely that they will provide any further stratigraphic complexity in terms of the site's overall sequence and phasing.) As suspected, the area's acidic topsoils have clearly impacted on bone survival. Aside from some animal teeth and burnt bone, the few faunal remains recovered are otherwise very small and decayed. However, the preservation of charred plant remains and charcoal seems excellent and we were able to wet sieve five samples, and permission was granted to export these to the UK. Apart from providing organic material for the purposes of absolute dating (see below), these will shortly be assessed by Karen Lundstrom-Baudais of the CNRS, Paris.

Finally, by way of introduction, a GPS was acquired for the project and absolute reference points

were obtained for each of the major sites en route to Kohla; the main settlement's grid was itself also tied in (N - 28° 22.757; E - 84° 11.111; 3,330m OD).

Primary Occupation

The recovery of postholes in all trenches but IX and X came as a considerable surprise. A number of these proved to be very substantial. Based on the restricted exposure of our narrow trenches it is difficult to ascertain any pattern amongst them. While some may well relate to the main stone buildings and, for example, have supported porches, generally their density and situation would suggest that they should be attributable to 'pre-stone' structures. To this extent they are here largely phased with 'early' surfaces present in Trenches I, II, V and VI (found cut by stone building footings). These were most obvious in the latter, western two. In VI two such early horizons were identified, including an upper burnt surface which extended east across the base of Trench V and into the northwestern quadrant of Structure 27 (no early postholes were, however, found within the interior of that building). Samples of this burnt layer from Trench VI ([080]) were fine wet sieved and, aside from producing quantities of charcoal, numerous small clay crucible fragments were also recovered. It is clear that to come to terms with the nature of this early occupation and distinguish plans of its evidently timber buildings, larger-scale excavation exposures will be necessary in the future.

The recovery of this early phase offers an exciting dimension to the site's sequence, as it may suggest that the character of the primary occupation differed than its 'developed' expression. Possibly relating to patterns of seasonal landscape usage (i.e. pastoral transhumance), 'prospection' (viz. the discovery of mineral ores) and/or trade, it suggests an immediacy of occupation. In this regard the use of timber would have been an obvious choice in a

heavily wooded landscape, especially given the locale's immediately clay sub-soils (i.e. stone would have probably had to have been quarried from nearby slopes and outcrops).

Structure 27

Extending over c. 8.00 x 7.35m (externally), the design and layout of the building proved to be straightforward. Seeming packed with clay, its walls were 0.60-1.00m high and generally 0.55-.65m wide. It is clear that its construction had occurred within a broad lateral cut, and the northern back wall was dug into the natural clays to a depth of c. 0.90m. Thereby also supporting the terraced edge, that wall alone was 0.85m wide. As it was not dismantled, no foundation as such was discerned for it and it may well have been without a footing. Otherwise, whereas the foundations of the east and western walls were set in construction trenches 0.25-.30m deep, the trenchbuilt footings of the southern front are 0.45-.60m deep (the base evidently stepping up with the slope midway along its east-west length). Although no trace of any walled internal division was found within the building, its roof may have been supported on free-standing posts. In this capacity, three possible stone slab post-pad settings were tentatively identified along the building's central north-south axis. Occurring on the section-line, the ambiguity of their definition is an outcome of an alternative quadrant(-only) excavation technique.

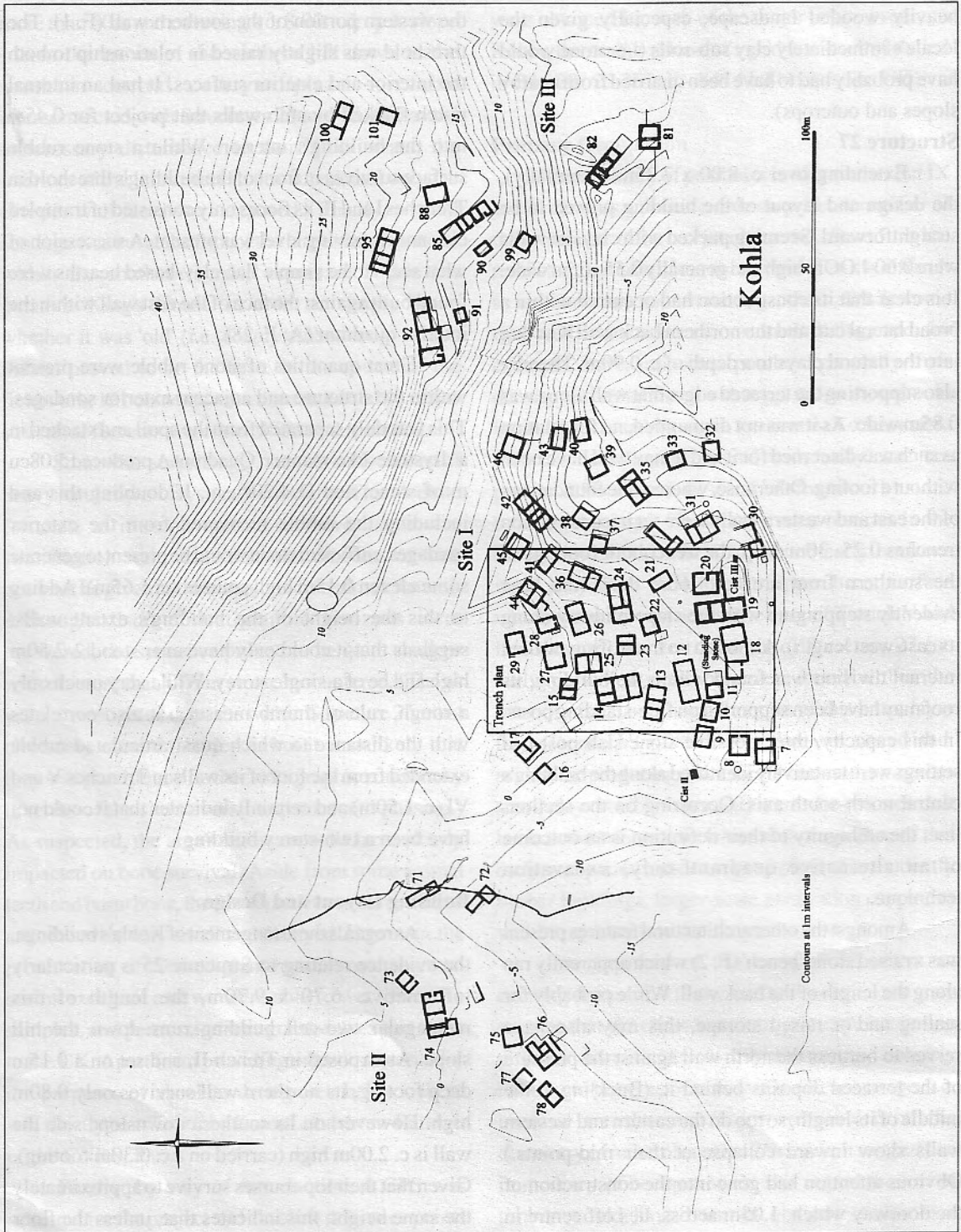
Amongst the other architectural features present was a raised stone 'bench' (F. 2) which apparently ran along the length of the back wall. While probably for seating and/or raised storage, this may also have served to buttress the north wall against the pressure of the terraced deposits behind it. (Buckling at the middle of its length, so too do the eastern and western walls show inward collapse at their mid-points.) Obvious attention had gone into the construction of the doorway which, 1.05m across, lies off centre in

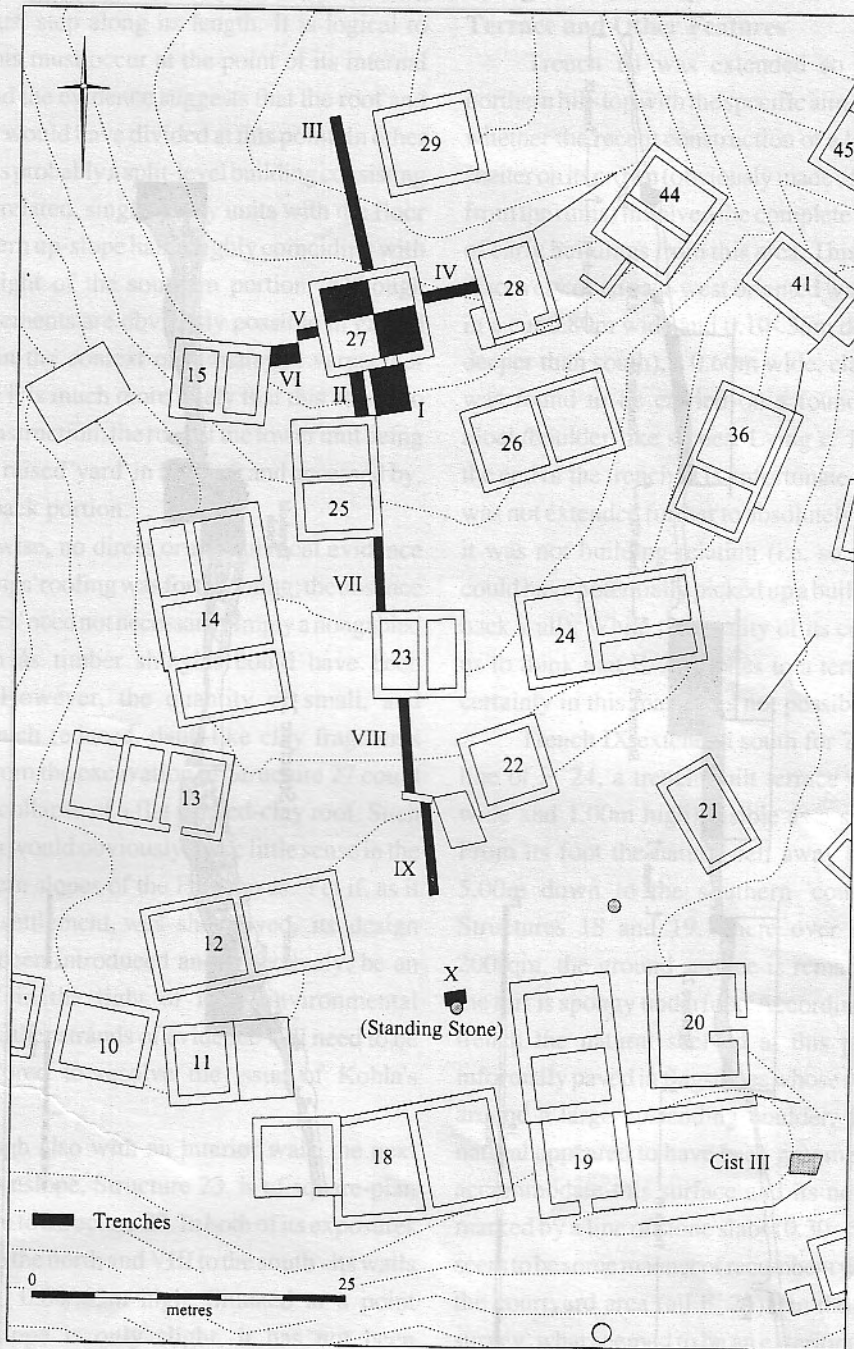
the western portion of the southern wall (F. 1). The threshold was slightly raised in relationship to both the interior and exterior surfaces. It had an internal porch flanked by stub walls that project for 0.45m into the building's interior. While a stone rubble surface survives in front of the building's threshold in Trenches I and II, its floors only consisted of trampled clay and no paving level was present. A succession of what seem to be simple flat, clay-based hearths were found built against the face of the east wall within the interior quadrant (A; F. 28).

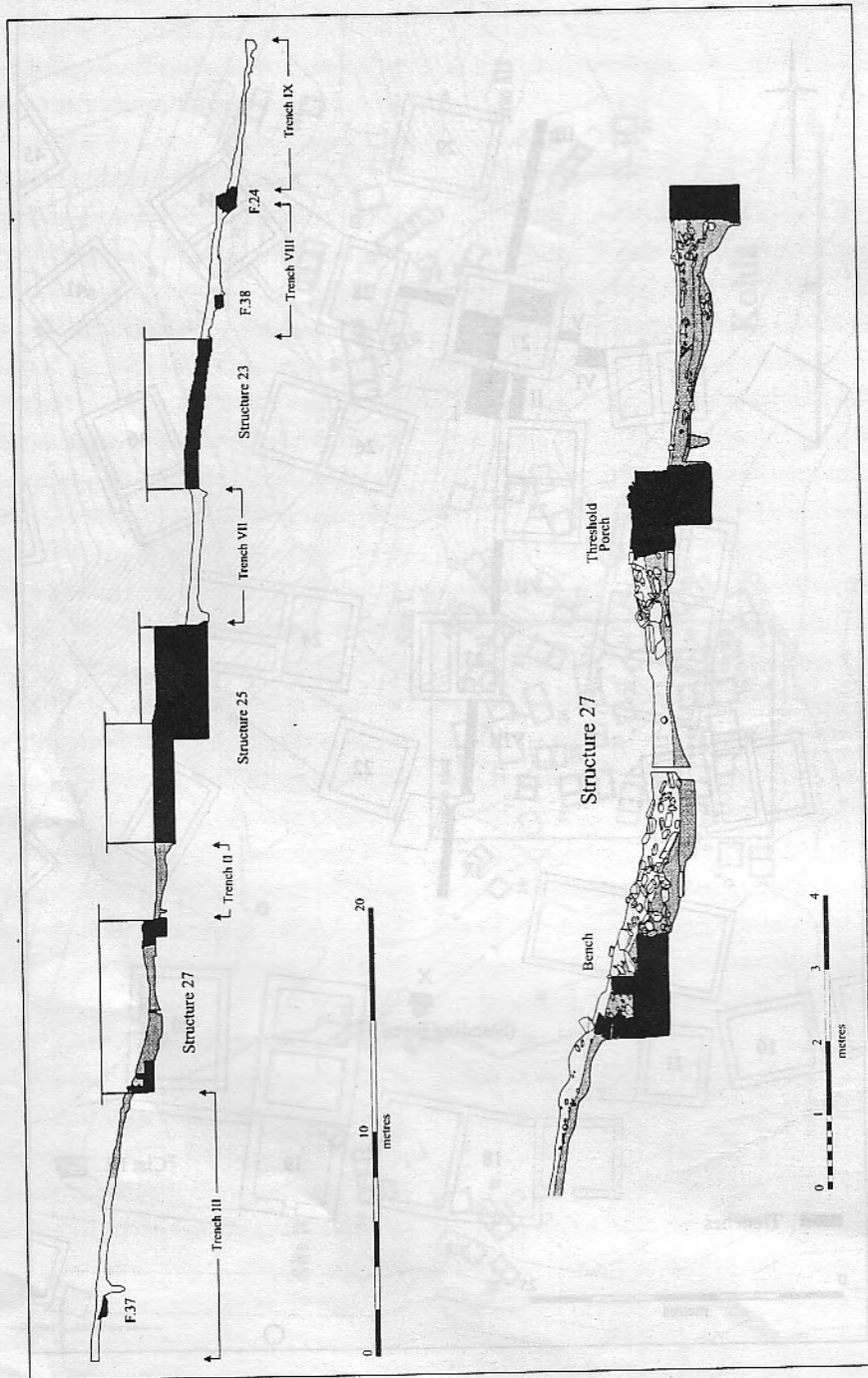
Great quantities of stone rubble were present within the structure and adjacent exterior sondages. This was duly separated from the spoil and stacked in a 'drystone-like' manner; Quadrant A produced 5.08cu m of stone, and D 4.20cu m. If doubling this and including the rubble recovered from the exterior sondages, sufficient stone would be present to generate some eleven 0.15m high courses (c. 1.65m). Adding to this the height of the building's extant walls, suggests that it could only have ever stood 2-2.50m high and be of a single storey. While very much only a rough, rule-of-thumb measure, it also correlates with the distance to which quasi-articulated rubble extended from the foot of its walls in Trenches V and VI (c. 1.50m) and certainly indicates that it could not have been a two-storey building.

Building Layout and Design

As regards the arrangement of Kohla's buildings, the evidence relating to Structure 25 is particularly informative. 6.70 x 9.70m, the length of this rectangular two-cell building runs down the hill slope. As exposed in Trench II, and set on a 0.15m deep footing, its northern wall survives only 0.80m high. However, on its southern downslope side the wall is c. 2.00m high (carried on a c. 0.30m footing). Given that their top courses survive to approximately the same height, this indicates that, unless the floor







level sloped markedly, the foundations and interior surfaces must step along its length. It is logical to infer that this must occur at the point of its internal division, and the evidence suggests that the roof and storey level would have divided at this point. In other words, it was probably a split-level building consisting of two interrelated, single storey units with the floor of the northern up-slope half roughly coinciding with the roof height of the southern portion. Although such arrangements are obviously possible in gabled structures, in the context of Himalayan vernacular architecture it is much more likely that this attests to flat-roof construction; the roof of the lower unit being utilised as a raised 'yard' in front of, and accessed by, the higher back portion.

Otherwise, no direct or unequivocal evidence of the buildings' roofing was forthcoming; the absence of stone 'slates' need not necessarily imply a nongabled construction as timber shingles could have been employed. However, the quantity of small, and evidently much reduced, daub-like clay fragments recovered from the excavation of Structure 27 could attest to the collapse of a flat packed-clay roof. Such a roof design would obviously make little sense in the moist southern slopes of the Himalayas. Yet if, as it seems, the settlement was short-lived, its design could have been introduced and, effectively, be an 'experiment' in the light of local environmental conditions. Other strands of evidence will need to be further explored to resolve the issue of Kohla's roof types.

Although also with an interior wall, the next building downslope, Structure 23, is of square-plan and more akin to Structure 27. In both of its exposures Trench VII to the north and VIII to the south - its walls were only c. 0.60/0.65m high. Situated at a point where the slope is only slight, it has not been significantly terraced into the hill. Its internal north-south wall need not relate to any kind of split-level

arrangement, but only an interior subdivision.

Terrace and Other Features

Trench III was extended so far across the northern hill-top with the specific aim of investigating whether the recent construction of a large pastoralist shelter on its crown (obviously made of stone collected from the ruins) involved the complete dismantlement of early buildings from this area. This resulted in the discovery of an east-west oriented wall (F. 37). Built in a cut 0.80m wide and 0.10-.35m deep (north side deeper than south), a 0.60m wide, clay-packed wall was found to be carried on a foundation of large block/boulder-like stones. Lying c. 1.80m south of the end of the trench, it is unfortunate that the cutting was not extended further to absolutely determine that it was not building-relating (i.e. so that the trench could have potentially picked up a building's northern back wall). While the quality of its construction led us to think that F. 37 relates to a terrace boundary, certainty in this manner is not possible at this time.

Trench IX extended south for 7.20m from the line of F. 24, a trench-built terrace wall (c. 0.85m wide and 1.00m high) visible as a surface feature. From its foot the natural fell away by 0.60m over 5.00m down to the southern 'courtyard' before Structures 18 and 19. There over approximately 200sqm, the ground surface is remarkably flat and the turf is spongy underfoot. Accordingly, within the trench the natural shelved at this point and it is informally paved in flagstones whose surface extends around a large upstanding boulder. The surface of natural appeared to have been groomed/truncated to accommodate this surface and its northern edge is marked by a line of stone slabs (0.30-.60m wide) that seem to be some manner of recumbent wall delineating the courtyard area (all F. 25). (In the original 1994 survey, what seemed to be an exterior terrace-related staircase was identified immediately east of this trench.)

Trench X was opened at the northern foot of the large standing stone set beside Structure 19, with the intention of determining whether this was 'old' or had been recently set. Upon the removal of 0.30m of humus, this stele was found to be embedded within the extension of the same paving recovered in Trench IX, thereby proving the antiquity of the standing stone. Aside from this determination, the importance of these two trenches is that they demonstrate the existence of formally defined 'public' space' within the core of the village settlement, which the standing stone is itself an expression of. Interestingly enough, no occupation surface was found sealing this paving; remarkably few artefacts were recovered in association, suggesting that deposition may not have been a major component of public activities.

North of the F. 24 terrace wall, a complex sequence of features was identified within Trench VIII. F. 38 was a 0.75m wide 'buried' wall (i.e. not visible at topsoil level) consisting of three courses of large stone slabs. Due to ground slope, only its northern side was trench-built (0.40m deep); it had been laterally cut into the slope and there was no defining cut on the southern side. The slope on that side had been truncated/flattened over c. 1.90m and the southern face of F. 38 had, therefore, been built free-standing. Abutting the north side of the wall was a 0.50m 'square' box-like cut, c. 0.20m deep with a large slab laid across its base (F. 41; its western side was truncated by F. 42, a large void posthole). Its excavator thought that the impression of subsequently removed vertical slabs could be identified in the sides of this cut and, therefore, that it was either a stone-line cist or hearth. Indeed, a concentration of charcoal was found upon the basal slab and a single burnt bone fragment was recovered. The interpretation of this feature group is further complicated by the fact that a cairn-like setting was found to seal them (F. 23). Ringed by small stone rubble, a large concave/domed

slab capped a distinct heap of charcoal that was surrounded by sherds from a single broken pot. What seems to be horse teeth and small fragments of white burnt bone were also recovered from these deposits. In short, this seems to relate to a ritual 'placement' and perhaps even a mortuary interment. If the latter, by any measure this would be a remarkable occurrence within the core of a village and could suggest that it post-dates the site's abandonment.

While F. 38 was clearly terrace-related, lying only 1.30m south of Structure 23 it could also have footed a porch for that building (or, alternatively, been the southern side of an earlier building). If so, the F. 41 'box' hearth/cist may be directly associated with it or be a later feature (i.e. 'encampment'-related; see below).

Finds

The excavations proved surprisingly prolific in the quantity of artefacts. In total more than 1200 sherds of pottery were recovered; their gross trench density is shown in Table 1.

Trench	Sqm	Pottery (No.)	Density (Sherds per sqm)
Str. 27			7.2 (ave.)
Quad A	10.25	31	3
Quad D	11.55	133	11.5
I	9.10	218	24*
II	3.30	93	28.2*
III	13.30	109	8.2
IV	5.00	64	12.8
V	1.90	8	4.2
VI	4.00	71	17.7*
VII	6.00	220	36.7*
VIII	5.60	165	29.5*
IX	7.20	90	12.5
X	1.40	2	1.4

Table 1 - Pottery Frequency (* indicates above mean densities - 15.8 sherds per sqm)

Although such a limited excavation sample provides, as yet, no sound basis for generalisation, what may prove to be 'trends' can be distinguished. Foremost, is how relatively low the densities are within Structure 27. The terraced construction of that building probably resulted in the truncation of earlier occupation horizons and the re-deposition of their associated finds. Equally, these figures suggest that - analogous to the maintenance of domestic space in villages today - the building was swept out and, perhaps related, the densities in the doorway-related quadrant (D) were almost four times greater than the building's 'backspace' in Quadrant A. (Here it is surely relevant that, as indicated in Table 1, aside from Trench VI all the occurrences of above-mean densities occur in front of buildings. Abutting Structure 15, the location of the entrance into that building is unknown and the robust survival of the Phase 1 horizon in Trench VI also probably contributed to its densities.) The evidence that the houses were cleaned out could, by extension, imply the existence of midden dumps. Probably located at the fringes of the settlement's built core, these have yet to be located. Of course, this chain of argument presupposes that Structure 27 - with its low artefact densities - was a house, as opposed to a meeting place, workshop or shrine/temple. Only further excavation of a range of the site's structures will provide comparative context to permit such statements with any confidence.

The densities across the surfaces in front of Structure 27 (Trenches I & II; 26.1 ave.) are roughly comparable to that before Structure 23 (VIII; 29.5);

whereas at 36.7 sherds per sqm the densities between Structures 23 and 25 are substantially greater. South of Structures 23 and the F. 24 boundary wall, the density of Trench IX - running down to the 'plaza' - is relatively low (12.5), with the lowest density being in Trench X at the foot of the main standing stone. While admittedly the paving was not removed across this area, this still suggests that the central 'public' space was kept relatively clean and activities occurring there were not significantly artefact-related.

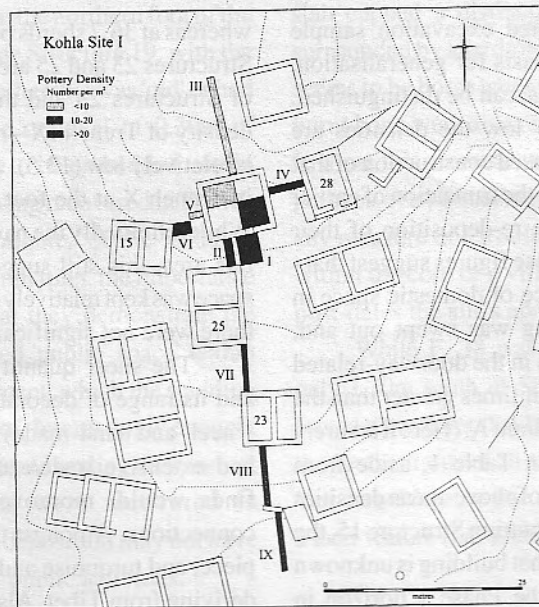
The sheer quantity of the pottery recovered, and its range of decorative styles and fabrics (both wheel- and hand-made) suggests that the settlement had extensive trade/exchange links. A number of finds would, moreover, point to long distance connections. Amongst these are a worked obsidian piece, and turquoise and fossil coral beads probably deriving from Tibet. Also found was a piece of hard fired 'stoneware' and a remarkably fine sherd, of almost eggshell-like quality, whose source was probably in China.

Initial analysis of the survey-collected pottery from Kohla and the other sites indicates that while some fabrics are common throughout, there are distinctions between the 'up-mountain' and lower 'highland' sites. Based on Gibson's preliminary 1996 study - and although a number of the sites require further collection before any statistically valid comparison can be attempted the division would seem to come at Karapu, with the sites below having a different suite of fabrics and a higher proportion of decorated wares.

Site	Total (No.)	Decorated (%)	Fabric:						
			A	C	D	E	F	G	B
Kohla	314	4.6	•	•	•	•			
Chikre	107	-	•			•			
Khoido	56*	10.7		•	•	•			
Karapu	7*	-	•		•	•			
Kui Choh	139	74				•	•	•	
Nadr Pa	111	47.7			•	•	•		
Yangjakot	42*	31			•				•

| < Shared Fabrics > |

Table 2 - Pottery Seriation of the Environs Sites (* indicates sites requiring further collection)



A number of iron objects were recovered from the excavations, including 3/4 knives. More noteworthy, perhaps, was the presence of iron slag within three contexts (Trenches I & III; a piece of slag had also been found in the preexcavation survey collections). Numerous small pieces of crucible were recovered from the lower burnt ground surface in Trench VI; a copper alloy ring and a miniature spatula-like piece, as well as a silver earring, were also found. Both stone and worked-down pottery gaming discs were recovered (and a drilled, round-worked, decorated sherd may have been utilised as a pendant); a variety of worked stone implements were also retrieved.

Dating

Based on the scale of subsequent tree-growth upon the ruins, we have always thought that Kohla was generally of a Medieval date and could be as much as c. 1,000 years old. Although, by whatever affinities there are between its ceramics and those dated elsewhere in the country (especially the scored

wares), a date range of anywhere between AD 500-1500 was possible. In order to bracket the sequence - at least as based on the results of this season's work - two radiocarbon dates were submitted for analysis:

- 1) [080] - 850 ± 60 BP (AD 1030-1280 - 2 sigma/95 % probability; Bet 149145)
- 2) [005]D - 750 ± 50 BP (AD 1200-1300 - 2 sigma/95 % probability; Bet 149144).

The first is from the burnt, pre-stone building phase in Trench VI; the second from charcoal dumped adjacent to the threshold of Structure 27 itself. Although giving a maximum occupation of some 270 years, the probable intersection point of these two dates with the calibration curve would respectively correspond with 1200 and 1270. This could suggest that the occupation lasted, perhaps, in a range of 150 years and may even have been less than a century. Given what is understood of the cultural sequence of the region, and the internal correspondence between the two dates, they both seem quite acceptable. Moreover, while complications may be encountered elsewhere in the larger Kohla complex (i.e. its other

'quarters' may extend the chronology), this tight dating would complement its as yet two-phased sequence and the overall impression of the settlement as a short-lived 'experiment'.

Ethnographic and Trailside Observations

Reflective of the Project's ethno-historical component, the following observations were made:

- 1) Long a source of much speculation, at Kohla proper the great central capstone setting (with a box-shrine built within its interior) saw still a new phase of modification. Given the night-time cold, some of our labourers elected to sleep beneath it (its stone overhang refracting heat). To accommodate themselves they dug what amounts to a dripchannel around half of its projecting semi-circle, adding a 'domestic' dimension to the history of this probable monument.
- 2) As mentioned in earlier reports, the location of the site's cemetery has been extensively sought and its absence has been the cause of some consternation. In the course of his landscape reconnaissances Yarjung believes that he may have now found it set atop a ridge overlooking the settlement. Certainly there has been 'disturbance' on its crest and a few possible cairn-like settings can be identified. (Interestingly enough, he failed to recognise a large lightning-split tree located at the edge of the area in question. In his earlier dream-inspired searches for the cemetery he was informed that a tree of this type would mark its location; see Evans 1999: 453, note 13.)
- 3) En route a pastoralist cache, holding of bamboo shelter poles, mats and ropes, was observed set beneath a rock overhang at the riverside below Kohla. Recorded photographically, in previous years similar transhumant stores have been observed set within the hollow trunks of light-

ening-struck trees.

- 4) When visiting a newly established day-care centre at Yangjakot on the return leg of the journey, we were shown a number of wooden miniatures of agricultural implements. Apparently for the instruction of children, these were documented photographically. Similar to the model pastoralist shelters recorded in previous seasons and other instances of demonstrative model construction observed amongst the Gurung/Tamu, in the coming year we intend to submit a paper concerned with their model-making practices to the *Journal of Material Culture*.

Anthropological Fieldwork

Aside from video-tape documentation of all facets of the fieldwork (these are currently being time-coded by the anthropological research assistant, Dil Kumari), anthropological research undertaken during the 2000 field season focused on:

Shamanic Oral Texts - Translation and analysis of the historical content of the shamanic 'oral texts' (pye) continued as in previous field seasons. The major achievement of this season's work included the completion of the lengthy Lemkorho Pye that describes aspects of ancestral life at Kohla. The pye, which is briefly summarised below, is currently being analysed and secondary oral knowledge of historical importance that was accessed through the text is in the process of being documented and analysed:

The Klye headman at Kohla wanted to rule over all the villages in the area and decided to collect taxes. He told his advisor Lemko to go all the villages in the surrounding area and collect the taxes. None of the villagers wanted to pay but with difficulty Lemko persuaded them to do so. Lemko's asyo (mother's brother) Aangichyo lived in Tapro Mhijyaye Thoh where Lemko had been born. He owned a mill by the

river and took a little of the grain that he ground for people in payment. This meant that he was richer than most villagers and so the headman wanted a larger tax from him. He refused to give anything, saying that he earned his payment whereas the headman was taking a tax and giving nothing. Lemkorho was in a difficult position. He couldn't argue with his asyo. So he went back to Kohla without Aangichyo's tax.

The headman was angry and told Lemko to return to collect the tax but his asyo refused a second time and Lemko returned empty handed. The headman told him that if he didn't collect the tax from Aangichyo he would lose his job and all his wealth. Lemko was frightened and begged Aangichyo to pay. His asyo still refused as he thought that it was unfair to tax the villagers. Lemko was very upset but decided that he had better keep his master happy even though he would have to turn against his asyo.

Lemko brought a case against his asyo which was judged by all the men of the village. They fined him double and treble the tax he owed. There was a great argument between Lemko and his asyo. Aangichyo shouted "you have taken my heart and my leg". Lemko went back to Kohla and the headman rewarded him by making him his advisor for life. Aangichyo was furious and that night he put a curse on Lemko. Lemko who was asleep in Kohla had a very bad dream and awoke in terror. After that he became sick with fear and never recovered. A few days later he died. The headman was very upset that Lemko had died and decided to do a pai (major mortuary ritual) for him. He asked Aangichyo for the syol-asyo koi, (cloth given by asyo), the chu, keky (goats), tohkyu, kohkyu, thukyu (sheep into whom Lemko's soul would be placed before travelling to heaven and the companion sheep), and sundo chyu, aoli ki (special kinds of rice) without which a pai

cannot begin. But Aangichyo refused. The headman went to look for a pachyu and klehbri (shaman) to do the pai. He couldn't find any who would do it without the asyo koi and other things Sylo Pachyu was a greedy man and when the headman offered him more than the usual payment he agreed. He made the pla (effigy of the dead person) and decorated it. He made it talk and made the food that had been offered to it disappear as he had magical powers. After three days he told people that Lemko had reached Targila.

Lemko had not reached Targila. He was stuck in Heni Nhoeye Chhaja, a place somewhere in the Himalayas on the way to heaven. His soul wandered in search of bodies to inhabit but it could only go into dead bodies. He would find the rotting corpse of a mouse and enter it so the body would come alive, but it only become more rotten. Between the rainy season and the dry season nine klehbris and seven pachyus passed through Heni Nhoeye Chhaja. They heard a noise "pey-ju, pey-ju" and wondered what sort of animal or bird made that sound. They looked around and saw a disgusting creature that looked as though it was made from rotting flesh. It wanted to speak and bowed down to them. The chief klehbri asked, "What are you and what do you want of us?" The creature answered "I lived in Kohla before my death. My name was Lemko. During my life I gave my asyo great trouble and because of that he cursed me and when the headman tried to do my pai my asyo refused to give the asyo koi and other essential items. Without these things I can't cross the river Hansyulu Kyu to Targila".

The nine klehbris and the seven pachyus went on their way. When they reached Kohla they asked if anyone had died. They were told that no one had died but then the villagers told them that a few years ago Lemkorho had died but they had done his pai. The

chief klehbri explained to the villagers that the pai was done incorrectly and that Lemko had never reached Targila. The headman was very upset and called for his horse and rode off to look for Lemko. When he reached Heni Nhoje Choh he listened for the "pey-ju, pey-ju" sound and then he saw the hideous creature and held out his shawl to it and said "If you are really my honest and wise advisor Lemkorho, come to my shawl". The creature bowed nine times as Lemko would have done when he was alive and came slowly to the shawl. The headman gathered the creature in his arms and sobbing held it to his heart, then he returned to Kohla.

He wanted to re-do the pai but still the asyo would not come nor send the required items. The headman visited Aangichyo three times and took all his valuables with him on his third visit but still the answer was "no". Without the asyo koi and other essential items it was impossible to do the pai. Then the headman chose a clever boy and told him to go at night when everyone was asleep to the mill and steal a bit of cloth. After that he had to go to Aangichyo's house and steal a little millet and then go to the rice beater and steal a little rice. The boy returned to Kohla with all the items and Lemko's pai was repeated. This time it was performed by a descendent of the famous Pakrai Pachyu and an unnamed klehbri. At the end of three days the headman opened his shawl and it was empty. The creature was gone and the headman knew that Lemko's soul had reached Targila at last.

To date, analysis of this pye has focused on what it tells about the introduction of taxation, the manner in which social relations of hierarchy changed and the way that people resisted that change. A further avenue of enquiry to be explored includes the search for historical documentation concerning the

introduction of taxation into this area, related changes in relations of hierarchy and local responses.

Ethno-Historical Research - Prior to 2000 the Project focused primarily on the translation and analysis of the historical content of the pye and analysis of the social dynamics of the Project itself. During field trips undertaken in 1994 and 1995 ethno-history interviews informed archaeological enquiry. All phases and activities of the research trips were video-taped and interviews were conducted with local people on a range of topics including shepherding patterns, house-building techniques, local flora and fauna, sacred geography and interpretations of material culture. Interviewees included shepherds from different Gurung/Tamu villages, people from the villages of Yangjakot and Wachok, visiting shamans from Pokhara and our porters.

In the course of this work it has become apparent that extensive ethnohistorical research needed to be conducted in addition to that done in conjunction with archaeological enquiry. To this end an ethno-historical research team was formed in early 2000 consisting of co-directors, Judith Pettigrew and Yarjung Tamu assisted by Dil Kumari Tamu. In-depth ongoing ethno-historical research commenced in April 2000. Interviews are being currently being conducted with a wide range of Gurung/Tamu individuals, male and female, across different social strata, age groups, clans and backgrounds. Preliminary analysis of less than 50 interviews has to date provided little significant historical information but does illustrate the cultural importance of Kohla to diverse sectors of Gurung/Tamu society. Young people, however, particularly those who live in the town appear to have more limited knowledge concerning their ancestral heritage.

Linguistic Analysis - Linguistic analysis of the

migration texts is shortly to commence in collaboration with Mark Turin, a linguistic anthropologist based at the Himalayan Languages Project, Leiden University. This collaboration will enable comparative linguistic analysis to be undertaken on the migration histories and will add a new and important dimension to the study of the Gurung/Tamu past.

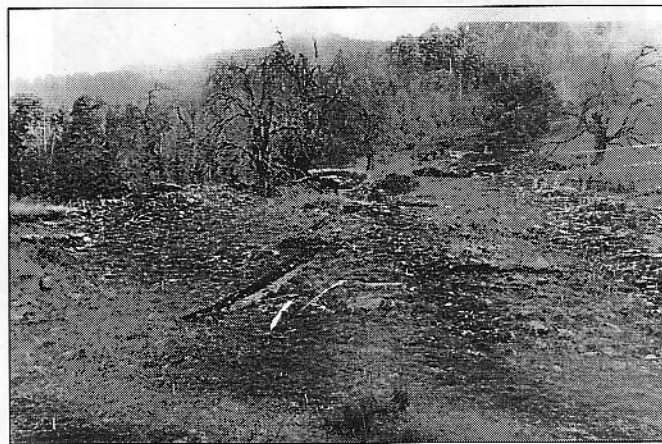
Research Directives and Prospects

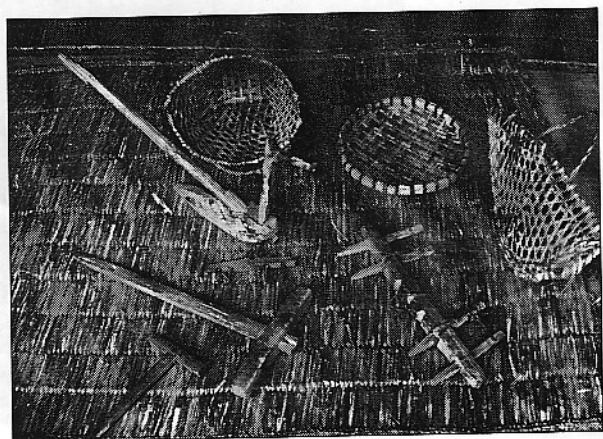
Essentially this season at Kohla tested whether we could excavate under such extreme conditions. Having succeeded in this, it is clear that if we are to fulfil the aims of the project that the archaeological investigations will need to progress on two fronts:

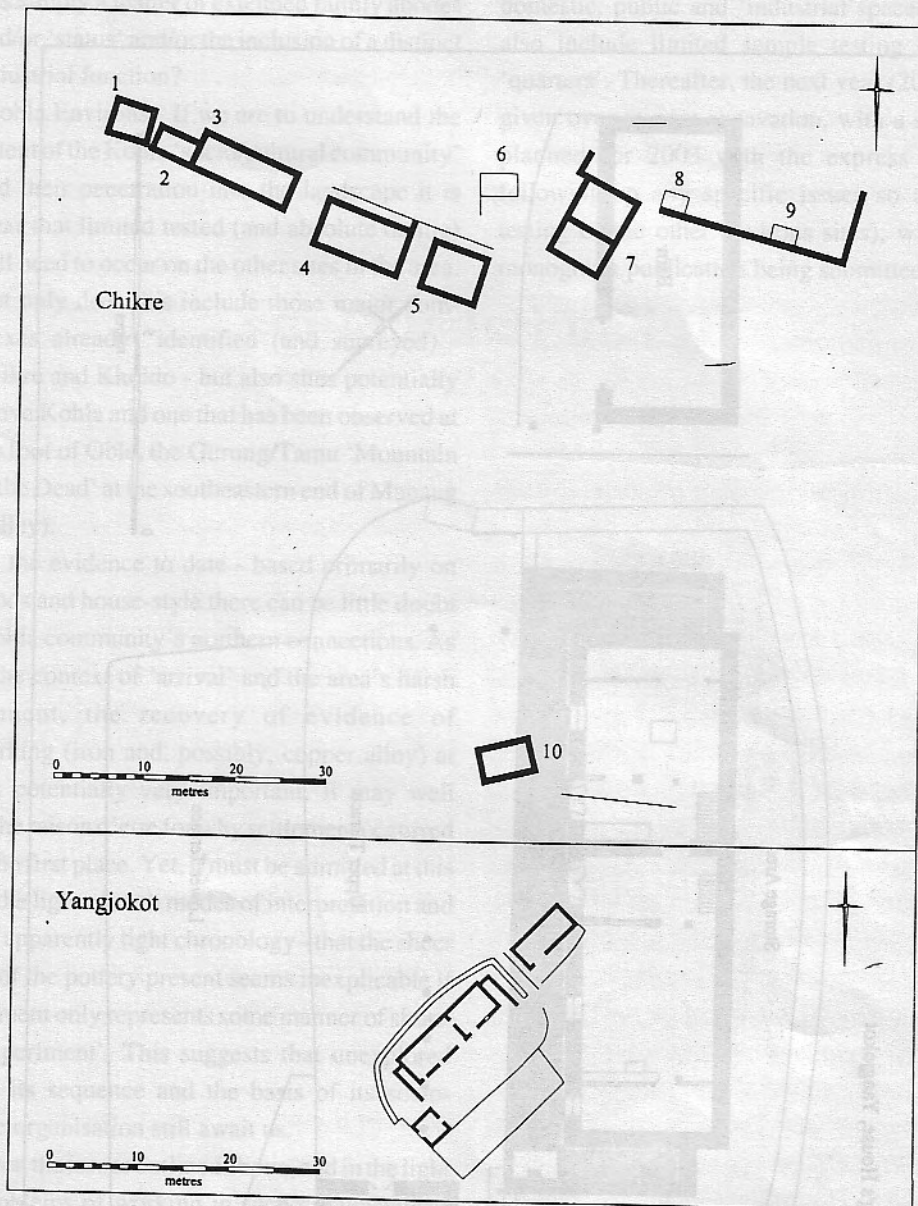
- I) Settlement Excavations - Aside from the interaction (and variability) between the central Kohla settlement core (I) and its eastern and western 'quarters' (II & III), other main avenues of research have been highlighted in the course of this year's work:
 - i) The situation of the primary timber-phase occupation in relationship to eventual layout of the final complex. Is it, for example, confined to the northern central hill-top or do the 'sister' settlement quarters also have pre-stone precursors? To adequately come to terms with the nature of this early phase of settlement will require large-scale exposures in order to recover full building plans.
 - ii) Relating to the first issue is the potential inter-relationship of the site's 'permanent' village settlement and transhumance, as seasonal usage of the locale may have provided the means of its initial reconnaissance. Similarly, it will be essential to determine to what extent it was visited after the abandonment of the village. Still today a place of transhumant encampment, the ruins of many 'old' phrohon shelters dot the site's fringes and it is conceivable that its environs were utilised for seasonal pasture immediately after the cessation of permanent occupation. Such activity could well explain the recovery of glazed wares that may be of later attribution than the radiocarbon dates and, too, perhaps the cairn-like feature in Trench VIII.
 - iii) How real is the apparent distinction of the central public space and are the structures lying south of it somehow different (e.g. The 'King's House')? Related to this is, of course, the situation of industry and, too, the possible whereabouts of village middens.
 - iv) Albeit involving major presumptions, if Structure 27 is considered to have housed a 'typical' domestic unit, then - even if leaving aside the issue of 'kingly' residences (e.g. Structure 19/20) - what do the much larger and more complexly compounded or sub-divided buildings such as Structures 12, 14 and 18 represent? Is

Plates Opposite:

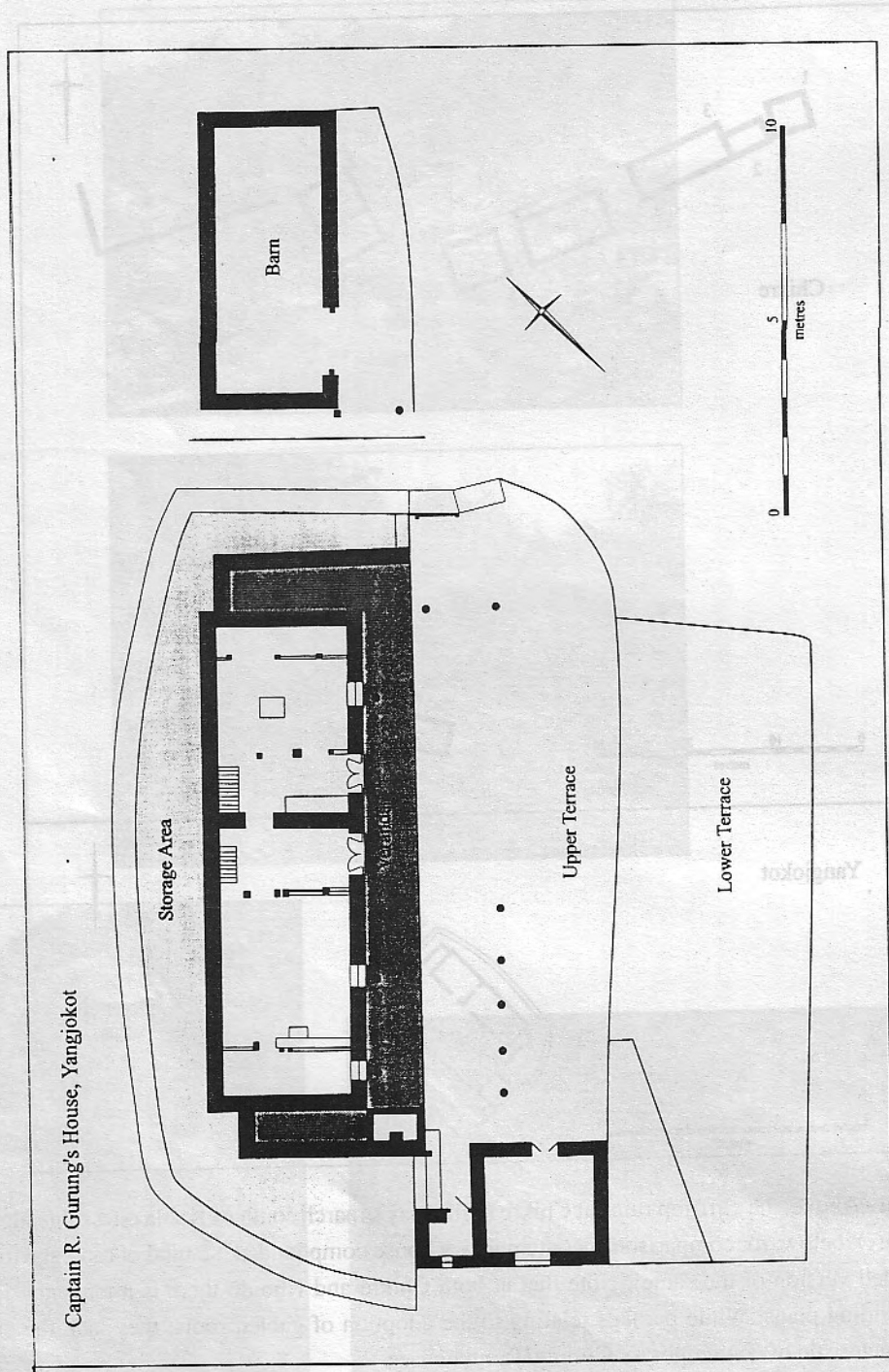
- I) Top - Kohla, looking north with Trench IX in mid-ground bordered by terrace wall behind (F. 24); Structures 25 and 27 are visible on hill-top behind (note paved surface and boulder at bottom end of Trench IX). Bottom - Trench X looking east with standing stone embedded in paved surface; note west wall of Structure 19 behind.
- II) Top - Kohla, looking north to doorway of Structure 27 with its southern front wall exposed down to foundation level in Trench I; note postholes in foreground and behind the building in Trench III. (The stone stacks beside the latter are the 'measured' rubble separated from the building's quadrants.) Bottom - Looking east to Trench IV and west wall of Structure 27 (foreground) with east wall in Quadrant D behind (with west wall of Structure 28 in background).
- III) Top - pastoralist cache beneath a rock overhang; bottom - agricultural miniatures at Yangjakot day-care centre.







Caption - Above, the cliff-top ruins at Chikre (half a day's march south of Kohla on a ridge high above the river valley); below, for comparison, a contemporary house compound at Yangjokot (on page following a more detailed version of the same). Note that at both Chikre and Khoido there is a tendency for more elongated building plans. While perhaps relating to the adoption of gabled roofs, they lack the elaborate porches characteristic of contemporary Gurung/Tamu houses.



this simply a matter of extended family abodes and/or 'status' and/or the inclusion of a distinct industrial function?

- 2) Kohla Environs - If we are to understand the extent of the Kohla 'socio/cultural community' and their penetration into the landscape it is clear that limited tested (and absolute dating) will need to occur on the other sites in the area. Not only does this include those major complexes already identified (and surveyed) - Chikre and Khoido - but also sites potentially above Kohla and one that has been observed at the foot of Oble, the Gurung/Tamu 'Mountain of the Dead' at the southeastern end of Manang Valley).

By the evidence to date - based primarily on trade goods and house-style there can be little doubt of the Kohla community's northern connections. As regards the context of 'arrival' and the area's harsh environment, the recovery of evidence of metalworking (iron and, possibly, copper alloy) at Kohla is potentially very important. It may well provide the *raison d'être* for why settlement occurred there in the first place. Yet, it must be admitted at this time - in the light of such modes of interpretation and the site's apparently tight chronology - that the sheer quantity of the pottery present seems inexplicable if the settlement only represents some manner of short-lived 'experiment'. This suggests that unexplored facets of its sequence and the basis of its socio-economic organisation still await us.

Given the issues outlined above, and in the light of the problems of working in such circumstances (altitude, weather and the Nation's general political forecast), what is now proposed are two further seasons of excavation. The first in the early autumn of 2001, is intended to be of a relatively large-scale. It will coalesce and expand upon the area-exposure within the central settlement core (viz. issues of

domestic, public and 'industrial space/usage), and also include limited sample testing of its other 'quarters'. Thereafter, the next year (2002), will be given over to post-excavation, with a short season planned for 2003 with the express purpose of following-up any specific issues so arising (and testing of the other environs sites); with the final monograph publication being submitted in 2004.