

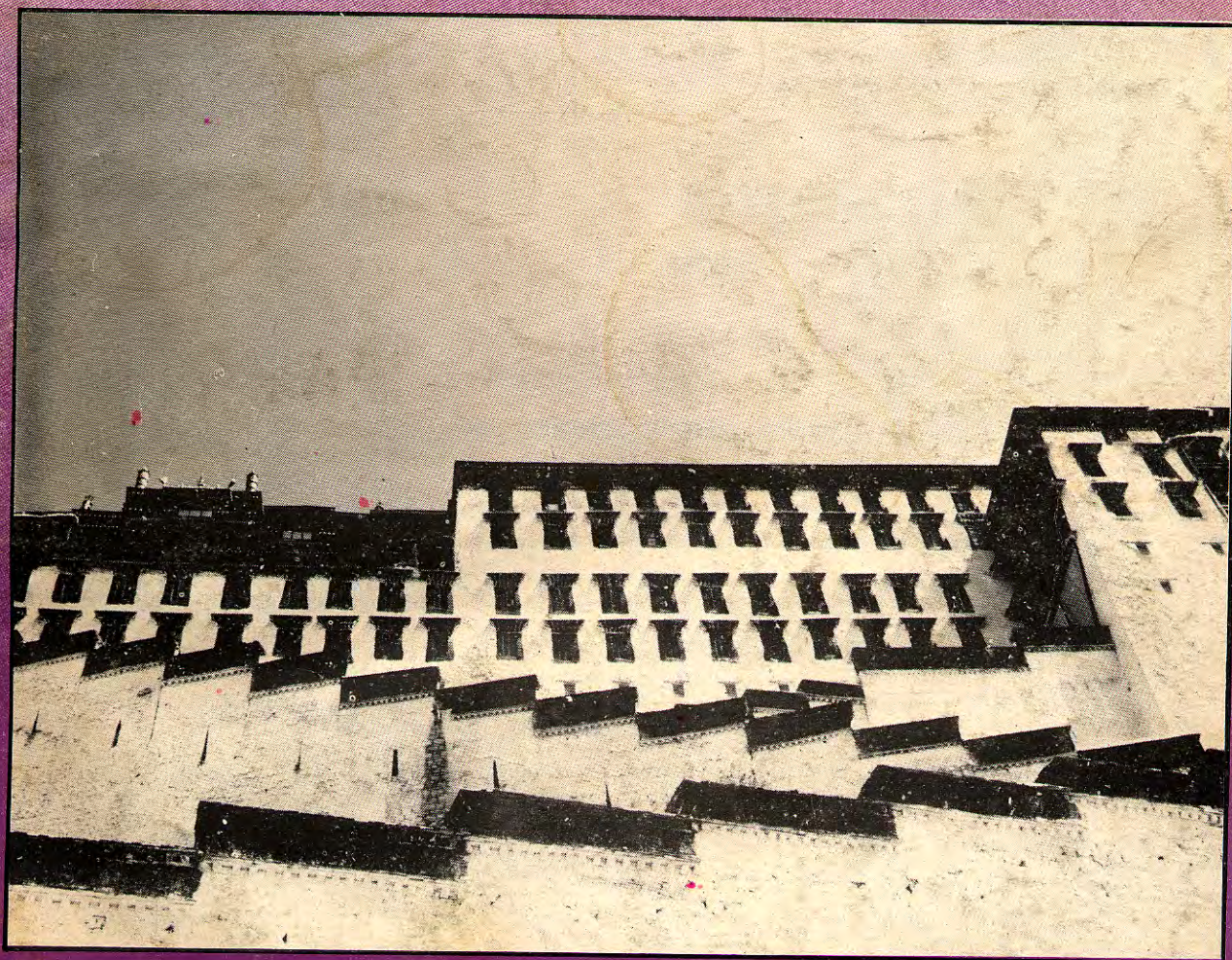
NRs20 IRs12 US\$6

ISSN 1012-9804

MAR/APR 1991

# HIMAL

ALTERNATIVE BI-MONTHLY



## Tibetan Diaspora

Dharamsala Politics

Dalai Lama

Carpet Story

The Dharma

Opening Mustang

Indian Activism

Plains' Bias

Tintin in Tibet

## COVER

### 5 Discovering Dharamsala

- 11 Interview: Dalai Lama
- 13 Limits to Democracy
- 14 Review: *Freedom in Exile*
- 16 Chushi Gangdruk
- 18 Rugs to Riches
- 20 Transmission
- 22 Dharma in Flux



## FEATURES

- 27 Indian Activism
- 29 Key to Mustang
- 34 Plains' Bias
- 35 Tintin in Tibet



## DEPARTMENTS

- 24 Briefs
- 32 Voices
- 31 Know Your Himal
- 36 Abstracts
- 44 Abominably Yours

Cover picture of the Potala, Lhasa, by **Leslie DiRusso**.

*Himal* (ISSN 1012-9804, © Copyright 1988) is published every two months by Himal Association, PO Box 42, Lalitpur, Nepal. Tel: 977-1-523845. Fax: 977-1-521013  
Please turn to page 4 for subscription information.

# HIMAL

ALTERNATIVE BI-MONTHLY

Vol. 4 No. 1 Mar/Apr 1991

अस्त्युत्तरस्यां दिशि देवतात्मा  
हिमालगो नाम नगाधिराजः  
पूर्वापरी तोयनिधो वगाह्य  
स्थितः पृथिव्या इव मानदण्डः

*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)*

**Kanak Mani Dixit**  
Editor

**Kesang Tseten**  
Associate Editor

**Anup Raj Joshi**  
Staff Writer

**Basanta Thapa**  
Marketing Director

**Balram Sharma, Anak Thapa, Ved Pant**  
Administration

### Advisory Panel

M. Abdhullah, Peshawar  
Adlai Amor, Manila  
Anita Anand, New Delhi  
Kinley Dorje, Thimpu  
Harka Bahadur Gurung, Kathmandu  
Cornielle Jest, Paris  
Prem Shanker Jha, New Delhi  
Bharat Dutt Koirala, Kathmandu  
Ram Chandra Malhotra, Rome  
Hemanta Mishra, Kathmandu  
David Sassoon, New York  
Kumar Khadga Bk. Shah, Kathmandu  
Donald Shanor, New York  
Ambica Shrestha, Kathmandu  
Vidya Stokes, Shimla  
B.G. Verghese, New Delhi  
Brian Welsh, Athens



MAIL

**IPIL IPIL FAILURE**

In his article about the Majhis' "rise to property" (Nov/Dec 1990), Huta Ram Vaidya mentions the importance of the Ipil Ipil fodder trees in Majhigaon and other surrounding villages in Sindhupalchok. He says that by 1989, 90 per cent of the households in Majhigaon had adopted Ipil Ipil. Throughout, Vaidya describes the success of these trees in bringing about a healthy, productive change in the lives of the fisher-folk.

The women of these families now have to collect firewood and fodder from a hill across the Indrawati river.

While staying overnight in Bahunipati, during a trek to Helambu, the villagers told me about their problem. However, I realised that the villagers had taken the matter into their own hand and were actively searching for alternative breeds of trees. It seemed that even after suffering a setback, the villagers of Majhigaon were still self-confident. Clearly, the failure of Ipil Ipil has not devastated them. It would not have harmed Vaidya's success story had he mentioned the failure of Ipil Ipil; on the contrary, it would have strengthened his argument.

A. Shah  
Kathmandu

*bhais*, and *didis*, *bahinis*, one has only to be a silent observer at the international gatherings to observe the interplay of human facts and foibles.

Patronising attitudes of the "lords" apart, it is the condescending mannerisms that vividly display a poverty of the mind. The intellectual flirtations of the so-called "intelligensia" (whatever its worth) who speak for poverty under double-breasted jackets, could put any averagely well-read, honest Nepali to shame. Who then is the worse culprit? Local "budhijibis" who talk big of poverty from propped-up pillars, pretend to act as custodians of Nepali interests, but who get co-opted into big-time consultancies? Or the "lords", whether white or brown, who are expected to speak the language of their parent organisations and are also expected to observe a code of conduct that fits neatly into our newly found culture?

Prabha Thacker  
Patan

**WHO IS THE CULPRIT?**

The write-up on "Lords and Masters" (Nov/Dec 1990) by A.R. Joshi was timely and stimulating. It has finally addressed the debate that swirls around aid-givers, aid-takers, aid-stimulators and aid-befrienders. Of course, such discussions have informally found their way into hoity-toity parties of the "lords" and "masters"; where scotch whisky is the order of the day. The question has also been taken up on humbler tables, over "rakshi" and "dal bhat", where both whites and browns "with less glamorous professions and humbler incomes" meet in genuinely closer ties of friendship.

Besides fancy cars, high salaries and perks, which are the lords' by right, there are other advantages which perhaps only Nepal in all of South Asia offers: its pristine Himalayan environment, rural retreats, friendly, gullible local people, as well as a "cosmopolitan" society. As Joshi rightly indicates, the other-worldly difference in salary and perks between the lords and the "non-masters" (*i.e.*, the other local Nepalis) is so immense that the latter feel "materially even poorer." In my mind, not only do they feel "materially poorer," but mentally so as well. For, with due apologies to the masters, lords as well as to our humble *dajus*,

**PANCHAYAT JUSTICE**

I am astounded by the arguments that Sunil Pyakurel makes in his letter defending the "Carpet Scandal" *vis-a-vis* the "Billion Dollar Scandal" under the now defunct Panchayat regime, and his comments on Dipak Gyawali's "Tryst with Democracy" (May/June 1990). No less ridiculous is his portrayal of Gyawali's sincere attempt to expose the misdoings of the Panchayat regime as "intellectual irresponsibility" and an "exercise in opportunism." Actually, it is Pyakurel's attempt to distinguish between the two Panchayat scandals that seems to be highly motivated and biased.

Retrospectively, there is very little difference between these two scandals as far as the nefarious intentions of the perpetrators are concerned. In contending that in the former "all public servants were rehabilitated with honour after being acquitted," the letter writer seems to have forgotten the basic elements of so recent an episode. Discerning readers will recall that

NH20 US\$12 US\$ NOV/DEC 1990

**HIMAL**  
ALTERNATIVE PUBLICATION



**Hill Poverty**

Lord, Masters  
Majhigaon  
Sindhupalchok  
Joshi's Journal

Small Contribution  
Inquiries & Comments  
Debating I TRIP  
Thank you

Unfortunately, their extreme reliance on one fodder tree has now created a big problem for the Majhis. An aphid called psyllid has made inroads into the hills of Sindhupalchok and has ravaged the Ipil Ipil trees. The leaves, which were used for fodder, have been eaten away. Even the branches, used for firewood, have become useless.

The problem started about two years ago. The farmers realised that many trees were turning bare. At the suggestion of development workers, some acted quickly, beginning to plant newer breeds of trees, like calienbra and mulberry. Those who did not, suffered harshly.

the entire judicial proceedings related to this *magnum* scandal collapsed and fizzled out after the king nominated a key accused as the ambassador to the United States. This, while the case was *sub judica*.

Although judges under the Panchayat dispensation did once in a while rule against the puppet authorities and thus maintain a cosmetic facade of impartiality, ruling against a royal *firman* that virtually exonerated an accused and rehabilitated him with more than just ordinary honours would have been tantamount to *lese majeste*. The royal palace, during its years of misrule and absolutism, had made sure that none with the spines so strong or with any amount of self-respect graced the bench, or any important public office.

Actually, the way in which the Panchayati powers-that-be rode roughshod over all norms and values for petty personal gain led to a rapid erosion of public faith in the system, not a little because it tampered with the sacredness of the judiciary. Yes, the accused in the Carpet Scandal were "acquitted" and even "rehabilitated with honour" by the regime, but this royal magnanimity required a heavy expenditure of the monarch's political capital, as conclusively demonstrated in the streets of Kathmandu and other parts of the country during the spring of 1990. In scratching open this old wound in the country's body politic, [Pyakurel] only proved Gyawali's contention that the Panchayat system was but a corruption factory which completely weakened the nation.

Instead of nit-picking with Gyawali's succinct summary of the ills of the Panchayat, it would enlighten the readers of *Himal* better if the Panchayat sympathisers were to make an honest appraisal of the real strengths of the Panchayat which allowed it to last all of 29 years, three months and 26 days. They might also explore the reasons for the collapse of the regime within all of 59 days of popular struggle.

Kapil Shrestha  
Kathmandu

### EVANGELISM, DEVELOPMENT

I am a Church of Scotland minister, just back from a memorable trip to Nepal. During my trip, I met a whole range of missionaries at work in the field of aid and development and worshipped with indigenous Christians.

Given the tension which inevitably exists between evangelism and development, I would be intrigued to read an informed Nepali view of the possible scenarios for post-election religious groupings, were a more open, tolerant spirit to prevail. An amplification of Rishikesh

Shaha's "Right to Religion" section in the article "A Good Constitution That Could be Better" (Nov/Dec 1990) would, for example, be interesting.

I was struck strongly one evening upon meeting two very highly qualified academics, one of economics and the other of mathematics, to find them at a loss when I asked if they saw any inspiration and hope at the heart of Hindu spirituality for the future of Nepal. The rather moribund post-Christian spirituality of Western Europe hardly offers hope in this part of the world but I am aware of the very rich and productive influence of the Reformation on the Continent and here in Scotland. This precedent of a powerful, spiritually-based catalyst for educational and social change begs questions of the variety of spiritual movements in your country. Any chance of an article exploring this area?

James H. Robertson  
Glasgow

### BUDANILKANTHA ONE

The "defence" of Budhanilkantha school by its headmaster Brian Garton (*Himal* Nov/Dec 1990) should not go unchallenged. Whatever one's view on the role of this school in Nepal's education system, its detractors see it as a purely elitist endeavour, while its defenders consider it a vehicle for rapid social mobility. All would agree that it is an extremely costly means to promote social mobility, compared to other secondary schools in the country. Unfortunately, Garton did not provide any financial data on cost per student which would enable direct comparison. But, his statement that it "offers a significant model for development" is highly questionable. Is he seriously suggesting that other schools can count upon a similar degree of foreign subsidy? The British taxpayer currently pays for the salaries of five expatriate staff as well as expensive scholarships for undergraduate study in Britain. Mr. Garton seems to have missed the point of Mathema's critique, which was simply to address the basic question posed by an education economist: what is the opportunity cost of the state financial resources spent on the school, and measured against the cost-benefit of such spending on the national economy? With regard to the latter, the unusual policy of bonding former students on their return from study in Britain to work at the school itself would take away expertise from sectoral policy-making, and surely narrow these societal benefits. Isn't that a bit elitist?

Andrew Nickson  
Kathmandu.

### BUDANILKANTHA TWO

By no stretch of the imagination can we call Budanilkantha, as Brian Garton contends it is, "a national school." The headmaster complains that Mathema's proposal to privatise his school is "damaging to the future of secondary education in the country as a whole." What contribution has Budhanilkantha made towards improving secondary school in Nepal, other than producing a dozen or so SEC graduates every year? In spite of its huge annual budget which runs into millions of rupees, this school has no importance whatsoever for the country's secondary school. I do not blame the school management as such, for in every sense Budhanilkantha is an elite school -- expensive, self-centered, aloof and an island unto itself. It is not in its character to concern itself with schools of "lesser breed."

Raina Man Pradhan  
Faculty of Education, Kirtipur

### BUDANILKANTHA THREE

After all that is said and refuted by Headmaster Garton, the fact that Budanilkantha is a high-cost school way beyond the reach of the vast majority of Nepalis remains undisputed. Schools like these have many other problems. Firstly, they alienate children from their own community and insulate them from the possibility of living and working in rural areas. Secondly, they create an "educational caste system" that goes against the spirit of equity and social justice.

The school is a textbook example of "good aid gone to wrong cause." Rather than fund a single school set up to cater to the needs of a few privileged families, British taxpayer money could have been put to more productive use in improving the country's public school system. Schools such as Budanilkantha have a right to exist in the private sector, but not to be run on foreign grants and with public resources.

To try to project Budanilkantha as a model for Nepal's educational development goes against common sense. I would suggest to the headmaster that he come out of his ivory tower isolation and reconsider whether Budanilkantha is really the answer to Nepal's educational needs.

Kedar Mathema  
Sanepa, Lalitpur

Debate on Budanilkantha is now closed to allow space for other dialogue. Those still wishing to discuss Budanilkantha are requested to write directly to each other - **Editors**

## WATER RACKET

In some Third World countries, India in particular, drinking water drawn from underground is being commercialised and black-marketed by middlemen, and the poor and lower middle classes are suffering. We cannot say drawing groundwater is scrupulously illegal; no legislation prevents people from boring into the ground to draw water. But both the ground and the poor are being over-exploited. In areas such as Cuddalore and Saurashtra in India, for instance, over-exploitation has lowered the groundwater table by 12 meters and sea water has seeped into the aquifers. The bore-wells now pour out not potable, but saline water. The Civic Corporation and local authorities take a commission from the water supply contractors for every tanker load of water drawn from aquifers on Government land leased to them. Thus, exploiters are making capital out of this scarce and precious drinking water resource. It is time for the United Nations, World Bank or UNICEF to bring out a draft legislation on the use of ground water and to insist that member countries introduce and enforce the legislation to qualify for any United Nations water-related development project.

Felix Ryan  
Madras

## HIMAL THRILLER

Having read through your latest issue, I must say that the articles in *Himal* get to be more and more well-written. Most are about social and environmental issues in that neck of the woods, and yet they are quite spell-binding, like a spy novel. Kudos to your writers.

One comment if you care to listen. It is frustrating, at least for me, to see amounts of money given in your currency without the equivalent in US dollars for comparative purposes (in parenthesis). *Himal* is an international magazine (you have the subscription fee in US dollars for "elsewhere") and the "elsewheres" would appreciate the impact of what you are driving at without having to pull out a calculator and using your annual subscription rates as a table for the equivalents.

Elizabeth C. Rubin  
New York

Readers, please note that opinion columns carried in *Himal* do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the magazine nor its editors. Readers are invited to comment, criticise or add to information and opinion appearing in *Himal*. Letters should be short and to the point, and may be edited.  
Send to: PO Box 42, Lalitpur, Nepal.

## Decorative Green is Not the Answer

by Bidur Upadhyay

**E**nvironmental coverage by the mass media of our region has focused primarily on problems such as deforestation, land degradation, sedimentation, population growth and pollution. Public forums, meetings and conferences examine ways to enhance awareness of environmental threats. But the fact remains that not enough is known about the natural Himalayan environment and about its complex relationship with human activities.

There has been a tendency in recent years to blame the poor hill farmer for being unwise and environmentally insensitive. Similarly, much is said about flooding and sedimentation problems in areas downstream from Nepal's mountain regions due to deforestation in the hills.

In reality, the impact of the monsoon rains on geologically young mountains with steep slopes and seismically unstable terrain is to ensure rapid runoff regardless of what the land cover may be. According to the best available information, it is such a process over the past several million years that filled the Gangetic plain with sediment up to depths of 2000 meters and created a "sediment fan" in the Bay of Bengal that is 12,000 meters deep and extending well south of Sri Lanka. In the face of such dramatic geophysical processes over eons, there is no need to pin blame for problems in the lowlands on the mountain farmers.

According to a popular myth, "tree roots are sponges" which soak up water during the rains and release it slowly during the dry season. The implication is that cutting Himalayan forests causes floods in the monsoon and drought in the winter. In parts of the north-eastern United States, the forest area has been increasing since the turn of the century, yet there have been floods of increasing severity.

Some catchment research has shown that there may be even greater flow in the dry season than in the wet season. In Australia, for instance, a stream that dried up without rain became [perennial] after logging. Some scientists have even argued that better rainfall infiltration enhanced by well-vegetated surfaces can actually result in increased chances of landslides because of increased slope "pore pressure". For example, in Nepal, the widest and deepest landslides -- such as the Jharlang, north of Taplejung -- occur often on forested land.

Most scientific evidence accumulated during the past several decades by hydrologists

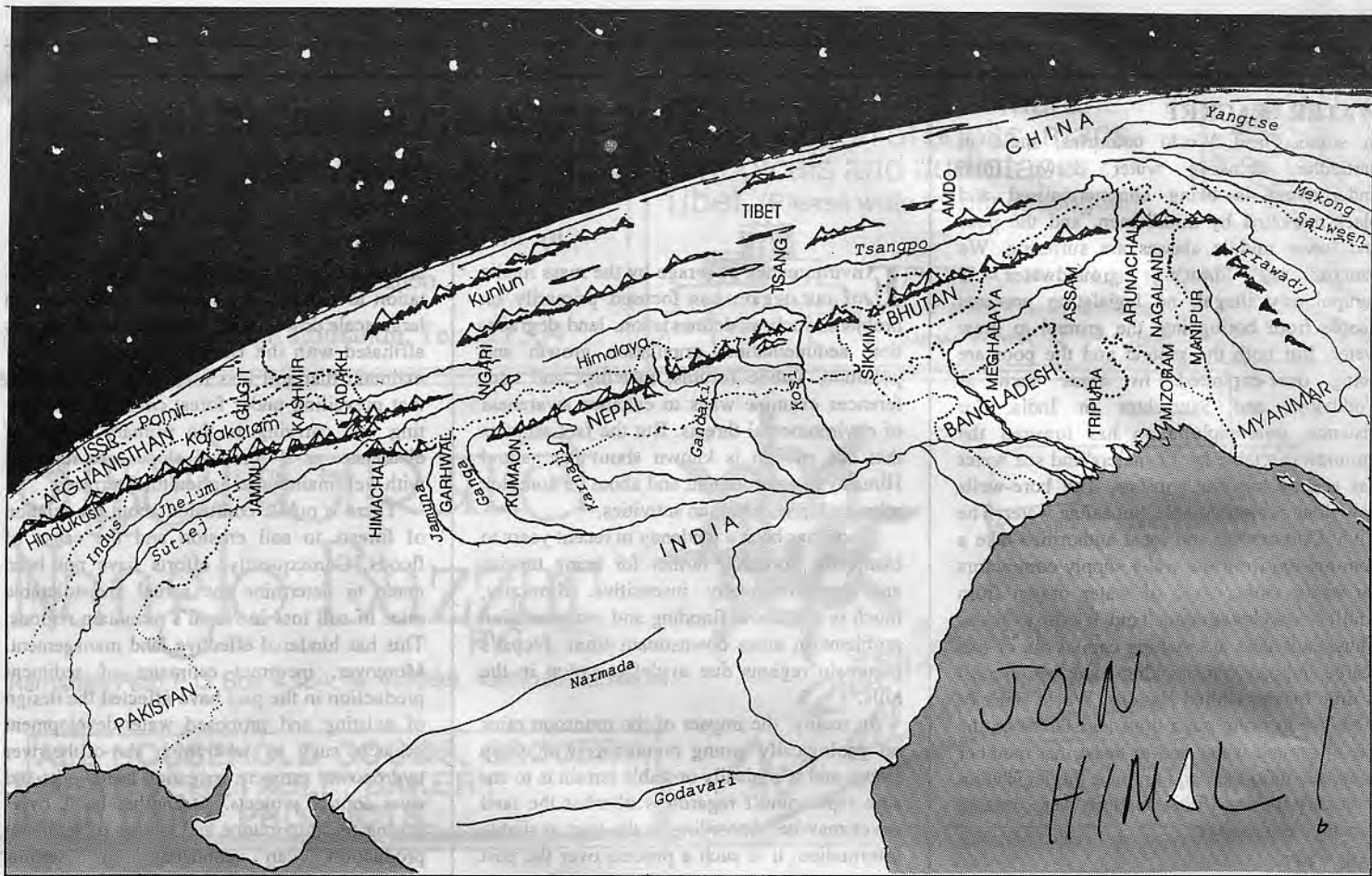
and watershed researchers fails to link deforestation to reduced dry flows or an increase in large-scale downstream flooding. Some experts affiliated with the United Nations University maintain that soil loss may be even less than that prevailing under forest cover if hand-cutting and carrying is the primary means of clearance, or if forested slopes are replaced with well-maintained agricultural terraces.

There is public confusion about the relation of forests to soil erosion and the cause of floods. Consequently, efforts have not been made to determine the actual and tolerable rates of soil loss in Nepal's mountain regions. This has hindered effective land management. Moreover, incorrect estimates of sediment production in the past have affected the design of existing and proposed water-development projects such as reservoirs, run-of-the-river hydropower projects, irrigation headworks and river control projects. At another level, overstating the importance and causes of sediment production can contribute to serious misunderstanding between Nepal and the lowland countries of India and Bangladesh, which suffer from the impact of aggrading stream channels and floods.

One can conclude that no scientific rationale exists to suggest that forests are a major factor in preventing major floods and landslides. This does not, of course, mean that Nepal is free of environmental problems. It is certain that a crisis of enormous dimensions is developing in Nepal, but its causes is related to social and economic factors aggravated by rapid population growth rather than deforestation.

The mass media has over-dramatised the environmental deterioration in Nepal and linked it to deforestation. Wrong information presented as data serves only to divert attention from the real problems, those of poverty and population pressure. The very uncertainty that has emerged from this emotional emphasis on the role of forests has become part of the problem in Nepal. Instead of blaming the whole problem on the marginal issue of deforestation and focusing on simplistic solutions, we must develop and strengthen the multiple-problem, multiple-solution approach.

B. Upadhyay is Professor of Meteorology at Tribhuvan University and Advisor to the Water and Energy Commission in Kathmandu.



#### ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES

	SOUTH ASIA	ELSEWHERE
<b>INDIVIDUAL</b>	NRs 110/IRs 65	US\$ 25
<b>INSTITUTIONAL</b>	NRs 300/IRs 200 (or equivalent)	US\$ 45 (or equivalent)

Send a gift subscription to a friend or colleague. There is no better way to keep in touch with the Himalayan region. *Himal* is current. It is serious. And it is readable.

Please do NOT send cash in mail.  
Bank drafts and money orders preferred.  
In South Asia, do not send cheques.

#### Send subscription orders and correspondence to:

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

**North America:** M. Basnet, 4 S. Pinehurst Ave. #6A, New York, NY 10033, USA

**Europe:** L. Deubck, Donaust. 38, D-4100 Duisburg 29, Germany  
Helene Dingg, Tannenweg 18, CH-3037, Guemligen, Switzerland  
*Rest of Europe:*  
Zahia Hafs, 25 Rue de L'Ecole de Medecine, 75006 Paris, France

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

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

Since *Himal* receives many queries about back issues, we list below all numbers that have been published to date.

Vol.	No.	Colour	Date	Cover Story
0	0	Green	May/1987	The Valley Chokes
1	1	Green	Jul/1988	Highlanders on the Move
1	2	Blue	Nov/Dec 1989	<i>Dharma's</i> Changing Landscape
2	1	Red	Jan/Feb 1989	World of the Girl Child
2	2	Purple	Mar/Apr 1989	Prosperous Himachal Pradesh
2	3	Orange	Jul/Aug 1989	An Obsession with Tourism
2	4	Green	Sep/Oct 1989	Changing Food Habits
2	5	Blue	Nov/Dec 1989	Development Refugees
3	1	Red	Jan/Feb 1990	The Shangri-La Myth
3	2	Grey	May/June 1990	A Nepali Interregnum
3	3	Green	Sep/Oct 1990	The Tarai, A Backwater?
3	4	Blue	Nov/Dec 1990	Hill Poverty
4	1	Purple	Mar/Apr 1991	Tibetan Diaspora

**HIMAL DOES NOT ACCEPT  
LIQUOR OR TOBACCO  
ADVERTISEMENTS.**

The maelstrom of exile politics, complicated for even seasoned Dharamsala hands, is almost impenetrable to the outsider. Standards applied to national capitals do not apply here in this seat of Tibetan exile. Political gossip runs the gamut from the bringing down of a "protector" deity from the official pantheon to the dark doings of Taiwan agents that have sown rift between Tibetan and Tibetan. There are deep undercurrents and rifts, and yet, the most vehement critics of the exile government joke over momos and thukpa at local eateries with the Dalai Lama's most trusted advisers.

## TENZIN GYATSO

While the tightrope of Tibetan governance and diplomacy in exile might frustrate others, the Dalai Lama's optimism seems robust. Welcomed to India as a 24-year-old refugee in April 1959 by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, the Dalai Lama has spent most of his adult life in exile. In conversation, this "wolf in monk's clothing" as Radio Beijing labels him when the hawks are ascendant, speaks his mind in his Indian-accented English with disarming frankness. Resting his chin on the back of his hand, he pauses briefly over questions, carefully selecting his words not for a diplomatic reply, it seems, but a heartfelt response. Sound, practical reasoning, more than mystical visitations, may best describe what guides the Dalai Lama on affairs of state.

Except for the Chinese propagandist, even his direst detractor would concede that Tenzin Gyatso means well. He immediately softens the hardboiled protagonist with his warmth and down-to-earth humour. Even the "Dharamsala dissidents", unrelentingly critical of everything his government says or does, are unwilling to assign dubious intent on the Dalai Lama. For the foreseeable future, they all agree, Tibetans need "His Holiness."

## DHARAMSALA DISSIDENTS

The critics of the Dharamsala government need not fear midnight knocks, nor prison cells. As the level of tolerance for differing opinion is high, and in the absence of obvious government sanctions, one might wonder why there is not more critical opinion among the refugees.

Although one is struck by the frank criticism that is aired in Dharamsala, most ordinary Tibetans are too preoccupied with their monasteries, personal affairs and businesses to spend time finding faults with their government in exile. Thus, outspoken Tibetans often find themselves isolated by the mass public opinion against them. In the absence of like-minded peers among the swarm of devotees, there is rapid burnout.

Jamyang Norbu, a writer and former Director of Dharamsala's Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts, wrote recently in the *Tibetan Review* monthly that "...because of their extraordinary devotion to the Dalai Lama, (Tibetans) quite easily lose heart when they feel they may cause offence to him...It is this weakness that the government has used very effectively now to suppress dissent."

Says Tashi Tsering, a well-regarded Tibetan historian, "You see, the Dalai Lama is the root guru. Ninety per cent of all refugees have received teachings from him at one time or another. This *guru-chela* connection makes it very difficult to go against his wishes."

Does the Dalai Lama recognise this dilemma? "He is always surrounded by Tibetan or Western admirers. Even the Dalai Lama has *chamchas*," says Tashi Tsering. Agrees another critic, "For all his greatness, the Dalai Lama has lost many opportunities. He has succumbed to the protocol and duties behind the barbed wire of his residence. He is an accessible person, but that access is reserved for foreign journalists, not Tibetans."

Tenzin Tethong, one of the three ministers ("Kalons") elected in May to the interim cabinet of the exile government has worked closely with the Dalai Lama. Tethong cautions against looking only at the office. "There is no other Tibetan at this point in our history who can replace the Dalai Lama. And what His Holiness has been able to do is due to his personal hard work, and not just because he happens to be the Dalai Lama."

Because the Dalai Lama is the primary symbol of Tibetan nationalism, his presence seems to have precluded secular and political avenues for Tibetans to achieve self-determination and other nationalist aims. Observers might admire the Dalai Lama for his Gandhian brand of politics and non-violence, but it can be stifling to Tibetans who hold other beliefs on political activism.

An interesting question might be: what if Tibetan nationalism had a Nelson Mandela or a Yasser Arafat? There are several reasons why this has not happened, one of which may be that Tibetans are victims of their leader's moral authority, perhaps divinity. Beside him, which homegrown non-incarnate political leader stands a chance?

## IN HIS NAME

The Dalai Lama might be criticised for his alleged inaccessibility, naivete, and even his divinity, but Dharamsala's most ardent critics direct their ire at the former kalons, deputies and others who act in his name.

Says Lhasang Tsering, who resigned as President of the Tibetan Youth Congress in early February, "Rather than shoulder their responsibilities, the kalons all wait for his cue. For all their faults they use his name like a rag to wipe their hands. We are destroying our best asset."

Jamyang Norbu writes of "displays of embarrassingly excessive devotion to the Dalai Lama, of hysterical patriotism, and of religious fanaticism...actively promoted by the Tibetan Government." Norbu should know: he was assaulted by members of the Tibetan Women's Association for his irreverent plays.

"They have even banned books," says another critic. With or without the knowledge of the Dalai Lama, academic works of Tibetan history that depart from the "official" version have been pulled from the stacks by order, while other books are censored. Tibetan scholars have been subjected to organised hate-mail for holding unpalatable views. In Dharamsala they do not victimise, they ostracise.

While their criticism may be valid, the refugee dissenters have little to despair, if they compare their exile politics with, say, the closed politics of Bhutan. While Thimphu's shoguns have remained insular and unchanging, Tibetan refugees have been forced to confront the world in its own terms since 1959. Many refugees who were educated in Darjeeling and Kalimpong schools, and then in western universities, make up today's intellectual vanguard and subscribe to the tenets of liberal political thought. The Dalai Lama's May announcement was partly a response to the growing demand of educated exiles for more representative government. ("Though I did not know the word then, I always wanted democracy for my people," the Dalai Lama has said.)

## UNDERSTANDING MANGZO

Some observers believe that a slow decline beset exile politics through the 1970s and the 1980s, when there was a lull in "the struggle" as efforts were focused on re-settlement. Some of it was inevitable as once vulnerable refugees became more self-reliant. But then, the problems of politics *in stasis* began to take its toll and, in the words of Jamyang Norbu, the exile government began to attract "the usual contingent of knaves and fools." The Dalai Lama's administration seemed to be satisfied with running its little office complex (complete, however, with grand Lhasa names and titles) in upper Dharamsala.

"Our leaders had no foresight, thrown as they were across three centuries when they came into exile," explains Lhasang Tsering. "They were incapable of being nationalists be-

The maelstrom of exile politics, complicated for even seasoned Dharamsala hands, is almost impenetrable to the outsider. Standards applied to national capitals do not apply here in this seat of Tibetan exile. Political gossip runs the gamut from the bringing down of a "protector" deity from the official pantheon to the dark doings of Taiwan agents that have sown rift between Tibetan and Tibetans. There are deep undercurrents and rifts, and yet, the most vehement critics of the exile government joke over momos and thukpa at local eateries with the Dalai Lama's most trusted advisers.

## TENZIN GYATSO

While the tightrope of Tibetan governance and diplomacy in exile might frustrate others, the Dalai Lama's optimism seems robust. Welcomed to India as a 24-year-old refugee in April 1959 by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, the Dalai Lama has spent most of his adult life in exile. In conversation, this "wolf in monk's clothing" as Radio Beijing labels him when the hawks are ascendant, speaks his mind in his Indian-accented English with disarming frankness. Resting his chin on the back of his hand, he pauses briefly over questions, carefully selecting his words not for a diplomatic reply, it seems, but a heartfelt response. Sound, practical reasoning, more than mystical visitations, may best describe what guides the Dalai Lama on affairs of state.

Except for the Chinese propagandist, even his direst detractor would concede that Tenzin Gyatso means well. He immediately softens the hardboiled protagonist with his warmth and down-to-earth humour. Even the "Dharamsala dissidents", unrelentingly critical of everything his government says or does, are unwilling to assign dubious intent on the Dalai Lama. For the foreseeable future, they all agree, Tibetans need "His Holiness."

## DHARAMSALA DISSIDENTS

The critics of the Dharamsala government need not fear midnight knocks, nor prison cells. As the level of tolerance for differing opinion is high, and in the absence of obvious government sanctions, one might wonder why there is not more critical opinion among the refugees.

Although one is struck by the frank criticism that is aired in Dharamsala, most ordinary Tibetans are too preoccupied with their monasteries, personal affairs and businesses to spend time finding faults with their government in exile. Thus, outspoken Tibetans often find themselves isolated by the mass public opinion against them. In the absence of like-minded peers among the swarm of devotees, there is rapid burnout.

Jamyang Norbu, a writer and former Director of Dharamsala's Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts, wrote recently in the *Tibetan Review* monthly that "...because of their extraordinary devotion to the Dalai Lama, (Tibetans) quite easily lose heart when they feel they may cause offence to him...It is this weakness that the government has used very effectively now to suppress dissent."

Says Tashi Tsering, a well-regarded Tibetan historian, "You see, the Dalai Lama is the root guru. Ninety per cent of all refugees have received teachings from him at one time or another. This *guru-chela* connection makes it very difficult to go against his wishes."

Does the Dalai Lama recognise this dilemma? "He is always surrounded by Tibetan or Western admirers. Even the Dalai Lama has *chamchas*," says Tashi Tsering. Agrees another critic, "For all his greatness, the Dalai Lama has lost many opportunities. He has succumbed to the protocol and duties behind the barbed wire of his residence. He is an accessible person, but that access is reserved for foreign journalists, not Tibetans."

Tenzin Tethong, one of the three ministers ("Kalons") elected in May to the interim cabinet of the exile government has worked closely with the Dalai Lama. Tethong cautions against looking only at the office. "There is no other Tibetan at this point in our history who can replace the Dalai Lama. And what His Holiness has been able to do is due to his personal hard work, and not just because he happens to be the Dalai Lama."

Because the Dalai Lama is the primary symbol of Tibetan nationalism, his presence seems to have precluded secular and political avenues for Tibetans to achieve self-determination and other nationalist aims. Observers might admire the Dalai Lama for his Gandhian brand of politics and non-violence, but it can be stifling to Tibetans who hold other beliefs on political activism.

An interesting question might be: what if Tibetan nationalism had a Nelson Mandela or a Yasser Arafat? There are several reasons why this has not happened, one of which may be that Tibetans are victims of their leader's moral authority, perhaps divinity. Beside him, which homegrown non-incarnate political leader stands a chance?

## IN HIS NAME

The Dalai Lama might be criticised for his alleged inaccessibility, naivete, and even his divinity, but Dharamsala's most ardent critics direct their ire at the former kalons, deputies and others who act in his name.

Says Lhasang Tsering, who resigned as President of the Tibetan Youth Congress in early February, "Rather than shoulder their responsibilities, the kalons all wait for his cue. For all their faults they use his name like a rag to wipe their hands. We are destroying our best asset."

Jamyang Norbu writes of "displays of embarrassingly excessive devotion to the Dalai Lama, of hysterical patriotism, and of religious fanaticism...actively promoted by the Tibetan Government." Norbu should know: he was assaulted by members of the Tibetan Women's Association for his irreverent plays.

"They have even banned books," says another critic. With or without the knowledge of the Dalai Lama, academic works of Tibetan history that depart from the "official" version have been pulled from the stacks by order, while other books are censored. Tibetan scholars have been subjected to organised hate-mail for holding unpalatable views. In Dharamsala they do not victimise, they ostracise.

While their criticism may be valid, the refugee dissenters have little to despair, if they compare their exile politics with, say, the closed politics of Bhutan. While Thimphu's shoguns have remained insular and unchanging, Tibetan refugees have been forced to confront the world in its own terms since 1959. Many refugees who were educated in Darjeeling and Kalimpong schools, and then in western universities, make up today's intellectual vanguard and subscribe to the tenets of liberal political thought. The Dalai Lama's May announcement was partly a response to the growing demand of educated exiles for more representative government. ("Though I did not know the word then, I always wanted democracy for my people," the Dalai Lama has said.)

## UNDERSTANDING MANGZO

Some observers believe that a slow decline beset exile politics through the 1970s and the 1980s, when there was a lull in "the struggle" as efforts were focused on re-settlement. Some of it was inevitable as once vulnerable refugees became more self-reliant. But then, the problems of politics *in stasis* began to take its toll and, in the words of Jamyang Norbu, the exile government began to attract "the usual contingent of knaves and fools." The Dalai Lama's administration seemed to be satisfied with running its little office complex (complete, however, with grand Lhasa names and titles) in upper Dharamsala.

"Our leaders had no foresight, thrown as they were across three centuries when they came into exile," explains Lhasang Tsering. "They were incapable of being nationalists be-



cause of their upbringing, outlook and lack of education. The leaders were out of their depth, so when they began to understand the enormity of the tasks ahead, escapism became the norm. That they only talk about schools, powder milk and temples. Once you bring up the topic of independence, they are silent."

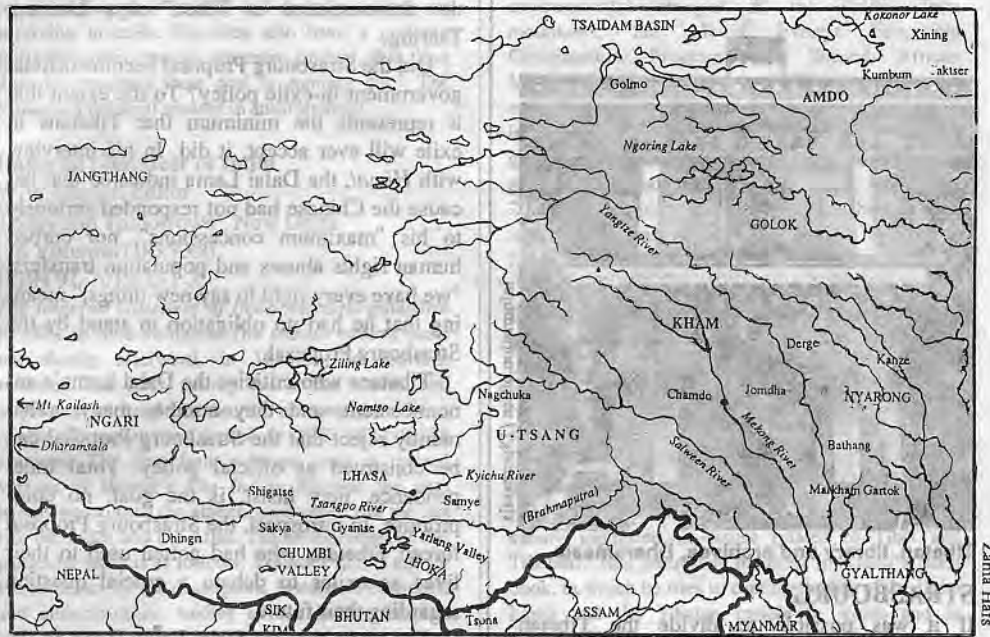
Historian Tashi Tsering blames the "political immaturity" of Tibetans. "Mangzo, democracy, is a word that has no meaning for the older folks. The kalons were elected because they held aristocratic ideas and values."

Still, to many refugees, such pointed criticism of the exile government is undeserved. After all, the exile community is made up of refugees living in separated pockets under alien laws and cultures. Many argue that Dharamsala has managed to keep the fire of nationalism alive over three decades in exile. Says Kalon Tenzin Tethong, "Of course resettlement is what was emphasised in the last 20 years, but the freedom struggle cannot be compartmentalised. We have not exaggerated Chinese atrocities nor overplayed our "exoticism", but have tried to deal with down-to-earth situations. Actually, the exile administration is as good as many Third World national bureaucracies. Our administration is more responsive and very cost-efficient."

But Tethong acknowledges that Tibetans have been more successful as refugees than in "fighting for independence." Lhasang Tsering, who did a stint as a rebel warrior in Mustang with Chushi Gandruk, says, "Today, we are not even in the race for freedom. Nobody ever made us an international issue like the West Bank or Afghanistan. We do not have our equivalent of the PLO, Poland's Solidarity or the African National Congress. We left Tibet to get back in, but who is trying? We tried to market that one commodity for which there are no takers, truth. Even today, we hope for change in China, but democracy in China will not bring freedom to Tibetans. Today, not one party in the world supports Tibetan independence."

## WOWING THE WEST

What Tsering says may be true, but international (or at least, western) public support for the Tibetans is remarkable, all the more so because the supporters have little to gain. Because Beijing refuses to listen, exile Tibetan "foreign policy" has been an ongoing search for international sympathy and endorsement. Tibetan diplomacy has a formidable spokesman in the Dalai Lama, but it has also made capital of the goodwill that Tibetans enjoy and the growing appeal of Tibetan Buddhism.



Slowly, a global constituency has grown for Tibet. It consists of *dharma* practitioners and others who believe that Tibetan culture should be preserved, left-of-center groups such as Germany's Green Party, human-rights oriented organisations and legislators, and, previously, a few anti-communist groups. Tibet's opening to foreign visitors since the liberalisation of the post-Mao era, too, has been a vital factor. Many ordinary tourists, after their trip to Lhasa, returned home as self-appointed ambassadors of Tibet.

When a particular government is strong enough to override Beijing's objections (like Norway, say, and unlike Nepal), the Dalai Lama has been allowed to visit, often as a "religious leader". Tibetans mark another diplomatic victory and the campaign continued, the garnering of United States congressional resolutions, organising "Year of Tibet" celebrations (partially funded by Hollywood actor Richard Gere), chaperoning "His Holiness" through religious-cum-public relations exercises through world capitals, and securing visits by Dharamsala officials to more and more countries.

The opening up of Eastern Europe provided the Tibetans with new and pronounced support. The Poles, the Czechoslovaks and others not yet socialised into the "givens" of international diplomacy *vis-a-vis* China, and with perhaps a sense of shared history, have warmly welcomed Dharamsala representatives. Besides Vaclav Havel, President of Czechoslovakia, with whom the Dalai Lama has a special personal rapport, he has been officially received by German President Richard von Weizsacker. Tibetan emissary Lodi Gyari, former kalon

who now heads the International Campaign for Tibet in Washington D.C., recently met with Vylantas Landsbergis, President of Lithuania and Arnold Rutter, President of Estonia.

The sudden emergence of Mongolia from under the Soviet umbrella promises Tibetan exiles a government much more sympathetic to Dharamsala than Tibet's southern neighbours. Mongolians have historically looked to Tibet and its monasteries as the source of Buddhist learning, and at present they have a need to nurture their own culture after years of Soviet dominance. Already, Dharamsala envoys have made contact with very receptive Mongolian leaders, including the President and Prime Minister. The contacts have been made easier recently because the Indian ambassador to Ulan Bator is Kusho Bakhu, a respected lama from Ladakh. The Dalai Lama has been invited to Ulan Bator in July to give the Kalachakra initiation (as he did in Sarnath this year) to believers in Mongolia.

International news coverage of the demonstrations that have erupted in Lhasa since September 1987, which led to the imposition of martial law for more than a year, has also helped bring the Tibet question out of the media's closet. The biggest public relations event for Tibetans, however, was the Nobel Peace Prize, received by the Dalai Lama in December 1989. The Nobel Committee might have bestowed the award for the Dalai Lama's humanist diplomacy just as much as *against* the Chinese Government for its crackdown on the Tienanmen Square demonstrators, but Dharamsala's "international legitimacy" was boosted by the Nobel.



Information office / Dharamsala

Tibetan library and archives, Dharamsala.

## STRASBOURG

If it was possible to divide the Tibetan community, it was the "Strasbourg Proposal" that did it. Many Tibetans feel that the Dalai Lama himself gave up "the struggle" when he unveiled it in May 1988 before the European Parliament in that French city.

The European Parliament was the single most important international forum that the Tibetans had been invited to, and the Dalai Lama used it to announce, one, that he intended to withdraw from politics. Two, he said that he would be satisfied with an arrangement under which, as long as the Tibetans could have self-government in Tibet, the Chinese could have foreign affairs and defence. This departure from a categorical demand for complete sovereignty and independence was made with the advice of Michael Van Walt, a Dutch lawyer attached to the Dalai Lama's entourage since the mid-1970s.

The Strasbourg Proposal was prompted by the Dalai Lama's belief that Tibetans, given Beijing's rock-solid intransigence, had no realistic alternative means of going back to their high plateau. Also, he believed the announcement would force Beijing to halt human rights abuses as well as the policy of settling Chinese in Tibet.

Independent and independence-minded Tibetans from all over the Tibetan diaspora denounced the idea -- in the most respectful terms reserved for the Dalai Lama, of course. Why this about-turn from state goals when Tibetans were dying on the streets of Lhasa for independence and not self-government? Why now, they asked, when the worldwide attention and support was swelling like never before? "The proposal took the wind out of the sails of

the demonstrators in Tibet," says Lhasang Tsering.

Did the Strasbourg Proposal become official government-in-exile policy? To the extent that it represents the minimum that Tibetans in exile will ever accept, it did. In his interview with *Himal*, the Dalai Lama indicated that because the Chinese had not responded seriously to his "maximum concessions", nor curbed human rights abuses and population transfers, "we have every right to say new things," meaning that he had no obligation to stand by the Strasbourg Proposal.

Tibetans who criticise the Dalai Lama's announcement, and they number many, vehemently reject that the Strasbourg Proposal can be construed as official policy. Total independence, they insist, is the goal: no compromise. In retrospect, the Strasbourg Proposal forced Tibetans who had gotten used to their lives as exiles to debate a crucial question regarding their future.

The storm that the Dalai Lama faced on the Strasbourg issue was unprecedented. It might have suggested to him that the community in exile had reached a certain threshold of political maturity beyond which decision-making would have to follow institutional guidelines rather than be limited to a small circle of advisers. This realisation too might have been a factor inducing him (obviously not so "out of touch" as critics would claim) to dissolve the National Assembly and the cabinet last May.

Another event that set the stage for the democracy move was the "Taiwan Affair", a murky and convoluted episode of intrigue, money and opening of old wounds which put Tibetan exiles on edge for the past year.

## AFFAIR WITH TAIPEI

In the early 1970s, Taiwan's funding of the Tibetan resistance in Nepal lost out to the "CIA faction" which was led by the Dalai Lama's brother Gyalpo Thondup. Dharamsala had always been wary of Taipei. It believed rightly that any Kuomintang support for Tibetans was a gesture against the "Red Chinese" and not an endorsement of Tibetan independence. Dharamsala also suspected the Taiwanese of trying to cause a split between Tibetans along regional lines.

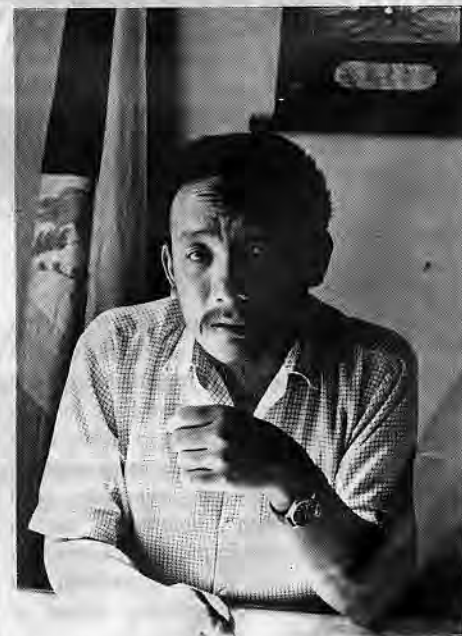
A Dharamsala directive instructed Tibetans not to have anything to do with the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission (MTAC), the Taiwan Government's conduit for assistance. But Taiwan's funding continued and the divide among Tibetans deepened. Taipei picked up a Calcutta-based refugee named Kunsang Lama to act as its "agent" and soon Taiwan-backed Tibetans were criss-crossing the Sub-Continent

pouring funds into schools and monasteries and sending hundreds of refugee children to Taiwan for education. Incredibly, the exile government authorities themselves began secret contacts with Taiwanese intelligence through Pema Gyalpo Gyari, the Dalai Lama's representative in Tokyo and brother of Lodi Gyari, influential kalon at the time. It is clear that Dharamsala's right hand did not know what the left hand was doing.

When Indian police began investigations into his activities, Kunsang Lama blew the whistle on Dharamsala in March [1990]. The repercussions were immediate and divisive. How could the government blacklist individuals when its key members were themselves engaged in a Taiwan racket? The super-charged rumour mill of the exile community soon churned out stories of financial mismanagement and hundreds of thousands of dollars stashed in secret bank accounts. The trail seemed to lead from Taipei through Tokyo all the way to Dharamsala.

As far as scandals go, by South Asian standards, the Taiwan imbroglio was hardly the stuff of banner headlines. But it sent tremors through the Tibetan exile community. A joint letter from Tibetan exile associations complained to the Indian Home Minister of MTAC's activities and even demanded that he try to "expatriate Mr. Kunsang Lama from the Indian soil."

That the Tibetans could be so rocked by the Taiwan affair speaks of the insecurity of a refugee community that does not have the societal mechanisms of a responsive media,



Critic Lhasang Tsering.

law enforcement and investigative agencies, and accountability of those in power. Even in the absence of actual embezzlement or financial mismanagement, the government-in-exile suffered a serious loss of credibility.

The Taiwan-related events accelerated the move towards "democracy". Earlier, Dalai Lama had indicated his intention of withdrawing from government once back in Tibet. Now, he proposed that even while in exile, Tibetans choose their own Assembly and Kashag. Tibet's rule by *Choe-sig ni-drel* (the "union of religion and politics") was about to be dismantled for the first time since its installment by the Fifth Dalai Lama, Lobsang Gyatso, in 1642.

### SPECIAL CONGRESS

A special congress of Tibetan people in exile was called on 11 May 1990. Representatives filed through the ornate entrance of the main library in Dharamsala to listen to "His Holiness".

In his inimitable style, the Dalai Lama told the gathering that things had to change. Democracy had to be introduced even in exile. The Kashag and the Assembly were dissolved; a new and expanded Assembly was to be elected, which would in turn elect the kalons. "From now on, the people's decision will be final. I feel that the Dalai Lama should have no role here," he said.

The Dalai Lama hoped that the special congress would elect seven kalons to serve in an interim cabinet till the elections were held for the Assembly. He stipulated that only those with "qualifying marks" of above 70 per cent be elected to office.

The Dalai Lama also announced that the draft constitution of 1963 be revised. That document had kept intact the Dalai Lama's primary role in Tibetan politics in keeping with "old norms". He said that a draft guideline would be formulated for the refugee community -- a sort of a constitution-in-exile. Also mentioned was a tribunal which would, while remaining within Indian law, adjudicate disputes between the Dharamshala government and individual refugees.

The Dalai Lama ended by saying: "Once our issue is resolved, I will stay outside the Tibetan Government. This is my right and seems better for Tibet's long-term interest." To most Tibetans' relief, he added, "In case we are faced with problems which can be solved only by the Dalai Lama, I will be there. I will do whatever is possible. But it is important that people are able to act on their own through democratic processes without relying on the Dalai Lama."



Celebrating Losar, or New Year, at Baudha.

### A NEW KASHAG

After making his announcements, the Dalai Lama retreated to his residence up in Mcleodganj, but the meeting of the special congress stalled because, characteristically, there was no one to take over from the Dalai Lama. Representatives went back to the Dalai Lama for instruction. He suggested that former Chief Kalon Juchen Thupten Namgyal chair the meeting.

When the vote for the interim cabinet was counted, only three persons made the threshold of 70 per cent set by the Dalai Lama: Kelsang Yeshe, 45, a former monk at Drepung Monastery and educationist, was named Chief Kalon, in charge of religious, cultural, home and economic affairs; Tenzin Tethong, 42, credited with recent advances in the United States, for international relations and information; and Jetsun Pema, 50, the first woman ever to serve in the Kashag, to oversee education and social affairs. She is well thought of for promoting refugee education and is the Dalai Lama's sister.

The election for the new Assembly of Peoples Deputies was slated for February/March 1991, with the results taking a while to be published due to the logistical difficulties involved. The number of seats are to increase from 12 to 43: 10 each representing the three Tibetan provinces, with two from each province reserved for women candidates. The five religious orders (Gelug, Sakya, Kargyu, Nyingma, and the pre-Buddhist Bon) will have two seats each, and three "distinguished personalities" will be nominated by the Dalai Lama. The new assembly will elect the cabinet.

### CONFUSION AND PESSIMISM

The most astute of Tibetan critics voice their pessimism over the election exercise. Far from leading to democracy, they believe the election will deepen regional and sectarian schisms. Providing more seats in the house without changing the regional and sectarian basis of electing deputies has merely increased the lines of division. A recent article in the Dharamsala government's own publication, *Tibetan Bulletin*, said as much.

The regional divisions, where they exist, are between those who have their origins in provinces of U-Tsang in south-central Tibet, Kham in the east and Amdo to the north-east. The historical antecedents of sectarianism, meanwhile, go back centuries to when the orders constantly vied for power until the ascendancy of the Gelugpas in the 17th century. Some of this rivalry persists in exile.

Says Lhasang Tsering, "The changes have been cosmetic. Too much has been left to chance. People will vote for a candidate for no other reason than that they come from the same village. The Dalai Lama stepped out to allow maximum participation but that will not happen. His gesture was wasted."

Tsewang Phuntsok, the new President of Tibetan Youth Congress, which is the only "pan-Tibetan" organisation in exile, too, does not "expect miracles from the elections because it is the same old formula with more numbers." While deputies will elect the Kashag, "the deputies themselves will not be accountable to the people because they are elected by region and not by constituencies in exile."

Tashi Tsering believes that the democratisation exercise has been misconceived from the



Kevin Buttski

**Looking to Dharamsala: Labourer in Lhasa.**

start. "His Holiness is a bit impatient. Because Tibet was lost during his reign, he wants to get it back in his time. He also wants to show the people back in Tibet that we have changed. We exiles, too, are driven by a need to prove to the Chinese that we are not savages."

Tsering does not believe that the Tibetans are ready for the kind of democracy being tried out. "We need time, education, maturity. If the Tibetans do not know what is good for them, and they don't, they will continue to side with their tribe, faction and sect. Today, people are thoroughly confused and many things are up in the air."

The matters "up in the air" include the precise role of the Dalai Lama while in exile and how the Kashag is to be selected following the March elections. The monastic population in exile, the traditional minded majority of refugees, and possibly many within Tibet, are in near-panic, believing, in Tashi Tsering's words, that "their *bhagwan* is betraying them." It seems clear that, elections or no elections, and whether he is inclined to it or not, the Dalai Lama will be politically active for the foreseeable future.

The Dalai Lama himself would have preferred a two-tiered parliament, an upper house to take into consideration (as now) "not the exile population but the reality of Tibet", and a lower house with representatives of exile constituencies, one deputy for every 500 or 1000 refugees. However, the special congress, padded as it was by many who preferred the "old ways" and "old norms", proved unwilling.

Thus, the democratic advance for politics in exile is that the legislature will have the power

to elect the executive. But the legislators-in-exile will not be voted on the basis of exile constituencies but of provinces in Tibet. This would make the new Assembly more like Nepal's Rastriya Panchayat than the India's Lok Sabha.

**ELECTION FEVER**

The Tibetans are going in for one-man/woman, one-vote democracy but the communities, large and small, are widely dispersed in India and in Nepal, with small numbers scattered all over the world. This makes for difficult electioneering.

The constituency of candidates for, say, the Shigatse region in U-Tsang is scattered



Vijay Kranti

wherever Tibetans live in exile. How will the issues be raised and debated in the absence of media -- radio, television and popular press? How can real political issues, which invariably raise questions of ideology, be debated without political parties? The confusion has already begun. There are said to be four separate lists of "worthy candidates" from Kham alone.

Tsering Wangyal, editor of independent-minded *Tibetan Review*, feels that elections in exile need not pretend to reflect regions within Tibet: "We are already out of Tibet. It is not for us to represent people in Kham or Amdo. Once we go back, that will happen naturally. Elections should be on the basis of constituency."

The run-up to the election, Wangyal says, is "in general, a very bad scene." He blames the absence of a "democratic media" in the Tibetan language, other than *Dashar*, a very recent publication. "The issues are not being communicated, only bio-datas which emphasize the candidate's place of origin in Tibet. We Tibetans are in the middle of election fever, but are excited for the wrong reasons. The few candidates who are mature and understand modern politics stand little chance because provincial-based organisations are master-minding the elections."

**"TASHI DELEK"**

In exile, over the years, the mantle has passed from the ageing leaders of the old mould to leaders with a modern outlook (two of the present kalons and many others are products of Darjeeling schools) with their feet adroitly positioned both in the ceremonial, traditional world of Tibet and the liberal world of change and democracy.

In this moment of doubt and fear, the Dalai Lama, truly, seems to be the leader of his flock. He alone is above the factions, above the dissidents, above the kalons. The Dalai Lama acknowledges that in the months and years ahead there will be mistakes in this experiment with democracy, but, as he told *Himal*, he would rather the mistakes be made during his lifetime.

The move towards democracy is inevitable, says the Dalai Lama, likening democracy's spirit to that of the Mahayana tradition. He urges the young and the educated to have patience and understanding. At the special congress in May, he said, "...Most things are like this. When one talks about something, it sounds good and practical. But in reality, everything depends on human beings." And to those who thought he was abandoning them, he offered assurance: "I will always be available when the need arises....Therefore, I will ask you not to worry. Tashi Delek."

## "Democracy, very nice word..."

Himal editors Kanak Mani Dixit and Kesang Tseten met with the Dalai Lama at "Thekchencholing", his Dharamsala residence, in early-February. Excerpts:

**Himal:** What led you to dissolve the Kashag (Cabinet) last May?

**Dalai Lama:** You have to go back a little bit. When we came out as refugees in 1959, we immediately started to implement democratic ideas. In 1963 we adopted a draft constitution, and in recent years we intensified democratisation. At Strasbourg, in 1989, I made clear my decision not to participate in politics. Last May I thought it was time to put into practice democratic principles. I found that among Tibetans, there was a basic enthusiasm for democracy but they needed to play a more active role, take more responsibility. Also, the international situation had an effect -- democracy had become a fashion.

**Q.** So you joined the fashion?

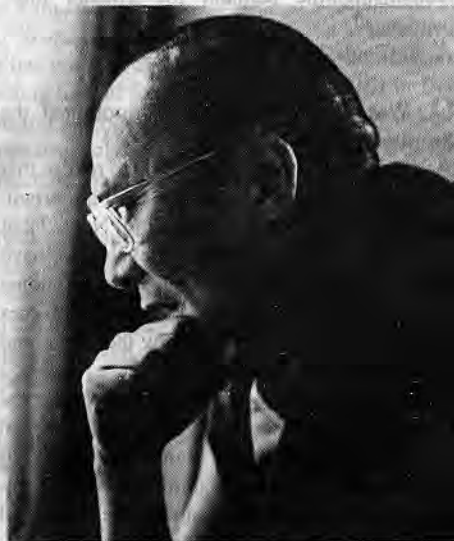
**A.** Yes, why not (laughing)? There was some controversy in our community, too. The plan was already there, and I thought it was time to implement it.

**Q.** Do you think Tibetans will let you leave politics? And are they politically mature to fill the void?

**A.** Frankly, I think they are not quite ready yet. But unless we test that through experience we will never reach maturity. Most important, I feel that all the testing and experience should happen during my time while I am alive and active. I want Tibetans to become more habituated to democracy before I become too old to be of any help.

Let me say that while in exile I have no intention of abandoning my responsibility for Tibetans. My intention is to carry final responsibility. However, the future plan for Tibet is complete democracy -- and I will have no role in politics. Even in the spiritual field, I do not want a special status, but just what comes spontaneously from the people. As I have said before, I really want to be a simple Buddhist monk, free from any formality. That is my freedom, my *moksha*.

**Q.** Were you satisfied with how things went after the developments in May?



V. Karant

**A.** Actually I was impressed. Individual Tibetans were showing initiative unlike previously. It was more serious, so there was more debate.

**Q.** There seems to be some confusion over what will happen after the March election of the people's deputies?

**A.** Well, the elected deputies will choose the Kashag. Also, they will have new suggestions to make.

**Q.** Will the new system, as some believe, cause even more regionalism and sectarianism in exile?

**A.** I think sectarianism is lessening but regionalism remains active. This is not very healthy but it is a fact. What to do? After all, you must remember that Tibetans are also human. With more time and experience, and through practice, it will improve. Actually, there is less regionalism among Tibetans inside Tibet. Due to the suffering and destruction, the entire Tibetans in Tibet are united. Basically, the Tibetan nation is not a young nation; it has a few thousand years old history; it has been tested. The present period is the darkest period in our history but we have survived it. We have not lost our determination.

**Q.** What effect will democratisation in the exile community have on Tibetans within Tibet?

**A.** Generally, Tibetans inside Tibet welcome democracy, they are very pleased at the recent

announcements. No doubt they also welcomed the 1963 draft constitution before. Tibetans inside and outside have the same feelings about democracy, even though those outside are a bit anxious right now.

**Q.** Could you and your exile government running the affairs of one lakh refugees still be regarded as representing the interest of the six million inside Tibet?

**A.** I think so. About 90 percent of Tibetans inside Tibet look to Dharamsala; their hopes are directed here.

**Q.** If the Chinese were to suddenly allow your return to Lhasa under conditions acceptable to you, does the exile government have a ready plan of action?

**A.** We are ready. But those within Tibet will have the main responsibility; they will be the real leaders. Even the Tibetans working in the Chinese Government in Lhasa, deep down, they are for Tibet. Of course, here among refugee Tibetans, we have better education, better knowledge of the outside world, so those who return will also have responsibility in many fields.

**Q.** As you know, the Strasbourg Proposal has created much controversy. Did it advance or put back the Tibetan cause?

**A.** In one way, I feel it created a basis for open support from some international organisations and certain governments, like the Dutch and the French. My regret is that it did not reduce the human rights violations nor the population transfers into Tibet, which was my hope. We made maximum concessions, we made clear our minimum requirement, but we have received no serious response from the Chinese. Therefore, we have every right to say new things -- although at the moment I still stand by the Strasbourg proposal.

**Q.** Diplomatically, was it a miscalculation to offer the maximum you were willing to give?

**A.** I believe we have to state clearly what we want. If that is impossible to the other side, then there is no need to have dialogue. Some say we should have made more demands, to get something less. I do not believe in making a gesture after which you can turn in any way. That would be confusing to myself.

**Q.** Will Tibetans continue to rely on Western support to influence the Chinese? Is that effective?

**A.** The Chinese will never admit to being affected by outside pressure. But unconsciously, there is an impact. For instance, the local Chinese authorities in Tibet were very much against lifting the martial law last March, but Beijing thought it necessary to make an outward gesture, though while announcing it they increased repression. The Chinese are very sensitive about the Tibetan issue. For example, when Hu Yaobang was in power, a confidential report known as Document No.6 stated that even a small event in Tibet has echoes outside so Chinese officials were asked to be very cautious about every action.

**Q.** Yet they cracked down in 1987.

**A.** That was the hardliners' action.

**Q.** Did the 1987 demonstrations in Lhasa take you by surprise?

**A.** Yes and no. What was special about the 1987 demonstration was that news of it reached out so quickly. There were large scale demonstrations in the past that we did not know about until much later, like in 1969.

**Q.** If the events of 1950 and 1959 had not happened, would Tibet have been a poor developing country or an independent and powerful country in the center of Asia?

**A.** If - that is purely hypothetical. (Pause) You see, in the 1920s, the 13th Dalai Lama, my predecessor, sent students to England to study modern science. If that had been continued without interruption, then Tibet would have developed.

**Q.** Would you have allowed Tibet to open up?

**A.** I think so. Right from a very young age, I was very interested in the outside world. In 1947, I started to learn English even though my attendant was against the "devil" language (laughing), what is called the language of the Enemy of the Faith in Tibetan. I was always interested in mechanical things, in science, and in Europe. Even back then I had a strong conviction that in Tibet power remained within very few hands.

**Q.** Being surrounded by protocol and duties, do you ever feel out of touch with your people?

**A.** I don't. My nature allows me to get along very easily with all kinds of people. Even in the old days, I always liked meeting people. Since becoming a refugee, I have had even

more opportunities have for closer contact with my people. Of course, I cannot meet each and everyone.

**Q.** Has any government come close to actually recognising the demand for Tibetan independence?

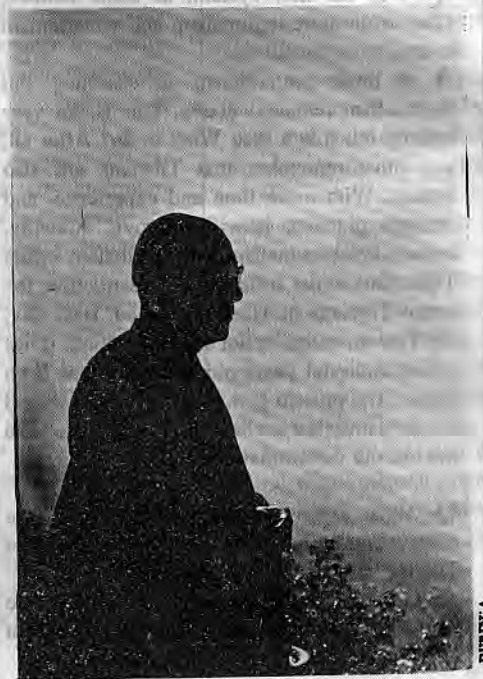
**A.** Difficult. Very difficult.

**Q.** Was that realisation what prompted the Strasbourg Proposal?

**A.** I think that the time has come to realise that national sovereignty may be less important. Look at the European Community. Now, Tibet is a landlocked country, so to develop we have to depend heavily on our neighbours. In human history, boundaries change. The Chinese forces will not leave, we cannot throw them out, and nobody comes to help us. With these reasons, I made that proposal - in response to a practical problem as well as a broader philosophical question. Ultimately, I think the states of Central Asia will have to think of some federation, association - also countries like Nepal and smaller nations - to get maximum benefit.

**Q.** How do you view the recent democratic changes in Nepal?

**A.** I welcome the change. Democracy -- very nice word, I like it very much. Democracy is the ideal. It gives people the opportunity to come forward, allows individual creativity. We can see the failure of countries with central-planning. Without freedom and democracy, there can be no progress in human society. Democracy also fits the Mahayana concept,



that progress comes from individual initiative, from within. Of course, if taken in the wrong direction, like the human brain, it can become more destructive or if guided properly, it is constructive and beneficial. Education is the key.

**Q.** For some, Tibet must be saved for its treasure of Buddhist wisdom. Then there are younger secular Tibetans who regard political goals and nationalism as most important. As the Tibetans' leader and as a 'simple Buddhist monk', what do you say?

**A.** I believe there is more benefit from working together. Sometimes nationalism and patriotism may not be the best in the long term. What I believe in is the preservation of the Tibetan identity - without harming the larger. With that as a basis, with wisdom, we must search for maximum common benefit. In communist states, individuals are not satisfied, and that has led to problems. Universal responsibility - as I call it - should be our long-term interest, the main goal, but first individual countries must be satisfied.

Regarding the question of religion, some younger Tibetans feel that Tibet had too much religion in the past, that we lost our country because of this. They are partly right. There was too much concentration on monasteries and too little contact with the outside world. At the same time, though, in spite of political demarcations, in spite of vast distances and little contact with Tibetans in Yunnan and Gansu, Tibetans have remained one nation and are Tibetans due to Buddhism. As in Poland, where nationalism and religion came together, in Tibet, too, religion has been helpful in keeping Tibetan patriotism alive.

**Q.** At the Kalachakra in Sarnath, you said that Tibetans could expect something significant to happen in the next five to ten years? What should they expect?

**A.** It is based on my common-sense calculation. There are so many changes occurring in the communist world. In China, too. With education and exposure, the people are completely fed up with the present system. So, the present rigid system will go -- that is definite: even an unbiased and realistic Chinese leader would agree. The present generation of leadership is very old. Most of them have spent their entire lives with one conviction, and that veil is preventing them from seeing the real situation in Tibet. So it is just my common-sense calculation, also something mystical (laughing). This is not a prediction, not 100 percent, but most probably...

# The Limits of Tibetan Democracy

by Dawa Norbu

Thanks to the favourable impact of movements for democracy in Nepal and Eastern Europe last year, the Dalai Lama was compelled to announce some democratic measures in Dharamsala, seat of the Tibetan exile government.

While such measures are steps in the right direction, I see some dangers in the misuse of the word "democracy", which can be used to perpetuate existing patrimonialism in the exile government and to launch ideological offensives against Beijing unless the existing institutions are genuinely democratised.

Under such circumstances, a skeptic does not see any real possibility of the Yabshi-dominated, semi-educated coterie which constitutes the Dalai Lama's power elite sharing its power either with the people directly or with their representatives. That coterie, with the Dalai Lama's implicit approval, will continue to dominate the crucial sectors of the Tibetan decision-making process through "democratic" manipulation. For whatever the pontiff's religious piety might be, he has shown over the years a human weakness in the exercise of power. It is either the male members of his immediate family ("Yabshi") or his clansmen who are entrusted with top political authority. This is obvious, for example, from the assignment of his men in Hong Kong, London, Tokyo and Washington. It is this same group that has been entrusted with the task of maintaining contact with the Chinese and others since 1978.

Unless the Dalai Lama ensures that the proposed democratic measures provide adequate scope for popular participation in the crucial political decisions that could affect the Tibetan people's future, Tibetan democracy will remain a farce that perpetuates patrimonialism. Given the temptations of power, I do not see much possibility of power-sharing with the people's representatives, far less with the people themselves. If the future of Tibetan democracy is to be safeguarded, the Tibetan public must press for genuine democratisation of existing institutions.

Dharamsala has a misconception about the word democracy. For the most part, it takes democracy to mean populism and demagoguery in which the demagogue's manipulation of religious symbols is enough to ensure popular support. But democracy without the institutionalisation of democratic values is meaningless. No democracy worth the name can meaningfully function without some necessary institutions to implement democratic values. And history suggests that it is dangerous to entrust men with power without institutional checks and balances. If, therefore, one is really committed to democracy, the critical question is this: how much of the essence of democracy can we implement under the given limitations which the Tibetan diaspora finds itself?

## FACADES AND IMITATIONS

It is true that Dharamsala cannot fully emulate the Western democratic model or for that matter the Indian one because the Dalai Lama does not control a piece of territory. The implication of this limitation is that even the creation of an autonomous judiciary, though essential for democratic functioning, is really problematic because the Dalai Lama's administration cannot legally enforce court decisions, as in criminal cases. Thus, Dharamsala should not attempt to set up facades of democracy in imitation of mature democracies that do not fit the Tibetan exile situation. Rather, they should endeavour to establish certain publicly-controlled

mechanisms by which public accountability on the part of the administration is established and the Tibetan people's voice is heard on political decisions that affect their future.

The essence of any functioning democracy is to encourage public participation in the political decision-making process through public or popular representation. So far, the practice in Dharamsala has been for a few Yabshi-dominated hands to monopolise decision-making power on the crucially important issues and to mobilize popular involvement only cosmetically. In this sense, the Tibetan power elite have more in common with Leninist regimes. The practical issue on the Tibetan democratic agenda ought to be how to democratise the existing institutions so that the authorities are made accountable to the public and the public feels that some sort of due process is at work in their "government."

Democracy without a critical press is practically meaningless. The Tibetan refugee press, including the *Tibetan Review*, which used to be independent and neutral at one time, is now completely controlled by the semi-educated power clique. If the Dalai Lama genuinely desires democracy for his people, he first has to liberate the Tibetan press.

Even then, direct democracy is not a possibility for even the small Tibetan community because the refugees are scattered all over India and Nepal. The refugees can at best be represented. But ever since the inception of the Assembly of Tibetan People's Deputies, the honourable members have been systematically co-opted by the Dharamsala administration. The deputies have been admirable yes-men and have defeated the very idea of public representation.

The exile administration has four or five autonomous Tibetan institutions which have substantial funds and which carry more prestige and power than even the Kashag. These institutions are reserved for certain tribesmen. This monopoly has to be broken if public prestige and power are to be shared with all the sub-ethnic groups, and especially the educated younger generation, regardless of sect or region. The functioning of such institutions must be regularised and a due process set in motion so that democracy is practised where it matters.

As regards the administration in **Exiles in Darjeeling.**

Dharamsala, the tradition is that power-holders remain in their seats for decades while their subordinates are frequently shifted from one posting to another. This contradicts the functioning of democratic government. Even in pre-1911 China, commissioners were transferred every three years to prevent corruption, but subordinates remained in their postings for long enough to lend practical continuity in the administration.

Given the Tibetans' political immaturity, the best investment at this stage would be to set up appropriate mechanisms to ensure that at least the Dalai Lama's power structure operates democratically and legally, even if at this stage it cannot be made accountable to the Tibetan public at large. Men may come and go but institutions stay. The best way to ensure a democratic political life is to institutionalise democratic values. And this should begin at home, not in the streets.

D. Norbu, author of *Red Star Over Tibet*, is professor at the School of International Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.



K. Babinski

# "Four Rivers, Six Ranges"

*The Dalai Lama's proclaimed path of ahimsa sets the theme for Tibetan refugees. But for a while, there was Chushi Gangdruk, the Tibetan guerrilla resistance, which operated along Nepal's northern frontier.*

by Andrew Balestracci

The 23 "tribes" of Kham and Amdo provinces met in Lhasa in July 1957 to form the resistance organization called the Chushi Gangdruk ("Four Rivers, Six Ranges"). It was these guerrillas, together with the Mimang Tsongdu (Peoples' Deputies), who made possible the Dalai Lama's escape to India.

In 1959, the United States Government, seeking to counter the communist threat, stepped up its support for the Tibetan resistance. From among the Chushi Gangdruk members, who were then regrouping in the Uttar Pradesh hill station of Mussoorie, the CIA began its programme of taking Tibetans for guerrilla training to Camp Hale, in the Rockies Mountains of Colorado. So secret was the affair that many recruits never knew they were in the United States. The plan was to train 4100 rebels, in groups of 400, who would launch guerrilla activities from a new base.

## MUSTANG BASE

The 750 square mile principality of Mustang, which protrudes from Nepal into Tibet, was chosen as this base, and Gen Yeshe, a Baba-Khampa, as the commander. The rebels set up their headquarters at Kesang, at the base of the Nilgiri Himal across the Kali Gandaki river from Jomosom, and the first batch of 400 arrived. But the news had leaked, and soon hundreds of Tibetans joined the resistance.

With its cover blown, the CIA halted its aid for six months. After an arduous winter, help to Tibetans came from a new quarter: India.

After its humiliating defeat in the 1962 Sino-Indian border war, New Delhi had decided to coordinate its actions with the Americans and the British. Under CIA sponsorship, India created the Special Frontier Force (SFF), made up entirely of Tibetans, and code-named "Establishment 22," to guard its northern borders. Under it came a new force called the Tensung Dangling Magar, or the National Volunteer Force Army (NVDA), under the leadership of Gyalo Thondup, the brother of the Dalai Lama.

By 1964 there was a major NVDA presence among the 6000 guerrillas scattered along the frontier, in Mugu, Dolpo, Manang, Nubri, Tsum, Langtang, and Walangchung Gola, with Kesang Camp, under Gen Yeshe, as the headquarters. While the rebels were called "Kham-pas," which is the word for Tibetans from the province of Kham (notwithstanding numerous connotations), there were Tibetans from all parts of Tibet.

It is believed that the CIA used the USAID premises at Rabi Bhawan in Kathmandu to transport supplies in a Bell "bubble-top" helicopter and STOL aircraft to Pokhara. In late 1962, military cargo flying in from south-east Asia dropped supplies such as rifles, 80-mm

recoilless guns, two-inch mortars, solar batteries, miniature cameras, medicine, food and Nepali money. Subsequent airdrops are also believed to have brought in anti-aircraft guns.

## CHINESE REACTION

Between 1963 and 1966, the different NVDA camps carried out operations to destroy road links, engage Peoples' Liberation Army convoys, and gather intelligence. With the increased guerrilla presence, the Chinese established eight new army camps near the border. They also put pressure on the Nepali Government to take action.

But the occasional NVDA raids into Tibet were only minor irritants to the PLA, whose response was generally swift, often resulting in high Tibetan casualties. In 1966, when the NVDA was at its strongest, new orders came from the CIA. According to Gen Yeshe, inexplicably, the CIA instructed him to halt further attacks on the Chinese and to concentrate on espionage. Asked to forego military action, many rebels began to settle down in the Nepali mountains. According to a Western researcher who traveled to Nubri in 1973, the Khampas seemed busy "beating their swords into plough shares."

## INTERNAL STRIFE

Rumour among the rebels had it that Gyalo Thondup had got the Americans to divert the money elsewhere. Gen Yeshe was informed that only 400 NVDA members would be kept in Mustang while the others would be based in India. Yeshe apparently saw no sense in this as in Mustang, NVDA activity was under Indian and not Tibetan control. In time, Yeshe was ousted from his leadership position, and Kesang Camp was put under two leaders, Gyatso Wangdai and Lhamo Tsering. Gen Yeshe's supporters accused Tibetans in New Delhi of misappropriating funds.

Yeshe organized 200 supporters in a camp just east of Mustang, and fighting between the two groups broke out; with it the divisions came along old "tribal" and regional lines. Between 1969 and 1974 the rival factions engaged in skirmishes, imprisonment of opponent rebels, and propaganda campaigns. It was then that the Nepal Government called Yeshe to Kathmandu to investigate the dispute. Yeshe offered to surrender his guns if Wangdai did the same. Amidst the hearsay, one source has it that Yeshe "pleaded for protection and then, in exchange for a grant of political asylum, gave the Nepalese a detailed account of the NVDA's troop strength, supplies, weaponry and positions." What is known is



The warriors of Kham.



that the Nepali Home Ministry provided rehabilitation for Yeshi's followers.

Meanwhile, as the rift among the rebels deepened in the early 1970s, the United States and China began to hold secret talks aimed at normalising relations. With that, the CIA's aid to the NVDA dried up, and Wangdai's supporters, too, began making their camps into settlements. By then Tibetan rebels had occupied the northern areas for a decade and a half, and along with their economic and political muscle, they also shared religious and cultural ties with the local inhabitants.

But the Chinese did not forget. In 1973, Mao Zedong reportedly threatened military action unless the Nepalis closed down the NVDA bases. Nepal acted swiftly. Declaring the region a "restricted zone," the Royal Nepal Army marched up the Kali Gandaki gorge. Though the rebels were outnumbered two to one, they knew the terrain like the back of their hand, and they had supplies to last two years.

Full-scale fighting, however, was prevented by the intervention of the Tibetan exile government, whose emissary flew up to Jomosom with a 20-minute taped message from the Dalai Lama, asking them to peacefully disarm. Rebels were anguished to hear the message, but they complied.

Once the surrender began, Nepali forces conducted "search and seize" operations, arresting rebels who had disarmed. Hearing of this breach of the terms of surrender, Wangdai and 40 rebels fled west. Wangdai was eventually killed on the group's approach to the 17,800 ft-high Tinkar Pass. Many Nepali soldiers, too, were killed in that last encounter. A few rebels made it to India.

The next day Gen Yeshi was flown by helicopter from Kathmandu to identify the body of Wangdai. Satisfied, a ceremony was held at which 200 medals, certificates and cash were awarded. Everyone, from the sergeant credited with killing Wangdai, to the Home Minister, decorated. A large tent on the Tundikhel parade grounds exhibited Wangdai's personal items, such as his guns, spurs, drinking cup, and his protective amulet.

After several months in custody, the rebels were free to settle in Nepal. Many chose to join the ranks of "Establishment 22" in India. Seven camp commanders were jailed until December 28, 1981, when they were granted amnesty. Gen Yeshi lives in Kathmandu, many of his followers in Jorpati and in other settlements in Nepal.



A. Balestracci was a student in the Wisconsin Study Programme in Nepal in 1989-90.

## South, to Bylakuppe

by Joshua Burson

Bylakuppe is an odd place. Outside the rows of houses, the hot wind pushes the dusty air past coconut palms and out into the arid plains. Inside the homes, it is cool; the rooms look, feel and even smell Tibetan. People in traditional Tibetan clothing sit on hand-knotted rugs with central Asian motifs, gulping bowls of butter tea. A family sits around making *momo* dumplings in rooms adorned with thangkas and prayer-wheels. On this dry, remote land, about the farthest point from the Himalaya in the sub-continent, a community of

several thousand Tibetans have built a settlement that was always meant to be temporary. But refugees of Bylakuppe have managed to carry on the cultural enterprise of being Tibetans, and are even thriving.

In 1960, the Dalai Lama felt the the Tibetans who had just come out into exile needed a stable place to live. Of greatest importance was that Tibetans live as a community so that their culture and traditions would hold them together until they could return to Tibet. Sensitive to the Tibetans' plight, the government of India called upon its states to provide spare land for these landless people. Karnataka, in South India, stepped forward with an offer of 5000 acres in Bylakuppe.

Initially, each person was allotted one acre of land, with no rent or lease payments. Back then targeted to have no more than 3000 refugees, Bylakuppe's population today exceeds 15,000, divided among five camps. From each camp, a person is elected for the voluntary job of camp leader. Decisions regarding direction, welfare and structure of the overall settlement is taken by the camp leaders along with the representative of the government-in-exile. These leaders are also responsible for administering justice within the settlement, and only serious cases are referred to the Indian Police. Although men and women have an equal vote, there have been few women leaders in the camp's history.

The Dharamsala government provides directions with regards to spiritual life, health and community standards, while the Indian Government provides finances for roads and schools. These contributions aside, the community sustains itself financially, through farming and other activity.



At Sera Monastery, Bylakuppe

One possible explanation for the Bylakuppe's success is that the community operates as a collective with every inhabitant a member, much like the Moshav in Israel. All tractors, farming equipment and other tools are owned by the cooperative. Members purchase seeds, stock and fertilizer which can either be repaid in cash or kind when their harvest comes in. Most of the corn, the major crop, is sold in outside markets, while rice and other minor crops are grown mostly for consumption within the camp.

Bylakuppe also has a tractor repair business, poultry farms, and dairy and animal sales, all of which bring income. Many enterprising Bylakuppans travel to northern India where they purchase sweaters and other goods to sell in the Mysore area. The settlement also produces the usual array of Tibetan handicrafts, thangkas, carvings and carpets.

Thirty-five per cent of the settlement population is considered officially "poor", and receives aid from the Family Welfare Association. Generally, the recipients are the aged or heads of large families. However, in a restaurant in the camp, Indians are hired as domestic help.

Most Bylakuppe children go through some schooling but many leave before matriculation. The mandatory Indian curriculum is followed, which includes English and Hindi. To this are added Tibetan language, culture and geography. Most Tibetans also know Kannada from their interaction with the community.

The camp has outgrown its intended population five times over, and a local official has an interesting observation to make. "In principle, we would like to increase our numbers because so many Tibetans died but then this puts a strain on our economy," explains Sonam Chopel, Office Secretary, representing the Council for Home Affairs the Dharamsala government.

All in all, Bylakuppe ranks high for its quality of life for Tibetans. There is economic security and religious and cultural freedom is unrestricted. A safe Tibetan haven in the southern tip of India.

J. Burson is a photographer who recently visited Bylakuppe.

Tibetan resistance, "which indicates that their assistance had been a reflection of their anti-Communist policies rather than genuine support for the restoration of Tibetan independence."

This account sounds genuine, as do other, more personal observations. The Dalai Lama recalls his loneliness when, having been chosen as the Fourteenth reincarnation, he was separated from his family and for years spent most of his time with servants and with tutors, some kind, some frightening, who prepared him for his eventual religious and civil responsibilities. Of his selection, he repeats the familiar and wonderful story of how disguised emissaries, directed by the vision of Regent Reting, arrived at his humble house and offered the child, barely two, a selection of objects, some of which had belonged to the Great Thirteenth, who had died two years earlier. Unerringly, the child picked only the correct spectacles, canes, and pencils, and said significant sounding things as well.

What the Dalai Lama does not say is, according to Goldstein, whose source is Kusantse Khome, senior lay member of the search party, that the then incarnated Panchen Lama had drawn up a list of several possible infant reincarnations, including the present Dalai Lama.

It is convenient for the Dalai Lama's exile government in Dharmasala to leave out this fact, if it is one. It is omitted as well in the Dalai Lama's 1962 autobiography. Because the dying Panchen Lama, like his successor who died in 1989, was under Chinese control, it may be important today that China cannot be seen to have had a part in choosing Dalai Lamas. The Dalai Lama himself makes it clear, when the subject of succession comes up, that there need be no Fifteenth reincarnation but that if one does appear he is likely, since the Fourteenth is in exile, to be found outside.

### MATTER OF SELECTION

The whole matter of selection is so important that other non-mysterious factors which may have played a part are ignored in the current autobiography. The Dalai Lama merely mentions, for example, that before his own discovery, his brother, who is 13 years older, had already been identified as the reincarnation of the abbot of the nearby powerful Kumbum monastery. The Dalai Lama's elder brother Thubten Norbu, in his 1986 memoir, remembers the 40-member search delegation staying at Kumbum for two years while carrying out its hunt "quietly and

unobtrusively." He insists that even when he heard the delegation had visited his house and inspected his little brother that he never discussed the matter with the search party's members, although it had become a subject of gossip in the monastery. Only a person wholly devoted to the miraculous story of the discovery of the Dalai Lama can ignore the significance of the Panchen Lama's list -- if it existed -- and the fact that the little boy in Takster had a powerful brother with whom the search delegation stayed for two years.

The Dalai Lama prefers simplicity, but he noticed that the first Chinese general he met was wearing a gold Rolex, and he was proud of the "pair of beautiful singing birds and a mag-



nificent gold watch" sent him by US President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1942. He also remembers with obvious pleasure - although the words cannot be his - the processions leaving the thousand-room Potala, which included porters carrying his caged songbirds and "a posse of horses from the Dalai Lama's own stables, all nicely turned out, caparisoned and led by their grooms."

All this is charming, and can easily disarm the reader into thinking that Tibet was a victim, guilty at worst of what Hugh Richardson (*Tibet and Its History*) has called "tortuosity," suffused with the exotic innocence which, in 1947, permitted the present Dalai Lama, then 12, to write to President Truman, "I am glad that you are enjoying the best of health and doing good service to uplift the happiness and prosperity of the whole world. Here, I am well and doing my best for the religion of Lord

Buddha and welfare of all beings...With greeting scarf, a portrait of myself bearing my seal and a silk embroidered Thangka."

This is the kind of Tibet that fed Western fantasies, discussed so ably by Peter Bishop in *The Myth of Shangri-La*. But the Dalai Lama himself describes another Tibet, which in addition to being a truly fantastic place had to a considerably degree rendered itself incapable of avoiding or at least blunting the tragedy of Chinese occupation that has attracted widespread compassion. In 1950, when only 15, the Dalai Lama was enthroned, and as he puts it, "I found myself undisputed leader of six million people facing the threat of full-scale war.... But what made it even more difficult to instigate reforms was the religious community's fear of foreign influence, which they were convinced would damage Buddhism in Tibet."

The lamas' fear of reform is much emphasized in Goldstein's marvelous book which, while compassionate is also clear-sighted, and will doubtless attract the indignation of those who need Tibet - as Bishop has shown - to be a perfect place, not for its sake, but for theirs.

Although Tibet had, therefore, almost four decades to create a modern army, and there had been high officials who not only wanted this but had begun to create one, "Tibet's religious segment was ultimately responsible for its military backwardness...." The Tibetan elite insisted that their country was unique, devoted, as its government wrote to Chiang Kai-shek in 1946, "to the well-being of humanity in the world."

To sustain this special global role, the Tibetan elite considered it vital to have the largest possible monastic system, which in turn devoured most of the region's resources. The principal monasteries invariably took the most traditional view - or the most blinkered and reactionary - of most questions, as the Fourteenth Dalai Lama himself has conceded.

The story of Tibet in the twentieth century is noble, tragic, and brutal. There is plenty of room in it for fantasy and bewilderment, because Tibet is that kind of a place: the Dalai Lama describes himself as "half Marxist" and a reincarnation of the Compassionate Bodhisattva. People have long wanted Tibet to be Shangri La. But Tibet deserves the critical attention we give other countries, which would reveal Tibet's own grievous shortcomings and the hollowness of Chinese claims to the "Western Treasure House." △

J. Mirsky is China specialist for *The Observer* in London.

Tibetan resistance, "which indicates that their assistance had been a reflection of their anti-Communist policies rather than genuine support for the restoration of Tibetan independence."

This account sounds genuine, as do other, more personal observations. The Dalai Lama recalls his loneliness when, having been chosen as the Fourteenth reincarnation, he was separated from his family and for years spent most of his time with servants and with tutors, some kind, some frightening, who prepared him for his eventual religious and civil responsibilities. Of his selection, he repeats the familiar and wonderful story of how disguised emissaries, directed by the vision of Regent Reting, arrived at his humble house and offered the child, barely two, a selection of objects, some of which had belonged to the Great Thirteenth, who had died two years earlier. Unerringly, the child picked only the correct spectacles, canes, and pencils, and said significant sounding things as well.

What the Dalai Lama does not say is, according to Goldstein, whose source is Kusantse Kheme, senior lay member of the search party, that the then incarnated Panchen Lama had drawn up a list of several possible infant reincarnations, including the present Dalai Lama.

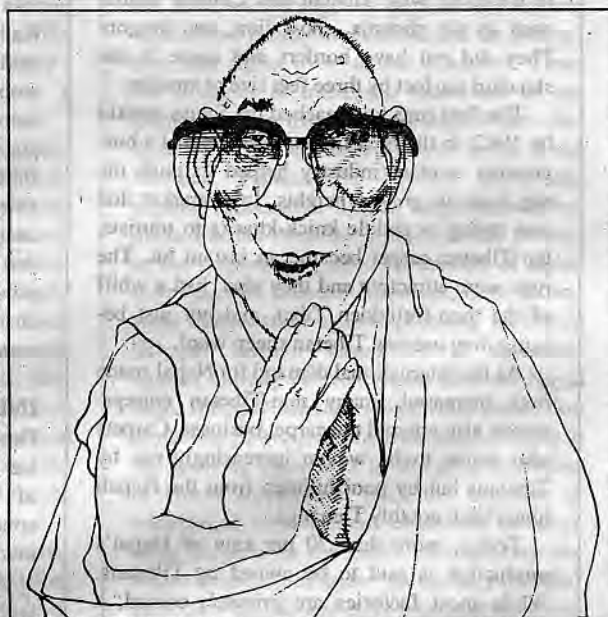
It is convenient for the Dalai Lama's exile government in Dharmasala to leave out this fact, if it is one. It is omitted as well in the Dalai Lama's 1962 autobiography. Because the dying Panchen Lama, like his successor who died in 1989, was under Chinese control, it may be important today that China cannot be seen to have had a part in choosing Dalai Lamas. The Dalai Lama himself makes it clear, when the subject of succession comes up, that there need be no Fifteenth reincarnation but that if one does appear he is likely, since the Fourteenth is in exile, to be found outside.

### MATTER OF SELECTION

The whole matter of selection is so important that other non-mysterious factors which may have played a part are ignored in the current autobiography. The Dalai Lama merely mentions, for example, that before his own discovery, his brother, who is 13 years older, had already been identified as the reincarnation of the abbot of the nearby powerful Kumbum monastery. The Dalai Lama's elder brother Thubten Norbu, in his 1986 memoir, remembers the 40-member search delegation staying at Kumbum for two years while carrying out its hunt "quietly and

unobtrusively." He insists that even when he heard the delegation had visited his house and inspected his little brother that he never discussed the matter with the search party's members, although it had become a subject of gossip in the monastery. Only a person wholly devoted to the miraculous story of the discovery of the Dalai Lama can ignore the significance of the Panchen Lama's list -- if it existed -- and the fact that the little boy in Takster had a powerful brother with whom the search delegation stayed for two years.

The Dalai Lama prefers simplicity, but he noticed that the first Chinese general he met was wearing a gold Rolex, and he was proud of the "pair of beautiful singing birds and a mag-



nificent gold watch" sent him by US President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1942. He also remembers with obvious pleasure -- although the words cannot be his -- the processions leaving the thousand-room Potala, which included porters carrying his caged songbirds and "a posse of horses from the Dalai Lama's own stables, all nicely turned out, caparisoned and led by their grooms."

All this is charming, and can easily disarm the reader into thinking that Tibet was a victim, guilty at worst of what Hugh Richardson (*Tibet and Its History*) has called "tortuosity," suffused with the exotic innocence which, in 1947, permitted the present Dalai Lama, then 12, to write to President Truman, "I am glad that you are enjoying the best of health and doing good service to uplift the happiness and prosperity of the whole world. Here, I am well and doing my best for the religion of Lord

Buddha and welfare of all beings. ... With greeting scarf, a portrait of myself bearing my seal and a silk embroidered Thangka."

This is the kind of Tibet that fed Western fantasies, discussed so ably by Peter Bishop in *The Myth of Shangri-La*. But the Dalai Lama himself describes another Tibet, which in addition to being a truly fantastic place had to a considerably degree rendered itself incapable of avoiding or at least blunting the tragedy of Chinese occupation that has attracted widespread compassion. In 1950, when only 15, the Dalai Lama was enthroned, and as he puts it, "I found myself undisputed leader of six million people facing the threat of full-scale war. ... But what made it even more difficult to instigate reforms was the religious community's fear of foreign influence, which they were convinced would damage Buddhism in Tibet."

The lamas' fear of reform is much emphasised in Goldstein's marvelous book which, while compassionate is also clear-sighted, and will doubtless attract the indignation of those who need Tibet -- as Bishop has shown -- to be a perfect place, not for its sake, but for theirs.

Although Tibet had, therefore, almost four decades to create a modern army, and there had been high officials who not only wanted this but had begun to create one, "Tibet's religious segment was ultimately responsible for its military backwardness. ... The Tibetan elite insisted that their country was unique, devoted, as its government wrote to Chiang Kai-shek in 1946, "to the well-being of humanity in the world."

To sustain this special global role, the Tibetan elite considered it vital to have the largest possible monastic system, which in turn devoured most of the region's resources. The principal monasteries invariably took the most traditional view -- or the most blinkered and reactionary -- of most questions, as the Fourteenth Dalai Lama himself has conceded.

The story of Tibet in the twentieth century is noble, tragic, and brutal. There is plenty of room in it for fantasy and bewilderment, because Tibet is that kind of a place: the Dalai Lama describes himself as "half Marxist" and a reincarnation of the Compassionate Bodhisattva. People have long wanted Tibet to be Shangri La. But Tibet deserves the critical attention we give other countries, which would reveal Tibet's own grievous shortcomings and the hollowness of Chinese claims to the "Western Treasure House."

J. Mirsky is China specialist for *The Observer* in London.

# From Loom to Riches

## Tale of the Tibeto-Nepali Carpet

*Tibetans have turned their ancient folk art into Nepal's top-ranking export.*

by Binod Bhattarai

One day in early 1960, when the Tibetan exiles were newcomers in Kathmandu, Jesuit priest Marshall D. Moran (now a sprightly 84) noticed a "shabby refugee" in the Jawalakhel locality clutching a bundle of wooded rods. Upon inquiring, Moran learnt that the wooden rods when assembled became a portable loom to weave rugs.

"The refugees were illiterate, in rags, and needed help. I knew that rugs would come to their help," says Moran, who was founding-member of the then nascent Nepal International Tibetan Refugee Relief Committee, and well they did. "Within three years, the refugees had forsaken the dark and dirty tents of the Jawalakhel refugee settlement, had wrist watches and were living in rented rooms."

What the Relief Committee did was get the man with the loom to train ten others, who then trained ten others. Soon, with the support of international agencies, carpet-making spread to all five Tibetan settlements in Nepal, from Dhorpatan in the mid-west to Solu in the east. The carpet industry was actually born in these refugee camps, gaining an international cachet due to the Tibetan connection.

Today, the carpet industry can be regarded as the refugees' boon to Nepal. Remarkably, what was first a handicrafts enterprise begun by distraught refugees has grown to become a full-fledged commercial success that ranks first among the country's export commodities. The venture is also one of the best examples of aid-giving and aid-taking: the agencies that helped to get it on its feet then left it in the hands of the recipients who went on to build it beyond all expectations. As a national income-earner, the carpet industry has today edged ahead of even tourism and is second only to foreign aid.

By 1976, Nepal had exported nearly 50,000 sq m of carpets. In 1990, exports had grown more than 20-fold to 1.2 sq m of rugs, drawing in a total earning of US\$70 million. For comparison, the tourism industry brought in a little more than US\$68 million in 1989 and garment exports are about US\$30 million annually. The carpet producers are confident that they will

top 1.5 million sq m in exports this year. The other benefit of the carpet industry is its enormous value as an employment generator. Manufacturers say that their industry employs, directly or indirectly, about 300,000 workers, counting weavers, washers, transporters and so forth, but there is no way to confirm this figure.

### WHIFF OF TIBET

The early rugs that emerged from the settlements were brightly coloured, according to tradition, with Tibetan and Chinese motifs such as the phoenix, snow lion, and dragon. They did not have borders and came in the standard six feet by three feet size or smaller.

The first rugs had reached the Swiss market by 1962; in the next fifteen years, Nepal's burgeoning tourism industry helped to push the rug trade to greater heights. In a market that was trying to peddle knick-knacks to tourists, the Tibetan carpet became an instant hit. The rugs were attractive and they also had a whiff of the then-forbidden Tibet, and not just because they use raw Tibetan sheep wool.

As the international demand for Nepal-made rugs increased, many non-Tibetan entrepreneurs also entered the carpet business. Carpets also began to be woven increasingly not by Tibetans but by poor hillmen from the Nepali hinterland, notably Tamangs.

Today, more than 70 per cent of Nepal's production is said to be owned by Tibetans. While most factories are privately-owned, a major producer, Carpet Trading Center, set up in 1966 to market the rugs produced in the Tibetan settlements, continues to use profits for those camps.

The industry has had its set-backs. For example, in 1977-78, the market fell into a slump, attributed to over-production and buyer fatigue with the same old snow lions and dragons. Rug-makers came to realise there was a larger market in Europe, particularly in West Germany and Switzerland, if they went beyond the traditional designs. Kathmandu producers gradually shifted from "ethnic" Tibetan carpets to producing rugs that could become a household item in Western homes. These so-called "Tibeto-Nepali carpets," characterised by designs that had more open spaces and softer or more "natural" hues seem to have hit the mark.

Such bullish claims may be excused in the wake of unprecedented exports. Twice a week,

a Soviet Illushin cargo jet with carpets ladders off the runway at Kathmandu's airport. Chartered by Lufthansa, each flight is laden with 25-30 tons of Tibeto-Nepali carpets bound for European markets. Even with this flight, there is at least a 200 ton backlog at the airport apron awaiting shipment. "We need many more flights to satisfy this demand. It takes months to make a delivery," says a producer.

One analyst who has studied the market says that while Nepal is already a major supplier of rugs to the world market, competing with established exporter countries like Morocco, it can win an even larger market share. Ironically, it is the very coarse (some would say "poor") quality of Nepal's rugs that guarantees the market. The crooked lines that give the Kathmandu export its "hand-crafted" look is said to be its appeal. The use of Tibetan sheep wool in a fifty-fifty blend with New Zealand wool gives Nepali carpets, in the words of carpet salesmen, "springiness, longevity and shine." This same blend or "feel" is not available to other producers, either in India (they cannot get the Tibetan wool) or in Tibet (they don't use New Zealand wool). Also Nepali producers have been able to adapt quickly to changing customer tastes and to deliver on commitments.

### INDUSTRIAL HAZARDS

Despite impressive exports, the rug business has its problems. They range the whole gamut of issues from child labour and working conditions to the lack of quality control and increasing competition.

A major drawback is the lack of training facilities, not only to prepare weavers but also managers, designers and quality controllers. Despite the size of the industry, all training takes place on-the-job.

Carpet weavers are paid according to sq m of rug produced. Depending on the number of knots and the pattern, a sq m can take up to four days to produce. Prior to their agitation of June 1990, their wages ranged from NRs200 to NRs250 per sq m. Negotiations, following the strikes, resulted in the increased rate of NRs350 per sq m. Those who work in the not-for-profit Carpet Trading Centre receive better wages of up to NRs400 per sq m, with a 15 per cent bonus for good work done, according to manager Thinley Paljor.

The cost of producing a carpet today is NRs1,615 per sq m (approximately US\$54 at NRs30 per US dollar) according to the Central Carpet Industry Association in Kathmandu. The Government has fixed an export floor price of US\$72 per sq. m. for washed and US\$67

for unwashed rugs. Because of falling wool prices, many producers say that the government's floor price is too high, which leaves room for undercutting by producers in India.

For an industry as vital as Nepal's carpet industry, there is as yet no authority to ensure quality and minimum standards of production. Wholesale buyers have been put off because some manufacturers are using blends of 70 per cent New Zealand wool and only 30 per cent Tibetan wool. This is due to the cheaper New Zealand wool and also because of declining consignment and quality of wool from Tibet. A few years ago, some producers even resorted to using wool trimmed from finished rugs, which only earned buyers' distrust and a temporary lull in the market.

Until recently, the carpets were "washed", that is, chemically treated by the importing agencies, mostly in West Germany. At present, however, with the installation of a washing plant about 70 per cent of rugs are exported in "finished" form. This development and the direct cargo connection to Frankfurt have drawn retailers directly to Nepal.

But the washing process is hazardous to the workers as it involves handling acids and alkalis, mostly without adequate safeguards, and most washing plants pass the dangerous and untreated effluents into the nearest sewer or ditch. The environmental impact of washing may be significant; however, no studies have been done on this subject.

Another health-related problem not adequately addressed is the respiratory problems that are caused by loose fibre in the air in the carpet factories. This particularly affects the women who card, spin and weave.

## WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The glossy travel magazines tend to romanticise carpet-weaving as a cheerful vocation. Actually, many of today's carpet factory workers are refugees of another kind. They are economic refugees fleeing Nepal's rural poverty. Most of the non-Tibetan weavers are from such highland tribes as Tamangs, Gurungs and Rais. Lately, Brahmins, Chhetris and, interestingly, Dhimals from the Tarai, too, have begun drifting in in search of employment.

Most of the workers are women. A recent study by "Freeddeal", a legal support and research group in Kathmandu indicated that 19 per cent of carpet workers are children under 14; 33 per cent are minors between ages 14 and 16; 30 per cent are women; and only 18 per cent are adult males.

Women and the bigger children work the looms while infants and smaller children play nearby. The factories are mostly cramped and ill-ventilated. Workers are brought in by contractors and paid by them. Because wages are based on individual output, weavers tend to work up to 12 hours a day.

Young village girls can fall easy prey to unscrupulous middlemen, says Prabha Thacker,

Sunder Bhawani of Dolpa Carpet Industries feels that the issue of child labour has been blown out of proportion in Nepal due to "marketing politics". He says "Indian producers, targeted by children's rights groups, can no longer employ children with ease. So they are now trying to sabotage the Nepali market by raking up the issue."

## LOOKING AT INDIA

Nepali carpet producers have other worries when they look south of the border. Says Binod Gyawali of Namaste Carpets, "The made-in-Nepal label has been helping us sell all along, but how long can goodwill alone keep us ahead?"

Nepali exporters point out that the Indian Government provides cash incentives of between 18 and 21 per cent in export earnings. They say Tibetan carpet producers in Dalhousie, Ludhiana, Gangtok, Benaras and Dharamsala are in an increasingly advantageous position than Nepali producers.

At present, the facilities given to Nepal include import facilities under the open general license scheme, the lifting of customs duties on material imports and exemption from income tax on export earnings.

The Tibetan refugees gave Nepal a whole new industry, but are today's carpets Tibetan? The Tibetan motifs of the 1960s have been replaced by patterns that are more likely to be geometric abstracts or fancy creations of design studios in Frankfurt or Munich sent over by telefax machines to producers in Nepal.

These carpets are not Tibetan or Nepali -- nor even Tibeto-Nepali. Their design may be European; their content a mixture of Tibetan and New Zealand wool. The craftsmanship is from a labour pool from the Nepali hills and plains and the Tibetan diaspora and their management Tibetan and Nepali. Carpet-making, in the end, has spawned a dynamic Nepali industry that has staked an enviable niche in the modern marketplace.

B. Bhattarai is a reporter for Kathmandu's *The Rising Nepal* daily.



who has just completed a study of female workers in 44 carpet units in Kathmandu. She is critical about the working conditions of the women she studied and expresses special concern for the fate of young women workers.

The carpet producers are said to prefer children over adults because their deft hands make them ideal weavers. According to a study on children employed in carpet factories, by the group Child Workers in Nepal, 35 out of a sample of 37 youngsters worked an average of 14 hours a day. Also, half the children were paid through relatives or middlemen who kept some of the money for themselves.

Gauri Pradhan, Director of Child Workers in Nepal, says his group is contemplating various ways to tackle the problem such as putting labels, and asking buyers to purchase only rugs that have labels certifying that child workers were not used for production.

Seven Powers

# Transmitting the Teachings

*Doing no harm whatsoever,  
Practice virtue perfectly;  
Tame your mind completely--  
This is the teaching of the Buddha.*  
-from the Vinaya.

(Translated in Kathmandu  
by Ngawang Chodron, an American nun.)

by Constance Wilkinson

Nepal, birthplace of the Buddha, has long been a focus for the transmission of Buddhist teachings, particularly of the traditions of the Newari Vajrayana Buddhism and Theravada Buddhism. Since 1959, in the wake of the Tibetan diaspora, Nepal has been serving as well as a vital place to preserve and propagate the teachings of Tibetan Buddhism, which have now been virtually eliminated from their own native land.

Although, particularly in the West, there seems to be a natural sympathy toward Tibetans in exile, there is also little real knowledge about the Tibetan Buddhist teachings which formed the vital centre of their culture. In part, this lack of knowledge is due to the infancy of any translating tradition done by actual practitioners. In Tibet, it took some 500 years for all the major texts and commentaries to be translated into Tibetan by practitioners who first made an arduous journey to India, learned Sanskrit, studied with Buddhist masters, and returned to Tibet to translate and transmit what they had learned.

In contrast, it has only been 30 years since Tibetan teachers came into exile, a relatively short period of contact between students and teachers. Ironically, it is the exile itself which has been responsible for creating the conditions for Western students and scholar-translators to be able to study with some seriousness Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, language and religion (which is not "lamaism").

## MISCONCEPTION

The first translations of Tibetan Buddhist teachings were done by well-meaning people such as Evans-Wentz, L.A. Waddell and others who were strongly influenced by Christian conceptions; words like "soul" -- which are explicitly not Tibetan Buddhist (or even any other kind of Buddhist) slipped in and became erroneously conjoined to dharma texts. Such mis-translated ideas, based on a Christianised vocabulary mixed in with a kind of airhead

mysticism (such as that in the notorious books of the Scot, "Lobsang Rampa"), fueled the pop culture version of "Tibetan Buddhism" which persist to this day. Hence, the Hollywood notion of "reincarnation" which involved belief that there is some "soul" which is reborn time after time; it must be a terrible shock to discover that within the Buddhist teachings there is an explicit denial of any soul -- indeed, there is a denial of the true existence of any "self", any "ego", any "I" at all. In fact, it is precisely this fictive belief in "I" which is held responsible for the various sufferings of sentient beings. To quote Kamalasila, a great scholar who himself made the long trip to Tibet to assist in the first translations of dharma texts: "The cause for restlessness is the ego-centred mind. When on has the idea of "I", there is no end to ego. Only Buddha said that this "I" is essenceless, no one else did. Thus there is no way other than his teachings to find peace of mind."

*Karma* (Sanskrit; in Tibetan *las*) is another a word which has somehow sidled into Western vocabularies with a totally inaccurate meaning; its pop culture definition is of some ineluctable, predestined fate; we see characters

Steven Powers



Baudha's monastic skyline.

in movies such as *Shogun* bemoaning their "karma" as if it had fallen upon them from above, unmerited, like when one is unhappily surprised by feeling a bird's excrement dropping down onto one's freshly-washed hair.

An accurate translation of *las* (pronounced "lay") would be, simply, action; the wider implication being more apparent in the traditional phrase *las-rgyu'-bras*, action/cause/effect, a shorthand meaning that all actions serve as the causes for inevitable results, just as in normal circumstances (save a trip to the moon), dropping a stone results in that stone's falling to the

ground. Thus, there is the notion that negative or positive actions will, sooner or later, bring about correspondingly negative or positive results, leading one to consider well the consequences of one's actions.

Similarly, Tibetan Buddhist notions of mind are crucial, widely misunderstood, and extremely difficult to translate. The difference between *sems* and *blo* is something like the difference between discursive mind and the intellect -- but not quite; *rnam par rtok pa* (literally: "to think in aspects -- aspect-ly -- as opposed to having complete understanding") refers to thoughts themselves. A clear distinction is made between thoughts, and the aware mind in which such thoughts occur (or, in the majority of cases, the *unaware* mind in which various thoughts occur.)

## AUTHENTIC TEACHERS

One can see that, to avoid misunderstanding, the accurate dissemination of the Tibetan Buddhist teachings is heavily dependent upon a sound foundation of textual and oral translation into Western languages, based on extensive study of the teachings with those who know them best -- the distinguished exiled lamas of Tibet. Unless one has been taught that what translates into English as "emptiness" is an entirely different beast from some nihilistic nothingness, and, indeed, that the nihilistic point of view is specifically refuted in philosophical texts (as in the eternalist viewpoint), it's all too easy to wander off on an entirely wrong track.

Kathmandu has for many years been serving as a centre for transmission of Tibetan dharma and, like the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Dharamsala, India, as a centre for translation from Tibetan into Western languages (primarily English and French). Here -- mainly in Baudha -- a would-be translator can study colloquial and classical Tibetan

language and Tibetan Buddhist religion and philosophy, and can choose from a wide variety of schools, teachers, and teachings. Almost in spite of itself, because the education of translators has not been given much importance, Kathmandu has proven a fertile ground for training the first generation of Western practitioner-translators.

Translators, budding translators, and persons seriously interested in the practice of Buddhism flock to Nepal to study without the umbrella of institutions -- and without their subsidies -- purely from a love of the subject. With the computer revolution sweeping into Baudha around 1986, there has been a ten-fold

surge in the publication of translations. There is a 1,000-page autobiography of Shabkar Tsogdruk Rangdrol nearing publication, as is the biography of Thangtong Gyalpo, a 14th-century-yogin-cum-bridge-building-engineer. A flurry of books, largely technical advice on meditation, has been brought out by Rangjung Yeshe publishers -- and these all represent but the tip of the iceberg.

In terms of oral translation and the oral dissemination of teachings, there are "seasons" in the Kathmandu Valley when public teachings according to the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism are given and translated into Western languages; people from all around the world come to attend teachings -- from Europe, Japan, Malaysia, America and Australia.

Just in the past six months, Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, taught a group of about sixty person a philosophical text called "Making the Distinction Between Ordinary Phenomena and Phenomena as They Truly Are." Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche and his father,

the renowned Dzogchen practitioner Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche, taught a seminar on "The Four Seals of Existence" and on a short text on mind by Mipham Rinpoche to a group of a hundred. The initiations and teachings of the Sakya school called "Lamdre" were given for a month by Chogye Trichen Rinpoche to another hundred persons. These seminars were taught by the exile lamas in Tibetan; the transmission of the teachings was possible because of practitioner/translators -- largely Nepal-trained or Nepal-based.

In addition, there are lamas such as Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Tenga Rinpoche, and Chatral Rinpoche, who teach individuals according to their needs and capacities; contact with them depends upon locating a willing individual capable of translating what they teach. There are, moreover, newly arrived lamas from Tibet filtering into the Valley each year; it is very moving to hear translated teachings from lamas such as Yangthang Tulku, who underwent torture and imprisonment, about how to

generate impartial compassion toward all sentient beings.

A key figure in the tradition of translation and dissemination is Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso. Renowned both as a meditation practitioner and an expert in philosophy, he founded the Marpa Institute for Translation in 1986 to train a new generation of translators for the almost endless task of translating the massive amount of philosophical and religious literature into English and other languages. Named after a famous translator-yogin, the institute flourished until Nepali visas regulations were changed to prevent stays longer than three months. Since the courses lasted for six months each year, the Institute moved to Bodh Gaya in 1989 and to New Delhi in 1990. But Khenpo's 100-odd would-be translators await their return to study in what is arguably the world's most fertile ground for what they do. ▷

C. Wilkinson is a student at the Marpa Institute of Translation.

## Ignoring the Neighbourhood

Somewhat successful in wooing western countries, the Tibetan exile government seems to treat South Asia as a backwater. Understandably, the primary focus of the public relations effort has been to gather international (read North American and European) support. Faced with the stringent restrictions placed by India and, more so, Nepal on Tibetan activism, Dharamsala has been concentrating elsewhere.

The lack of interest in Tibetan affairs among even educated South Asians reflects the realpolitik that has guided official Indian and Nepali policy, which resists any talk of Tibet as being anything but part of China. But a foreign policy position need not have the result of burying or discounting the social, cultural and economic ties that the Himalayan rimland populations have had with Tibetans for centuries.

Though Tibetan refugees find themselves among South Asians, they have either given up trying or have not tried hard enough to reach out to the Indian and Nepali politicians and intelligentsia. Lodi Gyari, who till recently handled international relations for the government-in-exile, says, "One has to be candid. We have failed in reaching out to the region. For immediate gains, we felt it important to emphasize raising awareness in the West because only the West has the economic and political power to make an impact on China. But for the long term, it is more impor-

tant to create an awareness in India and Nepal than in, say, the United States."

It is easy for Tibetans to be waylaid by Westerners because the latter come looking for them. Somehow, the exile Tibetans' cause seems to have struck a deeper resonance in the West. Whereas the Nepali or Indian is liable to look at Tibetans as just one more ethnic group among so many, except that these are refugees from "Bhot".

In the United States and Europe, it is not uncommon to find overzealous Westerners who are more Tibetan than Tibetans themselves: proclaiming their Buddhist beliefs, the righteousness of Tibetan nationalism, and the virtues of remaining traditional. Having made their point, these vicarious Tibetans return to their comfortable homes on the outskirts of New Haven, Zurich or Dusseldorf.

Many of them also make frequent visits to places where Tibetans are to be found, such as Kathmandu and Dharamsala. Says a bookshop owner in Dharamsala, "By and large, the Westerners who come here are misfits running away from their own societies. Their adulation is another kind of tranquiliser for us Tibetans."

Says Tashi Tsering, a Tibetan historian, "We have totally neglected the Indian public and media. As a result, the Tibetan issue never gets play on Doordarshan. The Dalai Lama's office has always been more interested in western journalists with fancy video cameras."

Vijay Kranti, a journalist close to the Dalai Lama, agrees. "They do not go to the Indian press except when there is a demonstration in New Delhi. Tibetans sometimes forget that they are as Third World as Nepalis and Indians and that this is the society they have to influence."

Occasionally, members of the Tibet Youth Congress and the Tibetan Womens Association attract attention in Delhi with demonstrations and hunger strikes. Given Nepal's extreme vulnerability to pressure from Beijing, however, the Tibetan exile community in Kathmandu is cautious to the point of inaction, though they have more than made their presence felt in business and in religious activities. Even the Bhutan People's Party's liaison office makes more noise in Kathmandu than the Dalai Lama's representative. When Tibetans fleeing across the border are captured and handed back to the Chinese, unless you are connected to the refugee grapevine, you would not know it.

It angers Tibetan officials in Dharamsala when they hear of diplomatic toasts that refer to "age-old ties" between China and India, or China and Nepal. "Those age-old ties were all with Lhasa, never with Beijing, which was thousands of miles away," says one official.

That might well be true, but in the Indian or Nepali realpolitik, a billion Chinese totals a billion people. And, the representatives of 1.2 lakh Tibetan refugees, courting western states, need to find time to do less-glamorous but as crucial lobbying in South Asia's less-receptive capitals. - KMD

# Dharma in Flux

*In exile, Tibetan Buddhism adapts to new conditions and to new followers.*

by Anup Raj Joshi

**K**arma Pemba is a 13-year-old Tibetan monk at the Thrangu Tashi Sholing monastery in Baudha. His parents fled Tibet to settle in Gorkha in central Nepal, where he was born. He was ordained as a monk last year, but so far religion has only meant studying, eating and playing together with other monks like him in his *gomba*.

It is likely that Karma will know only a monk's life. But this is okay, says he, tittering and hiding his face in the sleeves of his red robe, "I like my guru and I like my *gomba*. I am glad my father sent me here."

## DHARMA CENTRES

Until early this century Westerners looked upon Tibetan Buddhism, or Vajrayana, the indestructible path, as a corrupt version of Buddhism. That many Tibetan masters ate meat and visualised gods and goddesses garlanded with skeletons convinced British observers that this form of Buddhism was inferior to the Theravada tradition, prevalent in South and South-East Asia.

More recently, however, scholars have realised that this view is unfounded and, what it more, that Tibetan Buddhism has preserved the unbroken lineage of and developed on the whole breadth of Buddhism as it existed in India seven centuries ago.

Today, the world over, there is growing interest in Tibetan Buddhism, and this can be attributed chiefly to the increased access to Tibetan dharma teachers since their exile from their homeland. Dharma centres have sprung up in more than 50 countries -- there are an estimated 200 in North America alone.

But even as these centres attract more new members, monasteries may be seeing a decline in the number of Tibetan monks like Karma Pemba. Before 1959, the Sera, Drepung and Ganden monasteries in Tibet altogether housed more than 20,000 inmates. In exile, Tibetans have recreated these "big three" in Mysore, South India, with a population of roughly 8,000 monks.

## WHAT PRACTICE

Today's non-Tibetan followers are seeking ways to make Vajrayana more relevant to their daily lives. While some practitioners still enter

three-year or even twelve-year retreats, most live at home, meshing religion with daily-life. They learn the practice of Tibetan Buddhism through short seminars and retreats.

Frederique Lawn, 26, of Switzerland is an exception. He has already spent three years studying the Tibetan tantric way at Baudha, which over the past decade has become the hub of Tibetan learning for Westerners.

Lawn quit college and came to South Asia in search of "the truth," which he found in Tibetan Buddhism. He has lived in Kathmandu, mostly without a visa, and spends his meagre saving following rinpoches (Tibetan masters) to India and back.

For Lawn and others like him in Baudha, Tibetan Buddhism fulfills a need not addressed in their own cultures. "It teaches emptiness, a philosophy which enriches rather than takes away from your life," explains Lawn. Understanding "emptiness", in fact, is what brings thousands of seekers every year from all over to Baudha.

"Emptiness is like a snake. If you catch it at the wrong end, you are bound to get bitten." Thus spoke the sage-scholar Nagarjuna, who expounded the first treatise on Madhyamika philosophy, the essence of Vajrayana. Says Sridhar Rana, a long-time practitioner, "Emptiness ultimately means *praitiya-samudpada*, or interdependent existence. Nothing has inherent existence and the recognition of this fact, is itself, emptiness."

## A MATTER OF FAITH

But for many Tibetans, like 25-year-old Paljor, who is studying commerce in a Kathmandu college, religion remains a matter of traditional faith. He visits monasteries on special occasions, such as Losar, the Tibetan New Year. Paljor sports a *zi* around his neck and wears blue jeans. He says, "Gompas are nice."

But he criticises the well-heeled Tibetans of Thamel who go around in cars. "They don't know anything, and they don't have faith," he says.

Most Tibetans, however, do have faith and are content to circumambulate stupas spinning prayer wheels and reciting *om mane padme hum* as

they turn beads; but the finer points of "emptiness" would elude them as well. Nonetheless, these lay Tibetans turn to rinpoches for blessings and in times of strife. Says 32-year-old Tempa Sherpa, a well-to-do shopkeeper in Baudha, "I go to the rinpoches whenever I have family problems, social problems, even financial problems. They can help."

Some of the younger Kathmandu-raised, English-educated refugees question whether all rinpoches are truly detached from material things. A young Tibetan, who asked not to be identified, spoke critically of one tulku (reincarnate lama) who is said to have NRs4 million to build himself a mansion.

"I think most rinpoches are genuine," says Tashi, 23, of Thamel, who was educated in a private school in Darjeeling. "But I do not know what they teach. So, I pray in the English way. My mom goes to Swayambhu to see a rinpoche, but I don't."

Although many seminars and teachings provide non-traditional opportunities to study the religion in Kathmandu Valley, few younger Tibetans attend. Of the 60 participants who attended a seminar conducted by Thrangu Rinpoche at his monastery in Baudha in January, fewer than five were urbanite Nepalis. There were no Tibetans.

There could be several reasons why younger Tibetans do not show up at such teachings. Seminars are advertised in foreign publications and tend to be too expensive for lay Tibetans. Further, the teachings are conducted in highly Sanskritised Tibetan and translated into English -- both being of little use to most Tibetans.

## RINPOCHES

The seminars, however, are important to rinpoches because they help defray the high costs of their gompas. Aside from Tibetan



The traditional way: Rumtek Monastery, Sikkim.

Stephanie Colvey



## Tibetans Inside and Outside

exiles and Westerners, the Chinese in Hong Kong and Taiwan have also recently started to provide funds for building and maintaining the monasteries. Today, there are 12 monasteries in Boudha, and altogether about 150 in India and Nepal.

Some rinpoches stress the importance of monasteries. "Once you have gompas you have other things like hospitals and schools," says Choklin Rinpoche of the Sher Dup Ling Monastery in Boudha.

Others, however, believe that such institutionalisation is not necessary. Namkhai Norbu, a rinpoche with centres all over the world and his base in Italy, believes that big monasteries are not important and that you can teach the essence of Tibetan Buddhism anywhere by adapting to specific societies. As he wrote in a recent book, one does not need intellectual, cultural or historical knowledge for the study of Zogchen (a form of Tibetan Buddhism), which "cannot be said to belong to the culture of any country."

Making Buddhism adaptable to a new environment might have explained Chogyam Trungpa's success in the west. Trungpa, who founded the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado (the only accredited Buddhist university in the United States) took a British wife, drank and smoked, but he understood the Western mind better than most.

Michael Girodo, a former student of Trungpa who coordinates the Nepal program at the Naropa Institute, says that Naropa continues to change with the times, as Trungpa had envisaged: "Many foreigners are not sure of what they are looking for. Trungpa wanted to provide them with opportunities to explore eastern and western philosophies and world-views. This is why in Naropa we have psychology classes and meditation classes, Tai Chi and theatre."

### REACHING OUT

Tibetan Buddhism is in transition. As it gains new ground around the world, it faces historically unique challenges. More and more, it is addressing the needs not just of Tibetans, but of diverse groups of people, from Japan to Mexico, who seek in Vajrayana a spiritual anchoring to their fast-paced, modern lives.

While Tibetan Buddhism is already adapting itself to the demands of others, is it responding to the changing Tibetan culture in exile? Among younger Tibetans, as the Dalai Lama himself recognises, there may be less faith but more reasoning. This, he said, was good, for what the Tibetans have inherited they must now re-inherit and make their own. Here lies the challenge of the Tibetan monasteries and rinpoches in exile. ▽

Almost every Tibetan refugee talks about that hope of the "return" which will happen, according to the conventional wisdom, when the Dalai Lama and Beijing come to a compromise. In that event, how many refugees will actually return to the old country? Would the refugees be received open-heartedly by Tibetans who never left? The answers are by no means obvious.

There are presently about 120,000 Tibetans in exile. Most of them are in India, living in refugee camps or independently in places like Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Mussorie and Dehra Dun. There are more than 12,000 in Nepal, mostly in Kathmandu and some in refugee camps such as in Pokhara, Dhorpatan and Solu. In Bhutan, there are probably less than one thousand. In addition, there are 2000 or so Tibetans in Europe, 1500 in North America and smaller numbers scattered all over, from the Nordic countries to New Zealand.

One Nepali anthropologist believes that no more than fifty per cent of the diaspora will actually return in the event of a Chinese opening. He says, "The more educated they are, the more westernised they become, the less likely they are to return. This is the experience of all South Asians who have settled abroad and Tibetans can be no exception."

But non-Tibetans who see well-adjusted, successful Tibetan refugees probably misjudge how deep the longing to return to one's own can be. While it is true that the younger refugees who were either born in exile or left Tibet in 1959 as infants have only their parents' memories to lead them back, it is clear that the pain and the insecurity of exile can never be entirely neutralised by economic security or a western-style education.

Says Tenzin Tethong, recently elected kalon in the Dharamsala government, "Living in exile is not easy even after so many years." He believes that "between 80 and 90 per cent of refugees will return if the Dalai Lama returns." Rather than go back to their village of origin, many returnees might settle down in or near metropolitan Lhasa. Also, he said, many might return but continue to maintain business bases that they have spent a lifetime setting up in Nepal or India.

The Dalai Lama himself expects those Tibetans who presently serve in the Chinese bureaucracy to run the government bureaucracy, with the better educated returnees making their contribution in many other fields.

### WELL MET?

The possible reunion between the returnees and the Tibetans within Tibet may not be without problems. Certainly, there will be a painful adjustment process. There is naturally some resentment among those in Tibet who suffered through the Cultural Revolution and other humiliations while the exiles became refugees but free. There is also the Tibetan nomenklatura which has worked in the Chinese-dominated administration for 30 years, whose attitude towards a future political upheaval and redefinition of roles may be somewhat ambivalent.

Some of the future divide may already be evident in exile among the old refugees ("*kyapchoba*") and the "new arrivals" ("*sanjor*"), Tibetans who came out in the early 1980s and never returned. On the main street of Mcleodganj in Dharamsala, the *sanjor* (a term some of them dislike for the hint of condescension it carries) tend to stick together, a little apart. The *kyapchoba* are at ease with Hindi and many in the exile government have convent English. The new arrivals, on the other hand, are at a loss with their Chinese, which is of little use in India and Nepal.

Tibetans refugees were forced to be overnight entrepreneurs when they crossed over in 1959. In Nepal, they created a whole new industry in carpets. In India, they found a niche in the competitive marketplace as wool merchants, buying sweaters wholesale from Haryana factories and peddling them from Madras to Meghalaya and as far as Sri Lanka. They also got busy re-establishing their monasteries, their institutes of higher learning, Tibetan medicine and the performing arts, all of which are in better health than their counterparts in Lhasa.

Compared to this beehive activity in exile, Tibetans within Tibet were mired in the rigid traditions of a Beijing-inspired centralised economy. A senior official who accompanied a Dharamsala delegation into Tibet in 1980 came away feeling that Tibetans he met had lost the "vitality" of Tibetans.

Says the official, "The Chinese occupation seems to have really harmed the psyche of the Tibetans. The scars are telling. The work ethic is not there. They are sullen, not cheerful, and extremely cynical about everything. There is also a streak of dogmatism. We refugees had the Dalai Lama with us, while they were without religion, without a leader and without guidance." -- KMD

## Will the Real Switzerland Please Stand Up?

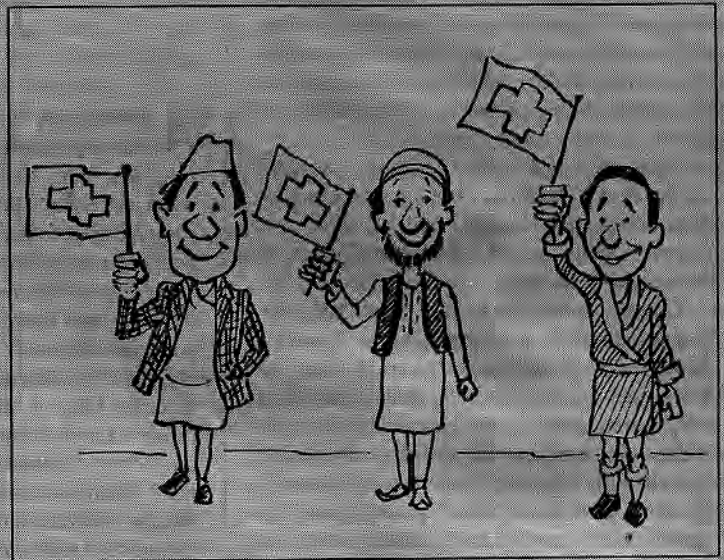
The mountainous country famous for watches and chocolates, neutrality and vaults brimming with dictators' secret bank accounts, has become the vaunted model for Himalayan states with none of the above but plenty of natural beauty.

There is a bidding war in progress as to who deserves to be the Asian "Switzerland". Himachel Pradesh, India's "apple state" - though it produces more potatoes - feels it makes the grade after Kashmir's bid was drowned out in gunfire. But Shimla lacks a lake like the graceful Lac Geneva, whereas Srinagar had Dal and the ski-resort of Gulmarg as its own St. Moritz.

Though there is no record of it, Bhutan, somewhere along the line, must have planned to put in its stakes for the title. But while the French, Italian and Germans seem at least to be talking to each other, the future relationship between the Sarchokpas, Drukpas and Nepalis is still unclear.

When its "104 years of the *krour Rana sashan*" ended in the early 1950s, Nepal firmly set its sights on becoming a Switzerland of the Himalaya. Just to keep up appearances, a watch assembly plant was set up, and buffalo cheese palmed off as yak cheese. For a chocolate-equivalent, there was the rock-hard *chhurpi* and the indigenous more than made up for the Swiss Army Knife, as did the Machapuchare of Pokhara for the Matterhorn of Zermatt.

Last month, P.M. Krishna Prasad Bhattarai told a Kathmandu audience that, if elected, his Nepali Congress Party would



transform Nepal into a Himalayan Singapore. Quick to correct that revisionist *faux pas*, "Supreme Leader" Ganesh Man Singh piped up from the back and corrected Bhattarai, "No, the Switzerland of the East."

Sikkim has now entered the fray. Bolstered by the recent

relaxations which allow more foreign tourists to visit, Chief Minister Nar Bahadur Bhandari recently announced that he was strengthening of the state's tourism infrastructure. But where will all the tourists stay? Said Bhandari, in "Swiss-type cottages."

## The Bamboo and the Rat



The rare flowering of a dwarf-sized bamboo species in Arunachal Pradesh might be welcome news to naturalists, but it worries economists and administrators. The mauve-coloured flower is the harbinger of famine--and of militant violence.

The bamboo's cyclical bloom is said to cause a population explosion among rats, which then set about destroying standing

crops. Famine conditions provide conditions ripe for social upheaval among an already marginalised tribal people.

Bamboos and rats have already played a destructive role in the recent history of two of India's troubled north-eastern "Seven Sisters" - Mizoram and Nagaland -- and Arunachal officials are afraid history might repeat itself in their state.

The flowering of the bamboo species in Arunachal was first noticed last autumn. Soon thereafter, reports began coming in of damage to standing paddy, maize and millet, from Bhalukpong on the Assam border to Seppa valley in the north. In January, the state government reported that 270 families in the East Kameng district were near starvation because of the rat menace. Many other districts were also in crisis.

While the scourge has hit Arunachal Pradesh for the first time in its short history as an Indian state, earlier blooms in

Mizoram and Nagaland have presaged spurts in separatism. Experts say two types of famine, known as Thingtam and Mautam and linked to the cycle of the bamboo flower, strike Mizoram every 50 years. In 1959, the Mautam famine in Mizoram coincided with the swelling ranks of Mizo guerrillas demanding independence from India. Similar patterns have been noticed in Nagaland too, where separatist militants fought a long and bloody war with the Indian army.

The deaths last year of Mizo leader Laldenga and Naga leader Phizo, who brokered peace accords with New Delhi after years of struggle, have left a political vacuum in the north-eastern states. Assam, the largest unit in that part of India, is already under New Delhi's direct rule following an upsurge of secessionism led by militants of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA). Most of Arunachal falls within disputed border areas and

many of its districts, such as Kameng, are inaccessible to outsiders. The escalating famine in Arunachal is therefore a cause of concern for New Delhi as it might herald a fresh cycle of violence.

The perplexing biological link that seems to exist between bamboo and rats is being investigated by scientists at the North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) in Shillong, Meghalaya and New Delhi's Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR).

In February, a newspaper supplement paid by the Arunachal government on "Statehood Day" remarked, "Unlike the other neighbouring States of the north-east, the overall picture of Arunachal Pradesh is one of stability, peace and tranquility." Unless, of course, the bamboo and the rat destroy that idyll.



## White Waters of the Seti

What good is a well-intentioned irrigation project if your field is then a cemented expanse where nothing grows? That is the unique and devastating problem facing the villagers of Arba Phant and Khumar villages ever since the misbegotten benevolence of the Seti Irrigation Project brought in the white waters of the Seti Gandaki.

Earlier, the farmers used to irrigate their fields with water from Kahun Khola, but the project came in and channeled the flow of the Seti, known for the heavy load of talcum-fine white silt (hence the name) it carries as a result of cutting its way through the limestone hills upstream. The project, completed with Chinese aid in the summer of 1985, "irrigates" 1030 hectares of land, besides generating 1500 KW of electric power.

The project's canal brought in such a volume of silt (diatomaceous clay) that the crop fields have been converted into cemented lots. The "Seti Cement" can be up to four inches thick, and one farmer actually used the silt to seal his leaking roof.



Rice field covered with "white silt".

The crop yields have plummeted. According to the Soil Science Department in Kathmandu, the paddy yield of a typical farmer in Arba went down from 3000 kg per hectare in 1984 to 1750 kg/ha in 1986.

The Agriculture Development office in Pokhara has tried spraying affected fields with zinc sulphate and "micro-nutrients", but the silt is too thick. For a technical explanation of the same, listen to Dhruba Joshy, a soil scientist who is extremely concerned with what is happening in Pokhara: "Due to the layer of diatomaceous clay deposit on the topsoil, plants are unable to gain sufficient nutrients from the roots. In the presence of the layer of Calcium Carbonate, the soil beneath is unable to conduct

oxidation by decomposing sulfur on top of the soil. In other words, air space is being replaced by highly alkaline clay."

One farmer tried a local cure. It is not clear who gave him the idea, but he applied 80 crushed dry cell batteries to one half of his field. The "treated" part gave him a yield of 4270 kg and the untreated part only 3465 kg. He seemed to have hit upon something, but then next year his entire crop was destroyed, batteries or no batteries.

Kailash Shrestha, ex-Deputy Director of the Seti Irrigation Project, says the first big mistake was not to consider sedimenta-

tion before building the canal. A 1976 study had shown clearly the dangers posed to irrigation by the Seti's high silt content. But the Chinese, building the NRs500 million project, would not listen to anyone, says Shrestha.

The Chinese seem to have belatedly noticed what the project has wrought and have promised a NRs8 million desiltation basin. But since the Seti silt is extra-fine it will not settle easily and a standard desiltation basin will not do. Besides, says Joshi, "Where will you store the silt? The Seti's silt load is so high that you will need another Pokhara Valley just to store the silt."

Meanwhile, who will desilt the fields of Arba Phant and Khumar, or is there some use for cemented lots in the middle of Pokhara valley? An airport, perhaps? - **Rosha B. Chitrakar**



Seti's white silt joins clear Kahun Khola.

## Lethal Fish

One morning 23 years ago, the townfolk of Ridi Bazaar in Gulmi District, West Nepal, were astonished to see Ridi Khola below their bazaar full of dead fish floating downriver. They caught as many as they could, and the Ridi diet for following months was made up of fish and more fish.

The evening before, a Malaria Eradication Programme spray team had washed their DDT equipment on the waters of the Ridi Khola at Kharjyang, 15 km upstream from the Bazaar. The fish-kill was massive, and the villagers had learnt of one more way to fish without nets or a line.

Previously, they had used explosives brought in by military men on leave, or bought from local contractors. Also, there have existed more traditional means of mass-killing fish, using leaf, fruits or sap of indigenous plants such as Chilaune, Khirra, Mauwa and Moidalfor.



Cooking Barangdi Khola fish.

That one negligent act of the DDT crew more than two decades ago brought lethal tech-

nology to a corner of Nepal, and the unknowing villagers took to it as a bonanza. After DDT and explosives were prohibited, the villagers turned to pesticide readily available in the market and at agriculture-support centres.

On 10 November, villagers of Kallabari just north of Tansen town bought a bottle of Thiodine and poured the contents into the Barangdi Khola. Tam Bahadur Pachabhajya, an ex-serviceman who was one of the "fishermen", had a hearty meal of fish that night. Within three days, he was suffering from severe respiratory and mental disorders, and he has yet to fully recover. There are others like him.

Today, the silent killers of fish include pesticide brands such as Metacid, Metasiston, Malathian, Aldrin and Thiodine. No one reads the labels and warnings. Much of the fish available in the local markets can be expected to be thoroughly contaminated and toxic. The *bhattis*, roadside stalls along the Pokhara-Bhairawa highway serve pesticide-laced fish to unsuspecting passengers. Today, local farmers are also using pesticides on the monkeys and porcupines which raid their crops.

The loss of other aquatic and terrestrial life through misuse of chemicals must be significant, but no public health or environ-

mental agency is monitoring. What are the long-term risk to health to innocent villagers who

today happily pour bottles of carcinogen-laden pesticides into local streams and rivulets? And

what of the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems that are damaged?

One of the main watercourses victimised by chemical pollution has been the Tinau Khola, which is tapped by bustling Butwal town for its drinking water. The fish-kills are only the most outrageous consequence of the availability of pesticides. Even in their normal use for controlling pests in vegetables, fruits and other crops, there are problems with pesticides. Sprayed produce is not supposed to reach the consumer until after 10 days so that the residue is inactive, but no one is counting. - Vinaya Kumar Kasajoo



Ridi Khola during Maghe Sakranti mela.

V. K. Kasajoo

## Vote for Trees

If the Nepali Government needed a master-document on how to protect the country's fast-disappearing Tarai forests, such a document now exists. It is the report of the Forest Conservation Study Task Force, headed by leftist politician Drona Prasad Acharya, which was officially presented in early February.

After four months of study, public meetings and field visits in 25 Tarai and Inner-Tarai districts, the Task Force concluded that encroachment into forest land by landless settlers (*sukum-*

*basis*), as well as the politics behind such encroachment, constitute the major threat to the last remaining patches of Tarai green.

Other problems listed by Acharya's team are: population growth and poverty, negligible community participation in conservation, trade in firewood, and forest-felling for building development infrastructure.

The report lists 150 no-nonsense recommendations, including a proposal that all *sukumbasis* who have entered the forests since April 1990 be ousted. Those to be settled in the future, says the Task Force,

should be issued "*hariyo purjas*", "green" land-ownership certificates in place of the traditional land-ownership certificates *lal-purjas*. *Hariyo purja* land would be non-transferable but would be valid as collateral for bank loans.

The Task Force has asked the government to effectively explain to the population that under no condition will anyone be allowed anymore to settle on forest land.

Having identified settlement by *sukumbasis* as the major threat to the Tarai forests, the Task Force also suggests the lowering of land ceilings and handing over surplus land to landless labourers. It is not yet clear who will bell that cat, though.

The most important segment of the report deals with the threat to the Tarai forests between now and the general elections, which are slated for 12 May. These forests have always been the first victims of political upheaval and uncertainty, when law and order mechanism in the Nepali hinterland tend to collapse. Trees, as the only resource instantly convertible into cash, are the first to fall. Large chunks of the eastern Tarai forests disappeared in the run-up to the 1980 plebiscite (on to have or not to have the Panchayat), and there were felling sprees during the last two elections under the Panchayat.

Forests have continuously fallen to marauders since the April 1990 people's movement, and

the Task Force sees the destruction accelerating in the months ahead. To prevent green mayhem around election-time, it recommends that all tree-felling, even on private plots, be banned 15 days before nomination papers are filed by candidates till 15 days after the election results are announced.

"This must be done. Otherwise, while the rest of the population is busy with the elections, the opportunists will head for the woods," says Hem Bahadur Bista, Secretary-General of the Nepal Forum of Environmental Communicators and member of the Task Force. Bista sees the political parties as the key to saving what remains of the Tarai forests before, during and beyond the elections. "The *sukumbasis* represent vote banks, and parties and politicians must resist the temptation to pander to them."

For the first time, there is a plan to prevent forest destruction from accelerating during a period of political instability. The only question is, whether the interim government of Nepal and political parties are committed enough not to miss the forests for the votes. - Binod Bhattarai



The task force in a field visit, Western Tarai.

# Thus Far, and Further

## A View on Indian Activism

*Over the last two decades, environmental activism in India has matured into a strong voice which demands a new order of development that is both socially just and ecologically sustainable.*

by Smitu Kothari

In the period immediately after Independence, a majority of Indians who were politically and socially concerned were mobilised in the massive exercise of "nation-building". Propagated by the team of planners and political leaders led by Jawaharlal Nehru, mega-development projects were seen as the pillars on which would be based the country's "quantum leap" from a "backward" to a modern society.

Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, groups and communities across the Sub-Continent had protested against the exploitative policies of the colonial government. From widespread forest-based movements in the Himalayan foothills to revolts and demonstration in tribal areas all over, these assertions represent a long-standing commitment to among the people to protect their natural resource heritage. However, the voices advocating a more sustainable use of natural resources were temporarily stilled during the initial years of independence, swamped by the focus on mega-development.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, it became increasingly clear that the existing development policies and projects were leading to intensive ecological degradation and the wresting from millions their sources of livelihood. With ecological collapse in many areas, large numbers of people lost their access and control over productive resources like land, forests and water.

### INTRINSICALLY GREEN

In the Garhwal Himalaya, for instance, the large-scale denudation of forests led not only to the escalation of landslides and floods but also to loss of water, fuelwood, fodder and soil fertility. This process also compounded the debilitating burden on women, who had to go even further for water and bio-mass needs.

Spontaneously at first and then more consciously and systematically, the women of the area mobilised themselves against the multiple forces which were jeopardising their very survival. People like Sunderlal Bahuguna and Chandni Prasad Bhatt facilitated the strengthen-

ing of this people's movement, popularly known as the Chipko Andolan.

Elsewhere in the country, the growing awareness of the adverse consequences of the dominant policies of economic development led to a wide range of popular movements which have mostly evolved around the use, access and rights over natural resources. From the struggles of traditional fisher-folk of the Ganga and its tributaries (Ganga Mukti Andolan) to those on India's coasts (such as the National Fishermen's Forum); from the popular movements against large dams (Narmada Bachao Andolan, Tehri Virodhi Samiti) to the responses against the erosion of rights over common property resources; from nationwide mobilisation against polluting industries (Bhopal, Sriram Chemical) to agitations against military establishments (Karwar Naval base, Baliapal Missile Rang); from opposition to nuclear power (Narora, Kahrapara, Kaiga) to the growing awareness of the adverse impact of Green Revolution; from the exposure to widespread displacement caused by development projects to the perils of importing obsolete technologies under "technology transfer" projects -- all this and more represent the diversity and breadth of the popular movements in India that are intrinsically "green."

### SYSTEMATIC RESPONSE

Inspired by these movements and by the publication of reports like the *First and second Citizen's report on the Indian Environment*, activists, academics and journalists have begun to respond more systematically to the multiple breakdowns in India's natural resource regimes. For example, they have thoroughly studied the long-term dangers of the Green Revolution package, which is based on a shrinking genetic base of hybrid seed, chemical fertilisers and pesticides.

The Green Revolution has not only enhanced the control of transnational corporations, but have led to a variety of environmental and social problems -- pollution and decline of ground water tables, pesticide-related deaths, declining soil productivity, mar-

ginalisation of small farmers, the slow collapse of diverse indigenous practices of land and water management, and so on.

There has also been significant popular writing on the impact of forest decimation; the disastrous consequences of monoculture; the side-lining of indigenous species; and unbalanced economic the unbalanced growth which has primarily benefited the large and medium farmers.

The Bhopal Gas disaster and its tragic aftermath lay bare hazardous and shocking industrial practices, as well as official apathy towards the victims. The pervasive indifference to disasters such as Bhopal among the growing middle-class only compounded the tragedy.

Against all the indifference, however, there did rise some popular movements which gradually gained self-confidence. Witness, for example, the mobilisation against the establishment of the Baliapal Missile Range in Arise, which would displace tens of thousands of traditional fisher-folk and natural farmers from some of India's finest agricultural land -- and all this in the name of "national security".

### POLITICS AS USUAL

Wherever they could, politicians have ignored each of these expressions of the struggle for human rights, cultural survival and environmental security. Mainstream politics is still committed to the model of development that aggressively forces millions into homelessness, a state in which they become victims of repression by the state and others.

As each of the new voices becomes steadier and louder, the official attempts to stifle discussion is strengthened. Not only is the demand for dialogue on the social, economic and ecological costs of these destructive projects not heeded, often, organised attempts are made at spreading disinformation which invariably exaggerates the benefits of the projects and questions the motives of those seeking greater accountability.

The significance of a Narmada or a Baliapal struggle goes far beyond the local and the specific. They raise issues that go to the very heart of democracy: Is the government the only repository of information on what it considers to be "beneficial" development projects? When conventional avenues of seeking public accountability are met with repression and pernicious propaganda, what are the channels for dissent and debate? When institutions like the Courts abdicate their fundamental responsibilities, where does the citizen make an appeal?



Chaya Library

Narmada marchers in Madhya Pradesh; a fasting Baba Amte.

### SOME RECENT EVENTS

In July 1988, Baba Amte, who with tens of thousands of local tribals had opposed the Inchampalli and Bhopalpatnam dams on the Indrawati river in central India, called a national get-together on "the politics of big dams." Activists from all over the country met at his Ashram in Anadavan, Maharashtra. Uniting "with a common resolve" affirming their basic right over productive natural resources, the gathering expressed its collective concern regarding the unsustainable utilisation of the country's water resources -- a process that gave priority to industrial, urban and big farmer needs. A significant statement, the "Assertion of Collective Will Against Big Dams," was released.

In early 1989, groups from all over India decided that the Narmada river would be the focal point for their struggle against the "Destructive Development Model." All groups would organise to converge in a show of collective strength at Harsud, a town of 18,000 which will be submerged if the Narmada Sagar Dam is built. An unprecedented 40,000 people gathered in Harsud from all over India, primarily representing victims and potential victims of development projects and processes.

The Harsud rally signified a crucial coming of age. A statue was erected at the rally site representing the alternative path of development based on a sustainable relationship with Nature; it depicts the Pancha Mahtattva -- air, soil, water, fire and ether -- supporting a globe with "Vikas Chahiye, Vinash Nahin." (We want Development, not Destruction) inscribed on it. A mass oath affirming belief in these principles was taken by those present.

The Jan Vikas Sangharsh Yatra, which was organised by the Narmada Bachao Andolan in January, showed clearly where the divide lies today. The marchers represented those who want development without destruction. In the particular instance, they believed that extensive

social, economic and environmental disruption will occur if the Sardar Sarovar Dam is built on the Narmada. Arrayed against them, and represented by the massive police barricade set up at the Gujarat border, were the political and corporate leaders and the big-farmer lobby, supported by the Gujarat government, which claims that the dam is the state's life-line to the future.

### JAN VIKAS ANDOLAN

A direct outcome of the Harsud rally was the formation in December 1989 of a loosely knit forum of ecology-based movements and other social and political organisations and activists. In the intervening year, the Jan Vikas Andolan (Movement for People's Development) has evolved into a network of groups and individuals committed to a new order that is both socially just and ecologically sustainable.

The Andolan believes that development as is currently practiced is "socially disruptive, biologically and genetically homogenising and environmentally destructive." The evolving perspective of the Andolan is also that there is an integral relationship between "injustice and environmental degradation -- from the local to the global context. The Andolan is committed to an alternative approach which gives central priority to ecological regeneration and the restoration of access and control over productive resources to local communities."

This approach, therefore, calls for a radical altering of current planning priorities and stresses a concentrated plan encompassing among other things, afforestation and comprehensive regeneration of wasteland and degraded lands; integrated restoration of watersheds; land-shaping and soil and water conservation measures; rain water harvesting and small and medium-scale storage; regeneration of pastures and maximisation of stall-feeding of animals; an alternative energy policy that is decentralised and relies on a sustainable

utilisation of renewable resources; enhanced biomass productivity of the land; ecologically sustainable agricultural practices -- all this within a perspective of enhancing an individual and collective lifestyle which creates least violence on other living beings. Much of this approach would obviously be irrelevant if attempted under the present centralised, bureaucratic and unjust system. The alternative has to be located in a systematic programmer to transform the system.

From the popular movements two centuries ago, to the Telegana and Jharkhand movements, to Chipko and Harsud, to the significant struggle along the Narmada river, the movement for an alternative future is deepening its impact and widening its reach in India. I would like to stress that what is stated above is *only indicative* and needs much greater discussion, reflection and action. The struggle will doubtless be slow and painful. It will have to be waged at multiple levels by a wide variety of actors. The current situation in India and the Sub-Continent does not elicit optimism. However, the evolving political, economic, cultural and ecological perspectives and varied initiatives that are represented in Jan Vikas Andolan and other similar efforts hold out the promise of a new vision for our societies.

S. Kothari's concerns include ecology, human rights and people's movements in India. He is actively involved in the Jan Vikas Andolan. For information on the JVA, write to Lokayan, 13- Alipore Road, Delhi 110 054



### NEPAL PRESS INSTITUTE

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

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

**CONSULTANCY:** On all media-related issues.

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

Post Box 4128  
Kathmandu  
Tel: 228 943

# The Key to Mustang

*It is time to open up the "Forbidden Kingdom", so that it, like Lower Mustang, can benefit from tourism and development.*

by Manjushree Thapa

Lower Mustang, home of the Thakalis with its district capital at Jomsom, has gradually been transformed by trekkers on the "Annapurna Circuit," pilgrims to Muktinath, and apple farming.

In contrast, the Bhutia inhabitants of Upper Mustang, the ancient kingdom of Lo, live much as their forbearers did for centuries, farming in the spring, taking their animals to high pastures in the summer and engaging in trade in the winter.

Mustang, the stub that juts from the high central Himalaya into trans-Himalaya Tibet is two worlds in one.

For the Loba from Upper Mustang, change has often taken away, not brought, benefits. Since 1959, the Chinese Government has prevented access to the traditional grazing grounds north of the border, so livestock has dwindled. Because farming on the wind-swept, desert land remains as unyielding as ever, seasonal migration has increasingly become a necessity. Cultural poverty has come hand in hand with material poverty. There are fewer artisans and the Lobas' *gompas* seem neglected and in need of repair.

Upper Mustang, up from Kagbeni village, two hours north of Jomsom, is restricted territory to non-Nepalis. This restriction makes the people of Lo live a life protected from outside change, but also with little development. The government has given running water to most villages and brought in a few health posts and schools, and the price of rice is subsidised. Clearly, such measures are inadequate, and cannot substitute for the development activity and alternate sources of income mainly from tourism, that the Loba sees when he looks south. And he is asking for the same.

## LO COUNTRY

Geographically and culturally Tibetan, Lo has always been an enigma within Nepali borders. Until Ame Pal, a local chieftain, unified the various principalities of the area in the 1380's, Mustang belonged to western Tibet. The kingdom remained independent until the end of the 18th century, when warriors from Jumla marched across Dolpo and conquered Lo. With the Gorkhalis' capture of Jumla in 1850, Lo came under Nepali suzerainty. The Mustang kings, descendants of Ame Pal, were allowed to keep the title of *raja*, though their functions became increasingly ceremonial.

Except for a brief period in the early 1950s, Upper Mustang has been closed off from the south and, obviously, the north. Its special geographical situation, of being surrounded on three sides by Tibet, made upper Mustang the ideal base for the Tibetan resistance to carry

out operations against the Chinese. Under pressure from Beijing, Kathmandu disbanded the guerrillas and made Upper Mustang off-limits.

Today, though the Khampa "marauders" have been forgotten, the Nepali government continues to close off the area north of Kagbeni. Perhaps the restrictions remain due to bureaucratic inertia, and a long-standing and perhaps ill-founded fear of ruffling Chinese feathers. These are insufficient reasons to deny opportunities to an impoverished people, local spokesmen maintain.

Aside from keeping out tourists, the policy has also kept out foreign development agencies. According to Bishnu Raj Hirachan, former District Chairman of Mustang, foreign agencies say they are not interested in funding projects in areas that are out-of-bounds to their expatriate staff.

## LOBAS' DEMAND

Among those advocating the opening of Mustang are many inhabitants of Upper Mustang, from the walled township of Lo Manthang and villages such as Charang, Ghemi and Samar.

"Over 90 per cent of the people of the upper areas want Mustang to be opened," asserts Jabyang Bista, who lives in the northernmost village of Chosyere. "Maybe some people in southern Mustang want it closed, but the people in the north want it opened."

Opening Upper Lo could make the villages of lower Mustang mere night-stops for tourists headed for the Tibetan culture of the north. Understandably, some lodge-owners in Tukuche, Jomsom and Marpha prefer to keep the northern areas closed. Most, however, recognise the windfall that could accrue to the whole area from the opening.

Thus, when King Birendra made an unofficial visit in January 1990, the 16 Pradhan Panchas of Upper and Lower Mustang presented him a *binti patra* with the plea that the north be opened.

According to Tashi Zampa, who was then the Pradhan Pancha of Lo Manthang, another similar document had been presented to the king six years earlier. According to Jabyang Bista, after the King's last visit Mustang was presented "one or two lakh rupees, but we saw only a few thousand." The money, says Bista, was used for *gompas* in Lo Manthang.

Unfortunately, the Lobas have little political clout, with no ethnic representation during the



Lo Manthang awaits.

years of the Panchayat rule. It is unlikely they will do any better following the multi-party elections slated for 12 May.

**TOURIST LURE**

Most believe that the promise of an untouched Tibetan culture more Tibetan than Tibet itself will lure Westerners in search of new Himalayan destinations. Travel agents in Kathmandu, eager to cash in are pushing for an early opening. After all, with the veil off Bhutan, Tibet, and Ladakh, Mustang stands out as the most-isolated out-of-bounds "Tibetan" society.

Tek Chandra Pokharel, President of the Nepal Association of Travel Agents, believes that tourists' eagerness to enter Mustang would prompt them to pay high rates. Also, because Mustang lies in a rain shadow area, it could be promoted as a viable destination during the monsoon, the low tourist season. In any case, Pokharel says, "People should not be made to live in a museum."

The government, meanwhile, continues to show ambivalence. Damodar Gautam, Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism till recently, agreed that isolating Mustang from the world "will push it further into darkness." He has advocated opening all of Nepal's restricted areas.

Understandably, the Tourism Ministry advocates Mustang's opening, but the decision rests with the Ministry of Home Affairs. Bhakta Bahadur Koirala, the then Secretary of the Home Affairs, acknowledged that the villagers' *binti patra* did make the issue "pressing". The government would not open Mustang before establishing proper trails, police checkpoints, health posts, a communications network and lodges, he said. However, no move has yet been made towards building such infrastructure.

**THE NAY-SAYERS**

There are some who argue against exposing upper Mustang's fragile ecology and culture to the consumerist world outside.



The Raja's palace, Lo Manthang.



Bishnu Raj Hirachan says that the desert environment cannot support the demands of tourism. "People will sell their firewood for a little bit of money without realising the long term problems this creates."

The ecology of Upper Lo certainly requires detailed study. Today, villagers from Chukhsang and Chele, north of Kagbeni, have to hike two days to the sparse forests near Samar for their firewood. The inhabitants around Lo Manthang only use dung. Both sources of fuel are dwindling. There are three micro-hydro projects in Upper Lo, but electricity has been expensive and labourious to install.

Hemanta Mishra, chief of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation in Kathmandu, opposes opening Mustang for environmental reasons. Mishra also argues that Mustang's culture, one of the last representing old Buddhism, should be protected. Besides, he contends, the people of the area itself will benefit little from opening. "First, travel agencies in Kathmandu will benefit, and then other outside communities, but not the Loba."

But both Hirachan and Mishra concede that if the area's natural resources and the cultural heritage can be safeguarded, then the veil on Mustang may be lifted.

**CONTROLLED TOURISM**

The important question, then, is not whether Mustang should be opened, but how and when. Is high-cost low-volume tourism *a la'* Bhutan more attractive, or the come-one-come-all variety prevalent in Leh?

Arjun Tulachan, originally from Tukuiche in southern Mustang, says of his family's experience with mass-scale, low-cost tourism: "We, too, were happy at first when foreigners

came to stay at our lodge for two rupees a night. But the long-term effect on the environment and the low economic benefit to the people makes this kind of tourism unwise."

Some advocate "controlled tourism", but in varying forms, and for different ends. Those in the high-end of Kathmandu's tourism industry propose low-volume access which they say would protect the natural and cultural environment as well as bring most benefit--but to whom?

A.V. Jim Edwards, chairman of the Tiger Mountain travel group, suggests the government charge an entry fee of around US\$100 per person and "allow only a few travel agencies with the highest foreign currency turnover to take in a limited number of persons." Opening the area without consideration of the cultural and environmental issues would destroy what it is that attracts tourists in the first place, believes Edwards.

There are other more creative, if unlikely, proposals. Keshab Lamichane, who runs Nepal Cultural Experience, a special interest tour operator, submitted a proposal several years ago to conduct exclusive tours in the restricted area for "high class" tourists. Among other things, Lamichane proposed that three houses of the King of Mustang be turned into a museum, and that programmes be organised to educate travellers about the natural and cultural heritage of the region. According to Lamichane, his plan would maximise income while minimising the adverse cultural effects of tourism. "Let the local people improve the quality of their lives, but let them not wear ties."

**LOBA VIEW**

While Kathmandu's trekking agents would obviously prefer to take in groups themselves, some Lobas advocate decentralised, locally controlled tourism. Tashi Zampa suggests that a law be passed curtailing the rights of people from outside to buy property or to run business in upper Mustang. Only that would ensure that the people of the area benefit from tourism, he says.

But such ideas would dampen enthusiasm in Kathmandu corridors. Damodar Gautam dismisses them as "highly parochial," saying that competition among businesses is essential for the development of the region. T.C. Pokharel, while agreeing that steps should be taken to ensure benefit to the locals, voices skepticism: "Do these people have resources to start their own business?"

Another Loba, Kelsang Tashi, is confident that the Loba can learn to handle tourism when it arrives. "The younger generations are not





M. Thapa

### Open latch in Upper Lo

like their elders. They have seen the way things are in the rest of the country. They have studied. Even the Sherpas did not know how to run businesses in the beginning. Like them, we will learn." Tashi's wife, Chimi Dolkar, is convinced that Upper Mustang must be opened. "Some can be porters, those who are able will run hotels. Right now, even those who want to cannot earn money." She says the suggested entry fee into Upper Mustang should go directly into development programmes for the region.

Mustang's future is, surely, not its continued isolation. Even today, in contrast to 30 years ago, a traveller from southern Nepal has no difficulty finding people who speak Nepali in Charang or Lo Manthang. Names like Chandra Bahadur and Kamala, rather than Sonam and Dolma, are not unusual today. Pictures of King Birendra and Queen Aishwarya hang over many hearths.

In spite of all the talk of "proper infrastructure," in all likelihood, Upper Lo will be flung open without any preparation when the time comes. Neither the Home Ministry nor the Tourism Ministry have taken steps to prepare Loba society for the inevitable opening. A study of the effect of opening Ladakh, Tibet, Bhutan, Southern Dolpo and Kanchenjunga, as well as the ample sociological studies of the Sherpas since the 1960s should provide valuable material for discussion and action.

On how best to open up the area, many heads will have to come together: government officials of the various ministries, the representatives of Upper and Lower Mustang, the travel trade, conservationists and specialists in the relevant academic disciplines. A commission comprising of such individuals, with a workable mandate, might be the first step towards a proximate and sensible plan of action.

M. Thapa is a photographer and writer who travelled to Mustang last summer.

## 7952 m Gyachung Kang and Gasherbrum III

by Arnico Kumar Panday

One is in the Himalaya and straddles the Nepal-Tibet frontier; the other is 1300 km away in the Karakoram, between Pakistan's Baltistan and China's Xinjian autonomous region. Both these mountains are 7952 meters high. Gyachung Kang and Gasherbrum III jointly share the distinction of being the sixteenth highest mountains in the world.

### Gyachung Kang

28 deg 05'53"N, 86 deg 44'32"E

Gyachung Kang, ninth highest in Nepal and sixth highest in Tibet, is located at the north-western corner of Solu-Khumbu District. Though part of the Khumbu Himal chain, it sits further north than the main range.

Unlike other Himalayan peaks of comparable height, Gyachung Kang is visible from very few places in Nepal. Just eight kilometers west of it stands the taller Cho Oyu (8201m); the southern and eastern valleys are blocked by neighbours such as Pumori, Cholatse, Tawatse and Khumbila, while Chomolongma/Everest/Sagarmatha, Lhotse, Chamlang, Baruntse, Ama Dablam, Kantega, and Thamserku block the view from afar. The view from the southwest, even from such vantage points as Pike' (4070m), is obscured by the Rolwaling and Shorong Himal; even Numbur (6959m), which stands 40 km to the south-southwest, manages to block the view of Gyachung Kang.

From Gyachung Kang's hexagonal South Face descends the Ngojumba, one of Nepal's longest glaciers and a principal source of the Dudh Kosi. Near the snout of the glacier lie four little lakes and Pepsi-serving lodges of Gokyo; downstream are many Sherpa villages, including Namche Bazar, 34 km from Gyachung Kang. North of Gyachung Kang, in Tibet, the Gyachung Glacier feeds a stream that joins the outflow of the Rongbuk Glacier on Everest's north side.

Gyachung Kang has been successfully climbed three times. In spring 1964, a Japanese expedition led by Kazuyoshi Kohara, climbed the mountain from Ngojumba Glacier. In spring 1986, a joint French-Nepali expedition pioneered a new route to the top up the southwest ridge. The most recent successful ascent was made in autumn 1988 by a joint South Korean-Nepali expedition. At present, Gyachung Kang is open only to joint expeditions that include Nepali climbers.



### Gasherbrum III

35 deg 45'36"N, 76 deg 38'33"E

Unlike its Himalayan "twin", Gasherbrum III is part of a family -- the "Gasherbrum Group" in the Baltoro Mustagh area of the Karakoram. The Karakoram, much shorter than the Himalaya at less than 500 km length, is considered "wilder" and more desolate.

The Gasherbrum Group is situated close to the eastern end of the Baltoro Mustagh near the frontier separating Pakistan's Baltistan and China's Xinjian. The Baltoro Mustagh spans the northern watershed of Baltoro Glacier and contains the Karakoram's highest peaks including K2/Godwin Austen/Chogori.

The Gasherbrum Group almost encircles the South Gasherbrum Glacier, a tributary of the Baltoro. From east, around the north to the west, the glacier is surrounded by Gasherbrum peaks I, II, III, IV, V, and VI. Gasherbrum III is the northern most, standing roughly two kilometers east of Gasherbrum IV (7980m), and one kilometer west of Gasherbrum II (8035m). Perhaps because of its higher siblings, Gasherbrum III has been neglected. Gasherbrum II receives the attention common to 8000m peaks, while Gasherbrum IV has been famous since British mountaineer Martin Conway's 1982 description. These were scaled in the 1950's, while Gasherbrum III was climbed only in 1975.

A route up Gasherbrum III was reconnoitered in 1958 by Italian Ricardo Cassin, following his climb of Gasherbrum IV. The peak was successfully climbed in 1975 by two men and two women of a Polish expedition.

It is possible that Gyachung Kang and Gasherbrum III might not both be *exactly* 7952m tall. While at present there is no dispute about the figure, it is possible that mistakes were made when the mountains were surveyed over a century ago. The recent dispute over the height of K2 serves as a case in point. Might Gasherbrum III be higher than that Gyachung Kang? Or Gyachung Kang higher than Gasherbrum III? Or does it matter either way?

AKP is *Himal's* "Know Your Himal" columnist.

# Voices

[Poetry]

## TREAD GENTLY

*Poem written while in Pokhara, October 1990, by Phil Voysey, an Australian and representative of Save the Children Fund Australia in Bangladesh.*

Tread gently yells the universal voice of reason  
over the cacophony of tourist dollar.  
Here they come again  
to conquer mountain trail and apple pie  
futile attempts to pound every last particle of dust  
into submission  
with especially designed Dunlop retreats.

As always the dust rises up  
and seeps into delicate labyrinths of ego and  
grim determination  
causing tolerable discomfort  
while rocks teasingly slide and shuffle  
from beneath the feet of certainty  
and enjoy a good laugh  
at the expense of twisted kneed and bruised backside.

Several concerned individuals can be seen  
furiously scrubbing the stream clean with Blue Omo  
while others scratch at the sweat and grime  
that has matted thought and responsibility  
and watch as rivulets of bleached common sense  
trickle into the spinach patch of some innocent tourism  
junkie.

(I wonder if that woman  
parading around in her bikini top  
realises how absurd she looks  
against the background of towering, snow-capped mountain  
peaks?)

Tread gently screams the universal voice of reason

"Pen, sweet, rupee," is the children's three chord litany  
delivered with supplicating eyes  
and like an overplayed pop song long ago slipped from the  
top 40 nobody is listening.  
Pizza, apple pie, coke is the modern classic with the  
timeless melody.

(I wonder if the local DJ with the studded nose rings  
and the three malnourished children  
understands the lyrics  
but then who listens to them anyway.)

Tread gently screams the universal voice of reason  
as the needle balances precariously over the newest sound  
and the turntable begins to spin.

[Discovery]

## BEING BHOTE IS 'CHIC'

*From an article on Bhutias, Tibetans, who settled in India long before 1959, by Tendar in the Tibetan Bulletin.*

In many ways, the Bhutias have come full circle. In the '60s they went out of their way to fling this word "Bhote" at every Tibetan refugee in sight. "Bhote," depending on the intonation in which it is said, can mean anything from being a simple reference to a Tibetan to being uncouth, unwashed and, the worst sin in their sight, being non-Nepalese, non bidi-smoking, non paan-chewing, and non tobacco-eating. Now the Bhutias are discovering that they are Bhotes after all and it's chic.

Discovering a part of their forgotten cultural and spiritual origins is an aspect of the dynamism which has lately imbued and informed the Bhutia community. The community is the source of one of the best talents of India's expanding bureaucracy, and many administrative and foreign services, services which enjoy huge social prestige.

[Liberation theology]

## IS RAMAYANA ANTI-WOMAN?

*From an article entitled "Toward A Liberation Theology of Hinduism" included in the February mailing of News From Fields and Slums, a Delhi-based alternative feature agency.*

The episode of Sita's exile is, by far, the saddest and the most controversial episode of Ramayana. It shows Rama bowing to highly unjust public criticism of Sita, thereby leading him to exile her.

This is, no doubt, a grave injustice to Sita and the fact that Ram, who has been glorified in Ramayan, had agreed to it would make it appear that this epic also glorifies this act and is therefore anti-woman. But before jumping to this conclusion, certain facts have to be kept in mind.

First, this episode does not appear in Ramacharitmanas (the version by Tulsidas) at all; it appears only in Valmiki Ramayana (the version by Valmiki)....which, according to scholars, was a later addition, not a part of the original epic.

Second, it is made amply clear that before this public criticism reached him, Ram had been living most happily with Sita, and that the decision of exiling Sita caused him great suffering and distress. Yet, he still took it, keeping in view his principle of never ignoring public opinion.

In judging the epic, it must be borne in mind that this act is condemned as highly unjust by several favoured characters, including Lakshman, Ram's much-loved brother. As Lakshman was given the responsibility of taking Sita to the ashram (in exile), he says that it was better for him to die than to do this "cruel deed" for his elder brother whom he otherwise worshipped.

Those who criticise Ramayana as being anti-woman and anti-low caste generally quote the lines of Manas which say that drums, animals, ruffians, low castes and women are deserving of punishment. But then these lines are spoken by a character who has been reduced to a villainous role following his refusal to obey Ram. In no way can this be compared to the words of wisdom which the sage-poet has spoken on his own at various places in the epic or else put them in the mouths of favoured characters such as Ram and Sita.

Elsewhere in Manas, it is written, "Women are stupid by nature," but again Goswami Tulsidas has not said this in his own. This is Sati, a Goddess admonishing herself for having been less than fair. "Woman, and that too a servant, is both wicked by nature." These words appearing elsewhere are said by Kaikai when speaking of Manthara, and both have major villainous roles.

Thus it is not proper to dub Ramayan anti-woman just on the basis of a few sentences quoted out of context...It is possible there may be episodes which cannot be justified on the basis of our present day principled stand on some issues. In such cases, of course, we have to reject and even condemn what is written in the scriptures. But needless and unjustified criticism of scriptures which offer substantial scope for spreading progressive messages will not take us anywhere. Such an approach may alienate us from people.

[Editorial]

## HIMALAYA: THE PROBLEM

*From the lead article, "The Problem" by Sanjeev Prakash, in the February issue of Seminar, the monthly journal from New Delhi, which focused on the Himalaya.*

The Himalaya remains at the margin of our consciousness in order of both geography and priority. If that is a sad comment, sadder still is the fact that its open, uninhabited terrain and its untapped natural resources complete the illusion of its being a sort of storehouse of wealth. In a sense, we are using the yardstick of the plains to measure mountains. It is time to begin to see the mountains as a different subset of conditions where the requirements of the development process are intrinsically different. There is too much stress, even among the more enlightened of our planners, on the interface between mountain and plains though not nearly enough on linkages within the Himalayan region itself.

But the Himalayan region is not just our side of the mountain. It comprises, besides Nepal and Bhutan, an extensive network of associated ranges extending from Burma to Central Asia and including most of Tibet. Important dimensions of security and economics intersect here, but can they long take precedence over fundamentals of appropriate development and conservation without being further compounded? In the enormous plateau of Tibet, too, the problems seem similar, the violent meeting between plain and mountain more responsible for the upsurge of ethnic values than the obvious dimensions of political and ideological struggle.

In fact, in some ways the process of modernisation seems to be forging a deeper awareness of a common mountain consciousness throughout the Himalayan region. If this proves to be true, then one effect over time may be to alter political equations between the densely populated nations that surround the region. Let us not forget that there are moments when the margin can determine the fate of the centre.

[Travel]

## VIDEO BUS GAYA

*From the travel journal of a Kathmandu pilgrim bound for the site of Siddhartha Gautam's enlightenment.*

If you have the time, walk, cycle, or ride a bullock-cart; don't take that bus to Gaya! After a pleasant half-hour hop by plane to Patna, I found myself very reluctantly purchasing a seat on the Super Deluxe Coach **With Video**. I had searched in vain for a bus without video billing, while being pulled in five directions by characters fighting for their cut on my ticket. Failing, I solaced myself on lucking a window seat, never mind that it was at the very back.

I should have smelled a rat at getting off so easily. It was a window seat all right, but the window was a sheetless pane of nothing. There was no chance to grab someone else's seat. I swallowed my disappointment and was poised to lose myself in a pilgrim's meditative musings when a chorus erupted from the field of passengers. "Pic-churr! We want pic-churr!" clamoured voices in unison through paan-filter.

"Wan moment!" came the stentorian voice of the driver's all-purpose assistant. True to his word, in a moment a Hindi film burst forth on the dusty screen that had been staring down at us ominously.

I'd forgotten the video! I decided to watch rather than curse it but the print from Patna's Superman Video Parlour was atrocious. Only disfigured shapes in technicolour. Amazingly, an hour passed, but not without a toll on this stout pilgrim: the backseat knocks, the screen a-blasting, and the searing winter wind of the Indian plains blasting in through the passage of my glasnost window. I was metal cold, nauseous; responsible for the third stream of vomit jetting out through the unobstructed air-passage at my side.

The second hour sailed; time was backstepping. Then three hours. The film ended, the screen evinced a finale. But there were no sign of nearing Gaya or any place. Gaya was a three-hour ride, so were Hindi films. What was happening?

No sooner had the colours on the screen stopped moving, the clamour came again: "Pic-churr! Pic-churr!" The gofer complied. Another film crackled into life. It was then, with the delay in fight scenes, that a few passengers, then many, began murmuring and grunting. Soon there were shouts: "Array! Yay to rasta nahin! Array! This is not the road!"

We'd been on the wrong road for an hour. Time had moved back. The cheering for the swashbuckling hero with a fetish for entangling the heroine's sexily flimsy scarf had changed to a chant: "We want money back!" More deficit minutes passed. The road was finally broad enough for the bus to make its turn. But the adventure wasn't over. A few miles near Gaya, we were held up again. A truck had mowed into a tree, traffic was blocked. We waited in the forest.

Vehement muttering, grumbling, hoots. Then again: "Pic-churr! Pic-churr!" The bus passengers were now a crowd, restive and combative. The driver complied, and the forest suddenly came alive with cine-goers. It was hard to say from where they came, but in a while humanity from without had elbowed and ankled in to position themselves for the next offering from Superman Video. Those who could not get in latched on to window frames, standing tip-toe on the bus tires, blocking my paneless window escape. The bus in the forest had become Bombay cinema: songs, melodramatic speeches, gunshots, helicopter chase scenes, and the screams of heroines' mothers soon rented the forest air.

# Mountain Development, Plains' Bias

by Jayanta Bandyopadhyay

For decades following the Second World War, the destiny of billions in the Third World has been identified with "development", which can be described as the most extensive human activity in the world today. However, as practiced, it has remained an econometric exercise that marginalises the majority of the populace. The monetary reductionist approach to development has resulted in the free play of market forces. Development that is economically attractive for some but environmentally destructive for many has added to the burden of the poor. The process of marginalisation and environmental destruction is vividly evident in the mountains of the world.

According to the received history of civilisation, economic development is invariably seen to have evolved in the plains. This bias is so deep and extensive that even when attempts are made to redefine development, the rich experience of mountain regions are ignored, as was true, for instance, with the 1989 Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development.

Due to the lack of a focused attention on the specific problems and potential of mountain societies, the development highlands is said to be marked by "uncertainty". In this way, what could have been an important indicator for reconceptualising development has been perceived as a "dilemma". This dilemma has its origins in the attempts to "develop" the mountains with a bias towards economic growth in the plains. In this way, the mountains receive investment in development merely to provide cheap timber, hydropower or even human labour to the plains. This plains' bias is based on the view of the hills as an inexhaustible reservoir of resources in need of externally induced exploitation.

Contrary to many experts who see as "backward" and "traditional" all areas which are inaccessible to comfortable transportation systems, the mountain areas have undergone continual socio-economic transformation over centuries. These transformations have been in response to specific and changing societal and environmental conditions. In considering appropriate development possibilities for the mountains, it is important to understand what might be called "mountain characteristics."

The single primary characteristic of mountain areas, as opposed to the plains, is, obviously, "verticality". Emerging from this are three more categories of mountain characteristics: geophysical, socio-economic and cultural characteristics. Further sub-divisions of these characteristics are shown in the accompanying diagram.

Planners, administrators and scholars engaged in mountain development in the Himalaya must understand clearly these characteristics and their inter-relationships. This is vital even for those who have their origins in, and sympathies for, mountain areas because it is likely that they have all been socialised in academia dominated by the plains' bias.

The verticality of mountain regions not only acts as a meteorological barrier, but by generating physical inaccessibility, it disconnects the highlands socially, economically and culturally from the plains. Highland development, even those carried out by governments of mountainous countries, has, by and large, remained a programme of bringing mountain resources (natural and human) closer to the plains. This has been done by putting exclusive focus on reducing the geophysical characteristic of "physical inaccessibility."

There has been a remarkable increase in the accessibility of the world's mountain regions with the advent of mechanical transportation systems run by fossil fuel or electricity, which are largely owned by economic powers in the lowlands. In view of the fact that the two other geophysical characteristics (structural fragility and microclimatic variability) are fundamental attributes which cannot be easily altered,

all types of mountain transformations that have taken place can be explained by the changes introduced in the one parameter of physical inaccessibility. Continuously expanding accessibility, backed by capital- and energy-intensive transportation systems, has led to mountain "development" whose sustainability is in question. It is the plains' bias which has spurred this unidirectional expansion of accessibility as the main element of mountain development.

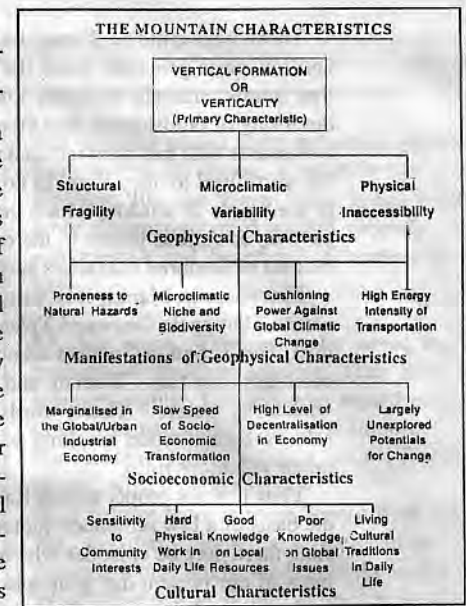
Due to the plains bias, inaccessibility has always been seen as an "obstacle" to mountain development. However, an understanding of mountain characteristics would have perceived this very inaccessibility also as an opportunity to generate new, decentralised development options. One major disadvantage of inaccessibility, of course, was the difficulty in information flow, but this issue is moot in today's era of micro-electronics and informatics.

Only a conscious elimination of the plains' bias and a deeper understanding of the possibilities of the mountains can return to the mountain people control over their destiny. Satellite technology has made accessible the remotest areas to technology-backed marketing, either of sugary soft drinks or of wars, covered live. Inevitably, this cultural invasion of the remotest mountain corners is going to generate artificial wants while marginalising genuine needs, thus distorting development priorities. It is possible to convert the threat of this plains-based cultural onslaught into an information revolution for the benefit of the mountains. For this to happen, mountain development must be guided by an understanding of the special mountain characteristics.

But identification of these characteristics is just the beginning. Mountain research must now further articulate the details. For example, a clearer understanding of mountain-specific hazards may pre-empt investment in ecologically destructive projects. A clearer understanding of micro-climatic niches and biodiversity will provide guidelines needed for dividing areas according to conservation needs. Highland areas need not always be disturbed by ecological transformations. Mountain ecosystems can be highly adaptive and resilient to some types of ecological disruption, like global warming.

Because of the vital ecological role played by the mountains in an Earth whose natural systems are increasingly in jeopardy, understanding of mountain characteristics would be important not only to ensure appropriate development for highlanders, but also to help safeguard the health of the planet.

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



## Tintin in Tibet: A Friendly Evocation

When Tintin traveled to Tibet through Nepal in the comic book pages, he caught the fancy of not just the visitor but the visited.

by Nyo Lotsa

In the shortlived freak magazine *Flow*, published in Kathmandu in the early seventies, the Darjeeling Nepali author Parijat wrote: "I am not among those who sell their Mongolian face to the third-class tourist's camera." In her own forceful way, writer Parijat here expressed the gist of much of the discussion in "The Shangri-La Myth" (*Himal Jan/Feb 1990*): To what extent do we perpetuate for tourist consumption a stereotype image of ourselves, borrowed from Western exotica seekers in the first place, and perhaps detrimental to our self-image and cultural identity. On the other hand, we do, with an equal degree of misinformation, create our own stereotypes, evident in P.Kharel's "The Dalai Lama's proposed Visit: Neither the Clime nor the Time," in *The Rising Nepal*, 3 Feb 1991: "It would be wrong to assume that the Dalai Lama has (a) considerable (number of) followers in Nepal. Of the various Buddhist sects in the Kingdom the Yellow Hats, represented by the Dalai Lama, constitute barely two percent."

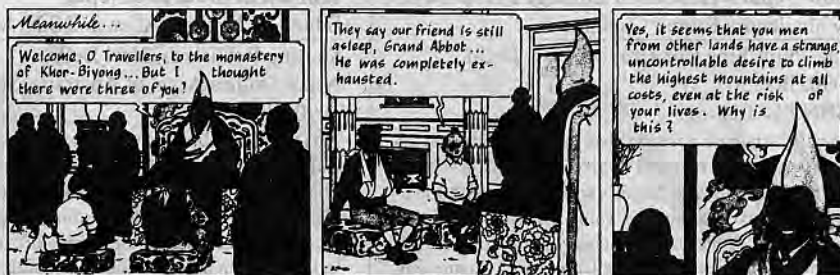
During the recent Kalachakra initiation in Sarnath, the number of adherents that came from Nepal was significant enough for the Dalai Lama to honour them with a special address. Furthermore, though himself ordained in the Gelugpa (Yellow Hat) tradition, the Dalai Lama, in no way, "represents" that school (he is not even the Throne Holder); and as recent research has borne out, one of his lineages, received during the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama, came to him via a line of incarnation of Nyingma lamas from Helambu, closely connected with the history and successive restorations of the Baudha stupa.

In fact, contrary to Kharel's insinuation, the connection between Nepal and Tibet is historically sufficiently close for us to expect, over the coming years, an avalanche of fresh findings on the history of Nepal, drawn from the as-yet little explored Tibetan sources.

Seen from this perspective, it comes as an agreeable surprise to (re)discover how un-Shangri-La-ing the most widely read book on Nepal (an estimated half-million sold!) is. I am of course referring to the evergreen *Tintin in Tibet* by the Belgian Herge, in which most of the action takes place in Nepal, and only a tiny bit around the Gosainthan massif, across the border in the Shishapagma area of Tibet.

Why did the artist not call his album "Tintin in Nepal. The answer is two-fold: not only was Tibet at the time, in popular European imagination, the land of greater mystery (with the mixed-bag of Alexander David-Neel's accounts a principal source), but Nepal was then just appearing in the map of a similar imagination, of all things, through the accounts of expeditions searching for the Yeti which appeared as sensational serials in major newspapers. "Nepal, Land of the Yeti": it is a stereotype we ourselves have been perpetuating, among other ways, in the form of that sculpted copper beast serving drinks in front of the Royal Nepal Airlines building, in terms of kitsch one of the dumbest monuments on earth.

For Herge's purposes, the distinction between Nepal and Tibet had to remain vague. Only by having his heroes cross an ill-defined border "in a remote and dangerous area" could he let them wander about in the all too



well defined "Forbidden Land". Tibetans in exile have often accused Herge here of political blindness. While Herge may not have evoked the grim happenings in Tibet in that period, to the charge that he was apolitical, he is not completely guilty.

In the Nepal tale, the stereotypes are few, and the dominant mood and nuance may be considered "environment-friendly". After the *khursani* (chilli pepper) episode in Bhaktapur, and a quick scene in Patan's Mangal Bazaar, the trekkers are seen walking all the way to Baudha: there was no road then, and the stupa was surrounded by fields. As they head north, the only disturbing element is the continuous use of the term "Sahib"; we may safely assume that the artist was unaware of its colonial overtones.

For his documentation, Herge had to rely on tales of the rare traveller to Nepal and on secondary sources since he travelled mostly in his imagination. But Herge was resolutely anti-colonialist in attitude, so much so that he never allowed the translation of his *Tintin in Congo* into English.

If it was Herge's aim to bring out the essence of the Tibetan Buddhist culture his heroes encounter, he could hardly have done better. Sure, the words of the rinpoche echo almost verbatim what the earliest Everest climbers were asked: "Yes, it seems that you men from other lands have a strange, uncontrollable desire to climb the highest mountains at all costs even at the risk of your lives. Why is this?"

The point of the entire *Tintin in Tibet*, however, is precisely that they have *not* come with such an intention. Their goal is a more lofty one, one that makes total sense to the monastic community. The same rinpoche later praises them for having risked their lives to save a friend, and put another's welfare before their own. If in doing that, the High Lama "bows in deference" to them, we may overlook that as an exaggeration of manners. The enduring success of the Tibet album among the Tibetan community shows that this poetic liberty was overlooked.

The one odd quote that might suggest the Shangri-La tendency: "You must know, noble stranger, that many things occur in Tibet which seem unbelievable to you men of the West." But it is neutralised by Herge's strong realism when it comes to depicting the heart-rending poverty in the hills. He might have missed on the detail of dresses in the (Sherpa? Tibetan?) children, but his compassion for the material misery of these children comes across loud and clear between his lines of story-telling.

Yes, all in all, the real grandeur of Herge's pictorial tale resides perhaps in that he achieved, long before the formula was ever put to words, and what anthropologists have only recently dared to attempt: an account that makes sense to *both* communities, visitor and the visited, the outside reporter and the subject. This was what anthropologist Alexander Macdonald attempted in his "The Tamang as Seen by One of Themselves" and his subsequent co-authorship (in Tibetan) of a Sherpa history.

Nyo Lotsa (a pseudonym) has been working as an anonymous translator in Central Asia.

## ABSTRACTS

### **Indo-Nepal Relations in Linkage Perspective**

by Shailendra Kumar Chaturvedi

B.R. Publishing Corporation, New Delhi

1990, IRs130

ISBN 81-7018-610-2

Nepal's "strategic position" has made it a "cockpit of international and regional rivalry" says Chaturvedi in this book, adding that Nepal's relationship with India should receive exhaustive study. A Reader in the Department of Political Science at the Institute of Advanced Studies in Meerut University, Chaturvedi tries to analyse Indo-Nepal relations using a new approach called the "linkage framework." In his words, this "approach emphasises on the fact that behavioral pattern emerged in one political system recurs in the other and such recurrence has a sequence." The 184-page book has seven chapters, appendices, a bibliography and an index.

### **Folk Culture of Nepal: An Analytical Study**

by Ram Dayal Rakesh

Nirala Publications, New Delhi

1990, IRs100

The author is a 49-year-old Professor of Hindi at Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu. He is also editor of a cultural magazine, *Safari Nepal*. According to Rakesh, Nepal has been a land of folk culture and legend from time immemorial. The book has 104-pages of text, illustrations and a bibliography. While the title refers to Nepal as a whole, the book is mostly about Maithili culture, nine of the twelve chapters being devoted to Maithili festivals, arts, paintings, songs and so on. One chapter is on the Rodhighar, which he says is, "the most traditional and popular cultural institution and an appropriate means of mass communication among Gurung and Magar communities of Nepal." There is also a chapter on the Tharus of Chitwan.

### **Art and Culture of Nepal: An Attempt Towards Preservation**

by Saphalya Amatya

Nirala Publications, New Delhi

1991, IRs250

The book is a "historical account...of Nepalese art and culture" and an exploration of why there is a "crisis" in how art is perceived in today's Nepali society. Nepali architecture is unique, says author Amatya. Here, the Indian and the Sino-Tibetan cultures have meshed peacefully. Amatya has a doctorate from Jawahar Lal Nehru University and is presently the Director-General of the Department of Archaeology. He also edits *Ancient Nepal*, a journal of archaeology. The 220-page book has 25 chapters, 24 picture illustrations and a bibliography. The chapters cover a wide range of topics regarding Nepali art and culture, including Nepali handicrafts, museums, architectural history of Patan Durbar and stone architecture. Amatya says he has written this book for a special reason: "We must maintain these temples, stupas and other monuments as far as possible. We should give them original shape decorations, good care and timely renovation." The book is intended for art critics, culture experts, trekkers and scholars.

### **Women in India and Nepal**

Edited by Michael Allen and S.N. Mukherjee

Sterling Publishers, New Delhi

Asian Studies Assn. of Australia, Series No. 7

1990, IRs375

This book is about women in India and Nepal by anthropologists and historians based in Australia. The editors say that the book "is intended as a contribution to our understanding of some of these seeming paradoxes in the social life of women in India and Nepal." The nine contributors are Michael Allen, Meredith Borthwick, John Gray, Vividene Kondos, Jocelyn Krygier, S.N.Mukherjee, Gail Pearson and Elizabeth L. Stutchbury. Three historians discuss whether legislative changes regarding the status of women have actually had a positive effect. Six anthropologists, some with case studies and fieldwork background, explore how, structurally and ideologically, males have dominated women and perpetuated their domination. The book is of 375 pages.

### **Rolamba Journal**

Joshi Research Institute

Vol. 10, No. 3

July-Sept 1990, NRs30

A description of the Rolamba Journal is nowhere given in the latest issue. On the whole, however, the features are mostly on historical and cultural topics relating to Nepal. The July-Sept issues has articles in English about "Mahayana Ethics of Nature Conservation", "Kali", "Medieval Colophons", and in Nepali about "Sidhi NaraSingha", "Bhaktapur", and "Historical Issues". A very recent problem, that of the AIDS pandemic, is also featured.

### **Conservation for Development in Nepal**

by Sasinath Jha

National Book Organisation, New Delhi

1990, IRs300

ISBN 81-85135-46-0

For sustainable development in Nepal, a sound long-term policy is needed to manage the country's dependence on renewable resources, Jha writes. This should be done by rectifying the ecological problems that have already taken place and preventing the country from future environmental damage. Lecturer and Chairman of the Department of Botany at Mahendra Morang Adarsh Multiple Campus in Biratnagar, Jha restates throughout the book the importance of "wise management of resources." Such a poor nation as Nepal "cannot be unmindful to the erosion in the shrinking resource base." This 340-page effort is intended for anyone interested in "nature and economics."

### **Lost Childhood :Survey Research on Street Children of Kathmandu**

Child Workers in Nepal, Lalitpur

1990, Price not listed

Prefacing this 18-page research paper, Gauri Pradhan, CWIN co-ordinator, says: even though the phenomenon of street children is not traditional to Nepali society, it has been increasing every year in urban centres. This latest survey of CWIN represents

one in a series undertaken over the last 4 years. After setting down the "bitter facts" of the street children, the report looks into who these children are, why they are on the streets, whether they work, how they manage to survive, and other such issues. The report also provides recommendations. Case studies of six street children are presented.

### **Essays in Nepal's Foreign Affairs**

by Yadu Nath Khanal

Malla Press, Kathmandu

1988, NRs250

This 175-page book contains essays, articles and seminar papers written by the author between 1982 and 1988. Each chapter is complete on its own. Khanal provides his reflections on such issues as Nepal's relations with India, China, the USSR, the USA, the SAARC question, and Nepal's own socio-cultural issues. The book is intended for the general public. A long-time diplomat and scholar, Khanal is the author of many other books, including *Nepal: Transition from Isolation*. He has been Nepal's ambassador to India and the US and was also foreign secretary. Before 1956, he was professor of English at Tri-Chandra College in Kathmandu.

### **The North-East India:**

#### **Land, Economy, and People**

by R. Gopalkrishnan

Vikas, New Delhi

1990

This volume is designed to provide the necessary background to understand the "patterned and unpatterned" activities through which the Indian north-east region has related itself to the most important activities of the country. The book is, therefore, intended to be one of comparative analysis of geographical phenomena in North-East India. To cope with the basic problems of analysis of the regions, the author has listed and identified the fields that form linked patterns within the administrative units of the North-East. Gopalkrishnan is a Reader in the Department of Geography at the North Eastern Hill University in Shillong, Meghalaya.

### **The Sikkim Saga**

by B.S.Das

Vikas, New Delhi

1990, IRs150

ISBN 0-7069-5434-3

Sikkim became the twenty-second State of India by the Thirty-Eight Amendment Act of the Indian Constitution in April 1975. Was merger necessary? Was there a popular uprising against the Chogyal in 1973? Could the provisions of the 1950 Treaty not have protected India's vital interests? In the ultimate analysis, what has India gained? Attempts are made to answer these and other questions. The publisher describes the book as "a first-hand report of the period of turmoil in Sikkim from 1973 till its merger with India in 1975". The book is also a story of three ladies -- Indira Gandhi, Hope Cooke and Elisa Maria. A political assessment of the future is also attempted. B.S.Das was the first ambassador of India to Bhutan from 1968 to 1972. During 1973-1974 he served as the Chief Executive in Sikkim.

## ABSTRACTS

### Women in a Tribal Community A Study of Arunachal Pradesh

by Kiran Mishra

Vikas, New Delhi

1990, IRs 295

Numerically, the largest of the Arunachal tribes is the Nishing tribe, whose members inhabit the region bounded by rivers Subansiri in the east and Kameng in the west. Nishing society has a polygynous social structure based on shifting agriculture. The women have been the preservers of age-old customs and traditions. With exposure to development and modernisation, the thinking and life-style of the Nishing are changing inexorably. However, according to the author, young educated Nishing women are crusading against polygyny; their traditional acumen in managing economic and family affairs in the milieu of shifting agriculture will help them in carving out a comparable place *vis-a-vis* men in the cash and commerce-oriented economy. Kiran Mishra has researched with various tribes in Arunachal Pradesh and at present is working on "the role and status of women in the polyandrous Buddhist community of Ladakh."

### GURA Newsletter

G.U. Research Association

Price not listed

The Garhwal University Research Association (GURA) has begun publishing a newsletter. As reported in the *World Mountain Network Newsletter*, the maiden issue is of 48 pages and details the great variety of research and publication stemming from an interdisciplinary group of scientists representing many of the academic departments of HNB Garhwal University. The newsletter has been planned as a biannual feature with the hope that it will eventually become more frequent. Contact: P.O. Box No. 60, HNB Garhwal University, Srinagar-Garhwal 246 174, U.P., India

### Settlements of Hope

by Ann Armbrecht Forbes

Cultural Survival, Cambridge

1989, US\$10

ISBN 0-939521-44-X

This slim volume is about Tibetan refugees who settled in Nepal. Their story, says the author, "is told with the hope that it sheds light on this process of carving out a path that is both traditional and modern, a path where choosing to participate in the twentieth century does not necessarily entail sacrificing the uniqueness of one's traditional beliefs." The foreword is by the Dalai Lama and the book is divided up into four parts. Among the subjects discussed are the flight of 1959 and how the Tibetans in Nepal are coping with the problems in the modern world. There are chapters on carpets, Himalayan exporters, horse traders and entrepreneurs. Author Forbes talks about the Tibetan religion, of the third generation Tibetans born and raised in Kathmandu, and of the community as a whole. In the last section, she studies "the ideal" and the economic and the political realities. In the epilogue the author says, "The tale of the Tibetan refugees is one of quiet endurance. They are

reconstructing their culture and their lives; they are surviving in exile. But they also have a growing sense that their options are more limited, that their time for reaching their goal is running out." The author is a doctoral student in anthropology.

### Imperial Gazetteer of India

W.W.Huntre, Editor

Today and Tomorrows', New Delhi

(26 Volumes) IRs5000

ISBN 91-7019-251-X

*The Imperial Gazetteer of India* was first published in 1881 in nine volumes. The second edition came out shortly afterward, in 1885-57, in fourteen volumes. Still later, mainly due to the interest and inspiration of Lord Curzon, the new revised edition of the *Gazetteer* was issued in 1907-1922 in 26 volumes. The first four volumes were a revised version of Hunter's *The Indian Empire*; the next twenty constituted the alphabetical series and the last two the Index and the Atlas. The arrangement of this particular work is as follows: Volumes I, II, III and IV are respectively the descriptive, historical, economic and administration studies of the Indian Empire. Vols. V-XXIV constitute the studies of all the known provinces, districts, towns and villages in alphabetical order, giving the descriptive, historical and cultural, agriculture and irrigation, administration and education details of India, Bangladesh, Burma, Ceylon and Pakistan. The last volume is the Atlas of India, and it gives maps in accordance with the collated information and material in the earlier 24 volumes. These maps are in original format and colour.

### Status of Enforcement

of Labour Law in Nepal

Legal Research & Dev. Forum, Kathmandu

1990, Price not listed

Published in Nepali, with a summary available in English, this report sets out the existing labour law in Nepal and reports on its enforcement. The findings are based on interviews with Nepali government officials, labour leaders, industry managers, owners, and employees. The report finds serious violations in Kathmandu industries, particularly in the carpet and garment sectors. It calls for framing and defining a long-term labour policy, effective enforcement, recognition and regulation of trade unions, literacy programmes for workers and special protection for child workers. Contact: PO Box 4865, Kathmandu. Tel-221340

### World Mountain Network Newsletter

International Mountain Society

December 1990, Vol I, No 1

Price not listed

This first issue of *World Mountain Network Newsletter* is published by The International Mountain Society of California with, as the editorial says, the hope of improving communications and encouraging "mutual support amongst all those concerned about mountains -- environment, appropriate resource use, and the future of mountain people." The 16-page newsletter contains news about mountains around the globe, including on

environmental changes in the Polish Tatra mountains, the Mount Everest Ecosystem Conservation Program, the Second African Mountains Conference in Morocco, and the environment, population and economy of Tajikistan, in the Twenty-First Century. The newsletter also gives information about parks, environmental programs, animal trusts and even other newsletters. The Network plans to come out with three or four issues each year. Contact: IMO, P.O. Box 1978, Davis, CA 95617, USA.

### Dalai Lama:

The Nobel Peace Laureate Speaks

by Vijaya Kranti

Centrasia Publishing, New Delhi

1990, IRs400

ISBN 81-85400-00-X

The author first encountered the Dalai Lama in 1972. He became one of the few Indian journalists to be keenly interested in issues related to Tibet and Tibetans. This interest is manifest in Kranti's latest book, in which he tries to capture the life of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people in words and in pictures. The first part of the book summarises recent Tibetan history and provides succinct descriptions of the Dalai Lama himself, his land, his people and his "struggle". Then, as the title promises, Kranti lets the Dalai Lama speak. Roughly a hundred pages of the book is devoted to the author's interviews with his subject. The Dalai Lama responds to questions ranging from difficulties of life in exile to what it means to be a living-Buddha, what he did with the Nobel money, why he is not a vegetarian, his views on Panchen Lama, and many others. The book's striking feature is the collection of impressive black and white photographs, including one which captures the Dalai Lama in meditation, without glasses. Kranti, journalist and photographer, is a senior correspondent with *India Today*.

### VIDEO ABSTRACT

Tehri: A Prelude to Disaster

S.Prakash Film & Video, New Delhi

1990, IRs250/US\$25

This is a 15-minute video on the implications of the building of the Tehri Dam in the hills of Garhwal. Among other things, the documentary deals with the earthquake risk to this major, 272 metre high structure which is being built with Soviet assistance; it also delineates the "manipulative" process of decision-making, said to be based on scientific research, that has led to the continuation of this mega-project. The film details the actual scientific position in clear, simple terms. Drawing upon the views of seismologists, engineers, environmentalists and the local people, it also describes the possible consequences if a dam failure were to occur due to an earthquake. Contact: F-18 Nizamuddin West, 110 013. Tel: 618923

Limited copies of the alternative journal *Ilda Dossier* and the World Watch Institute's *WorldWatch* magazine are available for free at the Himal library, Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur.



# SUMMIT HOTEL GARDEN RESTAURANT

Kupondole Height, Lalitpur  
P O Box 1406, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Tel: 521894, 524694  
Fax: 977 1 523737  
Tlx: 2342 SUMMIT NP

The Summit Hotel is famous for its warm and friendly atmosphere, efficient staff, excellent food, a delightful garden with swimming-pool and one of the best locations in town with a spectacular view.

## All in one...

Freight Forwarding, Moving, Packing,  
Shipping, Insurance, Transportation ...  
We offer a complete range of services.



### ALLIED CARGO INTERNATIONAL (P) LTD.

PO Box 2316, Kathmandu, Nepal. Phone: 228 498 Telex: 2522 BODWAY NP Attn. ALLIED

### EVEREST TRAVEL SERVICE (P) LTD.

THE PIONEER TRAVEL AGENT IN NEPAL OFFERS:  
Ticketing, Daily Conducted Tours, Travel,  
Special Tours, Rafting, Trekking & International Cargo.



Estd 1965

Everest de' Cargo (P) Ltd.

Pratap Bhawon, Kantipath, Kathmandu

Tel: 221392, 221216, 225263, TLX: 2279 ET5 NP



EMERY Worldwide  
International Courier

# Ghoomti

## Restaurant & Bar

Super Market,

New Road, Kathmandu

Where we entertain you with good food and  
melodious gazals, live.  
Our specialities: Indian, Muglai, Tandoori and  
South Indian dishes.



## DISCOVER TIBET

Discover the inner secrets and mysteries of  
this fascinating land, people and culture  
so different from anything you have ever

read, seen or imagined...

Our group tours depart every Saturday.

TIBET TRAVELS & TOURS (P) LTD., Tridevi Marg, Thamel  
PO Box 1397, Kathmandu, Nepal Tel 410303, 415126 Fax 977-1-220143

# WE HONOR BOTH



## ALPINE TRAVEL SERVICE P. LTD

DURBAR MARG, Tel: 225-362/225-020

AUTHORISED  
AGENT TO THE CHASE MANHATTAN  
BANK N.A. SINGAPORE



The Pioneers of Visa & Mastercard services in Nepal





# SUMMIT NEPAL

Summit Nepal Trekking  
 Kopundole Height  
 P O Box 1406, Kathmandu, Nepal  
 Tel: 525408, 521810  
 Fax: 977 1 523737  
 Tlx: 2342 SUMMIT NP

- Specializing in:-
- Mountaineering/Expeditions
  - Tailor-made Trekking
  - Unique Cultural Tours
  - Wild Life/Jungle Safaris
  - White Water Rafting
  - Personalised Services

## ADA

### Architectural Design Associates

- Architects
- Engineers
- Intr. Designers
- Project Managers



Kamaladi Ganeshthan, P.O.Box 1222, Kathmandu. Tel : 226921



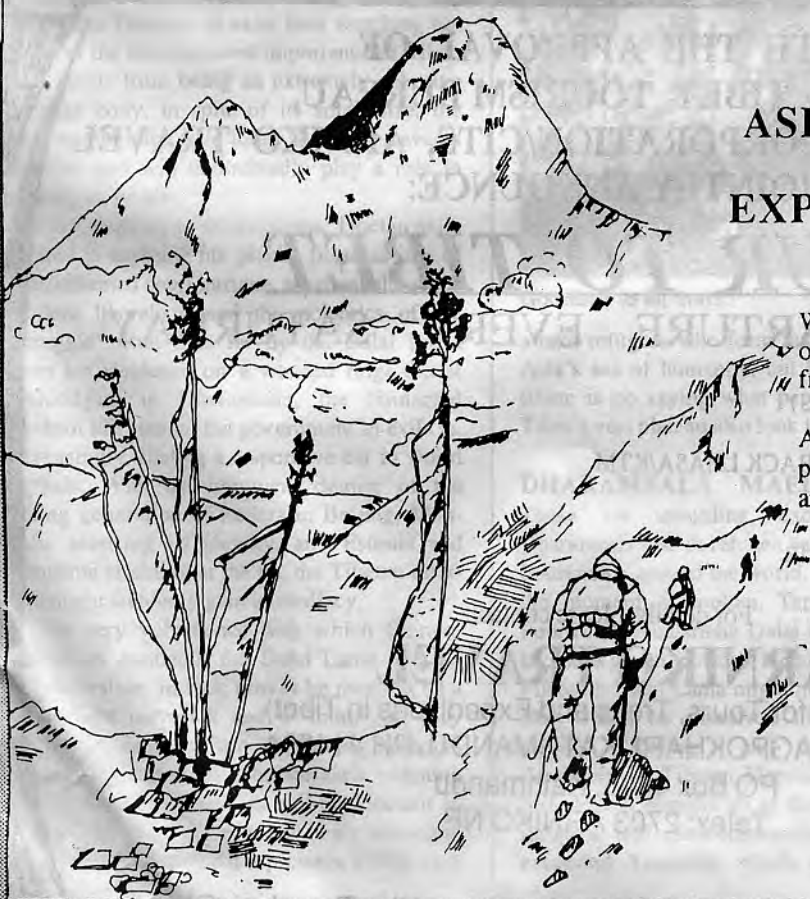
## TIBETAN REVIEW

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

### ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

India, including  
 Bhutan and Nepal ... Rs. 60.00

For a sample copy, please write to:  
 The Editor  
 Tibetan Review  
 c/o Tibetan SOS Youth Hostel  
 Sector 14 Extn, Rohini  
 Delhi - 110 085



## ASIAN TREKKING INVITES YOU TO AN EXPERIENCE WITH NATURE

We take you through natural trek trails to places of unending beauty and into contact with the friendly mountain people and their gentle living.

An experience you will never forget with our professional team to attend to all your trekking and tour arrangements with quiet efficiency.



P.O. Box: 3022, Keshar Mahal, Thamel  
 Kathmandu, Nepal.  
 Tel: 412821, Telex: NP 2276 HOSANG

**Mandala Trekking  
Presents  
Tibet by Jeep 4x4**

**From 5 to 15 days a' La Carte**

**For 2 to 4 Persons,  
with English-speaking  
Tibetan Guides**

For details, please contact:

**Mandala Trekking**

**Tel 228600, Kantipath, Kathmandu  
Telex: 2685 Mandal. NP.  
Fax: 977-1-227372 Attn: Mandala**

*Make Real Adventure!*  
with  
**Adventure Nepal Trekking**



**EXPERT IN ORGANIZING  
Trekking/Tours (Nepal & Tibet), Expeditions,  
White Water Rafting, Jungle Safari  
and Nature Trips!**



**Adventure Nepal Trekking Pvt. Ltd.**

Tridevi Marg, Thamel  
P.O. Box 915, Kathmandu  
Tel: 412508, Telex: 2636 SHERDA NP  
Fax: 977-1-222026

**WITH THE APPROVAL OF  
CHINA TIBET TOURISM BUREAU,  
TIBET TOURIST CORPORATION/CITS, ARNIKO TRAVEL  
JOINTLY ANNOUNCE:**

**TOUR TO TIBET**

**FIXED DEPARTURE EVERY SATURDAY**

1. 8 DAYS KTM/LHASA/KTM (FLY BOTH WAYS)  
(FROM 2 MARCH TO 28 DEC, 1991)
2. 8 DAYS KTM/LHASA OVERLAND AND FLY BACK LHASA/KTM  
OR ONWARDS TO MAINLAND CHINA  
(FROM 16 MARCH TO 30 NOV, 1991)
3. 12 DAYS KTM/LHASA/KTM OVERLAND TOUR

For details, please contact:

**ARNIKO TRAVEL**

(Specialist for Tours, Treks and Expeditions in Tibet)  
NAXAL, NAGPOKHARI, KATHMANDU. PH 414594

PO Box 4695, Kathmandu  
Telex: 2703 ARNIKO NP

We also handle treks to Kailash/Mansarovar and the Rongbuk Glacier.

*For the best possible  
souvenir of the Himalaya,  
get a great book!*

From Kathmandu's famous bookstores:

**\* Kailash Book Distributors**

At main entrance of Yak & Yeti, Durbar Marg, Kathmandu

**\* Pilgrims Book House**

PO Box 3872, Thamel, Kathmandu. Phone 416744

VISA-MASTERCARD HIMALAYA  
AMERICAN EXPRESS NATURE

Magnificent Postcard Selection  
Worldwide Book Mailing Service  
ADVENTURE

**ADVENTURE**

Books on Every Subject for the Whole World!  
MAPS & GUIDES

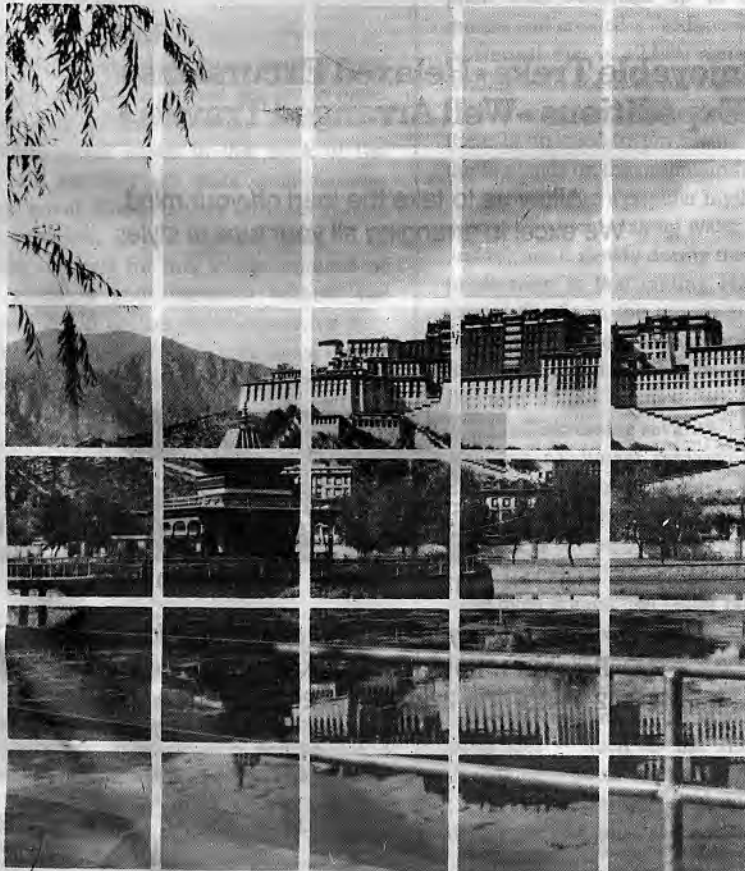
**Travel**

ART CULTURE PUBLISHING SOCIETY  
**Rare & Antiquarian**  
Pilgrims Book House

**BOOKS**  
HIMALAYA  
NATURE  
MAPS & GUIDES  
Kailash Book Distributors

Rare & Trav

ART CULT PUBLISHING



**MARCO POLO'S  
UNBEATABLE  
TIBET TOURS**

We now bring you the opportunity of visiting Tibet with our very attractive and affordable tour packages.

We also have extensive trekking programs including treks in the central Tibetan plateau, the Everest base camp and the trip to Mt. Kailash and Lake Manasarover.

Please contact us for more details.



**MARCO POLO TRAVELS NEPAL PVT. LTD**  
P.O. Box: 2769, "White House" Kamal Pokhari,  
Kathmandu, Nepal  
Fax: 977-1-418479, Telex: 2321 Bass NP, Tel: 414192,  
415984

## The Gorkha Guest House

- \* Live Nepali Classical Music, evenings
- \* A Sprawling Garden
- \* Homely Comfort
- \* Friendly Service
- \* Clean and Inexpensive Accommodation

Chhetrapati, Thamel, Kathmandu. Tel: 221 334

We stock the most comprehensive selection of books, maps, periodicals and audiotapes on Tibet. (Please write for our catalogue.)



POTALA PUBLICATIONS

107 EAST 31st STREET

NEW YORK, N. Y. 10016

## नाङ्गलो बजार प्रा. लि. Nanglo Bazaar PVT. LTD.

Ramshah Path, P O Box: 4384. Tel: 413099. Kathmandu, Nepal.

**ALL HOUSEHOLD GOODS, GROCERY,  
MEAT, VEGETABLE, BAKERY  
AND DAIRY PRODUCTS.**



सधैंलाई, सधैंलाई...  
*For all, always...*



**Enjoyable Treks • Relaxed Excursions •  
Fulfilling Expeditions • Well Arranged Travels •**

Allow us to take the load off your mind.  
We excel in arranging all your trips in style.



**HIMALAYAN EXCURSIONS**

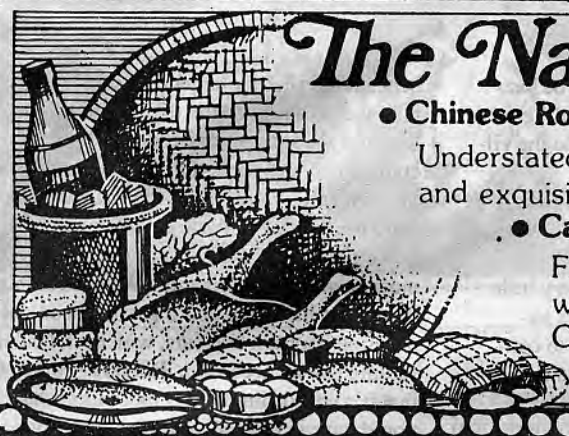
*Specialising in Trekking and Expeditions*

P.O. Box: 1221, Keshar Mahal, Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: 414842, Fax: 977-1-222026, Tlx: 2636 SHERPA NP

Res: 416112

# The Nanglo Experience



• **Chinese Room:**

Understated environment and exquisite Chinese cuisine.

• **Cafe & Pub:**

Free, friendly and inviting with the best of Continental Food.

• **Cake Shop:**

Oven fresh bakery products and goodies to make you feel at home.

**nanglo**

You know the food  
Remember the name

Durbar Marg, Kathmandu, Nepal. Phone: 223498



Every Mountain Watcher Needs A Kathmandu Himal Panorama.

Can you tell Choba Bhamare (5960m) from Langtang (7246m)?

Now you can, with our practical plywood-mounted three foot by three inch vista of the Himalayan horizon as seen from Patan Dhoka, meticulously drawn by a master mountain artist. If you are a mountain watcher who needs something more than glossy wall hangings, drop by the Himal office, or call Tel:523845. Price NRs150.

40,000 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> ft. BAR ...



... ..Where the tales  
are as tall as the mountains

Succulent steaks and burgers  
bountiful, with a vegetarian variety.  
The friendliest bar around the most  
convivial fireplace in town.

**RUM DOODLE**  
THAMEL, KATHMANDU, NEPAL

**WE TREK EVEREST  
EVERY WEDNESDAY &  
ANNAPURNA EVERY FRIDAY**

We take care of all your arrangements, regulations,  
the hiring of guides and porters  
food and equipment-at the eleventh hour, too



**Himalayan Journeys (Pvt) Ltd.**

Kantipath, Kathmandu-Nepal Tel. 226138, 226139

# Abominably Yours,

Occasionally, existential questions crop up in my mind as I ruminate through the winter months here in my Upper Barun hideout. Lately, these existential questions have tended to be geological in nature. Such as: how come my cave is so high up, at 23,386 feet above mean sea level?

I have read books on the subject of Himalayan uplift, and can converse intelligently at cocktail parties about subduction zones, overthrust nappes, continental plates and rock strata. But never have I read geology made as simple as it was in the 9 October 1990 issue of *The New York Times*, which I just received. (Will have to check with my Maha-Langur Courier Service about this glacial delivery.)

Anyway, for the best quotes on a subject as dense as mountain tectonics by as humourless a crew as geologists, I commend you to reporter Natalie Angier's piece in the newspaper, entitled "Himalayas' Rise Overturns Ideas About Peak-Building."

Evidently, American earth-scientists have just discovered that the Himalaya is the fastest-growing mountain chain on Earth, and their enthusiasm knows no bounds.

Exults Dr. John F. Shroder, geology professor from the University of Nebraska: "In the Himalaya, everything is going on faster and on a larger scale than at most other places. Uplift is faster, downcutting is faster, the rivers carry more sediment. If I'm studying landslides, I might have to wait in the U.S. for years to see one. But over there, I'll get a good one a

couple of times every summer. It may be hazardous to life and limb, but at least you'll get what you're looking for." Go tell that to the villagers.

Another rock-man, Dr. Robert Y. Yeats (Oregon State University), rhapsodises: "We have here a profound cross-section of the earth's crust laid out before us, with very little vegetation and almost 100 percent rock exposure. It's nice when you don't have to contend with trees or grass." Go tell that to the yaks.

According to the report, the tussle in the Himalaya is really between rocks that want to reach higher, and gravity, which will have none of it. "It seems that you can only build a mountain so high," says Dr. Clark Burchfiel, from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "This has been a surprise to us. There had been speculation that there must be a balance between upward forces and gravity, but this is the first case where we can actually prove it."

"The earth doesn't like to have its mountains too high. Ultimately, gravity must win," says Dr. Kip Hodges, another M.I.T. rocker. Danged gravity, *always* having it in for mountains.

Neither is Ms. Angier herself any slouch with vivid imagery when the subject is Himalayan uplift: "About 45 million years ago, the continental plate bearing the Indian peninsula, gliding to the northeast, slammed into the plate topped by Eurasia. The Indian plate attempted to keep moving by dipping

beneath the slightly larger Eurasian mass, but...the dive proved too difficult to manage. Because the subduction could not be accomplished, the two colliding edges folded up like origami to form the Himalayas." Ahh, hand me that Japan Airlines brochure.

Dr. Hodges of M.I.T. prefers something more graphic than origami: "We used to think that it was like what you'd get in a head-on collision between two cars, with each fender folding like an accordion. But now we know that it's not so simple. It is more like what you'd have if you ran your car into a brick wall, it hit its left fender, rotated, gathered up a few pedestrians, and then hit the wall with its right fender. You'd end up with a horrible mess and bits of people between the car and the wall."

For the most gruesome depiction of the Himalayan uplift, that passage takes the *tsampa*. Carried away by the horror of it all, Ms. Angier ends her piece by calling my Himalaya "that horrible mess of a mosaic of rocks forced upwards."

At about that time I let out the wail that Sherpas tell foreigners about, the kind that eerily echoes off the high valleys of the Hongu Basin, indicating an abominable person in severe stress. You can understand the state I was in: so many geologists, and all of them PhDs, putting the fear of rocks in a poor Himalayite. Everytime I look at Makalu across the valley now, it looks like a warped fender. I do not go out for fear of deadly earthquakes, lacerated massifs and mutilated ridgelines.

That night, with the jet-stream howling outside my cave entrance, I had a dream. I was in a Volkswagen Beetle making quick geological time on an American super-highway, headed for Princeton University, New Jersey, to give a lecture on how to hold your breath longest. Suddenly, heading straight down the turnpike, on the wrong lane, was a Volvo luxury sedan, full of mad geologists and driven by a reporter with dark strata under her eyes.

Crash! Mangled geologists, crushed fenders, the Volvo going into subduction under the tarmac magma, the Beetle rising above it all in slow-motion, a triumphant upthrust nappe in magnificent destruction.

I never knew Himalayan geology could be *so* scary.



Shard Ramji



# NEPAL INTERNATIONAL CLINIC

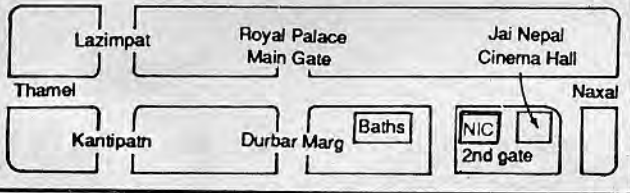


- ☆ Western medical setting serving the entire community
- ☆ Care by a U.S. Board Certified Internist
- ☆ Comparable services at lesser rates

- ☆ Imported Vaccines, Lab work
- ☆ Knowledge about Mountain Sickness.
- ☆ Central location
- ☆ 9:30 am-5 pm (Wednesday-6:30 pm)  
Saturday: Emergencies Only
- ☆ Open Sunday
- ☆ Prior appointment encouraged

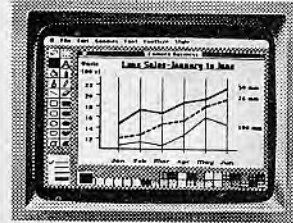
**412842**

Phone answered 24hrs.



# Macintosh™

Come in for a screen test.



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

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



**apple**  
Authorized Dealer

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



P.O. Box: 2502, Bagh Bazaar,  
Kathmandu, Nepal.  
Tel: 222-277, Cable: MICRO  
Telex: 2521 ATLINK NP  
Fax: 977-1-419250

# YANGRIMA'S WORLD OF MOUNTAINS

CONTACT US FOR YOUR  
ADVENTURE HOLIDAYS  
IN NEPAL.



P. O. Box 2951, Kantipath, Kathmandu, Nepal.  
Tel: 225608, 227627 Tlx: 2474 SUMTRA NP  
Fax: 977-1 - 227628



# We Also Serve You Birds On Trees



*French, Italian, Chinese, German,  
Russian cuisine. Served on the  
greenest green you've ever seen.  
Plenty of sun, fresh air and bird song  
too.*



**SHANGRI-LA**

LAZIMPAT, KATHMANDU, TEL : 412999

We Make You Feel Great !