VIGNETTES OF NEPAL

HARKA GURUNG
For my children

HIMALCHULI SAGARMATHA
MANASLU and BIKAS

who need to seek their own vista
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Some chapters are fully revised versions of my earlier essays. The introductory chapter appeared in the Nepal Review (November 1968) under the title “Climbing down the marigold bough” and a part of Chapter IX appeared in the same English monthly in July 1969. A section of Chapter V was published as “An attempt on Kagmara” in another English monthly Vasudha (March-April 1969). Chapters I, II, X, XIII, XVI and XX are greatly expanded versions of articles published in the daily The Motherland during 1966-69.

The route maps were drawn on the basis of the Survey of India maps of One Inch to 8 Miles (1 : 506,880) and One Inch to 4 Miles (1:253,440) series. The northern boundary has been adjusted according to the Maps of Sino-Nepal Boundary Treaty (Scale 1 : 500,000 and 1:50,000) published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal in 1961. Where available, One Inch (1:63,360) series of the Survey of India have been used to up-date the maps. The sketch map of Humla has been drawn partly from One Inch maps and partly from the author’s observations. Part of the Langtang map is based after the sketch by Peter Aufschnaiter published in Die Alpen, the monthly review of the Swiss Alpine Club. The Everest map is adapted from Erwin Schneider’s Khumbu Himal (1:50,000) published by Forschungsgesellschaften Nepal Himalaya (Munchen) and that of the Hongu-Inukhu area from The Mount Everest Region (1:100,000) published by the Royal Geographical Society (London).

The colour plates were printed at Craftsman Press Ltd Bangkok and the black and white photographs were printed at the Tribhuvan University Press, Kathmandu.
It is a breath-taking view when in the clear air of early autumn, the northern horizon reveals an array of dazzling snow peaks. The present volume has many such vignettes.

The Himalaya pervades the song, music, legend, thinking and indeed the whole life of the Nepalese. The book introduces to the readers not only the snowy mountains but also the hilly region, criss-crossed by a maze of streams and rivers and adorned with lakes and delightful valleys.

Even to many Nepalese used to hills and mountains, the book will reveal unexpected glimpses of the grandeur of Nepal. In addition to the description of the varying landscape, there are rich anecdotes on local history and lore, economy and culture of diverse ethnic groups. There are vivid descriptions of geology, flora, fauna and festivals and subtle observations on the changes taking place in rural Nepal.

For the trekkers, the book will prove a mine of information and offer them new insights on the various trekking areas in Nepal. The name of the author, Dr. Harka Gurung, a geographer and mountain chronicler, is itself a guarantee of the excellence of the recording of treks undertaken by him. It is like accompanying a walking encyclopaedia.
There is a Nepalese belief that some one with a mole in the sole is destined to travel. I have no faith in moles or for that matter even in stars although I have a prominent mole in my left sole. The reality however is that I have developed varicose veins on my calves through extensive travels in the hills of Nepal. My first long trek commenced as a compulsion to seek the nearest school, a week’s walk away in Kathmandu, and the later ones were in search of new horizons. The journeys described in the book were made under different capacities: as a research scholar and relief worker, teacher and planner, and as a minister. I began my travels as a lone trekker in rhythm with a heavy rucksack and later ones were on horse-back accompanied by escorts. I gained more from my earlier contacts with the people as an ordinary traveller than as a public official beseeched with requests for their basic needs.

The travels do not fit in a definite plan or pattern nor there is balance in coverage. The omission of Kathmandu, about which there are numerous accounts, was deliberate as my intention was to seek Nepal beyond the confines of the four passes of Kathmandu valley. Again the Tarai region privileged with modern transport means and official rest-house facilities gave me less opportunity for intimacy at the local level. The wider coverage given to the far western region and remote areas was mainly due to my intention to introduce lesser known places.

I have drawn heavily from my diaries, notes and photographs in describing my journeys. Where I was too busy or
lazy to keep notes or where my camera failed, I have relied on my memory although the passage of time has blurred the past mood. The reader may find the detailed descriptions of the routes tedious just as I found it tiring while walking across them. To me, the very act of being on the road was as important as reaching the destination. The profusion of words like ridge, valley, ascend, descend, climb, steep and traverse is a reflection both of my geographical bias and the rugged terrain of the country. While dealing with sociological aspects, I have used words such as Bhotia or Khasa in their original context and not in their later derogatory derivative sense. There are variations in emphasis on themes as each journey was a new chapter in my learning process. As Marco Polo has stated “And I only wrote half of what I saw”, I wrote only of what I knew.

The chapters are arranged geographically from the west to east and the chronology can be established from dates given in the text. I have taken liberty of breaking long journeys into convenient chapters as well as of bringing together short tours in a particular area. The Glossary includes all native terms used in the text with particular emphasis on place-name derivatives with diverse linguistic sources. The General Index includes altitudes in meters of most places that has relevance to the description.

Kshetra Pratap Adhikary of Sajha Prakashan showed a keen interest in the publication of this book and Randhir Subba, Chairman of the Central Sajha Organisation, went through the manuscript and provided valuable comments.

This book was written during one of the most difficult phases in my life when I was implicated in a court case of political nature. While my wife Saroj endured the situation with courage and fortitude, these reflections on my earlier encounters with real Nepal were a matter of much consolation. Indeed they sustained me during the time of stress.

The book has a beginning but no conclusion. The journey once begun in a small village in Lamjung must continue beyond the last rest-place and bridge, pass and vantage-point. There are many more places yet to be explored and even those I know
of will have taken a new aspect in a different season and time to lure me back. I draw no conclusions as the adventure is yet unfinished. The reader, I hope, will be able to elicit his own overview about Nepal from these ruminations of a native rambler.

Lamjung, Dasain 1979

Harka Gurung
CONTENTS

FOREWORD

THE INITIATION

Chapter One: WEST OF KATHMANDU  
Chapter Two: RELIEF WORK IN BAITADI  
Chapter Three: HIGH ROAD TO JUMLA  
Chapter Four: RARA AND MUGU  
Chapter Five: CHAUBISE AND KAGMARA  
Chapter Six: PHOKSUMDO AND TARAKOT  
Chapter Seven: JOURNEY TO HUMLA  
Chapter Eight: BETWEEN THE BHERI AND KARNALI  
Chapter Nine: POKHARA AND ITS ENVIRONS  
Chapter Ten: LAMJUNG: A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY  
Chapter Eleven: DESTINATION MUSTANG  
Chapter Twelve: MANANG AND MARSYANGDI  
Chapter Thirteen: CHITAWAN: THREE FACETS  
Chapter Fourteen: PILGRIMAGE TO GOSAINKUND  
Chapter Fifteen: A VISIT TO LANGTANG  
Chapter Sixteen: KODARI TO JANAKPUR  
Chapter Seventeen: AN EVEREST INTERLUDE  
Chapter Eighteen: ACROSS THE INUKHU AND HONGU  
Chapter Nineteen: DOWN THE ARUN  
Chapter Twenty: EAST OF KATHMANDU

BIBLIOGRAPHY  
GLOSSARY  
GENERAL INDEX
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Facing Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Baitadi</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Dang to Jumla</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Mugu</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Chaudbise and Kagmara</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Phoksumdo and Dhorpatan</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Northern Humla</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Bheri and Karnali</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Pokhara</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Lamjung</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Mustang</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Manang and Marsyangdi</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Chitawan</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Langtang and Gosainkund</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Kodari to Janakpur</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Everest environ</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Hongu and Inukhu</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Arun</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Ilam and Jhapa</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Map of Nepal</td>
<td>At end</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COLOUR PLATES

Frontispiece: Marsyangdi valley
Plate

I. a. Agar village, Jajarkot
   b. Chyakhure Langna

II. a. Jumla valley
     b. Fields of Lumsa

III. a. Rara Daha
      b. Mugu Karnali

IV. a. Approaching Mugu
     b. Mugu village

V. a. Mandhara traders
     b. Lama of Pungmo

VI. a. Phoksumdo Tso
     b. Suli Gad valley

VII. a. Beside the Bheri
     b. Jang La

VIII. a. Maikot village
      b. Dhorpatan

IX. a. Humla women
     b. Nara Langna

X. a. Salt-carriers below Katti
    b. Sinja shepherd

XI. a. Annapurna and Pokhara
     b. A Gurung house

After Page 112
XII. a. Mule caravan
   b. On the road

XIII. a. Girl in her finery
       b. Dhampus village

XIV. a. Fields of Thulibensi
     b. Barah Pokhari Lekh

XV. a. Dhaulagiri from Baglung
     b. Road near Tiplyang

XVI. a. Dhaulagiri from Thini
     b. Syang village

XVII. a. Beyond Charang
      b. Mustang town

XVIII. a. Manang village
       b. Marsyangdi valley

XIX. a. Langtang from Kyangjin
     b. Langtang forest

XX. a. Pressing oil, Melung
     b. Sun Kosi river

XXI. a. Tengboche monastery
     b. Ama Dablam

XXII. a. Dhankuta ridge
      b. New settlement

The cover illustration shows Lamjung Durbar, Barah Pokhari Lekh and Himalchuli in Lamjung.
BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS

XXIII. a. Seti bridge
      b. Dipail valley

XXIV. a. Baitadi basket
      b. Bhatna landslide

XXV. a. Jumla valley
     b. Jumla town

XXVI. a. Stone pillars
      b. Masta shrine

XXVII. a. Girls of Mah
       b. Mangri village

XXVIII. a. Lama of Mugu
        b. Mugu valley

XXIX. a. Children of Siyalgarhi
        b. Kaghara Lekh

XXX. a. Phoksumdo Tso
    b. Ringmo waterfall

XXXI. a. Humla valley
     b. Til village

XXXII. a. Crowd at Jang
       b. Majulepatan, Limi

XXXIII. a. Badi couple
        b. Ruins at Kakri Vihar

XXXIV. a. Pokhara Valley
        b. A chautara

XXXV. a. Gurung priests
       b. Modi valley
XXXVI. a. Shrine at Nuwakot  
b. Temporary bridge  

XXXVII. a. Khudi, Lamjung  
b. Gurung shepherds  

XXXVIII. a. Manang valley, west view  
b. Manang valley, east view  

XXXIX. a. Forest of gravel cones  
b. Annapurna and Nilgiri  

XL. a. Pasang near Geling  
b. Raja of Mustang  

XLI. a. Dhaulagiri and Kali Gandaki  
b. Marsyangdi valley  

XLII. a. Rhinoceros  
b. Crocodile  

XLIII. a. Langtang Himal  
b. Langurs of Langtang  

XLIV. a. A Mani wall  
b. Janaki temple  

XLV. a. Kunde village  
b. Ama Dablam  

XLVI. a. Pumo Ri and Kala Pathar  
b. Northern walls of Khumbu  

XLVII. a. Sagarmatha or Mount Everest  
b. Border peaks from Camp I  

XLVIII. a. Girls of Bung  
b. Hongu valley  

XLIX. a. Everest massif  
b. Rai family  

L. a. The Arun  
b. Limbu grave  

All photographs are by the author.
In a hundred ages of the gods I could not tell thee of the glories of the Himalaya. As the dew is dried up by the morning sun, so are the sins of mankind by the sight of the Himalaya.

—Skanda Purana
## ERRATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Should be</th>
<th>Printed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kuwakot</td>
<td>Nuwakot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5922m</td>
<td>6000m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>2 &amp; 12</td>
<td>track</td>
<td>trek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4067m</td>
<td>4086m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>across</td>
<td>across</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Ridga</td>
<td>Ridga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Langu</td>
<td>Langur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>pleasant</td>
<td>pleasant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>divides</td>
<td>divide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Tharpa</td>
<td>Thapa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>from</td>
<td>form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5961m</td>
<td>6711m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>insolation</td>
<td>insulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Maduwa</td>
<td>Madwua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>track</td>
<td>trek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Khloi</td>
<td>Kholi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tarali</td>
<td>Tarai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7246m</td>
<td>7446m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Stainton</td>
<td>Staintin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>pass</td>
<td>past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2712m</td>
<td>8900m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>gneiss</td>
<td>gneises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4300m</td>
<td>3300m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Line</td>
<td>Should be</td>
<td>Printed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>transported</td>
<td>traspor ted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>116</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1121m</td>
<td>3800m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>clientele</td>
<td>clientele</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>hierarchy</td>
<td>hieracrchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137</td>
<td>34–35</td>
<td>snuggled</td>
<td>snugglied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>forded</td>
<td>foraed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>146</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>wrote</td>
<td>wroted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Himalayas</td>
<td>Hamalayas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>157</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nawakot</td>
<td>Nuwakot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Begnas</td>
<td>Bengas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5100m</td>
<td>5200m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>170</td>
<td>25 &amp; 30</td>
<td>Modi</td>
<td>Madi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>174</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1418m</td>
<td>1432m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>176</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>by</td>
<td>be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>176</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>(p. 107)</td>
<td>(Chap. VII)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>183</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Ngadi</td>
<td>Nadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>183</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Pl. XIVb</td>
<td>Pl. XVlb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>187</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>overgrazing</td>
<td>oergrazing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>188</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Tista</td>
<td>Teesta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>202</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8078m</td>
<td>8091m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>215</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>enormous</td>
<td>enor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>216</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>barley</td>
<td>barely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>220</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>contains</td>
<td>contain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>226</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>tracing</td>
<td>tracting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>226</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>expedition</td>
<td>expedition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Ngawal</td>
<td>Nyawal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>238</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>axis</td>
<td>exit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>crops</td>
<td>corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>boiled</td>
<td>boilded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>on</td>
<td>in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>253</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Basnyat</td>
<td>Basyant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>254</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>scene</td>
<td>secne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>254</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>elaborately</td>
<td>elaboraely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>255</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Hetauda</td>
<td>Heatauda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>256</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>now</td>
<td>how</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>257</td>
<td>28 &amp; 35</td>
<td>McDougal</td>
<td>MacDougal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Line</td>
<td>Should be</td>
<td>Printed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>262</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>horizontal</td>
<td>horizontal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>274</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>dna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>277</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>fish</td>
<td>fishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>282</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>described</td>
<td>described</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>286</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Chalongpati</td>
<td>Chalngpati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>292</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>shortest</td>
<td>shorterst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>297</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kirantichhap</td>
<td>Kairantichhap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>299</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Khimti</td>
<td>Khimiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>299</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Bhadra</td>
<td>Bhhardra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>fairs</td>
<td>farirs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Barbise</td>
<td>Barbise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>306</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Gurkha</td>
<td>Gorkha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>307</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Benkar</td>
<td>Bengar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>316</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>frozen</td>
<td>forzen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>320</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5150m</td>
<td>5300m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>329</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pumo</td>
<td>Pum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>330</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Sweterland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>333</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Stainton</td>
<td>Station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>339</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Gudel</td>
<td>Guoel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>342</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>bottom</td>
<td>bootton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>363</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Lepcha</td>
<td>Lepdcha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>368</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Tichy</td>
<td>Ticcy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>370</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>ward</td>
<td>award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>371</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>market</td>
<td>maket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>371</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>religion</td>
<td>religon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>372</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Pyracantha</td>
<td>Pyrakantha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>373</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>stream</td>
<td>steam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>376</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>oak</td>
<td>oa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>377</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>ki</td>
<td>k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>380</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Lotus</td>
<td>Louts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>381</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pali</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE INITIATION

One remains unsatisfied after eating a mountain, unquenched after drinking an ocean.

- Tibetan proverb

Taranche is a small village in Lamjung in Central Nepal on the left bank of the Marsyangdi river. The snow peaks of Manaslu and Himalchuli loom large just twenty-four kilometers north of the village. Thula was born in Taranche where his father had established himself well through his earnings as a Gurkha soldier. The old man had been to France and Palestine during the First World War and had been mentioned in dispatches during the Waziristan campaign of 1919. Thula’s two elder brothers had seen battle action in the jungles of Burma and Borneo during the Second World War. Two generations of soldiers in the family had quite a collection of war medals and Thula would listen enraptured to their martial exploits. He was equally fascinated by their description of strange places and peoples in far-off lands.

Thula’s immediate environment consisted of the roaring Marsyangdi, flights of terraces and wooded hills climbing to the ultimate snow ranges. He had little clue of what lay behind the white rampart of Himalchuli and whence flowed the turbulent waters of the Marsyangdi. He seemed content playing with his friends and grazing animals around the village. He was the
recognized leader of the boys, for he could throw stones farthest of all. He had to climb the tallest tree, jump down the highest terrace field and fight more often to maintain his supremacy in the gang. The boys roamed wild, stealing fruits in the village and catching fish and crabs in the streams. They improvised games of war and hunt and of things natural. Once they were playing a bird game wherein Thula was supposed to be a thief crow and other boys small nesting birds. The boys made nests complete with eggs of rounded pebbles and went to hide. When Thula climbed the tree to steal the eggs, the boys came rushing with their hands flapping like wings to attack Thula, the thief crow. In panic, Thula imagined he could fly and dived down the tree only to land hard on a large boulder. He had a sharp cut on his forehead and although the wound healed after a few months, it left a permanent scar.

Accidents like these, however, did not diminish Thula’s love for sport and mischief. He became adept at snaring birds and at times he felt no scruples at victimising neighbours’ chickens. He enjoyed going with friends to the forest during the Spring season to seek for bird nests. They would place a three-branched twig with nooses made of horse-hair on the nest and entangle the bird when it came for nesting. In case of nests with young chicks, the boys never snared the parent birds. They would return when the chicks became feathered and then take them home for making pets.

The best time used to be the autumn when cattle, sheep and horses came down from the alpine pastures and grazed in the village fields. Milk and butter flowed freely in the numercus goths (shepherd’s hut) near the village and young boys chased and rode horses on the run. It was also the time when the village glowed with marigold flowers and family reunions took place during the Dasain and Tihar festivals. It was customary for the elders to go hunting for deer, bear and wild boar in the autumn. There was a large collection of antlers and horns of prize games in Thula’s house. The boys loved to enact their elders and play hunting
One of the boys would tie deer horns on his head and run. Others would give him a chase over fields, fences and forests as hunters and dogs. Thula always liked to be the deer and his ability to run fast and jump obstacles would make others difficult to catch him. If one of the boys closed on him, he would give a good kick as a desperate deer does to a hunting dog.

Many a time he would plead with his elder brothers to take him on their hunting trips. Once he managed to accompany his brother Mahila for pheasant shooting to a site where the latter had spotted some bird droppings and guessed that birds roosted there. Mahila carried a muzzle-loader and Thula held a torch and it was almost dark when they reached the appointed place. Thula was asked to light the torch and point it towards the tree, and lo, the branches were thick with *kalij* pheasants roosting wing to wing. The birds were too surprised at the flash-light and sat there blinking. Mahila aimed his gun and fired point-blank; there was a big bang but no birds dropped. The gun powder had burst at the striker and Mahila's face was black. Luckily he was not hurt badly. While the two brothers cursed the lousy gun, the birds now fully awakened made away in the dark.

On another occasion Thula's eldest brother Jetha was home on leave from the Indian army. He had brought home a new gun and although it was not the hunting season, he was impatient to show off his marksmanship. He was thankful to Thula when one day the latter spotted a langur monkey feasting on young maize crop near the village. Jetha set out with his new gun after the langur with Thula as his guide. But seeing a man with a gun the langur retreated fast to a nearby forest and perched himself on a high tree. Jetha asked Thula to wait behind and advanced stealthily towards the tree. Thula jumped, danced and grimaced at the monkey to distract him. The trick worked and the next thing Thula saw was the monkey drop down with a crashing thud. The beast lay dead as the bullet had hit it between the eyes. Thula did not want the effort of chasing the monkey to be wasted. He pulled the dead monkey by the tail and brought it to the village street. He set it on a boulder beside the road in a sitting posture
with stick supports from behind. In the evening, when people returned from work with their bullocks and buffaloes, the animals bolted in confusion and the men were startled at this sudden activity. And then they discovered the cause of confusion. They rushed at the sitting monkey with spades, hoes and sticks and were even more puzzled when it rolled down at the first strike. They realized how they had been fooled only when they saw Thula laughing in nts above the road. Then everyone laughed including those who had to run after the frightened animals.

The farthest Thula ventured outside the village was to the family sheep farm on Baraha Pokhari Lekh. It was a day’s journey away and he set off with the family shepherd who had come home for provisions. The track was all the way a steep climb through rhododendron and oak forest and Thula was excited to be above the valley clouds for once. They reached the shepherd’s hut at dusk and the place was crowded with sheep and goats that Thula could not count. Three ferocious mastiff dogs guarded the camp and their wholesome bark echoed in the mountains. Thula had fresh milk, cream and cheese to his heart’s content and slept with the lambs to keep himself warm.

In the morning the sun shone bright and the snow on Himalchuli looked clean and fresh. Soon after the morning meal, the shepherds drove away the animals for grazing leaving behind Thula, young lambs, and a guard dog. It was his first day alone on a high mountain. He dared not roam outside the hut and played indoors with the lambs. He was not afraid of the bears and leopards as he hoped the large dog would defend him. What he was frightened of was the Ban Jhankri or the wild shaman supposed to kidnap children.

About noon clouds began rising up the valley and hid the mountain peaks. The whole mountain side was covered with mist by afternoon. Thula made a lot of smoke in the hut to frighten away wild animals and the Ban Jhankri. He was really scared when he heard whistling sounds in the evening, for he had been told that the Ban Jhankri usually whistles. He crou-
ched close to the fire-place and held a burning log to defend himself. To his utter desperation the whistling became more frequent and came nearer. Then he clearly heard someone calling out his name and was greatly relieved to learn that it was the shepherd whistling to herd the animals. He rushed out to join the shepherds and with him also ran the lambs seeking their mothers for milk. The shepherd assured Thula not to be afraid of the Ban Jhankri as he could not catch a fast boy like him. He was told that the safest thing to do was to run downhill when chased by a Ban Jhankri for if it is a male the long crest-hairs would fall over his eyes and if a female, her long, pendant breasts would encumber her movements. Thula found life on the mountain exciting but he could not stay long. His gregarious self could not get over the lonely life of the high alps. He was glad to return to the village after a fortnight. His clothes had become yellow with smoke and he smelled of sheep, smoke, and butter. He rejoined his friends and continued their games.

Apart from the care-free days, life in the village was not all marigold and honey. Taranche was strung between two dangers; landslide from above and flooding of the fields on the banks of the Marsyangdi during heavy rains as well as famine in dry years. There were occasional quarrels in the village over land, livestock, and labor that led to litigation. Thula’s father was regarded as an elder statesman in the village and he would try to settle the disputes before it reached the expensive courts. His reputation in the area was built on the settlement of a long-standing dispute between two villages over grazing rights for which he had arranged a five-day marathon deliberation between the parties. The policy of attrition paid off and the final agreement was celebrated by a feasting over five sheep by both parties. In the village, quarrelling people would come to Thula’s father and begin accusing each other. The old man would first shout at them to shut up and then hear their cases in turn. Then he would pass his judgement which would be final. During such encounters, Thula would become serious and sit quietly beside his father and admire his authority.
In the winter months many visitors would pass through the village and Thula's father had three sets of hukka (water pipe) apart from his own for the numerous visitors, one set each for Brahmin, Chhetri and Gurung. These would be farmers from distant villages to buy grain, Tibetan Lamas and beggars, Hindu sadhus and pilgrims. They would talk of far-off places with Thula's father and Thula was a keen audience. His father had a mit or ritual friend from Tibet whose name was Tsering Lama and he visited the family every winter. Thula liked Tsering Lama for he had once cured his mother of a serious illness and had also taught Thula Tibetan alphabet and drawing animals of the Tibetan calendar. Sometimes Brahmin visitors would teach Thula some Nepali alphabet and he learnt to make pen of nigalo (Arundinaria) reeds and ink from lankuri (Fraxinus floribunda) leaves.

There was no school in the village or in the whole Lamjung district for that matter and the teaching technique of one old Chhetri, who was known as desi bura because he had been to India was to ask the boys to learn popular religious classics by heart in a sing-song manner. Thula had no formal education as his father was a busy man of affairs and his mother was illiterate. He yearned for school, the chief impetus being the nice dresses and pictorial books stored in the attic which belonged to his two elder brothers, Mahila and Sahila, from their brief Durbar School days. But Kathmandu was good seven days' away. Thula's father used to visit Kathmandu once a year to collect his pension and would return with sweets and toys for the children. Thula dreamt of going to Kathmandu but could never persuade his parents.

When Thula was nine years old he thought he better decide about going to Kathmandu soon. Pensioners then usually travelled in groups to collect their pension because of the danger of highway robbers. That winter Thula was sure to follow the proceedings when other pensioners came to confer with his father about travel arrangements. He overheard the decision that most of the pensioners should leave the village one auspicious Friday and camp ten kilometers south of Taranche. The rest with Thula's
father would join the party next morning. Thula remembered the day well and kept his plans to himself. On the appointed day, he hid a pair of trousers near the main road and played with his friends as usual. Then he saw the first group of pensioners on the road to Kathmandu. He let them proceed out of sight of the village and then he picked up his trousers and ran after them. His playmates were taken by surprise and chased him as far as Ghatte Khola, south of the village. But Thula was too fast for them.

He caught up with the advance party after half an hour. They tried to dissuade him from undertaking the journey. They asked him to return as he had no food and no place to sleep on the long journey. But Thula replied that they had to feed him as they were carrying his father’s provisions and as for sleeping he could lie down under a tree. They gave up asking any more questions of the determined boy. That night the party camped at Chaur under a large simal tree. Thula was fed and put to bed near the campfire. He fell asleep after worrying much over how his father would react at this clandestine adventure.

Next morning Thula’s father reached the camp on horseback. The old man did not look angry but asked Thula why he had run away from home. Thula replied that he wanted to go to school in Kathmandu and pleaded that he be taken. Father enquired whether he could walk a whole week on foot as there was no spare horse and no one would carry him and to this Thula confidently asserted that he could walk himself. Thula’s father thought for a while and then warned that if he had to go to Kathmandu he would be unable to come home for many, many years. Thula could not care less as he had made up his mind. Father must have taken pity on him, for he smiled and agreed to take Thula to Kathmandu. Thula was relieved and indeed happy.

But Kathmandu was another 128 kilometers east and Thula had to walk all that hill road. His feet became sore and swollen but he dared not complain as he feared that he might be turned back and others would make fun of him. He travelled across
steep trails, rough stream-beds and over swinging suspension bridges. By day he could see strange places and ask many questions. But at night, lying under the star-lit sky he would lie awake for long thinking of his friends and home. And he would cry silently at the thought of his mother's warm hug. But there was no turning back.

Then one day they arrived to a pass, Panchmane, and father drew aside Thula and pointed out the city of Kathmandu. At first Thula could not believe his eyes. He had never seen so large a flat land and had never imagined there could be so many houses and palaces in one place. Kathmandu was a discovery and a new world had opened before him.
CHAPTER ONE

WEST OF KATHMANDU

Beautiful indeed is Silgarhi of Doti, Sanphe of Achham;
Fish in the river, falcon on the ridge, pheasant on the alp.

- Folk song.

Kathmandu to Mahendranagar is a long way both in terms of space and time. They lie 530 kilometers apart, Kathmandu in the heart of the kingdom and Mahendranagar in the extreme west of the country. If Kathmandu’s antiquity dates back to more than some thousand years, Mahendranagar was established as a new settlement in the forest wilderness of Kanchanpur only in 1962. And the two districts evidence an immense contrast in land occupancy and population density. We, however, managed to span these two places at the opposite spectrum of Nepalese history and geography in a short time, a fact of modern Nepal. It was a Pilatus Porter plane chartered by the Nepal Red Cross Society for the delivery of medicine and clothes that took me and Ramesh Sharma, as members of the Society’s Disaster Relief Committee, to the Far West on 26th January 1967.

A smaller aircraft, flying at lower elevation and slower speed, enables one to better comprehend the features and as we were to cover three quarters of the length of the country en route, the
trip provided us with a fair sample of central and west Nepal landscape. Immediately after leaving Kathmandu before 9 a.m., we turned west and entered the valley of Mahesh Khola and then the Trisuli valley, a dense layer of morning fog filling the entire lower section. The higher hills to the north were still in blue shadow and above them floated the snow ranges of Ganesh Himal and Himalchuli. We crossed south over the Mahabharat Lekh near Kandrang Garhi and descended over the level forests and fields of Chitawan Valley and continued westwards to Nawalpur across the wide meanders of the Narayani river. We then crossed a forested ridge of Dauniya Danda (760 m.) to emerge over the fields of Parasi. When we taxied down on the newly-paved airstrip at Bhairawa, we had not only travelled 240 kilometers in an hour but had descended to 105 meters above sea level. We were on the northern edge of the Gangetic plain and 140 kilometers south of the Dhaulagiri peaks. The Nepalese Tarai west of the Narayani is known as Naya Muluk (new territory) as this tract seized by the British in 1815 was restored in 1860 in appreciation of Nepal’s help during the Indian Sepoy Mutiny.

We continued our journey westwards over the plains of Rupandehi and Taulihawa and crossed the dry Duduwa Danda (888 m.) to fly over the fertile Deukhuri Valley. The valley of Deukhuri bears much resemblance to Chitawan valley or the Rapti Dun. Both are east-west oriented spindle-shaped inner valleys (Bhitri Madhesh) and drained by west-flowing rivers with identical names—Rapti. Another striking similarity is the absence of Nepalese-occupied Tarai tract south of these two valleys. The Indo-Nepalese boundary alignment known as das gaja (ten yards) that elsewhere extends along the Tarai, climbs on Someswar Danda (878 m.) at Chitawan and runs along the southern foothills of Duduwa Danda with Koilabas as the frontier town in Deukhuri. Such geographic realities of space interrelationship may lead one to speculate on their historical parallelism. Chitawan and Deukhuri, originally inhabited entirely by Tharus, were until the mid-eighteenth century under the rule of the Tharus, while Deukhuri along with Dang was under the rule of Sallyan.
might conjecture that when malarial conditions made Tarai an effective political frontier in the past, these inner valleys providing similar ecological conditions might have made the acquisition of Tarai territory on the Gangetic plain superfluous for the rulers of Chitawan and Deukhuri.

But Deukhuri is not an extensive valley and before I could pursue the matter further, we were on its western end where the Rapti makes a sharp south turn round a dome structure revealing its outer rock strata like layers of a half-peeled onion. The flight was again over the Tarai plain of Banke and Bardiya, the climate getting drier and the forest more extensive. The Karnali river, released from the confines of the hills at Chisapani, was a huge expanse of water swinging wide over sandy flats. Its eastern distributary the Garuwa was tempered with elaborate irrigation channels leading to Tharu paddy fields while the western distributary the Kauriala dug deep against the sandbanks of Tikapur. West of Karnali, the forests were more extensive and only the white ribbons of sandy river beds coming down the foothills and isolated pockets of Tharu villages broke the monotony of the green canopy of sal (Shorea robusta) forest.

We reached Dhangarhi (190 m), at the south-western end of Kailali, two hours after leaving Bhairawa. We found it close to the Indian border a shanty town which made pretensions of being the headquarters of Seti Zone that included such farflung places as Saipal near Tibet. The growth of the town owed much to the extension of railway up to Gauri Phanta across the border originally for timber transport. When we reached there in January, the town was full of hill people who had come to the town for shopping, employment and resettlement.

Dhangarhi was merely a convenient stop-over for us. The worst affected areas by the previous year’s earthquake were in the hills and we left Dhangarhi in the afternoon for Doti. We flew north first over Tharu villages, sal forest and then the pine-covered foothills. The Chure range hereabout was much higher (1868 m) than those in the east and their summits had rhododen-
dron forest. We soon entered a contorted valley drained east by the Thuli Gad. The slopes of Tele Lekh (2787 m) were densely covered with pine on the south slope and oak on the north and the few clearings near the site of goths (shepherd’s hut) appeared insignificant. More expressive were the scars of landslip on steeper slopes precipitated by the recent earthquake. The sandstone strata of the Chure range inclined gently to the north and the quartzites and schists of Teli Lekh were inclined in similar direction but with a higher pitch. Once over the hump of the Tele Lekh, we were revealed the distant peaks of Nampa (6754 m) and Saipal (7035 m) to the north while below, the Seti river flowed east through a low valley.

We descended into the valley of Seti and landed on a narrow terrace above the south bank of the river (600 m). The Seti here occupies an anticlinal valley with beds of quartzite dipping on either side of the river with an east-west trend. We climbed down the terrace to the riverside and walked along its narrow southern bank. It is a considerable river with its source on the southern slopes of the Saipal and flowing past Talkot, Chainpur and Silgarhi, joins the Karnali north of Dhanaras ridge. We crossed the river by a solid suspension bridge where we ran into a flock of sheep and goats. The flock, in the care of a Chhetri maiden, was from Dhuli in Bajhang that had spent the winter in lower Seti valley (Pl. XXIIIa). We were to meet more flocks of sheep and goats from upper Seti on the northern bank and in the streets of Silgarhi itself. The shepherds were mostly Thakuri and Chhetri and we learnt from them that apart from some isolated pockets of Byansi from Tinkar, there were no Bhotia or Mongoloid tribal population in upper Seti. The fields were more extensive north of the bridge and were green with young wheat of improved variety. After a pleasant walk along the broad beach on the northern bank, we climbed past a low hill with an old fort and now merely known as Madu (temple) and then crossed a small stream coming down the north. The hill fort is now in ruins but during the medieval times following the decline of Khasa empire of Jumla, Doti was one of the powerful kingdoms in the far west. Ajmerkot of Dandeldhura is credited to Ajaya-
pal who ruled Doti during the 14th century and had his summer capital at Ajmerkot and winter capital at Dipail. Doti rule extended north-west as far as Johar and Darma in Kumaon until 1581 A. D. when Kumaon rulers of Chand dynasty re-established their authority. There were constant wars between Doti and Kumaon through the next two centuries and it was in the last decade of the 18th century, that a Gorkhali force under Ranbir Khatri defeated the then ruler Dip Shahi and finally annexed Doti to the expanding Gorkhali empire. It is the expression of the past supremacy of Doti that people west of the Karnali are still called Dotial in Kumaon and Garhwal.

We climbed eastwards from the stream near the old fort amidst overgrazed forest and fields left fallow after maize and millet harvest. On the way up, we met women and girls with loads of fodder leaf from nearby forests. At least, they were busy at normal hard work and had escaped the old custom of the land whereby some families used to offer their eldest daughter to the service of the goddess Malika and who would remain unmarried as deuki. A steady climb of over 750 meters brought us to a south-trending ridge on which Silgarhi was located. Silgarhi is a considerable bazar by hill standards and the well-built houses line the stone-paved street. There are two versions about the origin of the name of the place. The religious ascribe it to the combination of the shrine of Shila Devi above and that of Bhairav shrine in the garhi or fort below the town. A more prosaic explanation to which I tend to subscribe is the wide provenance of sandstone slabs called shila in Nepali in the neighbourhood and therefore the 'fort of sandstone.' During the Rana period, Silgarhi enjoyed the status of the main administrative centre for the Far West similar to Palpa in the west and Dhan-kuta in the east. The original settlement centered round the Bhairav shrine at the southern end and it has expanded into a linear town with a hospital and educational campus at the northern end. There are about 40 shops along the main street with Achham, Bajhang and Bajura as their hinterland. The bazar's external contacts are mainly with Dhangarhi and Tanakpur from where Indian muleteers bring salt, cloth and other merchan-
dise. Most of the shopkeepers are Newars but being so far removed from their original home in Kathmandu, they hardly use their Newari mother-tongue. Silgarhi has numerous government offices as the headquarters of Doti district as well as due to its central location in relation to the hill districts of Seti Zone.

We had a hectic time at Silgarhi in the evening contacting district panchayat members and government officials and explaining to them about the distribution quota of medicine and clothes we had brought with us or that were to be collected from Dhangarhi for the various earthquake affected areas. We had the further task of estimating the requirements of food aid to the affected population in addition to what had already been air-dropped the previous autumn. Next morning, January 27th, we left very early and came down the same path we had climbed the evening before. It was a pleasant descent in the cool morning but the sunlight that lighted the hills west of Dipail revealed a dreary prospect (Pl. XXIII b). Much of the slopes below 2,000 metres had been denuded of forest and the farms were small and marginal. No wonder, a sample household survey carried out by Charles Mc Dougal about the same time we were in Doti revealed that 30.3 percent of the households had members currently employed in India.* It was therefore not hard to imagine that the pressure of increasing population on limited resources and now accelerated by the trauma of the earthquake would launch an exodus of people from the hills to the Tarai forest land. Whatever the ecological implications, the trend was inevitable from the experiences in the eastern region and here too, I felt, the Rubicon had been crossed.

We reached Dipail in two hours and on the way met flocks of sheep and goats carrying salt and grain that belonged to Byansi. At Dipail, we got into the waiting aircraft and the flight to Dhangarhi took us hardly half an hour over the same route that the Bajhang and Byansi sheep caravan would be toiling for about a week. At Dhangarhi, we had lunch at the governor's

* Charles McDougal Village and Household Economy in Far Western Nepal, Kathmandu 1968.
house, a massive brick building from the Rana days and toured the dusty town in the afternoon. Transactions were mainly in salt, cotton cloth, kerosene and foodgrains bound for the hills and ghiu (butter), herbs, hides and skin, grain and timber for export to India. Among the numerous hataru (marketeer) from Doti, Achham, Bajura and Bajhang with their eternal doko (basket) were the native Tharus in cotton dresses and colorful ornaments of beads, cowrie shells and coins. Dhangarhi seemed to be the meeting-point of Rana Tharus from the west and Dangaura Tharus who had originally migrated from Dang.

We stayed in Dhangarhi for the night and the place swarmed with mosquitoes even in January. The next morning, we left Dhangarhi and the half-hour flight to Mahendranagar was mostly over continuous cover of immense sal trees. The forest seemed much more extensive in Kanchanpur than elsewhere and the few clearings near streams were like islands in a vast expanse of green luxuriance. When we landed on an improvised airstrip on the western edge of Mahendranagar, the impress of man in changing the natural state was already in evidence. The first sound that welcomed us after the roar of the aircraft engine had died down was the rhythmic whirr of a nearby saw-mill. Around the mill lay prone a large pile of sal trees that once drew sustenance from the virgin soil and gave shelter to wild denizens. And this was the place Jang Bahadur had selected to entertain the Prince of Wales for big-game hunting a century ago. The royal guest arrived Banbasa just across the Mahakali river on 17th February 1876 and the following day was welcomed into Nepal territory with his suite of 22 noblemen and gentlemen. During the royal shoot which was made up of eight hundred elephants and lasted until 6th March, the Prince shot fourteen tigers and a leopard while other members bagged six tigers and more than one hundred deer of different species.*

In 1966, Kanchanpur district still had 86 per cent of its

* Pudma Jung Bahadur Rana, Life of Jung Bahadur, Allahabad, 1909, chap. XV.
total area under forest cover. There were only a few settlements of hill migrants from adjacent districts of Dadeldhura and Baitadi and the majority of the population was Tharu as the 1961 census recorded that 84.4 per cent of the district population had Tharu as their mother-tongue. In 1961, Kanchanpur with a total population of 18,877 had a low density of 12 persons per square kilometer and population growth during the period 1954–1961 was only 6.3 per cent. It was still an idyllic district in 1964–65 of magnificent forests and rich wild life and with an annual cereal grain surplus of 11,323 metric tons. The new airstrip, the saw-mill and fresh clearings were a prelude to the changing face of Kanchanpur.

We walked eastwards to Mahendranagar along a forest path under tall sal trees festooned with giant creepers and wove our way past large ant-hills. Mahendranagar, about 270 meters above sea-level, was a new settlement in the middle of a forest with the foothills visible to the north. The place was first cleared in 1962 when the district headquarters was shifted here from Belauri on the southern border. The main east-west street was lined by a group of new houses made from plentiful timber and there were about two dozen shops. Apart from the hataru (marketeer) from Dadeldhura, Doti and Baitadi, the place already swarmed with squatters from the hills. The easy link with Tanakpur railhead, about an hour west, had endowed the place with commercial importance and in 1966 about 100,000 kg of ghiu had been exported to India through Mahendrangar, more than that from the older Dhangarhi bazar. Moreover, as the Zonal headquarters with 29 government offices, Mahendranagar claimed primacy in managing the affairs of the entire Mahakali Zone that extended as far as 154 kilometers north to Tinker.

At Mahendranagar, we were already witnessing the first beginnings of influx of the landless poor. The Tarai forest land west of the Karnali river was the only outlet left for the hill-men of far western Nepal who had experienced both a dramatic earthquake and less dramatic years of drought. The isolated clearings in due course of time will spread outwards like cancer
spots eroding away the present forest dominance and change the
landscape pattern and population composition. There was no
point in sentimentalising over the pristine state of Kanchanpur as
the drama of man seeking new frontiers was an old story since
his first break from arboreal heritage. We left Mahendranagar
after handing over the medicine and other relief supplies for
Mahakali Zone to the local authorities and flew east across the
dense forest we might not see again in a few years. We had brief
halts at Dhangarhi and Bhairawa and white peaks of Dhaulagiri,
Annapurna, Ganesh and Langtang floated above blue ridges and
brown hills as we flew east wafted by the strong westerly afternoon
wind. In the March of 1876, it had taken Jang Bahadur 24 days
to reach Thapathali from Jamna near Mahendranagar. We
covered the same distance in five hours and our swift transportation
provided an even sharper mental comparison between the moder-
nity of egocentric Kathmandu in contrast to the elemental stirri-
ngs of distal Mahendranagar. In essence, we were a witness to
the dichotomy of two Nepals.
CHAPTER TWO

RELIEF WORK IN BAITADI

Up there my horizontal drum is resounding,
Up there my kettle-drum is resounding:
I am the fierce warrior of Trimal Chand
Sangram Karki is my name.

-Folk ballad*

An earthquake on June 27th, 1966 had rocked and greatly damaged parts of Baitadi, Darchula, Bajhang and Bajura in the far western region. I had an opportunity of visiting Baitadi in August 1966 as a member of Red Cross relief team led by Ramesh Sharma. The immense problem of transportation within Nepal became clear when we had to circumvent 1,200 kilometers through India to reach Baitadi which is 480 kilometers west of Kathmandu. We left Kathmandu on July 25th by air through Patna, Benaras and Lucknow. We travelled by train through the night from Lucknow to Pilibhit from where we took a four-hour bus ride to Tanakpur a rail-head on the right bank of the Mahakali (Sarda) river. We changed bus at Tanakpur and the 150 kilometers

journey to Pithoragarh took us three days because of road damages caused by the earthquake and heavy rains. We spent the nights at Chalthi and Dhaun in ramshackle huts and reached Pithoragarh (1520 m) late in the evening of July 28th and stayed at the dak bungalow.

We left Pithoragarh by jeep the following afternoon but at Pipalkot a fresh landslide had blocked the road and we had to proceed on foot each with our knap-sack. We walked past Majrikanta and descended by a more direct steep path to Jhulaghat (700 m) on the banks of Mahakali river that defines the boundary between India and Nepal. The Indian side of Jhulaghat was a level shelf with good houses while on the Nepal side there was a steep slope as an apt symbol of our mountainous country. We stepped into the Nepalese territory by crossing a steel suspension bridge and our introduction to Nepal was sombre. On a rocky ledge above the bridge were a few houses and around the customs-house swarmed a large crowd of men waiting for a share of food aid being distributed by the government. It was not hard to anticipate what to expect in the interior villages affected by the earthquake from the famished look and tattered clothes the men had. We were put up in an old building near the customs house and I could not sleep well because of bed bugs.

It was easy to recruit porters for carrying four loads of medicine, cloth and blankets we had brought with us and left Jhulaghat the next morning, July 30th. The climb above the east bank of the Mahakali was facilitated by an overcast sky. We could see the swirling Mahakali down below and sections of motorable road across in India from our zigzag trail. The path climbed eastwards along an overgrazed hill slope and a steep ascent led to Mauni (1280 m). We then turned due east along a ridge and after five hours reached Gothalapani (1430 m) about a kilometer short of Baitadi bazar. Gothalapani, an old graveyard site, was a new extension of the crowded old bazar with the offices of the district panchayat, health, education, a rest house and half a dozen shops. We found the rest-house beside a
chautara (rest platform) under an imposing Ficus religiosa tree tempting and we stayed there. However, the roof leaked in the rain and we spent the night shifting our bed from one dripping corner to another.

Next morning we walked up to Baitadi bazar which is locally known as Garhi (fort). The town was located on the south slopes of Shahi Lekh (1611 m) and the houses were crowded along a narrow street. There were some government offices and about two dozen shops with a small park dedicated to Dasrath Chand, a martyr from the district. The commercial activity was of minor scale owing to the proximity of the larger Pithoragarh town about seven kilometers west across the border. It is however on the main trail from Jhulaghat to parts of Dadeldhura, Doti and Bajhang. Jhulaghat is an important trade outlet for some of the far western districts and in 1965–66 alone 333,648 kg of ghiu, more than from any other border-point, was exported from here. The streets of Baitadi were full of people from earthquake-affected areas seeking aid deliverance from starvation and some had come from villages four days away. We attended a meeting of the local relief committee at the governor’s office. The latest situation of relief measures were reviewed and a proposal to send a team to badly-affected Marma was discussed as the previous team had failed to reach the place. There were many suggestions from social workers in the committee but none volunteered to go to the field. We learnt that Marma and Purchaudi were the worst-affected areas in the district and when I decided to lead a team of Junior Red Cross volunteers to Marma, no porters could be found. I had to settle for Purchaudi for the simple reason that porters would go only that far.

On August 1st, I was all set with two juniors volunteers from Kathmandu and four loads of clothes and blankets but it rained heavily and there was no sign of the porters till 10 a.m. I had to postpone the march and we again went to the town. We visited the local high school where we formed a local Junior Red Cross branch and attended another meeting at the governor’s office to finalise the district Red Cross Committee. On the
court yard outside the office squatted the usual crowd waiting for food ration and when I interviewed some of them on the state of the road to Purchaudi, they told tales of dangerous trails and swollen rivers. Baitadi is said to provide good views of the country around including Byas Rikhi Himal to the north but we saw nothing but swirling monsoon clouds during our descent to Gothalapani.

The following morning was also overcast but it did not rain. I bade farewell to Ramesh Sharma and others and arranging to meet them at Pithoragarh a week later, left Gothalapani. I was accompanied by juniors, Shyam Rayamajhi and Mani Tamrakar and four fully-loaded porters. We left Baitadi before 10 a.m. along a dolomite ridge between the Nilgarh Gad and the Iswari Gad and reached Kathepate (1791 m) clearing among oaks in two hours. We rested an hour for lunch and continued east under light rain and after skirting along the north slope of a 2,060 meter prominence, we were at Dehimadu (1860 m) on a grassy saddle with four stream sources nearby. We visited the local madu (temple) of Nikalsaini Bhagwati and which, as one of the seven important Bhagvati or Durga or Malika shrines in the district, used to have in the past a coterie of deuki girls offered to the service of the goddess. Prime Minister Chandra Shumsher had issued a decree stating that henceforth no one should be offered to the temple as devkanya (maid to the gods) along with the abolition of slavery in 1927. The slavery that existed then in Nepal was more in the nature of debt servitude and the old custom seemed to have persisted much longer as about 150 slaves were freed in northern Baitadi by late King Mahendra during his tour of 1956. At Dehimadu, we saw no evidence of deukis and we were too early for the large fair held on its grounds every August.

We had tea in a nearby shop and continued east on our journey. We were soon engulfed with a thick mist that melted away as fast as it had appeared. On the way, the villages had cultivated fruits like mango, banana, pear and apple and a little further we climbed to Satbanj (2070 m) where there was a government
horticultural farm established in 1962 covering 28 hectares. We then left the ridge road leading south-east to Patan and walked east down a slippery track in heavy rain to the Runighat Gad. The rain continued as we crossed the stream and climbed to a pass (1770 m). We then descended down a narrow valley with pine forest and reached Bangsalla (1430 m) late at 7 p.m. We were wet, tired and hungry and it was with great expectation we approached the first house. The high-caste villagers declined to let us in the house and had nothing edible to sell and instead directed us to a roadside shed for travellers further on. I was furious with this strong hold of tradition but had to encourage the junior volunteers and goad the porters to continue walking in the dark wet night. We soon came to a lone shed on the road-side. It was raining hard outside and we went to bed only with coffee and biscuits we had brought with us.

Next morning broke fine and sunny and we walked down the Runighat through sal forest and turned north after its confluence with the Surnaya Gad. In two hours, we reached Barayel (1250 m) and continued east along the paddy fields of Pali, Naughar and Swali along the north bank of the Surnaya Gad between the forested ridges of Raulakedar Dhar (2530 m) and Kau Lekh (1890 m). Shyam slipped on the track and broke the thermos flask. The hungry juniors and porters partook of the pomegranates growing on the roadside. We finally reached Jathola (1520 m) village where we finally found something for lunch. We had a heavy meal at Jathola and then entered the narrow gorge of the Bareyel Gad flowing from the north. The track followed the stream and we had to ford it eight times, thigh deep at places. On the last one, Mani being over-enthusiastic, tried to jump across the stream and fell face down in the water. He was unhurt but damaged my camera a Paxette and its shutter and exposure meter jammed. After leaving the stream, we climbed a short steep section to the hamlet of Maukedhunga (1980 m.) where we found food and shelter for the night. We were still in Sorath garkha (sub-division) of Baitadi where earthquake damage had been less.
On August 4th, we started early from Maukedhunga in fair weather and soon reached a ridge (2130 m) which formed the boundary between Sorath gar kha to the south and Purchaudi gar kha to the north. We followed the ridge northwards and had to tip-toe over the lip of a landslide 400-meters in diameter on loose shale. We at last could see our destination Hat, and leaving the ridge at 2020 meters, descended through Lamuni (1830 m.) and Malde (1671 m) to the banks of the Purchaudi Gad. We followed the river upstream along the south bank for about a kilometer to find a suitable site to ford it. The river below the confluence of the Jamari Gad and the Kotila Gad was turbulent and I had to lead across the porters in turn. After crossing the river, we climbed about a hundred meters to Hat (1370 m), the main village of Purchaudi gar kha between the Jamari Gad and the Loli Gad. Here we met the district panchayat president, Ran Bahadur Chand, a remarkable man who had visited most of the earthquake-affected areas in the district and briefed us on the extent of damage as we lunched together at the house of the local pradhan panch. Here we had the first glimpse of damaged houses and surveying the scene around, we saw series of landslides scouring the hill sides.

After lunch, we walked up a limestone ridge of Sukchor (2130 m), north-east of Hat, to inspect Bhatna (185 m), one of the worst affected villages. Bhatna, a village of Bhatt Brahmins, with a small Malika shrine and lovely spring nearby had more than half of the houses badly damaged. The Bajhang border was only five kilometers east but there was no way thither due to landslides (Pl. XXIVb). We returned to Hat and began interviewing the people on the extent of damage as it was difficult to visit every village in the area. The dispersed pattern of settlement made even house surveying in a single village time consuming. I managed to gather the following information about the five badly affected villages in upper Purchaudi.
We made five bundles of clothes and blankets we had brought and handed them over to the panchayat workers. I believed that it was the responsibility of the local panchayats that the relief aids were distributed fairly.

The rock strata in the area dipped north at an average angle of 30 degrees and the villages were generally sited on the gentler northern slopes. Most landslides occurred on the northern dip slopes where the inclination of the rock strata aided down-hill sliding and the main rock types so affected were of slates and shales. The far western region had been experiencing drought over the last three years and food scarcity had been widespread. What the earthquake of 27th June 1966 did, apart from the estimated total 42 deaths, 62 severe injuries, 2,228 cracked houses, 3,969 fallen houses and 713 loss of cattle, was to dramatise the precarious economy of the far west. To add to the plight of the poor people, there was unusual heavy rain following the earthquake. The cracked houses habitable in normal years were rendered useless and dangerous by the heavy downpour and the hillsides shaken by earth tremors slid down when the soil became saturated. The three-year drought followed by an earthquake and landslides and floods had all cumulatively created an acute problem in the far western hills and its reverberations would soon affect the virgin lands of Kailali and Kanchanpur.

It rained all the time we were in Hat Purchaudi and we ru-
shed to Pithoragarh in two days by forced marches lest we be held up by more rain and landslides. We left Hat on August 5th and when we reached the river, it was still in full spate. While helping the two junior volunteers Shyam and Mani across the river, Shyam slipped and fell down pulling me along. Mani and the one porter we had retained held on firmly and we were safe on the southern bank. But the uncalled-for dip had damaged my second camera, a Canonet. The track now lay due west along the south side of the Purchaudi Gad and we traversed numerous north-flowing tributary streams. But for the continuous drizzle and overcast sky, it would have been a pleasant journey across a well-inhabited country of low hills alternating with small valleys. We crossed the Lamuni Gad and the Ghatte Gad passing through the villages of Dedpura (1580 m), Pujargaon (1680 m) and Jagargaon (1370 m). The inhabitants were mainly Brahmins and Chhetris with separate quarters for the occupational castes such as Kami and Damai. They use a large round dalo of woven bamboo for storing grain (Pl. XXIVa). The fields were green with paddy and in spite of the numerous cattle on the path, we failed to procure any milk. The local people had a superstition that precluded them from selling milk to strangers and low-caste people. The custom must have developed over the years, I felt, not out of fear of subjugation by strangers and helot castes nourished and strengthened by milk and butter but rather the pure economics of saving all the milk for making ghiu (refined butter), the most important export item of the region.

There was no question of procuring eggs or beer as the high-caste Brahmins and Chhetris had religious strictures against partaking of chicken and liquor. But for the Sauka, a Bhotia group who have settled in Darchula from Tinkar and have become very much Hinduised, the hills of Mahakali Zone are inhabited entirely by Brahmin, Thakuri, Chhetri and numerous occupational castes. Baitadi indeed forms a bridge between Kumaon and Garhwal on one hand and west Nepal hills between the Mahakali and Karnali on the other and the whole area has a common historical and cultural heritage. Garhwal, Kumaon and parts of
Nepal west of the Karnali were ruled by the Katyur dynasty during the medieval times with their capital at Baijnath in Kumaon and the area was again under the hegemony of Khasa rulers of Jumla. Many were the battles still preserved in the folk ballads and long the struggle between the kings of Kumaon and Doti until the conquest of the region by the Gorkhali in 1790. For example, a certain warrior of Doti named Sangram Karki who served in the court of the Kumaon king Trimal Chand, is said to have vanquished all the enemies and returned to the capital at Champawat with a caravan of elephants loaded with salt, horses loaded with precious clothes and goats loaded with gold coins which he delivered to the king. In spite of the establishment of the Mahakali river as the boundary between Nepal and British India after the Anglo-Nepalese war since 1816, the areas on either side of the Mahakali river still form a single cultural entity with similar caste structure, popular religion, art and architecture. The suffix 'Gad' for streams prevalent here extends as far west as Himachal Pradesh and in the east up to Riri where the Bari Gad joins the Kali Gandaki. It was, therefore, not surprising to encounter in Baitadi villages a Nepali language much influenced by Western Pahari dialect and the people wore a cotton cap prevalent in Kumaon and was the regimental cap of the 3rd Gurkha Rifles (raised as Sirmoor Battalion at Almora as early as 1815) and that later became more famous as the Gandhi cap.

We descended to the Maubheri Gad and after fording it reached Kalagaon (1430 m) six hours after leaving Hat. There was a pleasant wooded hillock at Kalagaon with a small shrine. A long flight of stone steps led to the temple made in the architectural style of Masta shrines of Jumla. From Kalagaon we turned west above a tributary of the Maubheri Gad and climbed to a saddle, Manilekh (1700 m). It was then a steep descent down a zig zag path to the Dhik Gad that drained due west to join the Chaulyani river. We forded the stream and climbed again to an east-west ridge. There were numerous villages on the way but we thought it a futile waste of effort to enquire after milk or eggs. We were very tired and hungry when we reached Khoche Lekh.
(1670 m) late in the evening where we managed to find a house to spend the night.

We left Khoche Lekh very early on August 6th under a light drizzle. The track turned west along a narrow ridge between the Dhim Gad and the Kansana Gad. The trail sometimes passed across vertical rock-faces high above the Kansana Gad. We then descended below Basali (1520 m) and reached Pipalkot (1310 m) where we had tea and mango. The path below Pipalkot was all the way down, a long tedious descent of 650 meters over slippery red earth. We reached the level terrace of Bajera Sera (670 m) on the east bank of the Mahakali about noon and had a good meal at a roadside inn. We were now on the main road between Jhulaghat and upper Baitadi and Darchula through the Chaulyani valley.

We crossed a bridge, the only bridge we came across during our five-day trek in Baitadi, over the Pandoli Gad and turned south along the left bank of the dark swirling Mahakali river. We climbed 450 meters high above the river after Gottar (915m.) to avoid the high cliffs on the east bank of the river. We then descended down to Jhulaghat bridge and crossed over to India. We rested here briefly and continued walking uphill and reached Udda late in the evening and spent the night in a bug-infested room. The next day we were among the comforts of Pithoragarh dak bungalow in the company of other members of the relief team. On August 9th, we travelled down to Tanakpur by bus and later by rail to Lucknow and flew back to Kathmandu.
CHAPTER THREE

HIGH ROAD TO JUMLA

Barren is Sinjahat, thorny bushes overwhelm the Kot;
Birat is deserted in these sad days.
The stone water-spout is dry and Prithvimalla is no more;
Dilapidated is the spring of Panchkosi, and gone is the fire
of Jwala,
Mighty fighters have overcome Lamathada of the Jumla kings;
So has evolved the age, what can now be done.

-Folk song

I flew to Dang from Kathmandu on 28th February 1966
on my way to Jumla. The airfield was a grassy flat on the east
bank of the Patu Khola about two kilometers south of Tulsipur.
Dang, 50 kilometers long and 15 kilometers wide at an average
elevation of 600 meters, is an extensive valley between Mahabha-
rat Lekh (2150 m) to the north and Chure range (990 m) that
separates it from Deukhuri valley to the south. The Babai
Khola drains the valley to the west and numerous tributary strea-
ms coming down the Mahabharat Lekh traverse the level valley
floor. The chief market of the area is Ghorahi (701 m), 27
kilometers east of Tulsipur, on the main road between the border-
town Koilabas and hill territory of Pyuthan and Rolpa. I walked to Tulsipur (660 m), the district headquarters of Rapti Zone since 1961 but the only substantial structure in the place was an old two-storeyed building where the Zonal Commissioner lived and worked beside a mango grove. The building originally belonged to Sallyan Raja and in front of it was a small garden with a bust of Juddha Shumsher as a proof of the Raja’s family link with the late Rana Prime Minister. The bazar was small but I had no problem in buying the few items needed for the long journey to Jumla.

Next day, I accompanied the local police inspector on a fishing trip to the Babai river. We travelled south by jeep and passed Raikhaliyan and Bangaon and after crossing the dry bed of the Patu Khola turned west through the villages of Salaura, Hekuli and Chakhaura. These were all Tharu villages with neat long houses and tube-wells fenced with finely-carved wooden frames. The original inhabitants of Dang valley were Tharus but successive immigration from the nearby hills of Sallyan, Pyuthan and Rolpa had pushed them as far west as Kailali and Kanchanpur. West of the Chir Gad which we crossed at Bargaragaon, the villages were mainly of hill migrants. As we continued west, the hamlets of Khilakpur and Padampur on either side of the Chhenti Khola were still surrounded by sizable forests. We then drove through a dense sal forest and turned south after crossing yet another stream, Towang, and reached the Babai river at Jaluke (480 m). This was a fording-point of the river on the main road between Nepalganj and Sallyan used during the winter. The reason we had travelled 25 kilometers west so far was the prospect of larger fishes in the numerous pools of the lower Babai. We made two dynamite blasts but the catch was indifferent. We had more trouble on the way back as we lost our way in the dense forest and it was late at night that we reached Tulsipur.

On March 2nd, I began my journey northwards with a porter and a policeman who was going to join his post at Jajarkot. We crossed the sandy river bed of the Patu Khola and passed
Damargaon (760 m) and Dandakhuti (790 m) amidst sal forest. It was oppressively hot until we climbed to a steep ridge at Ambas (1400 m). Dang valley spread before us under a dull haze and the ochre plain was interspersed by ribbons of white sand-beds of dry stream channels. We climbed on through a mixed forest of katus (Castanopsis indica) and flowering rhododendrons and quenched our thirst at a spring near Thunpani (1550 m). It was much cooler at Bayele (1580 m) and oaks clung on craggy south slopes of the Mahabharat Lekh (2050 m) which we crossed at Tharukot Bhanjyang (1980 m). We left behind the Dang plain and entered the hill country. The prospect north from the pass was a series of ridges of varying height and alignment. Kumak Lekh (2439 m) rose behind Sallyan ridge and above the Sarda valley while the snows of Bhalu Lekh (5403 m) was faintly visible in the far north. The descent from the path was through pine and rhododendron and we soon reached Phalabang (1370 m), the former seat of Sallyan Raja. The suffix bang, which means 'level land' in Magar language could be an indication of the past extension of Magar domain as far west as Phalabang. On the roadside was an old brick temple from where we had good views to the north. The former residence of the Raja was a large building roofed with corrugated sheet that was visible for miles. I rested quite a while at the shaded chautara beside the trail over quartzite outcrops asking the travellers on the state of road to Jumla. We then descended down to Lawamjula (880 m) at the confluence of the Sarada and the Lawam rivers and continued upstream of the Sarda along its left bank. The first night of the journey, I stayed at Chhayachhetra (1000 m) where there were some shops.

The following morning, we went north along the Sarda valley, green with irrigated wheat. We reached Sallyan bazar about noon after a brief climb of 450 meters above Sitalpati (1060 m). Sallyan with about 60 shops is straddled on a quartzite ridge between the Sui Khola and the Ghat Khola and the quarters of the local governor is perched atop the highest point, 1,530 meters. The ridge location might have advantages of de-
fence in the past and cool air now but the town has an acute shortage of water. On the way to meet the Bara Hakim, Dharm Bahadur Pahari, I saw a long line of prisoners with earthen jars and police escorts, hauling water for the officials from a spring below. The steeper slopes were covered with pine (Pinus roxburghii) and the name Sallyan was obviously derived from Sallo (pine), similar to Salleri in Solu. Sallyan was a place of considerable importance in the past as an administrative center for a much larger area which included Rolpa, Rukum and Jajarkot. Sallyan was also one of the first native states among the Baisi (twenty-two) principalities of the far west with whom Prithvi Narayan Shah had established contacts. In the process of cultivating friendship in the region where Prithvi Narayan had ambitions of extending his kingdom, he married his daughter Bilas Kumari to the Sallyan prince Rana Bhim Shah of Samal family in 1766 and to whom Dang was later awarded as a dowry. Sallyan was to be of much assistance during the Gorkhali campaign in the far west. According to Francis Buchanan Hamilton, writing in early 19th century, Sallyan was called Khasant (land of the Khasa) and the residence of the chief of the Sallyan ridge was built with brick and covered with tiles. At present, the bazar has numerous district-level government offices and a large community of Newars.

The weather was indifferent with hazy view of Bhalu Lekh and Hiunchuli Patan to the north and I stayed two days in Sallyan. On March 6th, I left Sallyan descending down the Ghat Khola on the north side of the ridge and rejoined the main road by fording the Sarda Khola below the Pet Khola. On the road, I met a group of Thakuris from Rukum carrying ghiu to Nepalганj. A few years later, I would meet people from Rukum and Gotam working on the old Hindustan road below Simla. On the 400 meters climb to Dandagaon, I also met a jhankri (medium-sorcerer) of Sarki caste with pheasant feathers and a drum going on a village errand. Dandagaon, on the main trail to Jajarkot, Jumla, Dolpa, Rukum and Rolpa, is an important collecting center for ghiu and is famous for the production of ginger. There
was a descent of 300 meters over quartzites and phyllites from Dandagaon to the banks of the Sarda which were cut with elaborate irrigation channels. Nine kilometers east and upstream on the banks of the Sarda near Harle is held a fair during the November full moon where, in the old days, villagers of Malta and Rolpa used to fight with stone missiles. We left the Sarda Khola at Sinyala and now followed the Chakli Gad upstream through an open pine forest. Seven hours after leaving Sallyan, we reached a pass (1910 m) about three kilometers east of Kumak Lekh (2540 m) whose south slopes were covered with Euphorbia royleiana. There is a shrine on the summit of Kumak where chickens and sheep are sacrificed during an annual festival in the month of Asoj (September-October). From the pass, we had good views of hills around Jajarkot capped by the snow summit of Bhalu Lekh (5403 m) and Hiunchuli Patan (6000 m). We descended a ridge covered with rhododendron and pine and in an hour reached Jimali (1380 m) where we stayed at a postman’s house. The postman jogged every morning with his bell-attached spear and mail-bag to the next depot, five kilometers away, and looked after his farm rest of the day. The bell was for warning of his approach to which all on the road must give way and the spear was for self-defence against wild animals. Our host had been on the mail trail for over 16 years for a paltry salary. It occurred to me that a brief orientation of younger postmen from the hills would hold better prospect for Nepal in the marathon event in international sports competitions.

Next day we descended down to the Jimali Khola, a north flowing tributary of the Marma Khola which joins the Bheri river at Thundar. After descending 1,150 meters from the rhododendron forest of Kumak pass, we entered a low tropical valley of red earths derived from schist, while white-necked storks stalked in the nearby marsh. Beyond Thundar (730 m), we came to an extensive system of river terraces on either bank of the Bheri. Just as the level plain of red soil stands out in sharp contrast to the surrounding hills, flat-roofed houses of Thundar, Kudu, Kuyepani, Nakhira, Gairi, Tatagaon and Sialkholia around the
area appeared as an island of cultural persistence amongst the normal pitch-roofed houses south of the main Himalaya. The houses with flat roofs of beaten earth on the plain seemed to have been more an adoption of Jumla house style as the inhabitants are said to have originally emigrated from Jumla and the nearby Thakuri principalities of Jajarkot, Jahari, Musikot, Gotam, Banphi and Rukum claim to have been splinters of the royal house of Jumla. That the flat roofs were not in response to local climate was evidenced by the highly laterised soil indicating heavy precipitation and a few houses at Nakhira, where we had lunch, had gable roofs superimposed on the flat roof terrace.

It was a long tiring walk under intense heat over the eleven kilometers long plain of Chaur Jahari or the ‘flats of Jahari’ nearly 120 meters above the blue waters of the Bheri. But for the snow peak of Bhalu Lekh that peeped over the forested ridge above Jajarkot and its Khasa inhabitants, we might as well have been in inner Tarai. The occasional simal tree provided the only shade and patches of young wheat were a pleasant sight amidst the dry red soil. After a brief rest at Sialkhola (790 m) at the northern end of the plain, we descended a bare slope of crystalline schist to a sal forest beside a bridge over the Bheri (670 m). We crossed the solid suspension bridge put up in 1926 and which now yields Rs. 26,000 annually to the district panchayat as a toll tax. We then crossed the Ibar Gad and the Pasa Gad, two western tributaries of the Bheri and began the ascent through Bohara-gaon (970 m) to Jajarkot. The final ascent to the town was a steep section across a badly eroded deep gully. We reached Jajarkot perched on the south slopes of an east-west ridge of phyllites late in the evening.

I rested a day at Jajarkot (1220 m) and looked around the old town. It occupies a strategic location with a sweeping view of the Bheri and the plain of Chaur Jahari to the south. Jajarkot was one of the 22 principalities of the far west after the downfall of the Khasa kingdom of Jumla. According to the genealogy of Samal Thakuris, Jagati Singh became the ruler of Jajarkot with his capital at Jagatipur, seven kilometers south-west of the Jajar-
kot town. A local legend goes that a horse of Jagati Singh always preferred to graze at the site of the present town and the capital was shifted to Jajarkot from Jagatipur during the reign of his grandson. Jagati Singh was probably a contemporary of Bali Raja (1398–1404 A.D.) of Jumla and his 18th descendant, Harihar Shah, ruled during the time of Prithvi Narayan Shah. Harihar Shah and Prithvi Narayan Shah met in 1643 during their pilgrimage to Benaras and the two signed a treaty of friendship that proved useful during the Gorkhali expansion in the far west.

Similar to the alliance through marriage made with the Sallyan ruler, one of the daughters of Prithvi Narayan Shah was married to Harihar Shah’s son Gajendra Shah who later sent tributes of horses, musk deer, shawl and gold coins to Prithvi Narayan Shah to commemorate the latter’s conquest of Kathmandu in 1769. Jajarkot not only worked in active collusion with the Gorkhali forces during their campaign of subjugating the various principalities in the far west but also helped in quelling rebellion in Doti and Achham in 1791 when the Gorkhalis were busy on the northern front against Tibetan and Chinese forces. Later, during the Nepal-Tibet War of 1854, Raja Jang Bahadur Shah led his Jajarkot army and attacked Taklakhar in Tibet in aid of the Gorkhalis. The Gorkha king Rana Bahadur Shah’s daughter, Durga Kumari, was also married to Raja Dip Narayan Shah of Jajarkot and when Durga Kumari wrote back complaining of the poor climate and goitre problem in Jajarkot, she was given a grant of five hectares of good land at Chaur Jahari in 1834 by her nephew Rajendra Vikram Shah. Bal Kumari, a princess from Jajarkot, was married to Prime Minister Chandra Shumsher and it was through her efforts that the Bheri below Jajarkot had a steel suspension bridge as well as a piped-water system for the town. Two documents found in Jajarkot provide interesting glimpses on the past. The earlier one is a decree by the local Raja exhorting his subjects to plant and preserve chiuri (Madhuca butyracea) trees that yield a fruit for valuable cooking oil and the latter one of the Rana period is a circular or-
dering Thakuri hill chiefs to give away their daughters in marriage only after the prior approval of the Rana Prime Minister.

On the highest point of the ridge was the old palace in disrepair, a small tundikhel (parade ground) and remains of a brick wall adorned with two prancing lions in white mortar on either side of the main west gate. The chiefship of the principality was abolished only in 1958 and the descendants of the Raja now live on a lower ridge further to the east. The west gate led down a stone-paved path along the ridge to a col to the west where there were some shops. The town had seven government offices and some shrines including that of Bhagawati and another one dedicated to an old Brahmin woman who was accidentally burnt to death by fire. Numerous flocks of sheep and goats from Jumla grazed on the nearby pine and rhododendron forest.

Leaving the police companion from Tulsipur at his new post in Jajarkot, I left Jajarkot on March 9th with a porter. I descended east of the town, turned north into the Dar Khola and walked upstream. Climbing first through sub-tropical bush-es and simal tree in full flower, I entered a Castanopsis and rhododendron forest and reached Jyamnechaur in two hours. A further steep climb through a dense rhododendron forest brought me to Lekh Rangchi (2070 m) with full view of Jajarkot ridge down below to the south. After an hour I reached Panchkate pass (3170 m) on Thara Kharak ridge and had a good view of Chalna Dhar (4500 m) to the west. The high trail continued north through rhododendron and pine to Damdala village and I spent the night a little further at Dhime (2130 m) in a Malla Thakuri house. I was at the head waters of the Saru Gad inhabited mainly by Thakuris. The villages were perched on small shelves high above the river gorge and the ridges above were covered with dense forest.

I departed from Dhime early next morning and passed Khurpa village with young barley in the fields and met numerous
flocks of sheep and goats at Thari Patan (3134 m) carrying salt and grains to Jumla. The trek then entered a side stream, the Chiplabiri Khola, and after passing the Thakuri and Magar villages of Dhanasi and Samela where wild apricot bloomed in profusion, I came to a dense forest of Rhododendron aroboreum and Tsuga dumosa. A gentle climb under tall pine trees and rhododendron in full scarlet bloom brought me to Hanesalla (2740 m), a pass on a ridge that separates the Saru valley to the west and Barekot valley to the north-east. Looking north from the pass, the upper reaches of the Barekot Khola and its tributaries the Dah Gad and the Ranga Gad superimposed by the snow ridges of Chyakhure and Bhalu Lekh came into full view. The trek descended north through Dhaulakot (2050 m) and Limsa (1670 m) to Barekot Khola. Nearby was the village of Agar (2130 m) which had a small iron-melting work (Pl. 1a). After crossing the Barekot Khola by a wooden bridge, I climbed to Barekot (1640 m) village and stayed in a Singh Thakuri house. The Barekot valley was inhabited mainly by Singh Thakuris with a few Chhetris in Dahgad and Magars at Limsa. The inhabitants seemed to have some link with Jumla through two high passes but they were ignorant about the upper Bheri and Dolpo to the north-east which they merely described as Bhotang or ‘land of Bhotia’, just as the Nepali-speaking areas are called Khasan. Since the porter from Jajarkot would not venture beyond Barekot, my host arranged a local porter which he called Harki. I thought I had found a name-sake in this remote valley but later realised that he was really a Sarki (cobbler) as the Barekot people pronounced H for S, another proof of Jumla’s proximity and influence in the area.

Beyond Barekot, we would have to manage by ourselves for shelter as there were no villages until the Chyakhure was crossed. I left with my porter on March 11th and soon passed Maina (2060 m), the last village before Chyakhure pass. Three hours after leaving Barekot, I reached Tilakkhudi Chautara (2220 m) where I came across the first chorten, a stone edifice put up by Buddhist travellers from the north. I then left Dah Gad
valley and climbed to a pass of 2,850 meters marked by a stone cairn and small sticks with white cloth streamers as an offering to the mountain gods. I met a group of Jumla men resting and smoking chilam pipe at the pass. The large clay pipe was elaborately-bound with brass and the dark colour of the fired clay pipe seemed to be a part of their soot-darkened hand and face. Although both my Barekot porter and the Jumlis wrapped themselves in thick woollen blankets worn as a poncho with a clip in the front, the Jumlis had a darker complexion due to their minimal contact with cold water and the compulsion of seeking warmth beside the soot-emitting pine fuel during the long winter. The pass provided a good view of the Gobre Gad valley we were about to enter enclosed by Chyakhure Lekh (4426 m) to the north, Bhalu Lekh (5403 m) to the east and Muchhali Patan (4760 m) to the west. The valley had dense pine forest of Abies spectabilis which is called gobre sallo in Nepali and therefore the name Gobre for the valley and the stream draining it. We descended to the Ranga Gad, a tributary stream from the west and after crossing it by a log bridge, came to the rolling grassland of Rangachaur (2450 m). We camped for the night under a tree and the porter soon had a blazing fire of logwood to keep us warm through the cold night. We had thick bread of buckwheat and chillies for our meal and slept beside the fire. It was a cold starry night amidst snow ranges on three sides and I had to warm my body in turn by rolling frequently as the temperature between the fireside and the leeside varied greatly. A bird, probably a finch, called its mate throughout the night breaking the stillness of the eerie silence.

We got up early next morning and followed the Gobre Gad upstream walking over grassy glades and under dense pine while the sun glinted on a flock of yellow-billed chough riding the fresh morning air current. Rose finches swung on long stalks of Arundinaria bamboo and the white snow on Bhalu Lekh dazzled above the green pine forest. In two hours, we crossed a low forested ridge of 2,820 meters and entered an open alpine valley. It was too early for flowers but the grass had turned green and it was a
delightful walk up a gently rising valley. By noon, we reached a log shelter at Tumtu Paowa (2100 m) where we had our sparse lunch of buckwheat bread. I lay on the soft grass for a long time scanning the flight of clouds over Chyakhure Lekh. When we started our climb up a ridge between two streams, a strong up-valley wind spurred us on towards the high pass. The path climbed steeply and we surprised a pair of Impeyan pheasants scratching snow under a pine tree. The male was a magnificent cock of iridescent colours, green head, golden neck, blue back and brown tail and they careened down gracefully to a lower forest. We reached Chhaila Pauwa (3500 m), a rest-house above the tree-line about 4 p.m. The place had already been occupied by a group of Jumla men returning home and we squeezed ourselves in the small room, knowing that the more the crowd, the warmer the night at this height. I looked south towards the green valley we had come up and clouds hung over the neighbouring snow ranges. The talk revolved round the prospect of crossing the pass next morning and much depended on nature. We retired early hoping that the good weather would hold.

The following morning, March 13th, we were greeted by a grey sky and light snow. But there was no point in waiting at the hut and praying as the Jumlis did. The sun was not up yet and it was bitterly cold when we started climbing single file on the fresh snow. One of the Jumla men had a horse and being the only person with a glove, I held the reins of the horse and steered it through the snow. The first hour was a steep climb over fresh snow and the weather later improved. The snowfall had stopped when we reached the gentler higher slopes and the sunlight reflected bright on the snows. The Jumlis who had covered themselves with woollen mufflers against the cold earlier, now put their hands over their eyes to avoid the glare from bright snow for fear of snow blindness. We reached Chyakhure Langrna (3964 m) after two hours hard climb from Chhaila Pauwa and the pass was a broad saddle without markers normally found on high passes (Pl. Ib). Our entry into the realm of the Karnali was subtle as the pass was on a sweeping plateau whose south and north sides could be discerned only by the thicker mantle of snow on the nor-
thern side. Although the passage from Jajarkot district to Jumla a district was imperceptible, the landscape on either side provided a contrast. To the south were deep valleys flanked by lower hills of sharper features while to the north, the ridges were higher and valleys broader with extensive grassy slopes. Far to the north could be seen the snow peaks of Chimata (5946 m), Patrasi (6254 m) Jagdula (5815 m) and Kagnara (6711 m) not as singular peaks of prominence or personality but as a maze of peaks similar of shape and height. Kanjiroba peak (6882 m), the highest summit in the group, appeared as an indeterminate snow pyramid behind other peaks that only a trained eye could identify.

On the way down the pass, I was entirely dependent on the alpine instincts of the Jumlis. The heavy snow had obliterated the path and they alone could guess its alignment under knee-deep snow and I followed their foot-steps. It was harder leading the horse on snow downhill as its bulk made it sink in places where men could tip-toe lightly and the iron-tipped hoof slipped on the hard ice. My labours on the Chyakhure were, however, rewarded later when the owner let me ride the horse from Napani to Jumla and for another few days in Jumla. We followed down a ridge covered with thick mantle of snow and patches of ice and re-entered the forest belt at Ratmata Pauwa (3600 m). The forest path was slippery with fresh snow melt but we were now in the woods free of the blinding glare of the snow. The upper level of birch was now replaced by pines and two hours descent through the forest brought us to a level ground where two streams joined to flow north. We walked along the valley floor profuse with wild cherry blossom and rested at Napani (2890 m) for lunch. We soon had fire crackling for baking the buckwheat bread and while the horse grazed on the new grass, I looked back south at the snowy pass above the forest that had been our ordeal only a few hours before. The Chyakhure ridge shone bright in the clear blue sky and although we sighted no chyakhura or chukor partridge on its slopes, it had provided me passage to a remote region of Nepal.

From Napani, we followed stream a of the same name and
I now had the facility of a free horse ride. We crossed the stream at three places over solid wooden bridges and an hour later reached Pahara Garhi (2860 m). The village is called Pahara because it occupies a sunny slope facing south in contrast to those facing north and in the shade known as sinyala. The village, the first one after Maina in three days, was a group of flat-roofed houses between wheat and barley fields below and pine forest above. The inhabitants, of Bura caste, were my first encounter with Matwali Chhetris in their natural habitat. They are Chhetris but wear no sacred thread, subscribe to a native faith of Masta with Dhami mediums and unlike other high-caste Hindus take alcohol. The term Matwali is derived from mad(alcohol) and the literal translation of Matwali could as well be ‘bacchanal’ with emphasis not on addiction but on free use. The qualification of Chhetri with matwali is itself a term in contradiction from the point of view of Hindu conceptual framework. This contradiction built in the heritage of Karnali culture may however be a key to the understanding of some cultural processes in the making of a multi-ethnic society of Nepal.

On the twelfth day since leaving Tulsipur, I started from Pahada Garhi for Jumla town. The track followed the north bank of the Napani Khola and crossed the Churta Khola near its confluence with the Napani. Above the road to the right was Munigaon (2860 m) another Matwali Chhetri village and across the river to the south appeared Dillikot (2770 m) whose white chortens clearly indicated that the inhabitants were Bhotias. The Bhotia or Khambas or Jad as the people of Tibetan origin are called, of Dillikot had migrated here from Mustang a few generations ago and the place was the western-most Bhotia settlement in the neighbourhood of Jumla. They must have been traders earlier as Dillikot is at the meeting-point of Jumla-Jajarkot and Jumla-Dolpo routes. Our track continued northwest along the right bank of the Churta Khola which here is called the Juliotsar Khola and changes its name again as the Babila Khola after its confluence with a westerly stream from Gothichaur.

We crossed the river by a bridge three kilometers below
Munigaon and entered a gorge leading to Gothichaur. The gorge was narrow and as we reached its south end, a lovely alpine valley opened before us. Gothichaur was a bowl-shaped valley with six alluvial fans closing-in towards its lowest point in the centre (2750 m) and as the name implies, it is said to be a veritable arena of hundreds of sheep, goats and horses during the summer grazing season. Gentle slopes covered with swards of grass swept up from Gothichaur to higher ridges covered with snow and pine forest. Even in this alpine wilderness, there was a sentinel of history in the form of a stone shrine in Shikhara style adorning a water-conduit beside the main road. I could do no better than quote Giuseppe Tucci who passed through the Gothichaur shrine in 1954 and wrote in NEPAL: The Discovery of the Malla:

"Nature unrestrained by the counterpoise of the climate proliferates in intoxicating exultation. Man himself is a part of nature. A bewildered immobility holds one in an inertia without past; one moves in a virgin land. The sudden appearance of the first temple a little before Jumla, solitary in a grass-grown hollow, is the unexpected sign that we are about to emerge from this mute savagery. Stones worked by man suddenly give meaning to the landscape. After the nothingness of nature absolute, where man can only wonder or tremble, the prodigious breath of human creation rises from these ruins. Contemplation of the landscape is succeeded by the reawakening of the imagination striving to gather and integrate the ancient voices suspended in these works."

A brief climb westwards from the shrine brought us to the western ridge of Gothichaur at 2,960 meters. The path then descended into the Dudheli valley with dense pine forest to the south and grassland to the north, a pattern that would be repeated in other east-west valleys (Pl. XXVa). We then came to the broader valley of the Babila Khola with the first paddy fields. We passed Garjyangkot (2490 m) and Depalgaon (2430 m) on the way and both these villages and Pankhure, Ukhari and Khallal-
bara on the north side of the Babila were inhabited by Chhetris and some Brahmins. Walnut trees stood leafless above the flat-roofed houses and on the field stubble grazed many cattle and horses. We crossed the bridges over the Babila Khola and the Tila Nadi at Dansangu and followed an irrigation channel to enter the main Jumla valley (Pl. IIa). The twin flags of Chandan Nath and Bhairav Nath temple fluttered in the strong westerly wind and we reached Jumla town before dusk on March 14th.

Jumla town (2340 m) has three local names; Chaughan in historical sense, Khalanga as an army garrison of 100 guns and Chhinasim as a local unit. The governor's house, revenue building and shops near Chandannath and Bhairavnath temples and forming the old quarter was located on a terrace on the left bank of the Ju Gad, a tributary of the Tila Nadi. On the right bank of the Ju Gad in the new quarter of the town were the high school and the district panchayat building. The parade ground and hospital were north of the town and the stream was flanked by irrigation channels leading to the paddy fields and there were also numerous water-mills. The town center with a stone-paved street had about 45 houses of which 13 were government offices, 17 shops and 7 tea-stalls (Pl. XXVb). The shops were mainly of general merchandise and clothes brought from Nepalganj; and the tea-houses were frequented by many government employees and local litigants for which Jumla was reputed. The town square had a stone milestone inscribed 'Sri Hanuman Dhoka dekhi kos 169' that designated a walking distance of over 500 kilometers between Jumla Khalanga and Kathmandu and along which track it is said the famous Jumla rice used to be sent to enrich the cuisine of the Rana Prime Ministers. Nearby were the shrines of Chandannath and Bhairavnath dedicated to two yogis from Kashmir and above whose dome stood three timber flag-staffs each over seven meters high. The town also has a military garrison and during the Chaite Dasain festival of March 30th, two buffaloes and six goats were sacrificed at the local kot decorated with regimental colours. Jumla as the headquarters of the old Jumla district of 18 subdivisions, 577 villages and 927 headmen and
present entire Karnali Zone of five districts was more like an administrative town and commerce played little part in it.

During the three weeks stay in Jumla valley, I joined Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf for a socio-economic survey of Thakuri village of Barkotebara and also visited Litakot about 15 kilometers west down the Tila Nadi. On the wide road, which is still called rajamarga or royal road, we saw a group of 17 pillars of Malla period on the roadside at Sridhuska and a native shrine under a magnificent old cedar tree at Lamra (2310 m). Litakot has a small shrine of a local goddess and on the way back, we crossed a bridge near the hotspring at Jarmi and climbed to a pine grove where was located an important Masta shrine. At Litakot, human effigies made from wood stood in the inner sanctum with some tridents but here at the shrine of Babiro Masta, the wooden effigies were piled high in the fore-court (Pl. XXVI b). The Masta cult or the worship of kinship deity through the medium of Dhami sorcerers is the distinctive religion of Matwali Chhetris that has since been venerated by other high-caste Brahmins and Chhetris as well as immigrant Bhotias in Karnali region.

The country around Jumla is made up of open valleys from 2,280 meters to 2,430 meters interspersed by high ridges above 3,600 meters. Crystalline schists, garnet-mica and quartzites are the main rock components with a simple monoclinal structure of low north-east dip. The high ranges of Chyakhure and Thaku-rji Lekh shield it from the full force of the monsoon but it has some rain in summer and much snow from the westerlies during the winter. The rains occur during April -August and snow falls from November to March although I encountered snowfalls in April at Rara and in May at Phoksumdo. Rain and hailstorms in March bring snow to an elevation of 2,600 meters around Jumla and the town has nearly a meter of snow during winter. It is the time when a quarter of the population move down to the lower hills for grazing animals, trade, or work and those left behind are confined to the fire-place working on woollens.

The main forest components are pine (Pinus chylla) on north-
facing slopes and spruce (Picea smithiana) on drier places with oak (Quercus semecarpifolia) as a common associate. Abies spectabilis occur on higher slopes where also are found extensive forests of birch (Betula utilis). Walnut from which cooking oil is extracted occurs both in wild and cultivated forms while cedar and willow are common trees around the villages. Above the timber-line varying from 2,800 meters to 4,200 meters depending on aspect are extensive alpine meadows (patan) with primula, iris, violets, saxifraga and numerous other flowering varieties.

Local terms reflect the mode of land utilisation and in Jumla region, alo or jiulo refers to paddy land, talo or pakho for dry land or settlement site, chako for shifting cultivation, melo for forest, sinwali for flood plain or water bodies and hinwali for alpine meadow. In the context of marginal agricultural productivity of the region alpine meadows and open ridges and forests are also exploited to the fullest extent. Apart from the use of alpine grasslands for grazing animals, open ridges (thala) were greatly valued for capturing falcon that formed the main export item in the past and the higher forests still continue to be a ground for clandestine hunting of musk deer. The capturing of hawks, goshawks and falcons has become a thing of the past, a past as sad and sentimental as the song of advice to MacGregor of Roro in Glen Lyon “When you go to the tavern, drink only one drink. Drink your dram without sitting and be attentive to your men. Spurn not any vessel but accept even a ladle or baler. Turn winter into autumn and stormy spring into summer. Make your bed among the crags and let your sleep be light. Though rare is the squirrel, a way can be found to capture it. Noble is the hawk, often it is caught by stealth".* Land use pattern at these temperate heights evidence a strong influence of insolation as the south-facing warmer slopes (Pahara) are more exploited for agriculture in contrast to the shady north slopes (Sinyala) which still abound with extensive forests. Three kilometers west of Jumla town are two villages facing each other on either bank of the Tila Nadi. Micha (2431 m), north of river on the south slopes of Langa Lekh (3507

m), has paddy fields at 2,316 meters, dry fields up to 2,834 meters, followed by a 335-meter narrow belt of open pine and alpine pasture above 3,169 meters. Barkotebara (2446 m) village on the opposite bank occupying alluvial fans of a steep north facing slope has paddy fields at 2,310 meters, pine forest with small field clearings up to 2,651 meters and then dense pine forest to the ridge summit (3489 m).

The main crops of Jumla are barley, wheat, buckwheat and potatoes along with soyabeans, beans, mustard and grain amaranthus. Jumla and adjacent Sinja Valley also grow paddy, said to have been introduced more than five centuries ago by yogi Chandannath from Kashmir. The yogi innovator prescribed an elaborate time-table to nurture the precious crop which the people still follow with minor local variations. The Jumla paddy fields with an extensive irrigation system are ploughed during February and March depending on snow conditions. All irrigation channels are repaired by Chait 11th (third week of March) and the seed-bed watered on the second day. The paddy seed is soaked in the channel for four days and then kept indoors close to the warmth of the hearth for sprouting. The seeds are then broadcast in the field on Chait 20th and followed by raking over of the field in Baisakh and transplanting takes place in Jestha (May-June). The crop is harvested in Kartik (October-November), eight months after it has been broadcast in the field. The intricate process and long patience needed for paddy growing is an indication of the deep penetration of Hinduistic plain culture into these remote Himalayan valleys. However, the tools used here are still primitive and more related to the culture of dry crops. Paddy is pounded by a long wooden pestle in a small wooden-bowl by hand and the plough-share is made of oak wood as if the Iron Age had bypassed the great Malla empire of the region. The tiered houses are adapted to a dry and cold environment. On the ground floor is the goth for cattle and above it the ghar (living quarters) on the first floor. The flat roof above the living quarters with kitchen is called thada which acts as a verandah and behind it the second floor rooms is called
panda. In spite of the plentiful timber available, the ladders between storeys are mere logs with notched steps.

Animals are the essential component of the economy for manure, milk, meat, wool, hide and skins as well as load-carriers for a people who have to travel long distances with seasonal rhythm in search of grazing and to exchange commodities. For example, the horses of Depalgaon are taken down in late November to Surkhet valley and return home in late February and are then again taken to the higher alps via Gothichaur during June-August. Sheep and goats are taken down to Dailekh and Jajarkot during winter and return to Jumla in spring with grain and salt. The traditional pattern of winter low road and summer high road pursued by the long caravan of laden animals has been dislocated by the decline of trade with Tibet and the Jumlis have become much more dependent on the resources of the south.

On April 2nd, I moved three kilometers west of Jumla town to Micha (2431 m) on my way to Sinja. The village has 43 households of Chhetris of Khatri, Burathoki, Rawal and Kathayet clans, 4 of Bam Thakuri, 17 of Sarki (cobbler) and 7 of Kami (blacksmith). Paddy fields are below the main road to Jumla on the north bank of the Tila Nadi. Immediately above the village on slopes with 18 degree angle are pakho (dry) fields and higher up at 28 degree slope are chako fields that are left fallow every two years. There is a group of twelve votive stupas half-buried under the ground and one has the date Saka 1423 (1501 A. D.) inscribed on its lintel. Another gives Saka 1404 (1482 A. D.) as the date of construction. Near the village were five caves and I dug two but found nothing except some potsherds. They were located on a hill slope and had two sides and a roof of large stone slabs and one had a dimension of 1.37 meter length, 0.91 meter width and 0.80 meter height. Although local version ascribes them to be burial grounds of the earlier Bhotia settlers, I was unable to determine whether these were remains of the early troglodytes or mere megalithic graves.
On April 3rd, I and my guide Dhanman Khatri from Micha climbed a ridge (2950 m) south of Micha and looked down Tila valley where men were busy preparing the fields for paddy. Due south near the river, stood two pine trees atop a rocky knoll at Khalachaur which is said to be the place where an agent of god cut the side of the lake that covered the Tila valley around Jumla Khalanga and drained it for human habitation. We then descended westwards near Kotila (2560 m) in the upper valley of Um Khola and numerous horses, sheep and goats grazed on the slopes. We crossed the Um Khola, turned upstream of its tributary, the Chim Khola, and on the way passed the village of Jatibhir (2580 m) set against a rock cliff.

Beyond Jatibhir, the track climbed through a forest, first of pine and then rhododendron and oak above 2,040 meters. We passed numerous cattle-sheds and ascended a grassy ridge (3,600 m) that formed the watershed between the Tila Nadi to the east and the Sinja Khola to the west. There were many stone cairns on the ridge and we had good views of Kanjiroba group to the east, Thakurji Lekh to the south and Punga Lekh beyond Sinja valley to the west. We then descended west 600 meters down to the Dilauri Khola. There were still patches of snow in deeper gullies in the upper birch forest. Oaks and pine reappeared lower down and on the ridge between the Dilauri and its northern tributary, the Bugari Gad, there were numerous shepherd’s huts guarded by ferocious mastiff dogs. We came across a carved stone pillar indicating that we were passing along one of the old roads between Sinja and Jumla. After crossing a log bridge and then following the Bugari and Linh streams, we reached Narakot (2250 m) on the left bank of the Sinja Khola. Sinja river is hereabout joined by the Lish and Bare streams from the east and the 15 villages on their upper reaches are inhabited by Matwa li Chhetris of Bura clan. We reached the house of Gopal Sharma at Ranukunabara (2320 m) on the left bank of the Sinja Khola after walking three kilometers north of Narakot.

The broad Sinja valley has a rich cultural heritage. The source of the Bare Gad which we crossed above Narakot has its
own little Kedarnath and on the high ridge above Banh and a Malika shrine and both places have annual fairs in August. Next day, we travelled north from Ranukunabara along the west bank of the Sinja Khola and on the opposite bank were some remains of a 18-kilometer long irrigation channel from near Lamathada to irrigate the fields of Narakot. Ranukunabara has a Bari Malika shrine under a cedar tree and nearby at Bistabara are numerous old shrines, water-spouts and pillars in stone. (Pl. XXVIa) At Dhanpa near Jancha live now 14 households of Barekot Thakuri who are said to be descendants of Prithvimalla. Three kilometers north of Bistabara is the village of Jancha, reputed to be the capital of Bali Raja and two ancient cedar trees there are named after him. On the roadside is a stone chorten erected in typical Lamaistic style but now converted into a Masta shrine. Near it is the Lamphera shrine much venerated by Matwali Chhetri clans of Roka and Rawal. The deity is said to have been originally brought from Humla and to whom a red ox used to be sacrificed in the past but now only sheep are offered in early October.

On the way to Sinja village, there were also symbols that conjured up personalities of the Mahabharat epic. A pink marble receptacle measuring 1.22 meters by .22 meters lying in the field is referred to as Bhimsen's plate and on the river bank, another marble slab with a mild depression along the center is visualized as fossilized Draupadi. Near a bridge over the Sinja Khola is a small shrine dedicated to Kichak and at Pandusera village (2370 m) at the base of a ridge named Virat is a small cave said to be the hide-out of the Pandavas during their exile. These symbols replicated from an epic of the Hindustan plain was another evidence of the penetration of Hindu influence along with paddy culture. A stone pillar beyond Pandusera has a carved image of a man on horse-back and is dated Saka 1444 (1523 A. D.) The Sinja Khola is joined by the Mindrabali Gad from the west at Lurku (2460 m), a village of Upadhyaya and Jaisi Brahmins. The main villages in Sinja valley are inhabited by Brahmin, Thakuri, Chhetri and occupational castes Damai, Kami and Sarti
with a preponderance of Jaisi Brahmins. Hatsinja or the main settlement of Sinja was a kilometer above Lurku and we reached it early in the afternoon. We stayed at the house of Dhanlal Hamal, an active social-worker of the area. Hatsinja (2430 m) village is located on a high terrace to the west of the Sirja Khola where the river emerges from a narrow gorge. The prefix *hat* is indicative of its past commercial importance though not in much evidence now. A route leads to it from the north by way of Botan, Chautha and Ghurchi Lekh and near the bridge at Sinja, we saw loads of wool from Mugu bound for the plains. There is also a direct route east to Jumla through Jaljala Gad and Dhimichaur.

Hatsinja has numerous relics of historical interest and I spent a day exploring them. There are five caves known as Bhotegomba (Tibetan temples) on a steep slope above the gorge of the Sirja Khola. Exploring one of these caves, Chhalpane Gomba, with Dhanlal Hamal, I found eight specimens of round clay tablets with raised relief of Chaitya and figures of Buddhist divinity with Lichhavi script. We later crossed the Sinja river and visited the nearby shrine of Kanaksundari on a hillock (2570 m) where annual fairs are held during *Dasain* in March-April and October-November. On the south slope below the shrine is the site of the old capital of the Malla kings and the place is now called Kctegacn and Lamathada. The place where once stood the fort, palace, minister’s quarters, horse and elephant stables, *vihar* and shrines, wells and water-spouts and noblemen’s houses is now littered with mounds of building and sculptured stones. A gate lion of stone from that period of grandeur has been reinstated near the Kanaksundari temple, its counterpart lost buried somewhere under the rubble. The destruction of the Khasa capital, according to local legend, is associated with a Chhichhim Lama from Mugu in the court of one of the Khasa Malla rulers and who on being insisted by the king to demonstrate his magical powers, created an earthquake that greatly damaged the buildings of the capital. Whatever the truth about Chhichhim Lama’s tantric prowess, the legend provides a hint to the patronage of Buddhist lamas in the Khasa court and that the decline of the destruction of the capital was due to some natural cataclysm.
The revelation of the medieval history of Khasa Mallas of Karnali owes to two scholars who visited the Jumla area about the same time in 1954. Giuseppe Tucci went up the Kali Gandaki, trekked west to Jumla and then south to Dullu and Surkhet while Yogi Narharinath travelled up from Surkhet to Dullu, Sinja and Jumla. A stele set-up at Dullu by Prithvimalla in 1357 refers to one Nagaraja who first set up a kingdom at Sinja thirteen generations before Prithvimalla or about 12th century A. D. He had come from the north probably after conquering the western Tibetan provinces of Guge and Purang and though of Khasa descent, the rulers evidenced strong Tibetan religious influences. A copper-plate grant of 1223 A. D. at Baleswar temple in Kumaon records the conquest of Kartipura (Kumaon) by Krachalla, sixth king in the line. Krachalla is described as the master of an extended Khasa kingdom and his grandson Jitarimalla invaded Kathmandu between 1287 and 1289. A copper-plate issued by Abhayamalla in 1321 A. D. granting freedom of religious practice to the Lama of Taghwari monastery now in Tibet and written in Nepali and Tibetan contain the earliest written evidence of the Nepali language. The power of Khasa Mallas reached its zenith during the reign of Prithvimalla (1338-1358) when the kingdom extended from the Trisuli Gandaki in the east, Garhwal in the west and Taklakhar in the north to the Tarai in the south. In spite of the decline of Malla power after Prithvimalla and the emergence of local rulers such as Medinivarma (1393-1404) and Bali Raja (1398-1404), Jumla continued to exert its influence in the far west until its ultimate defeat by the Gorkhalis. The Gorkhali forces led by Shivanarayan Khatri and Prabal Rana attacked Jumla in 1787 and although the Kalyal Thakuri ruler Shobhan Shahi resisted with a force of 22,000 men for two years, Jumla was finally defeated in 1789.

The past rich history of the region has left a distinctive pattern of settlement. Karnali Zone, the core of the old Khasa empire, is still the domain of Khasa population comprising of Chhetri, Thakuri, Brahmin and occupational castes. The Khasa and Bhotia interface is direct since there is no tribal cushion between the two groups as in central and east Nepal. However,
the influence of geography is seen in the apparent variation among Chhetris themselves who form two distinct groups. The comparatively lower and more fertile valleys such as those of the Tila and the Sinja and that have succumbed to greater Hindu influence are inhabited mainly by Brahmin, Thakuri and Chhetri who wear the sacramental chord. Secondary lateral valleys of higher elevation where no paddy grows remain the natural area of Matwali Chhetris and who may be considered the remnant of the historical Khasa. Their basic economy of dry crop cultivation and greater reliance on pastoralism has parallels among the tribal groups elsewhere. The Matwali Chhetris of Karnali region form not only a transition society between the high caste Hindus and the Bhotias similar to other Mongoloid tribes of the east but also act as a ladder of social elevation for the Bhotias (Jad) in the region who have adopted their surnames and Masta cult. On the other hand, while the Matwali Chhetris with greater interaction with the high-caste Thakuris and Chhetris have promoted themselves to the sacred thread, the high-caste Hindus including the Brahmins have adopted the local deities Masta and Malika. In essence, if the Bhotias and Matwalis have been much influenced by Hindu cultural values, the high caste Hindus have adapted themselves to the material culture of a temperate environment that is Jumla.
CHAPTER FOUR

RARA AND MUGU

Does not the Earth hold another beauty of pure nature?
Accumulation of all, garnered beauty
Poured unto this Rara, a chemistry
Bedecked with garland of snow mountains
Peaceful verdant green in natural life,
In our Nepal of sun and moon banner.
In free reflection
In the Himalaya
In Nepal
Unto lovely Rara!

-M. B. B. Shah

I left Hatsinja on the afternoon of April 5th. The path climbed north-west over a pine covered ridge above the village. I was forced to spend the night at Okharpai (3100 m) two hours later owing not to the delay but relay system of porters. My porter from Hatsinja, who had been deputed by the headman, would not go beyond Okharpai. The village had 68 households mainly of Matwali Chhetri clan of Bura. Later sitting by the fireside of one of the houses the elders told me of the old customs.
They talked of the ancient glory of the Malla kingdom and the later Kallyal dynasty of Bali Raja and how they were defeated by the Gorkhali forces after a long struggle. They considered Nepalese from the east as conquerors and government officials were still called 'Gorkhali' and to whom services were provided not for hospitality or profit but as a matter of compulsion and imposed custom. In the old days, touring Gorkhali officials had to be provided with free porterage and ration that sometimes included three goats, their heads used as tripod for the cocking pot and the cooking area had to be cleansed with cooking oil. In response, each village had a rotation among households for the supply of porters and provisions. The assigned distance a porter covered was not the length of route in kilometers or kos measured in so many chilam (pipe) smokes or the speed of the traveller but the frequency of villages on the way. No porter cared or was allowed to go beyond the next village where he would be replaced by another relay. Although I offered to pay well, my Hatsinja porter, dumped my load at Okharpati and returned home. And it was nearly three hours later that the Okharpati headman finally collected rice from one house, broad beans from another and salt and cooking oil from still others. It was both the result of a long-imposed custom as well as the poverty of the area that an evening meal for a traveller took so long to materialise.

I left Okharpati next morning with a local porter for Rara. The women already busy in the fields had no gold ornaments and instead wore necklaces of coloured beads and strung silver coins, some from the period of Edward VII. We climbed above the village and the higher fields of Okharpati and neighbouring village of Lumsa clung on steep slopes of 31 degree angle up to an altitude of 3,500 meters (Pl. IIb). I followed Diyabala Danda and two hours later reached its crest at 3,522 meters and descended north through a birch forest into the Ghatta Khola. The higher slopes had been cleared of trees for new fields and the valley floor was a delightful meadow of pink primulas. I rested on the grassy meadow beside the stream and had my lunch of buckwheat bread, boiled beans and salt and chilly as a precaution against altitude
sickness. It was nearly noon when I left the idyllic valley and began climbing up a narrow defile on the side of Chuchemara Danda. After an hour's steady climb, I reached a high pass (3749 m) on the Ghurchi Lekh (4067 m) and looked down on the expanse of blue water of the Rara Dah. The mountains beyond to the north were hidden behind grey clouds and when it started to snow, I hurried down the open northern slope to the security of dense pine forest lower down. Two hours later, I reached a log-bridge spanned over the Khatyar Khola that drained lake Rara towards the west. After a short walk upstream across some cattle sheds of Murma village and fields of Chhapru, I reached the western shore of Rara Dah (2980 m). The Thakuri village of Rara was another three kilometers north-east along the lake. The village spring at Rara was an elaborately carved water-conduit crowned with a small stone edifice of medieval period.

At Rara, I joined Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf's party who had just returned from Mangri after our parting at Barkot-ebara village in Jumla. Rara lake is located on the north slope of Ghurchi Lekh (4086 m) and confined from the north by another lower ridge of 3,300 meters. Although the lake drains west through a narrow gorge, the eastern barrier of the lake is hardly six meters above the lake level and the fall of the ground beyond this barrier is more than 1,370 meters steep decline eastwards to the Mugu river so that the lake is virtually perched on a high shelf. In another sense, the lake is a ready-made reservoir if a tunnel were to be channelled down to Bhattechaur (1759 m) for hydro-electric generation and the power could meet the needs of Jumla town and for the copper-smelting works at Dalphu which was closed in early 1950's for lack of timber fuel. The total energy generated would depend on the capacity of the spring sources of the lake to recharge the loss but recycling of water for turbine operation is not a new engineering technique. However, it will be some years if not decades that the remote Karnali region will have such development activities and till then one must rest content admiring the untrammeled beauty of Rara.

Rara Dah or lake is oval-shaped with a maximum length
of five kilometers and width of two kilometers and water surface of nearly eight square kilometers. On clear days, it is a marvel to watch the snows of Ghurchi Lekh reflected on the lake (Pl. IIIa). A clear inverted image in the still clear morning, it becomes alive as a shimmering, moving mountain in the light afternoon breeze and then fades into opaqueness of the wavelets as the wind becomes stronger. It is not only the mere reflection of the mountains and interplay of clouds above that makes Rara attractive. The blue waters of the lake set against pine-clad green hills and grey ridges beyond make it a place of serene beauty. One fine day, I walked round the lake in eight hours following the old horse-trail made for King Mahendra when he visited the place in 1964. Water fowls and bar-headed geese floated on waves that splashed against a fine stand of pine on the lake shore and from the open alluvial fans of Milichaur in the south, I had a clear view of Chankheli (4201 m) above Rara village and Chhayanath (5817 m) far to the north. The lake is said to be full of ducks and cormorants during the migrating season on their way south in November and the return trip during April as referred to in a folk song:

The ducks gone in Katik returned in Jeth
Saw many a land, visited many a place,
Soared high to see the lovely lake
Supreme one’s homeland than all the strange land.

The natives seemed to make little use of the lake resource. They had no boats and instead made a long detour south to fetch fuel and timber and the loads were laboriously carried on human back instead of an easy float across the lake. Even for fishing, no nets or hook and line are known and instead they use a traditional method. They throw some grains in the lake and harpoon the fish with long spears.

We stayed for four days at Rara and one night it snowed heavily. While Christoph and his party headed south for Sinja by the route I had come, I turned north for a lonely journey to
Humla. The track led north of Rara village and the young barley crop in the fields had been greatly damaged by wild boar. The upper limit of the field here was at 3,444 meters and the natives were resigned to the pestilence of wild boar, bear and monkey that damaged a large share of their crop. Above the fields was a forest of nine, walnut and rhododendron with dark pink flowers. A low pass (3200 m) of shattered schist on the forest ridge provided a good view of the lake to the south and the bare south walls of Chankheli (4201 m) across the deep Mugu valley to the north. I descended northwards through a dense forest of rhododendron, pine and oak. The descent was steep and the only sign of habitation was a cattle-shed in a small clearing at 2,650 meters. When I reached Aisidhara (1730 m) on the south bank of Mugu Karnali three hours later, I was down in a warm sub-tropical valley with Pinus roxburghii on the dry slopes and young paddy in the narrow fields. Aisidhara of 15 houses is a satellite hamlet of Roka Chhetris of Chhapru village near Rara. I crossed a wooden cantilever bridge over the Mugu Karnali which here flowed at an elevation of 1,569 meters.

I stopped at Sumli (1706 m), a village on a high river terrace on the north bank for lunch. I had planned to travel westwards down the Mugu Karnali on my way to Galpha and then north to Humla. It was while I was having lunch at Sumli that there arrived the local governor of Humla, Lekh Bikram Rana, and changed my travel plans. He said it was too early a season for upper Humla and invited me to join his entourage to Mugu. I readily agreed as Mugu seemed an equally unknown and interesting territory. The party moved eastwards and upstream along the north bank of the Mugu Karnali (Pl. IIIb). The gorge was narrow and the bare north side along which we travelled was dry and hot without trees while on the opposite bank, luxuriant vegetation clothed the north-facing slope. Three hours later we arrived at a level ground below Ruga village and crossed the Mugu Karnali by a rickety timber bridge and camped at Bhattechaur (1759 m.)

On April 11th, while the governor’s party rested and fished
at Bhattechaur, I made a brief visit to Tharpa (2130 m) about three kilometers across Bhattechaur. I again crossed the bridge over the Mugu Karnali and climbed to the village in about two hours. Tharpa is a Matwali Chhetri village of Bohra clan and the famed Masta shrine here draws devotees from Karan, Khater, Sinja, Gum and Chaudbise areas. The Tharpa Masta is said to have over 200 branches throughout the Karnali region and a new Tharpa shrine is established by taking out a bell and two dwaja (pennant) from this main shrine on auspicious days. Large fairs are held at the shrine of Tharpa Masta during the Dasain and full moon of Baisakh, Savan and Magh and animals are sacrificed on Saturdays except during the first half of Savan and Push. The shrine had a wide verandah and the interior had two altars, one of goddess Kali for blood sacrifices and another of the Masta with some bronze figures. The young Dhemi with a long lock of hair piled over his head as a turban, was reputed to know the Vedas by heart without formal tutoring. According to local tradition, the Matwali Chhetri villages of Tharpa, Panpu, Chhaila, Lah and Tirpa in lower Mugu were allowed to maintain the Tharpa shrine inspite of the later rise of Chandannath as the main cult in Karnali region.

On the following day, I climbed up the track south of Bhattechaur to Srinagar (1880 m) or Gumgarhi, the headquarters of Mugu district made-up of the panchayats of Rara, Tihar and Mugu with a total population of 5,040 in 1964. The village has Malla Thakuri as the dominant group and although I could not determine whether the name of nearby Bhattechaur below was derived from bhatta (bean) or bhote (Bhotia), there was an interesting evidence of culture contact at Chain village below Srinagar. On the cross-road to Rara eight kilometers west and Jumla further south, was a Bhagawati shrine beside a chorten with stone slabs with Tibetan inscriptions. Srinagar gives a good panaromic view of Chankheli Langna (3591 m) and southern mountains of Humla. I returned to Bhattechaur and went through the records at the Revenue Office. The total land revenue of the district was Rs. 9,272 and the last settlement had been made in 1889 with Upadhyaya Brahmins of Lurku (Sinja) as revenue collectors. The subdivi-
visions of Karan, Dalphu and Mugu then paid Rs. 740, Rs. 119 and Rs. 1220 respectively while Mugu with 132 houses paid taxes in 26 items, mostly in trade and livestock.

We left Bhattechaur on April 14th and the path followed up the south side of the Mugu Karnali. The rocks along the path were mainly quartzites and crystalline schist and we followed an easy gradient over pockets of fields amidst pine forests. We reached the small village of Dana (1980 m) about noon. On the opposite bank north of the river, we could see the fields of Tirpa (2130 m) carved out of steep slopes exceeding 37 degrees of angle. We had lunch at Lumsa (1950 m) a little further on the road near the confluence of the Sobhak Gad with the Mugu Karnali. Beyond Lumsa, the east-west valley trended towards the north and became narrower and the river-bed was choked with large granite boulders. Two hours later, we reached Chhaila (1969 m) where the Ridga Gad from the north and the Sate Gad from the south joined the Mugu Karnali at the same point. The main village of Chhaila with about 20 houses of Rokaya and Baduwal Matwali-Chhetri was on the north bank and here we left the last paddy fields in Mugu Karnali valley. The villages, all inhabited by Matwali Chhetri, were 600 to 700 meters above the river level and higher above were numerous goths near the summer grazing grounds. A little further beyond, we could see a huge rock across the river chiselled with the famous Buddhist formula ‘Om mani padme hum’ as a dramatic symbol of our entry into another cultural area. The river now trended east-west and the slopes became steeper. After another three kilometers we reached Dhungedhara (2160 m) at the bridge site between the first Bhotia villages of Mah and Mangri on either side of the Mugu Karnali as guardian-posts of Lamaistic realm beyond. On the fragile valley slopes clung colonies of young Alnus nepalensis and higher above continued pure stands of pine. We spent the night at Dhungedhara and the two nearby villages joined forces to entertain the governor’s entourage.

The following day, the governor who had special responsibility for remote areas of Karnali zone held a joint village assembly
at Dhungedhara where local problems were discussed. The natives were more articulate on the problems created by the decline of trade with Tibet and dilapidated condition of their village gombas. The pilferage of idols and books from the gombas had not yet become serious and a brisk trade still prevailed in musk pod then. *Chang,* barley beer, flowed freely and the discussion became a lively babble of mixed Nepali and Tibetan. While the debate continued, I climbed to Mah village (2530 m) high on the north side. The houses were flat-roofed and surrounded with walnut and willow trees while naked barley swayed in the village field. The people wore homespun *chuba* (toga) and *docha* (boots) of Tibetan style, and while men had ear-rings with turquoise, the women had large metal ear-rings, a distinctive ornament of the Bhotias of the Mugu Karnali (Pl. XXVIIa). The village had numerous *chortens* and the *gomba* was on a pine-clad ridge above the village beyond which the snows of Chhayanath (5917 m) were visible. On the opposite side to the south, was the larger Mangri (2220 m) village on a high shelf above the river (Pl. XXVIIb).

On April 16th, we left Dhungedhara along the north bank of the river that now roared among immense boulders. We walked up the valley through brushwood hemmed-in by steep slopes, bare to the north and pine forest on the opposite south slope. The villages of Riusa (3041 m), Puwa (2680 m) and Taka (2971 m) on the south side and Serok (2620 m) on the north side were located on high spurs above the river. I made a brief detour to Serok village climbing 600 meters above the road and visited the local *gomba* which had two lamas, 17 *thawa* (male) and 7 *ani* (female) novices. A religious ceremony was in progress and I had refreshing cups of cool *chang* with the crowd assembled there. The flat-roofed houses were packed against the steep slope and the different roof levels gave an impression of a series of terrace fields. On the way down along the Tenari stream, I had a good view of the peak of Chhayanath and then rejoined the main road walking under a *kani chorten*. That night, we camped at Tihar (2281 m) at the confluence of the Mugu Karnali and the Langu
river that drains northern Dolpo. We had fresh venison of ghoral (goat-antelope) shot by one of the governor's escorts for supper. The section of the Mugu valley between Mangri and Dalphu inhabited by Bhotias is known as Karan.

We continued up north along the much smaller Mugu river the following morning passing below Daura (2800 m) village along the west bank of the river. Soon we came to an old floodplain with a park of poplar trees at the confluence of the Mugu river and one of its northern tributaries, the Tal Chu. Three kilometers beyond, another stream, Chhap Chu, draining the northern flank of Chhayanath joined the Mugu river from the east. Just above this confluence was another old floodplain known as Khe (2022 m), one of the former sites of Mugu village. We crossed to the right bank of the Mugu river which now occupied a broad north-south glaciated valley. Trees became scarcer and pines were replaced by juniper bushes seven kilometers beyond Khe. The path rose gently north along boulders and thorn thickets where yaks grazed on the roadside. To the south, rose high the peak of Chhayanath which has a glacial tarn at 5,000 meters and where Hindu pilgrims gather in August to pay homage to the 'lord of mirage', another aspect of Shiva. We crossed the river to the west and followed it upstream through a wide valley of sandy flats amidst series of scree slopes (Pl. IVa). We then recrossed the river to its east bank and entered Mugu village through a white washed kani chorten (entrance gate) topped by a two-storeyed shrine. A small stream, the Chharchu, cascaded down a 36-meter high rock-face east of the village and joined the Mugu river near the kani chorten (3307 m).

We stayed four days in Mugu while the governor had discussions with a band of 16 armed Khampas camped nine kilometers above the village (Pl. IVb). I took the opportunity to climb a rocky ridge west of the village and looked down on the village in full perspective and had also a glimpse of the northern section of the valley leading towards Tibet across Namja La (c. 4335 m). Another day, I went up the birch forest above the village to visit Shama Chhuling gomba. The Nyingmapa lama
there had studied in Dolpo and was busy painting new *thankas*, (cloth banners) for the *gomba* (Pl. XXVIIIa). In spite of the ideal setting of the *gomba*, the Lama was not a recluse but lived with his wife and three children. Mugu village was located on a level ground on the east bank of the Mugu river at an elevation of nearly 3,400 meters (Pl. XXVIIIib). The village had 178 households and 10 *gobas* (headmen), a police check-post, and a customs house. The people of Mugu, called Mugal by their neighbours, are said to have migrated from Tibet many generations ago and the early migrants composed of seven households was led south by one Chhigu Rimpoche. It is said that until 1856, the Mugals had to pay tax on women (*chulto rakam*) to the *dzongpen* (governor) of Chhichumkor in Tibet from where they had migrated in addition to payment of other taxes to the Nepal rulers. The Bhotias of Mugu and Karan area have adopted ‘Tamang’ as their surname and I was told that the surname had been initially awarded by Jang Bahadur for their services during the Nepal-Tibet War of 1856. That the Mugali migration southwards into Nepal was mainly for trade is shown by the successive shift of their main village site. Their first settlement was at a place now called Purano Mugu (old Mugu) about 24 kilometers south of the border and nine kilometers north of the present village. When the place proved to be too cold for the Khasa traders from the south, the village was moved 16 kilometers south to Khe (2022 m.). They stayed for three years at Khe and when it proved too hot for their northern clientele, the Tibetan traders, the village was again shifted to the present site which was then said to be fores-ted.

The Mugu people had a monopoly of trade with Tibet since 1843. But the closing of Chyaptug trade-mart across the border in 1960 and the presence of a band of armed Khampas at Purano Mugu above the village had adversely affected their economy. Their dependence on trade is evidenced by a Jumli saying “Hat lage Mugal, natra Kangal” which may be roughly rendered as ‘Mugals are paupers without trade’. However, during the 1964–65 trading season 126,315 kg of barley was ex-
ported to Tibet and 715,046 kg of salt and 411,366 kg of wool was imported through the Mugu trade route. Other items of trade are rice, buckwheat, wooden and bamboo products to Tibet in exchange for sheep, goats and other animal products. The grains are procured during the winter from Gum and Jumla and the trading season with Tibet is from July to October. Mugu has an average rainfall of 1600 mm with a July high and buckwheat is planted in early summer and harvested in autumn. Although some families maintain herds of yak, no ploughs are used in the preparation of fields and instead hoe is used. The main cattle of Mugu is yak that are grazed in Chaudbise Khola during the winter. The Mugals formerly maintained large herds of sheep and goats but these have been abandoned after the closure of pasture facilities across the border in Tibet. Since the road along the Mugu Karnali is too low and warm for yaks and there are no large herds of sheep and goats, all goods are now transported on human back. The past prosperity of Mugu is reflected in the numerous gombas in and around the village. The main gomba in the village, called Sarkang or 'house of gold', has a gold statue of Chhyungu Rimpoche as the central image. It has a good library of old religious texts and the sets of Kangyur and Tengyur are written in letters of gold and silver. In the month of Jeth, a festival known as Koigen is held when young men and girls dressed in their best, camp out three kilometers north of the village at Chhujen for two weeks of dance and merriment. However, with the decline of trade and large-scale out-migration of the Mugals, Koigen and the gombas have lost much of their past vitality.

We left Mugu village on April 21st and retraced our steps the way we had come as far as Mainti (2680 m) three kilometers below Khe. The governor and his party were returning to Soru in Galpha while I planned to travel alone to Dalphu, Wangri and cross over a high pass (4877 m) south to Maharigaon in Chaudbise Khola. I thanked the governor for his company and hospitality and crossed the Mugu river and turned south-east through a pine forest. The track then climbed over a brushwood slope to Chitain (3200 m), a Bhotia village of 31 households. The
buckwheat fields were colourful and on the slopes grazed yak, dzo (cross-breed) and goats. I was again left to my own devices without the large escort of governor's men and at Chitain I was welcomed into the hearth of a Bhotia family where I brought a whole jar of chang for only Rs. 2.

I left early the next morning along a path that climbed above the village. On the path were abandoned fields now overgrown with young pine that were at least three years old. In the morning I felt a little irritation in my right eye and I continued climbing through the pine forest hoping the itch would go away. The pine forest was succeeded by birch forest and two hours later I was on Tangting ridge at 3,992 meters. The sky was overcast and although I was within twelve kilometers of Chhayanath (5917 m) which the locals call Milkang, the peak was not visible and in any case my eye-sore had worsened. I tried to look east up the Langu Khola where lay my destination Dalphu and Wangri but they were hidden behind a series of deep interlocking spurs. I descended east along the birch forest and joined the main trail to Dalphu. I went as far as the Balking Chu and the track beyond the stream was across a vertical granite rock-face. Dalphu and Wangri used to be famous for copper smelting until it was closed in 1951 due to shortage of charcoal for which the nearby forests had been much destroyed. As I gazed up the cliff track fit only for goats, I wondered how the metal or the wares therefrom must have been transported outside in the past. I washed my eyes dipping my head in a pool of the cold waters of the Balking stream, staring and blinking under water to cleanse off whatever irritant there was. The cold dip gave me only shivers and the eye-sore did not improve.

It was past noon and I had to turn back. I took the path leading west down to Tihar where the governor was planning to stay for the night and his party included a health worker. The trail went across a steep slope above the Langur river and on loose scree I had to walk on all fours. The eye-sore had become painful and I had to stop frequently to close my eyes for brief reliefs
as it would have been suicidal to walk with closed eyes among these
giant cliffs. My eyes and nose watered continuously and the hand-
kercrchief had become wet and I cursed myself for undertaking this
rash venture all alone without even a porter. It took more
than three hours to reach Katik (2990 m), a mere distance of four
kilometers and I showed my red eye to the villagers. They tried to
take out the irritant with a bird feather and I washed the eye
numerous times but to no avail. I had my lunch at Katik and
continued on my painful journey with a long birch stick as a sup-
port. The path was a steep descent along a grassy slope and I
managed to reach Kimri (2800 m) in one hour. It was nearby
dark when I staggered to the governor’s camp at Tihar and repor-
ted to the health worker. He examined my right eye with a tor-
ch-light and managed to extract a small piece of quartzite that
must have got into my eye during the night at Chitain. It was
a minute particle but it had altered my itinerary greatly. I felt
immediately relieved and thanked my benefactor.

We left Tihar about noon on April 23rd and it was plea-
sant being in the company of a large party walking at leisurely
pace. I now had some one to carry my load and I was not bur-
dened with worries of finding food and shelter at the end of a
tired day. We reached Dhungedhara and spent the night there.
The next day, the governor’s party continued west along the main
track and I climbed to Mangri (2220 m). The people were busy
in the field and while it was naked barley at Mah on the higher
opposite village, at Mangri it was wheat. The houses were group-
ed on the edge of the river terrace and above the village rose a
pine-clad ridge. I made a quick round of the village gomba
where I refreshed myself with chang and caught up with the
others at Chhaila. We returned to Bhattechar after a twelve-
day tour in upper Mugu valley.

On April 24th, I said good-bye to the governor and his party
for the last time and headed south for Jumla with a porter. I
climbed up the valley of the Gum Gad to Chain and leaving
Srinagar to the west, continued upstream. People of Srina-
gar were ploughing their fields on the trail-side and on the opposite
slope to the east was a dense pine forest. I reached the village of Pina (2430 m) after climbing 600 meters in five hours. Pina had about 10 Chhetri houses and a trail from here led to Rara Dah, eight kilometers west, through Topla and Jhari. The flat roof over the post office provided a good view of peaks across Mugu Karnali. The highest peak due north of Chhaila is about 5,600 meters and there are said to be nearly 40 glacial tarns on the range.

I left Pina early on the morning of April 26th and the last fields were crossed at 2,590 meters. The path then climbed south through a dense forest of pine and oak and above 3,000 meters birch appeared. The final ascent to Ghuruchi Langna (3457 m) was through a steep gully and little could be seen from the pass because of the forest. The descent south of the pass was a pleasant walk along a grassy glade down to a small stream. On the road I came across an old mile-stone that stated that it was 176 kos from Hanuman Dhoka (Kathmandu). The milestone below Ghuruchi and the post office at Pina indicated that we were on the traditional highway between Jumla and Humla further north. Leaving the grassy meadows of Chautha (3100 m), I entered the narrow valley of the Chautha Khola and crossed it by a log-bridge. The road now turned south-east along the north side of the Sinja Khola which here was called the Nyor Gad. The forest around Bhargaon (2890 m) had rhododendron and walnut. I halted at Bumra (2830 m) in a Matwali Chhetri house for the night. The valley around Bumra, enclosed by Ghuruchi Lekh to the north and Dwari Lekh to the south had a pleasant park-like appearance with undulating grassy slopes and stands of lovely forest.

The next day, April 27th, I followed the Nyor Gad upstream for two kilometers as far as its confluence with the Lete Gad. So far it had been a gentle descent all the way from Ghuruchi Langna. But another pass had to be crossed on the way to Jumla and the ascent began at the Lete Gad. The path was steep but pleasant under a dense forest with thick undergrowth of Arundinaria bamboo. The forest gave way to alpine grassland
at 3,400 meters. The weather was calm when I crossed Khali Langna (3545 m) and Danphe Langna (3688, m) two kilometers further. The view from Danphe pass, revealed Jumla valley as a rich expanse of green fields and farther to the south rose high the snow-clad Chyakhure peak (4695 m). I descended to Cherechaur (3010 m) where the ground was a variegated carpet of violet, primula and Stellera chamaejasme. I finally came down to the Ju Gad and followed one of the irrigation channels to the town of Jumla that now assumed metropolitan proportions after my 25 days in remote villages.
I rested for four days at Jumla after returning from Mugu. The people were busy in the paddy fields and the air was warm. On May 2nd, I left the town on my eastward journey taking a more northerly route through the Chaudbise Khola. I started about noon and after passing the fields of Talichaur and Devkotabara, turned north of Dansangu along the west bank of the Chaudbise river. There were numerous irrigation channels below the road that led to the fields of Jumla. Four kilometers beyond Dansangu, at Urthu (2520 m), one track turned northwest upstream of the Ghurseni Khola to Ghurchi Langna and another continued east along the south bank of the Chaudbise Khola. I took the later route and crossed a timber-bridge and walked upstream through a cool forest. The valley widened after Lorpa (2441 m) and the villages of Jamna (2510 m) and Lamri (2520 m) came into sight. The track went along the wide undulating plain of Dillichaur (2525 m) created by a series of alluvial
fans from the south. The new headquarters of the small Tibrikot district was located here but its development had been greatly hampered by the close proximity of Jumla town and the only office there was that of revenue office.

Near Dilkichaur, I came across a group of Bhotias camped on the roadside with a large stock of grain sacks (Pl. Va). The sacks piled one above the other made a wall near the fire-place. While one house-wife churned Tibetan brick-tea in a large wooden cylinder, men were having chang. Numerous sheep, goats and some horses including a donkey, which they had bought in Tarai for cross-breeding mules, grazed by the riverside. The Bhotias were from Mandhara, a day's march from Lamri in a northern side valley. Known locally as Duluwa Khamba (nomadic Bhotia) or Mandhara Khamba, they had migrated and settled 40 years ago at Mandhara, said to be the grazing ground of Luma village and the court case over the ownership of land between the Luma villagers and new settlers had dragged on for years. Mandhara Bhotias originally migrants from Dolpo and Mustang had now adopted Matwali Chhetri surnames and since 1965 had even begun worshipping Masta. They owned sheep, goats and horses for transporting their goods and took them south to Matela and Surkhet during the winter. They start for home in February and sow buckwheat and potato to be harvested in October. They leave for the warmer south in November after sowing barley which they harvest the following July. The group I met were returning home after spending their winter in Surkhet valley.

I stayed for the night at Lamri village on the north bank of the Chaudbise Khola. Mandhara Bhotias are intruders in Chaudbise Khola as all other 17 villages in this valley are inhabited by Matwali Chhetris of Bura or Burathoki, Rokaya, Bohara, Rawal, Rawat, Khadka, Bhandari, Mahatara, and Airi clan. Each household visits or sends someone to pay homage to Tharpa Masta every third year. They celebrate Dasain for five days but not Tihar. Till the turn of the century, Chaudbise used to be a poor area where only wheat and barley grew and fields were left fallow
every third year. The people worked as menial workers and agricultural labourers in Jumla. Their main occupation was dry crop farming and raising sheep and goats which they took as far as Jajarkot during the winter. It is said that one governor of Jumla, Tej Bikram Rana, who toured the area in 1889, encouraged cultivation of maize and potato in Chaudbise Khola. The agricultural economy in Chaudbise improved greatly after the introduction of maize from Barekot (Jajarkot) and potato from Nainital (India). Rice cultivation was also extended. Fields in Tirkhu were registered for paddy before 1889 while those in Pere and Talphi only in 1946 and these agricultural innovations had turned Chaudbise into a granary for the Jumla region. On May 3rd, I visited the revenue office at Dillichaur and the records showed the cultivated area of Chaudbise villages to be 13 khet, 70 muri, 9 pathi and 2 mana yielding Rs. 474/65 annual revenue. An additional annual levy of Rs. 25/65 was levied on ghatta (water-mill). The regional name Chaudbise which means 14 x 20 or 280 reflects the typical Nepali way of counting in twenties and the name may have been derived from the revenue amount similar to other locality names such as Atharsaya (1800) Khola in northern Gorkha and Ath Hazar (8000) Parbat in Myagdi districts.

On 4th May I started from Lamri for Talphi (2710 m) which was about eight kilometers east. I again crossed the wooden bridge over the Chaudbise Khola to its south bank and after two kilometers recrossed to its north side to reach Luma (2620 m). A track went north that led to Mandhara and Rinimoksha Tal where a fair is held during Janai Purne in August. I continued east below Bhotegaon (2680 m) and along the north bank of the Chaudbise Khola. Near Talphi, where the Chaudbise Khola is joined by the Chum and Huri Gad from the north and the Patal Gad from the south within a distance of two kilometers, the valley became considerably wide dotted with small hillocks. Talphi on the left bank of the Huri Gad was located at the western end of a long ridge that divide the waters of the Huri Gad to the north and the Chaudbise Khola to the south. The northern valley has a route to Wangri and Mugu through Hurigaon
(2890 m) and Maharigaon (3124 m), open only during summer. Wangri can also be reached by the more easterly Chaudbise Khola route that crosses the Lumbu Lekh at Khapre (4837 m). During the time I reached Talphi, the fields had already been ploughed for maize and millet and the sky was overcast with haze from the smoke of forest fires. I made a brief visit to Pere (2710 m), the last village about two kilometers east of Talphi leading to the narrow valley of the Chaudbise Khola.

Next morning, I started early from Talphi under a hazy sky. The Chaudbise Khola was crossed just south of the village and the track followed upstream of the Patal Gad. An hour later, I reached Siyalgarhi (2620 m), a Matwali Chhetri village of 25 houses (Pl. XXIXa). The village faced north and has a heavy snowfall during winter and the people breed horses. Siyala connotes shady or cold aspect as contrasted to Pahara for sunny and warm location. Siyalagarhi is considered the colder counterpart of Paharagarhi, the village I had stayed after crossing Chyakhure Lekh in early March. I had lunch at Siyalagarhi and continued along the valley of the Patal Gad under a dense forest of pine and birch. The trek followed the river for nine kilometers and at 3,139 meters it climbed steeply to Leti Lagna (3383 m). The prospect north from the pass was under thick haze and I turned south into the narrow and densely-wooded valley of the Ghar Gad. After a long descent of two hours I reached Churta or Naphukuna (3020 m) a small Bhotia hamlet on the main road between Jumla and Dolpo.

Next day, I continued eastwards upstream along the right bank of the Ghar Gad. The path passed through magnificent pine trees interpersed with oaks. After crossing the stream at 2,535 meters by a log-bridge, I made a steep ascent to Maure Langna (3916 m) just above the tree-line. The trek followed a gentle descent to the south-east along a grassy flank of a 3,987 meter peak, and then traversed north along the contour of two ridges to Chaurikot (3078 m). It was a pleasant walk with views of dense forests climbing from the Jagdula Khola towards Baradob
Danda (4173 m) to the south and snow peaks of Kagmara (5961 m) to the east. The village of Chaurikot had 25 houses and although the inhabitants were Bhotias which was quite obvious from their faces, their life-style and first names, they claimed to be Matwali Chhetri and had Chhetri clan names such as Mahatara, Rawal, Rokaya and Burathoki. The village gomba had been neglected since 1957, the kani chorten was in ruins and no one in the village knew how to read and write Tibetan script. They were in a stage where they had discarded their old religion and had yet to find moorings in the Hindu realm. The kitchen hearth and food habits were still Bhotia and I had a hospitable stay in Phurba Mahatara’s house.

On 7th May I started from Chaurikot and the road descended gently towards the Jagdula Khola. While the south side of the valley was densely forested, the northern side had been cleared extensively for cultivation and in the centre spread the large village of Rimi. I avoided the village as I heard of small-pox cases there and hurried down to Kaigaon (2620 m) on the south bank of the Jagdula Khola. The village had 18 houses of Matwali Chhetri and one Thakali and the headman had been trying to grow paddy here for last two years. It was 2 p.m. when I reached Kaigaon and I could have made the Balangra Langna (3877 m) on the main road to Tibrikot. Since I was tempted by Kagmara peak, I recrossed the Jagdula Khola and moved to the village of Hurikot (2590 m) on the right bank of the Jagdula Khola that drains the southern slopes of Kanjiroba. Hurikot village had 22 houses mainly of Rokaya and Burathoki, including 5 of blacksmiths and 3 Byansis. The Rokas claimed to have migrated from Sinja but their Mongoloid features, marriage relations with Bhotias and the existence of an old gomba indicated them to be of Bhotia origin undergoing a process of Hinduisation. The village gomba had been in disuse for the last 15 years and the villagers instead had turned to Thapa Masta and Bhavani and now celebrated Dasain. I stayed in the house of Sonam Gyaltzen who claimed to be a Singh Thakuri and here I was lucky to meet Dawa Lama from Ringmo village who agreed to accompany me.
as a guide and porter through the mountain trail.

We started from Hurikot along the right bank of the Jagdula Khola and crossed the river five kilometers upstream and turned towards an eastern tributary called the Garpung Gad. We climbed up a steep slope and soon the deep gorge of the Jagdula Khola disappeared to our left. The left flank of the Garpung Gad was covered with birch forest and above the forest extended the juniper bushes and finally the satellite peaks of Kagmara. The trek climbed for 900 meters and we then crossed the stream by a birch log at the last limit of trees on the slope. After another ascent of 150 meters, we reached a ridge and looked north into the broad valley of Kyanglaphak with the wide meanders of the Garpung Gad.

The sky darkened and it started to snow. We quickened our pace to the head of the valley where Dawa told me we could find a cave shelter to spend the night. It was almost dark when we approached the cave (4114 m) but to my consternation, we were greeted by two hefty Bhotias complete with pigtailed, sheepskin jackets and large daggers dangling down their side. I was looking forward to a cozy cave to escape from the snow and cold but it was an uncomfortable proposition to encounter two forbidding strangers in this remote valley. I had heard enough stories about the marauding Khampas at Mugu and Naphakuna. Dawa broke the silence and explained who we were and we felt relieved to learn that the two Bhotias were harmless yak-herders from Saldang in Dolpo who were in the area with a herd of yaks. They agreed to share the cave and we were soon exchanging the taste of yak milk and coffee beside the warmth of the juniper fire. After a hearty meal of tsampa gruel, I turned to my map while one of the Bhotias began playing his dhanyam (Tibetan guitar) late into night. Our route to Kagmara pass (5114 m) would take us close to the main Kagmara peak (5961 m) but the ridge connecting the pass with the peak seemed a sharp one, hard to negotiate. I planned to divert half-way up the path and traverse a small westerly glacier to reach the summit and then retrace to the pass which I estimated
would take about six hours. I was not well-equipped for a serious assault but one thrives on optimism. I collected a few cigarettes, sweets and coins in a tobacco tin container with a note saying “Harka Gurung was here on 9 June 1966” which I proposed to leave on the summit.

Next morning we got up early and were on the move by 4 p.m. We followed the frozen stream north for three kilometers and at the spot-height 4,162 meters, turned east to begin the ascent. The early dawn lent a peculiar radiant effect on the fresh snow (Pl. XXIXb). The air was still and the peaks of Lha Shamma (6411 m) and Kagmara (6711 m) and its northern ridge came into sharper focus as we gained in height. Half-way to the pass I pointed Dawa the fine summit above our shoulders and asked him if he would accompany me. Dawa declined adding that he had his family waiting in Ringmo. We understood each other and agreed to go our own way. I would make a solo attempt while Dawa would wait for me on the pass. It was 6.30 a.m. and I gave him six hours time for my return.

While Dawa laboured uphill bidding me good luck on my mission, I turned to a small ridge to the right. I negotiated the ridge following the foot-prints of a musk deer and came to a small glacier that decended down the north-western face of Kagmara peak. A steep ice-wall guarded the head of the glacier and I planned to walk up the glacier and by-pass the steep face by climbing up a snow coulier that led up to the summit. When I reached the glacier, walking up the snow fields was easier said than done. Three hours of slogging through knee-deep snow brought me no closer to the mountain. The ritual of dragging one’s feet out of the deep snow and thumping it back into the unknown became a laborious exercise. The sun was up and the whole mountain side dazzled. I plodded on with utmost effort yet the summit still seemed far. I was still struggling hard on the upper shelf of the glacier when I heard a peculiar sound, an echoing sound of something dropping. The sounds became more frequent and only later did I realise with panic that boulders underneath
the glacier were on the move owing to insulation and heat. I had no rope or companion to retrieve me if I were to encounter a crevasse on the glacier. The futility of my rash adventure dawnd on me and now I could appreciate Dawa's native wisdom. I turned a sad glance on Kagmara still 1,000 meters above and away. I turned back just below 5,600 meters on the rumbling glacier and headed as fast as possible towards the sanctuary of the nearest rock surface to the north. But one can't run on a glacier if one knows that a false step would sink one forever. The retreat was as laborious as the climb. I made a careful short-cut to a rocky ledge confining the glacier from the north. I had a feeling of tremendous relief when I finally heaved myself on solid rock as I knew I was on safe ground.

I lay down my rucksack, opened the tin container, devoured the edible contents and tore up the piece of paper that embodied my rash hope. I rested quite a while on the warm rock gazing at the elusive Kagmara that had shattered my vanity. I consoled myself that in any case I had not failed on a virgin peak as it had already been climbed by a group of women climbers from Britain four years before.* I followed the track to Kagmara pass that generations of Bhotias have crossed without being lured by the peak or fame. I was now content gazing at the profusion of peaks surrounding me. On the pass (5,114 m), I found Dawa reclining beside a cairn and complaining of terrible headache and pain in the eyes. I had no time to reflect on the further vista from the pass as I had to bring down Dawa to lower elevations as fast as we could manage. The eastern side of the pass was very steep and at places we literally glissaded down the snow slope. We descended nearly 700 meters in an hour and rested at the source of the Julung Chu which drains into the Pungmi Khola. Dawa felt better after a meal of tsampa and a doze of arak. 'Kagmara' is a combination of Nepali words Kag (crow) and mara (death) similar to the Tibetan version of Gorak (crow) and shep (death) of Gorakshep in Khumbu. But my companion Dawa, who was a Tibetan speaker, was unable to ascertain whether the pass was named because crows died during their flight over the high pass.

or due to the other prevalent story that crows attacked and killed men suffering from altitude sickness or snow blindness on the pass.

We continued our descent along the right bank of the Julung Chu through alternate stretches of snow and slush. We had to progress cautiously particularly across the slush on steep slopes. We surprised a flock of *naurs,* (blue sheep,) on the way but we had neither the strength nor armoury to pursue them. They rushed with great agility down the steep southern flank of the Julung Chu and began grazing unconcerned as soon as they had reached the other bank. The leader was a large grey male with enormous curved horns. We made a laborious descent of 1,000 meters down to the Julung Chu and continued downstream along its right bank amidst steep slopes capped by peaks of Kanchauni Lekh (6,443 m) and Kanjeralwa (6,660 m) on either side. The Julung Chu was now joined by the Punphun Chu from the north and on the lower slopes the farther bank we saw numerous herds of *ghorals* while blue pheasants crossed our path unconcerned. We later saw more of these birds in the fields of Pungmo and the pious villagers drove them not by throwing stones that would have hurt them but by shouting and clapping their hands. Wild life abounded here as they remained unmolested by the devout Buddhist villagers. It was past 7 p. m. when we at last entered the *kani chorten* of Pungmo (3,200 m) and we had been on the move for nearly 14 hours since we left the cave bivouac.
Chapter six

PHOKSUMDO AND TARAKOT

The way to the Thread-Cross has been shown. Shown as what? Shown as the realm where the spirits of the directions and intermediate directions and the zenith and nadir all gather together. There is no need to tell them. The sun and moon, the lunar mansions and the stars, the lords of the soil, spirits below ground, spirits above ground, all of them find joy in the Thread-Cross and yearn after it. They delight in the substitute offerings and revel in the riches.

–Bon-po Invocation*

I had arrived at Pungmo (3,200 m) on May 9th after a long trek across the Kagmara pass (5,114 m). The village is inhabited by Bhotias who trade between Dolpo and Tibrikot. They subscribe to Bon-po faith that represents the old indigenous religion of western Tibet with adaptations of later Buddhist teachings and religious practices. Shen-rab is the supreme teacher of the Bon-po creed in place of Buddhist Sakyamuni, and OM MANI PADME HUM is replaced by OM MA TRI MU YE SA LE DU as the sacred invocation. The swastika, mystical symbol of good fortune, is used with the bent arms of the cross pointing counter-
5. PHOKSUMDO & DHORPATAN

Ridge above 3000m

Author's route

- PHOKSUMDO
- DHORPATAN
clockwise by the Bon-pos in contrast to the clockwise pattern on the Buddhists, and similarly they spin their prayer-wheels to the left and circumambulate chortens and shrines with their left side towards the object of their respect. In modern parlance, the Bon-pos are right-hand drivers against the left-hand driving of the Buddhists.

I was too tired the previous evening to notice the images on the kani chorten by which we had entered the village. I visited it next morning and on its ceiling and walls were old paintings of both Bon-po and Buddhist iconography. I also visited the village gomha, Namgyal Lakhang, which had one tulku (reincarnate) Lama and about 30 novices. The gomba contained the image of Shen-rab, the founder-teacher of Bon-po, on the front pedestal flanked by a blue divinity on the left and a red one to the right. I happened to be in the village on the third and last day of Dumje festival, a ceremony for the protection of the village. On the first day, the preparation of torma (sacrificial cake) is followed by reading of sacred texts and on the second day another religious text “Thobo Chomjom Kya Gyaong” is recited. On the last day of the festival, the Lama performed a ritual invocation on the village grounds (Pl. Vb). The Lama first threw six tormas (sacrificial cake) made from buckwheat at the fire and then consecrated some weapons and tarchhos (banners) on an upturned tray. It was followed by a ritual dance in which the bearers of tarchho banners in red, blue, yellow and white reeled in circles to the accompaniment of the crashing sound of cymbals, drums and trumpets while other men whistled and fired guns in the air and the cacophony resounded from the mountains. Masked dancers in colourful dresses appeared on the scene and among the characters represented were a king, a queen, a Lama and one abo-nagri (official) in trousers and waistcoat. The ceremony ended with the feeding of tsampa (barley flour) and chang to all those present.

I left Pungmo about noon on May 11th under a light rain. The track led down the left bank of the Pungmo Khola and reached the confluence of the Pungmo Khola and the Suli Gad.
after an hour. The vegetation along the road was mainly brushwood while the shady opposite slope had pines. After the river confluence, I turned north along the right bank of the Suli Gad and three kilometers further on came to Polam (3,200 m), the winter hamlet of Ringmo. As we climbed above the hamlet, we could see another track on the opposite eastern slope with the summer village of Maduwa (3,300 m). A little further ahead we came face to face with an impressive waterfall that cascaded down 1,670 meters through a series of rock-steps below a high moraine ridge (Pl. XXXb). The waterfall drained out of the Phoksumdo lake by a narrow channel and fed the Suli Gad with its clear cold water. The rain had stopped and the fine spray wafted by the breeze cooled us as we climbed to the lip of the waterfall.

The view from the trail above the waterfall revealed a scene of colourful grandeur. Gentle moraine ridges with green green pine and brown fields of Ringmo enclosed a blue lake and around it rose rocky ramparts capped with snow (Pl. XXXa). I gazed on the sight for a long while and thought of previous visitors to this hidden valley. David Snellgrove, who came here in 1956 and unravelled the living spirit of Bon-po religion in Dolpo, thought that he had at last arrived at the paradise of Buddha 'Boundless Light' and noted* (4 The water is edged with silver birch and the gleaming whiteness of the branches against the unearthly blue of the water is one of the most blissful things that I have known.” Josephine Scarr visited the lake in 1962 and wrote, “The water is incredibly deep turquoise blue of the Italian mountain lakes. An apogee of peace and beauty. The lake was so idyllic that I could happily have never moved from its source.” I walked along the east bank of the lake outlet for about two kilometers and crossed it by a solid wooden bridge and reached the village through a kani chorten. Ringmo village (3,627 m) or Tso-wa (lake-side) as the natives call it was on the southern end of the lake. My guide and porter, Dawa Lama, took me to his house and introduced me to his wife Kali Amji, daughter Phuti, and young son Pasang, who had been designated a tulku for a gomba in northern Dolpo. I stayed with the family for three days while I savoured the
magnificent environs of Phoksumdo Tso.

The following morning, May 12th, it snowed heavily and when the snow had stopped about noon, I walked west of the village to a ridge prominence (3,688 m) with a chorten. Below me spread the houses of Ringmo, each surrounded by fields and across to the north-east on the edge of the lake were some ochre-painted houses near the gomba, Tupte Lakhang. When a light breeze set in, the gomba, trees and rocks that mirrored in the lake became alive with each ripple. I then turned back for a tour of the village. The first object of visit was the kani chorten, on the road, a large square structure with a roofed dome and flanked by smaller chortens. Snellgrove had described the nine mandalas (mystic circles) on its ceiling as one of the finest pieces of painting he had seen in his travels, and I adopted an ingenious method of learning about Buddhist and Bon-po iconography by studying the frescoes on the ceiling and walls of the kani chorten with the aid of Snellgrove's book *Himalayan Pilgrimage*, which I had reviewed in *The Geographical Journal* (London) in 1962.

Ringmo had 13 houses with 17 households and a total population of 87. The people all had Tibetan first names but some had adopted Chhetri surnames such as Roka and Burathoki and despite the chortens and gombas that bespoke their Tibetan heritage, these Bhotias were also in the process of acquiring Matwali Chhetri status. Most of their marriage relations were within the village while a few had relations in neighbouring Pungmo. Apart from the main village on the lake side, the small community maintains two satellite hamlets in addition to the gomba village. They live in Ringmo (3,627 m) in spring to plant wheat, move to Maduwa (3,300 m) in summer to cultivate buckwheat, return to Ringmo to harvest wheat and potato and then descend to Polam (3,200 m) in winter to graze their animals. The village in May 1966 had 39 bullocks, 26 cows, 23 yaks and hybrid dzo and a mare. The total annual agricultural production was estimated at 5,400 kg of buckwheat, 2,788 kg of wheat, 1,170 kg of chinu (millet) and 3,870 kg of potato. This was supplemented by salt-trading in Langu valley and casual work in Hurikot, Kaigaon, Roha and Tarakot.
The Ringmo people have certain local terms to refer to people and places. They call the Tibetans Dokpa, Khamba Posha for Tibetan refugees, Karma for people of Karan and Muguma for Mughals. For the southern people, their term is Ponbo for Gorkhali, Juplang Kharsa for Jumli, Tanye for Brahmin and Khasya for Chhetri. Among the places in Kathmandu valley which they visit for pilgrimage, Kathmandu town is Sagar-Kyarsa, Patan is Herang-Kyarsa, Bhadgaon is Khokum-Kyarsa and the places of worship are Phokpa-Singun (Swayambhu); Kulang-Anjo (Pashupatinath) after the Shiva’s bull which they visualise as an elephant; Charung-Khasyor (Bodhnath); Khyu-Rangjan (Changu Narayan) where they recognize the form of Garuda; Tama-Locan (Namobaudha), Phangmu-Ngalju (Guheswari) whereby Parbati is called Phangmu in Tibetan; Klu-Ranjon (Buda Nilkantha) for self-produced serpent and Klu-Chiuma (Balajyu) for man-made serpent.

On May 13th, the sky was clear and blue after the previous day’s snowfall and the surroundings took on a brilliant aspect. Primula, saxifrage, Stellera chamajasme and caragana bushes grew near the village and the lovely lake to the north looked tempting. Around noon, I turned north of the village along the southwestern edge of the lake clinging to a narrow cliff path. The lake water was extremely cold and lack of organic life lent the water a turquoise hue (Pl. VIa). In the local legend also the origin of the lake is associated with a priceless turquoise with which a Bon-po demoness bribed the villagers of Phoksumdo not to reveal the path of her flight from the ‘Lotus Born’ Padma Sambhava who was persecuting the mountain demons. The great Buddhist saint caused the turquoise to be turned to dung and the villagers thinking that the demoness had tricked them, betrayed her whereabouts. She in revenge caused a disastrous flood that drowned the village beneath the turquoise waters. The legend relates to the struggle between the older Bon-po doctrine and the later Buddhist religion in the area in the eighth century but the lake must have been a phenomenon of earlier glaciological event. The story does, however, indicate the stronghold of the pre-Buddhist faith among the people of Ringmo.
About a kilometer further was a deep recess created by the Jarjan Chu descending the east flank of Kanjeralwa (6,660 m), a fine snow peak to the west. There was another steep climb beyond the stream and the path was made of flimsy scaffoldings of birch branches along a steep face high above the lake. Two hours later, I reached the highest point (3,950 m) on the ridge track marked by a chorten. The path then led down to the northern end of the lake but I sat beside the chorten savouring the scene around. I had a panaromic view of the distal parts of the lake from the vantage-point. The lake was about four kilometers long and a kilometer at the widest with two feeder streams. The Mendok Ti (Flower Depression) to the north had a stream meandering down a wide flat with stands of silver birch. The north-western feeder Phunglung Chu was an alluvial flush from the snout of a glacier. Between the two feeders at the northern end of the lake, rose vertically a rocky mass with two summits of 5,093 meters and 5,462 meters. There was a snow peak of 5,623 meters on the east side opposite another peak of 6,179 meters on the west side above the track. The latter two peaks are less than eight kilometers apart and the lake occupies a deep cleft between them with a south-erly depression blocked by a terminal moraine on which Ringmo village is located. Beyond the village and the terminal moraine rose high another snow range with summits of 5,916 meters and 5,870 meters enclosing the valley from the south. The lake was a gem of tranquil beauty among these harsh cliffs and snow peaks. While returning from the chorten view-point in the afternoon, I saw magic on the lake water that changed from darker ultramarine in the shade to brilliant cobalt blue in sunlight.

The following day, I turned east and visited the Tupte Lakhang gomba on the edge of the lake. The gomba complex belongs to the Bon-po creed and as an indication of decline of interest in religion, the seven old private chapels beside the main gomba were shuttered. The site, however, with the lake-water lapping against the cliff rocks below the pine grove and full view of the white crown of Kanjeralwa (6,660 m) was a worthy place for deep meditation. I then walked south to a long ridge (3,870 m) of an ancient lateral moraine with a dense forest of pine below
and birch and juniper above. The ridge provided a good view of the lake outlet as a channel between two moraine banks and towards the south, one looked down the deep valley of the Suli Gad and the western extension of Dhaulagiri range in the distant horizon.

I left Ringmo on May 15 and Dawa Lama offered to accompany me as far as Tarakot. We took a more easterly route and walked down the side of the terminal moraine to the Mandu Lungpa. We passed eight cattle sheds, forded the stream and came to a group of ten stone farm-houses at Madwua (3,300 m). Down below on the right bank of the Suli Gad was Polam (3200 m) with sixteen houses on an alluvial terrace. We followed the east bank of the Suli Gad down a forest of birch, fir and cedar above and spruce and pine below. Late at noon, we reached the confluence of the Suli Gad and the Pungmo Khola and continued along the left bank of the Suli Gad (Pl. VIb). The river flowed due south between steep slopes covered with dense forest. Two hours later, we crossed the river by a log-bridge and visited a new settlement at Rianchi (3,000 m). There were nine Bhotia settlers and although the clearing had begun three years ago, they had their first crop of potato and buckwheat only the previous year. After refreshments we rejoined the main trail south and reached Tarkol Lekh (3,200 m) late in the afternoon. The track then descended again into spruce and Cypressus forest, and we later camped beside the Suli Gad (2,740 m) under a large tree. We were joined at the camp by four Bhotias from Namdo who were travelling south to trade. It was a clear starry night and at about 10.20 p. m. a blue star, probably a space satellite, sailed east across the narrow firmament above the Suli Gad gorge.

We left very early next morning and as the sun was late in reaching the deep valley, we shivered under the dense cover of spruce, walnut and maple. Tangles of Rosa sericea glowed with white flowers when the sun finally caught up with us and two hours later we reached a small clearing on the roadside. The settler here was a Tibetan refugee who had settled five years before and had his first crop of maize. The presence of Tibetan refugees
as casual labourers in Ringmo and Pungmo and their new settlements in Rianchi and here indicated that many more Tibetans had found refuge in similar remote areas across the country than those officially rehabilitated in the lower regions.

The clearing was at about 2,630 meters and beyond this, the track rose 350 meters and then again fell off 450 meters down to the Lambar Gad, an eastern tributary of the Suli Gad. We crossed the stream and negotiated a long spur and climbed to Rohagaon (2,890 m). The village is located north of the Phoksi Gad on a south-facing slope with about 20 houses of Matwali Chhetri and a Masta shrine. The paddy fields were 450 meters below the village and 200 meters above on the opposite north-facing slope was its summer settlement. The roadside village beside the Phoksi Gad was called Pahara (sunny) Roha and the higher summer settlement south of the stream was called Sinyala (shady) Roha. Just after crossing the Phoksi Gad we came to a spring under a clump of walnut trees from where we had good views of the steep slopes confining the Suli Gad. The next side valley drained by the Thapali Gad had two Parila villages, both on the same south-facing slope but here the climatic difference was related more to altitude than to aspect. The people of Parila move down to Lower Parila (2,370 m) in winter and climb up to Upper Parila (3,100 m) in summer. The forests were now confined to small patches on north-facing slopes while sage and spear grass indicated a drier climate towards the south.

At Lower Parila one track turned west to Tibrikot and thither went our road companions from Namdo. Dawa and I continued south and two kilometers farther turned round a spur and looked down into the Bheri river which I had left below Jajarkot two months earlier. We descended east into the Bheri valley along a grassy slope and on the river bank grew wild pomegranates in crimson profusion (Pl. VIIa). We walked up the north sandy bank of the Bheri river and crossed south to Dunaihi by a temporary bridge. At Dunaihi (2,100 m), located in a low east-west valley north of the Dhaulagiri range, were the last paddy fields and Brahmin settlement in the upper Bheri. The
headquarters of Dolpo district was shifted to Dunaihi from Tarakot in 1965 and here there were some offices, a school and a wireless station. There is also a Babiro Masta shrine and a small Saraswati temple put up in 1926.

The next day, May 17th, I continued upstream of the Bheri and crossed it near Upper Dunaihi (2,130 m) where there was a police check-post. While walking up the bank of the Bheri, I was surprised to meet Dil Das Thapa. I had first met him in April 1962 as a conscientious school teacher at Dhampus, north of Pokhara, and he had now been posted into this remote district as a school inspector. He was coming from Kathmandu accompanied by his young wife. As I had a long climb to Tarakot, I took leave of Dil Das after making anxious enquiries about the state of the snow passes beyond.

The trek continued north along the right bank of the river and entered a narrow gorge. The valley sides were bare and it was hot under the midday sun. A small stream Byas Gad, flowed from the north to join the Bheri and the valley now had an east-west trend. Putha Hiunchuli (6,246 m) and other peaks of the Dhaulagiri range and villages of Tarakot came into view towards the east. I continued up along the river for another six kilometers and crossed to the south side of the Bheri by a wooden bridge. From the bridge (2,317 m), it was a steep climb of nearly two hours to the main village of Tarakot (2,680 m) where I again met Christoph and Elizabeth Furer-Haimendorf. I was glad that I had good company for the long journey across the high passes of the western Dhaulagiri. Here I also met one local boy, Chandra Man Rokaya, who had completed his high school in the first division. Chandra Man epitomises a fairy tale success story in that as a boy he impressed with persistent pursuit the late King Mahendra during one of his early tours of Baglung and who arranged for his education in a boarding school at Pharping (Kathmandu). Chandra Man later excelled in studies and completed his degree in agriculture from Pantanagar (India) and M. A. in agricultural economics from New South Wales (Australia).

The area around Tarakot known as Tichu-rong (Valley of
Fragrant Water) was made up of stupendous slopes with a sharp north-dipping rock strata. Vegetation was sparse below 3,000 meters and villages and fields were perched on narrow ledges high above the Bheri, here called the Barbung. The dry slopes rose south through pine forests to the western ramparts of the Dhaulagiri while north of the river on the slopes of Byas Rikhi Lekh (5,608 m) were the high villages of Chilpara (2,860 m), Bantara (2,830 m), Byans (3,500 m) and Baijubara (3,500 m). The dry south slope of Byas Rikhi Lekh is known as Charko-Dhingla (where the vulture dies) and the north slope as Nayo-Kongla (where the naur dies of cold) in Tibetan. Other Tibetan names for local place names are Kholi for Rohagaon, Ngin for Parila, Lingyap for Bheri Valley around Dunaihi, Dhung-nygal for Dunaihi, Dhablung for Chilpara, Ma-pa for Bantara, Chawa for Byans, Parle for Baijubara, Dzong for Tarakot, Ba for Shahar Tara, Tup for Tuppa Tara and Dikung for Densa or Gomba Tara.

Tarakot itself was a complex of four settlements on separate spurs. The main village where we camped was known as Shahar Tara or ‘Town Tara’ (2,630 m) flanked by Tuppa Tara or ‘Pinnacle Tara’ (2,650 m) on a western spur and Gomba Tara or ‘Temple Tara’ (2,800 m) on a higher eastern spur. The central village had 75 houses with a population of about 400 persons. Although previous visitors have referred to Taralis or people of Tarakot as Tibetanised Magars, it is indeed difficult to determine without further research whether they are Magars who have adopted Tibetan ways of life or mere Bhotias in the process of upgrading themselves to Magar and Matwali Chhetri statushood. The location of Tarakot on the cultural crossroad is well exemplified by a local legend that tells of three different bride sources of the first settler’s son: a Thakuri girl from Jumla, a Magar girl from Maikot, and a Bhotia girl from Dolpo. The resultant cultural syncretism is seen in the Tarali religion which is a mixture of autochthonous cults with Buddhistic life cycle rituals and observance of Hinduistic seasonal festivals. Even more distinctive is their local dialect known as Kaike related to Tibeto-Burman language although the natives as great traders can also speak Tibetan and Nepali. James Fisher, who stayed at Tarakot over a year
(1968-70), provides an apt comment on the linguistic facility of the Tarali trader who, though he speaks the Kaike dialect at home, "must use the Tibetan language in his transactions to acquire salt, and he must use the Nepali language in his transactions to get rid of it."

The traditional crops are buckwheat (Fagopyrum), chinu millet (Panicum miliaceum) that are grown alternately and uwa (Hordeum vulgare). In spite of the long tradition of trade, it is surprising that crops they traded in did not spill over and sprout on the Tarai soil. Potato was introduced from Rimi about 60 years ago and corn was introduced only around 1960. When most villagers move south for trade between October and February, the village is not deserted but becomes lively with many Bhotias from Dolpo who winter in the area for 'eating sunshine.' The Taralis who weave and trade in woollens have adopted the colourful pattern of Dolpo shawls with deep red, pink, blue, mauve and black stripes. Another distinctive feature one saw at Tarakot was the hair-style of Mukut men from the upper Barbung who wound the long hairs in plaits into a bun round their heads and held with a round metal clasp. Local millet and barley are exchanged for salt in Dolpo during summer and Taralis then carry the salt to southern hills in winter to be exchanged with rice and maize. The goods are transported by sheep, goats and sometimes horses. They also trade in sheep and goats which they acquire in Dolpo and Jumla and sell for the Dasain slaughter in the lower Kali Gandaki valley.

We left Shahar Tara early on May 19th, climbing south above the village. On the way, we met a group of women collecting dried pine needles in the forest which they use as compost manure mixed with cattle dung and urine. We passed a group of chortens on the forest path and after a steady ascent of two hours through pine, spruce and fir, the tree-line was crossed at 3,800 meters. After breakfast on a grassy lawn, we reached the first high ridge of Thanke Langna (4,053 m) from where we looked down to the paddy fields of Dunaihi, and the snow peaks of Kagmara and Kanjiroba to the far north-west. The west shoulder of Putha Hiunchuli
was also visible 22 kilometers to the east. We then climbed two hours up a steep gully and finally reached Jang La (4,523 m). The wide pass with patches of snow had numerous cairns of piled stones and the one closest to the road had small bamboo poles with colourful flags (Pl. VIIb). It was nearly 3 p.m. and grey clouds hung over the southern horizon. We quickly descended a steep incline for about 400 meters and traversed east across a grassy slope. Edelweiss and blue gentians appeared among the grass. After a descent of three houses from the pass, we reached a height of 3,962 meters on the banks of the Saure Khola and pitched our tent. The pasture grounds at the headwaters of the Saure Khola called Purbang has large herds of animals from southern valleys during the summer.

Next morning, we turned south along the right bank of a tributary of the Saure Khola. The name of the stream was Panidhalo Khola which literally means ‘watershed stream.’ But it was another two hours’ climb to the high pass (4,500 m) at the head of the stream. Although we had made three high passes since Tarakot, the prospect to the south-east revealed more layers of snow ranges. Below the pass, in a grassy depression nestled a small glacial tarn, the Phuphal Dah (4,100 m). We descended down a gully to the Phuphal Dah where two tracks met. One led towards Beni, 90 kilometers to the east, and another turned south towards Maikot and we took the latter track. We followed a small stream down to the Seng Khola and had our lunch on its grassy bank. The rolling landscape of higher alps changed to rugged relief and dwarf rhododendrons and azaleas appeared. We descended down the deep gorge of the Seng Khola and camped early beside the river. That day we had ascended 600 meters and then descended 2,000 meters in eight hours.

The following morning we left the river and turned south along a trail that followed over a narrow ridge between the Seng Khola and the Rahal Khola. The clear morning revealed Putha Hiunchuli to the east and Hiunchuli Patan to the west and we soon entered oak and rhododendron forest. We met caravans of sheep and goats carrying rice and maize to Tarakot. Three
hours later we reached Dule, a camping-site for the animal caravans. There was a large dump of grains bound for Tarakot and the nearby oak trees had been heavily cut for animal fodder. While the main party headed south direct to Yamakhar, I made a detour to Maikot. The path again climbed to a ridge where I met two flocks of sheep and goats from Maikot in the oak forest. The ridge ended abruptly on a 3,490-meter prominence and the path descended steeply down its south face. Rhododendron flowers bloomed crimson red but the sharp quartzite pebbles on the steep path gave little opportunity for scenic appreciation.

The descent took more than an hour and the path levelled off at the junction of two dry streams. I soon reached a new clearing at Pilrnai (2,400 m) where there were two Magar and five Bhotia houses. Two kilometers further was Dandagoan with 15 Magar and 12 Dom (low-caste) houses. Argama, the winter counterpart of Dandagaon, could be seen down below in Rahal valley. Then I walked through the fields of Maikot (2320 m) and rested in the village. The village was located on a dip slope of mica-schist ridge with pine forest above and fields below. There were about 50 houses closely-packed together and on the Jumla-style flat roofs of beaten earth were spread the newly-harvested wheat (Pl. VIIa). Walnut trees stood sentinel near the village spring and men were resting in between the harvest of lower and upper fields, the latter with a still standing crop. The inhabitants were all Magars of Pun clan having marriage relations with Hukam, Ranma and Arjal villages in Rahal valley. A stone-walled shrine above the village called Devithan (temple of goddess) was dedicated to Dare Masta, probably the easternmost Masta shrine. Wheat is sown in Mangsir and harvested in Jeth, followed by maize which is sown in Jeth and harvested in Kartik. Millet is grown near the village and harvested with wheat while buckwheat is sown in Jeth and is ready by late Bhadau. They have no paddy land and neither do they keep buffaloes. Sheep and goats are, however, important and are taken to Purbang pastures in summer and down to Rukum during winter. Weaving is common and they export woollen goods and medicinal herbs.
I turned east from Maikot across a steep slope marked by numerous landslips. Vegetation was sparse with few stands of rhododendron and Alnus nepalensis on old landslides. Seven kilometers east of Maikot, I reached Puchhargaon. The fields and houses were spread on a narrow valley that extended between 2,340 meters to 2,590 meters and while the barley at lower fields had been cut a week before, wheat above 2430 meters was still unripe. I then climbed a grassy spur (2.820 m) and rejoined the main party at Yamakhar (2500 m) where both barley and wheat had not yet been harvested. Yamakhar, also with flat-roofed houses, used to have a customs-point where Maikot headman charged toll on Tarali sheep and goat caravans.

We left very early next morning from Yamakhar with a steep descent of 300 meters to the bridge over the Pelma Khola (Seng Khola upstream) and a 700-meter climb through Pelma village (2,500 m). The high-point above the climb was 3,100 meters and the track continued over a long ridge between the Kari Khola to the north and the Ghustung Khola to the south. Following the ridge route for about seven kilometers, we descended to the Ghustung Khola and crossed it by a long bridge. The path along the south bank of the Ghustung Khola was under magnificent spruce trees with a dense undergrowth. We then turned south along a tributary stream and reached a grassy park amidst pine and silver birch. The place was called Thankot (3,250 m) and was dotted with nine tents of Bhotias with numerous horses and three cattle-sheds of Thapa Magars with a large herd of buffaloes. It was a delightful camping site near the end of our long journey.

Next day, May 23rd, we started climbing south through birch and juniper forest in the chill morning air. Rhododendron lindleyi with white flowers brightened the forest trail. Above the timber-line, the path rose on to the grassy ridge of Dhupineta (3500 m) from where we had good views of the entire Dhaulagiri range. Putha Hiunchuli (7,246 m) and Churen Himal (7,375 m) were only 24 kilometers away behind the blue ridge of Chalikhe Pahar (5,086 m). To the northeast appeared the massive head of Dhaulagiri I (8,167 m) above the sharp south face of
Gurja Himal (7,192 m) with anticlinal folds. We sat on the ridge for quite a while scanning the series of northern ridges trying to identify the features we had negotiated over the previous four days. Then clouds began to gather on the high mountains and the brilliance of the morning sun was gone. We made a long traverse along the contour and after two hours reached another grassy saddle on the Phagune Langna (3,900 m). There was still some snow on the shaded north-slope and on Phaguni Dhuri (4,572 m) close to the west. The Dhaulagiri range was partly visible through billowing clouds and in the far west Hiunchuli Patan (5,922 m) reared its craggy head. Chalikhe Pahar with north-west dipping rock-strata now dominated the northern aspect as a dark reclining apparition.

We did not stay long on Phagune pass as it started to drizzle and further precipitation at such heights would surely bring snowfall, and we hurried down its south flank. We followed a steep gully and entered a pine forest and could at last see the western part of the Dhorpatan plain. We left the forested gully and after crossing a low ridge (3,140 m) overlooking the meandering Uttar Ganga river, we descended eastwards to a little Bhotia hamlet of Syalpe on the Dhorpatan plain (Pl. VIIIb). After walking three kilometers to wards the east along the level grassland we reached Nauthar (2,760 m). There was a new resettlement of Tibetan refugees managed by Swiss personnel and a grassy air-strip nearby and here we met J. D. A. Staintin, who has travelled widely in Nepal for botanical studies, along with a young Nepalese botanist Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha. Dhorpatan is an extensive alluvial flat drained by the Uttar Ganga river to the west. During the summer, large herds of buffaloes and other cattle from Nisi, Bhuji, Rolpa and Myagdi are brought up here for grazing. The traditional Magar and Kami graziers were surprised one summer to find Tibetans settled here. Whoever had sought out Dhorpatan as a virgin place for resettlement had not realized the full significance of this open alpine pasture for the neighbouring people. The traditional struggle between graziers and agricultural settlers was re-enacted at Dhorpatan and was resolved a few years later. Dhaulagiri Zone under whose jurisdiction Dhor-
Patan fell had lost a few porter loads of ghiu for export to Butwal but had gained in a community of enterprising people that would only enrich the area.

I had originally planned to walk all the way to Pokhara from Dhorpatan via Beni and Baglung in the Kali Gandaki valley. It would have meant a walk of at least another ten days. At Dhorpatan, where there was a wireless set, we learnt that a plane was expected in a day or two with food supplies from Bhairawa. At the mention of an air-lift, all the tiredness of nearly three months walking surged up in me and I decided for the easy way out. We camped beside the airfield to catch the earliest available flight. No aircraft came the next day, May 24th, and I strolled south of the camp. I crossed the wide flood-plain of the Uttar Ganga and a quagmire of dung-littered marsh south of the river. I then climbed up a slope of rhododendron and oak forest to the low saddle of Surtibang Bhanjyang (2,910 m). The pass provided a full view of the 12-kilometers long grassy expanse of Dhorpatan amidst gentle forested ridges. The view towards the south was a revelation in field geology. A small stream, Bhuji Khola that descended south from the past extended and expanded into a large valley that continued towards the south-east direction in a straight line as far as the eyes could see below the gray clouds. This was the valley of the Bari Gad which plunges south along a distinct geological fault to join the Kali Gandaki river just above Riri. The size of the valley was too large for the river that now drained it and one could conjecture that in the geological past the Uttar Ganga river flowed south-east along this valley and was later captured west by the Sano Bheri through headward erosion. Sitting on the Surtibang pass, and waiting for the next day’s aircraft, I was engaged in no mere flight of imagination, for drainage pattern and rock structure are the stuff of geological reconstruction very similar to the use of potsherds and finger-prints as evidence by archaeologists and criminalogists.

A DC-3 of the Royal Flight droned up the Bari Gad valley next morning and landed at the airfield. Bags of rice were unloaded and we squatted on the floor of the cargo plane. We
flew down to Bhairawa and when I came out of the aircraft to await the flight to Kathmandu, the heat of the Tarai overwhelmed me with all its fury, and the thirteen passes over 3,200 meters I had just crossed and the glacial valleys that adorned them were now far and remote.
CHAPTER SEVEN

JOURNEY TO HUMLA

The horse Jhampan rode, careened south and neighed;  
The golden crown Jhampan wore, rolled on the Chaughan edge;  
Jhampan was captured and his hands bound;  
Jhampan lost his throne and gone was his rule.

–Folk song

There is an old milestone beside the road on the hill above Simikot with an inscription “Hanuman Dhoka dekhi 179 kos” which can be translated as about 576 walking kilometers from Kathmandu. With an area of 5,980 square kilometers and a population of 29,524 (1971), Humla is one of the remotest districts of Nepal. Simikot, its district headquarters is 440 kilometers from Kathmandu and 218 kilometers due north of Nepalganj. For the Humlis who visit their main market, Nepalganj, it is a journey of about three weeks. To others, Humla is a mere jingle word appended with Jumla. Humla also provides a pilgrimage passage to Manasarovar and Kailash. In the Spring of 1966 I almost visited Humla when I had crossed over the Mugu Karnali after leaving Rara. At Sumli I met the local governor on his way to Mugu and I accom-
panied him instead to Karan and Mugu. It was 11 years later that I could visit Humla and by one of the shortest means and routes possible.

On 26th May 1977, I left Kathmandu by Twin Otter along with Ratna Rana, Prachand Pradhan and Khem Bista as travelling companions. We reached Chaur Jahari in Rukum after an hour's flight over the valleys of the Trisuli and the Kali Gandaki and hills of Gulmi and Rolpa. At one end of the grassy airfield were rolls of polythene pipe bound for some remote drinking water schemes and we would later see similar black coils awaiting further transportation at Nepalganj and Jumla airfields. We were on the air again after a 15-minute stop-over heading south-west to Nepalganj. Flying down the Bheri, we crossed the eastern part of Surkhet valley and then the Chure range, to arrive at Nepalganj 20 minutes later. We made a short visit to the Hatisar camp near Chisapani of the Kohalpur-Surkhet road project and returned to the heat and mosquitoes of the town for the night. We stayed as guests of Gopal Shamsher Rana, a former Inspector General of Police, in his large mansion that had seen better days.

The following day, we were up early and took off from Nepalganj for Jumla. We flew due north first over the Tarai fields then the strip of sal forest below the foothills. After crossing the pine-forested Chure ridges we entered the broad valley of Surkhet and continued north above the hills of Dailekh. As we gained in altitude to cross the first snows over Thakurji Lekh (3,900 m), the aircraft turned north-east following the alignment of the Tila valley. The ridges were smoother and forests more extensive with grassy slopes where winter snow had melted. It took us 45 minutes to reach Jumla whereas an average Jumli would take ten to twelve days struggling with his load across the Hawdi (2,890 m) or Mabu Langna (3,040 m). The air at the Jumla airfield was crisp and the sky clear and blue.

We continued on our journey after 15 minutes' respite at Jumla, Simikot was another 82 kilometers to the north-west and the aircraft first negotiated over Dwari Lekh and then Ghurchi Lekh leaving the blue surface of Rara Dah to our right. We steered
west of the Chankheli Lekh (4,191 m), crossed Metha Langna (3,773 m) and continued high up the Humla Karnali. Above Kharpu, we were virtually surrounded by snow ranges on all sides and our destination Simikot (2,940 m) was on a small shelf high on the left bank of the Humla Karnali. The plane made two circles before it swooped down on the recently-commissioned airfield. The runway had two gentle depressions towards the western end and the undulations somehow seemed to arrest the speed of the aircraft. If Jumla was crisp, Simikot was chilly in spite of the bright sun. A large crowd of colourfully-dressed Bhotias from nearby villages crowded at the airfield to receive an incarnate Lama from Jumla (Pl. IXa). When we later reviewed our position from the flat roof of the government house, we found ourselves in an amphitheatre of snow ridges, the only outlet being the gorge of the Humla Karnali to the south-east. Immediately to the south were the steep walls of Dhajalaina Lekh (4,885 m) with a series of sharp summits rising in succession to the west and the high trail from Jumla across Margor Lagna (4,029 m) was just visible descending down a snow saddle. The prospect towards the north-east, north and north-west was even more forbidding with still higher ridges.

In the afternoon we made a brief tour of the Simikot village. It was in three sections. The new government quarters with 26 offices, a school and a jail-house were located on a knoll (2,945 m) below the airfield. The jail had no secured walls surrounding it and outsiders roamed freely in the compound while the prisoners did paid chores for government officials. A series of terrace fields climbed above the airfield towards the north with some flat-roofed houses. Another section towards the east had a compact settlement overlooking the Ghat Khola. Barley and peas were growing in the fields and hedges of wild rose and willows provided a green aspect. The inhabitants were mainly Chhetris and the Masta shrine was at the western edge of the village beside a spring. The next nearest village Barunse (3,169 m) up the Ghat Khola was of Bhotias.

We left Simikot next morning with four horses, two police
escorts, a guide, two sayces and three porters. Hardly had we reached the western section of the village below the Masta shrine when we encountered on the road a crouching man with a boulder on his back. The policeman explained to us that this was one of the local customs of applying for justice. Other exhibitionistic methods of seeking justice were said to be to hold grass in the mouth, crouch on all fours as animals and do namaste with folded hands but with one foot raised in supplication. The fellow with the burden of the boulder complained that his fields in Kholchi village had been grabbed by his relatives. As our route did not lie the Kholchhi way, I referred his case to the local district officer who had come to see us off this far.

We then climbed through newly cleared fields and then to a pine-forested ridge (3267 m). Beyond Simikot, we were entering a geographic frontier yet without correct maps. Near the coordinates Longitude 81° 45' East and Latitude 30° North, near where we were, the old maps showed the Humla Karnali taking a south-easterly turn although the river bend occurred seven kilometers east of the place indicated. Similarly, the border ranges of Chandi Himal north of the Limi area are nearly 18 kilometers north of that shown in old maps and the extreme north-eastern corner of Nepal is not a mere bulge but rather a sharp cone directed towards Manasarovar lake. A sheer gorge descended 9 10 meters down to the Humla to our left and across it rose the steep walls of a snow ridge. To the north-west, we looked down to the valley of Humla Karnali with interlocking spurs and through which lay our track. Partridges scurried below the path and then we came to a fork on the road. The one to the right continued along the contour north towards Dhinga and this would be the path we would later return. The main trail fell steeply to the left towards the Humla Karnali which here flowed at an altitude of 2,190 meters. The path down to Dandaphoya village was very steep through sections of young pine. Dandaphoya (2,530 m) was a Thakuri village and there was a shorten on a rock platform. Near the village, we found handkerchiefs and small pots with flowers on the middle of the road. We were told these were a welcome gesture and when we passed them after
throwing some coins, the children who had hidden behind bushes reclaimed the money only after the strangers had passed a safe distance.

We continued beyond Dandaphoya amidst a lovely cover of walnut and oak that had colonised an old landslide below Gwalekhor (2,890 m), an upland farm. Three kilometers beyond Dandaphoya, we passed a small hamlet with a water-mill, a Masta shrine under an oak tree as well as a chorten on the road side. The track continued along the south-facing rocky slopes about 90 meters above the river and by noon it was dry and hot. In contrast, the opposite south slope was well-forested and seemed cool. We refreshed beside a cool mountain stream and across the river was the large village of Syangda (8,900 m) inhabited by Byansis. The village was large and compact, their flat roofs tiered one above the other as small terrace fields and there were a number of summer huts on a high shelf above the village.

We rode along the dry granite slopes and came to a stream that joined the Humla Karnali below Chauganphoya and a channel above the track irrigated a patch of paddy field. The Thakuri villagers had laid out blankets made from yak-hair by the way-side for us and offered us fresh milk. Across the Humla river to the south was another Thakuri village, Kholchhi, and the people were busy transplanting paddy. Kholchhi was indeed the last Hindu village as well as the last rice fields (2,350 m) in upper Humla Karnali. Kholchhi represents the northern-most penetration of Thakuris and their domination of Humla is preserved in a romantic legend. There once lived a beautiful princess called Sunkesara. The Jumla king Vikram Shahi (1602-1631) and Jhampan, a Bhotia ruler of Khocher, contended for her. Vikram Shahi prevailed and brought Sunkesara to Jumla but was later abducted by Jhampan while the Jumla king was away on a hunting expedition. Vikram Shahi sought help of another ruler Saimal Shahi and the combined forces defeated Jhampan and retrieved the queen. West of the Thakuri Kholchhi separated by a stream was the village of Jad Kholchhi which literally means Bhotia (Jad) side of Kholchhi and a little further was another
Bhotia village, Khagal (3,400 m) high above the river. On the north-side of the river, Chauganphoya (2,440 m) was the last Thakuri village and above it were the higher Bhotia villages of Dhinga (3,400 m) and Chyaduk (2,740 m).

We then descended to the left bank of the Humla Karnali and when a Thakuri girl grazing animals on the roadside hid far into a steep slope on our approach, I wondered whether the girl had reacted from fear of strangers or government officials. Earlier at the road-side reception in Chauganphoya too, women were conspicuous by their absence. In the afternoon, we began climbing above the river and on the path beside a grassy slope waited two Bhotias of Dhinga to offer us chang in wooden bowls. It was a welcome refreshment in the hot afternoon. The track then entered a gorge between Khagal and Chyaduk villages on either side and the narrow trail passed under a waterfall from Chyaduk. We clambered up a precarious zig-zag path up a bare slope to bypass a water-worn chute of gneises rock through which the Humla Karnali roared down. Sprays from the waterfall twinkled like fire-flies against the afternoon sun while rock pigeons circled above the gorge.

The track later levelled off high above the river and we walked through a section of huge boulders on an old landslide with a dense forest of wild apricot. The steep slope to the south had fine stands of pine but here sections of it had been cleared for slash and burn agriculture. It was past 6 p. m. when we approached a stream with four water-mills. Kermi village (2,530 m) was located just across the stream and we were put up in a newly-built house. While Ratna Rana with foot blisters during the steep descent to Dandaphoya and Khem Bista with sore buttocks on the first day of riding, complained bitterly of their plight and then snored off, I had a sleepless night with bugs.

Early next morning, we visited the Kermi stream near the village about 60 meters above where we had crossed it the previous evening. The stream descended in small cascades across the dip slope of a siliceous gneiss depression and near the upper end, we saw the stream steaming as if the entire household of Ker-
mi were by the riverside distilling liquor. On reaching the stream, we found it to be not one hot spring but a hot rivulet with steaming water. One could choose the water from the running hotter section or the warm pools and we had a luxurious bath. We returned to the village and started after an early lunch with a new relay of horses and porters. The Humla Karnali flowed more or less in the east-west direction west of Chyaduk conforming to the fault line of the main central thrust of the Himalaya and the north and south-facing slopes on either side of the river showed differences in vegetation cover. The north-facing slopes had extensive pine forests up to an elevation of 3,800 meters. On the north side, the pine forest was interspersed with thorny bushes and clearings for cultivation.

Two kilometers beyond Kermi where a pine forest had been cleared, a new subsidiary settlement was in the making. After continuing for an hour through open pine we came to a saddle (3,140 m) which provided a good view of the densely forested side valleys of the Chungsa to the north and the Khawa Lungba to the south. In the case of these lateral valleys there was not much evidence of contrast in vegetation according to aspect. We found no settlements in the Chungsa valley when we visited it the following week but in Khawa Lungba there was the village of Chala (3,810 m) of about 50 Bhotia houses just above the tree line. Once a flourishing salt mart, Chala straddled a high route between Sankha Langna (4,693 m) to the south and Shyakpu Langna (4,236 m) to the north. From our vantage-point, we could see some peaks beyond Chala to the south-west but it was difficult to identify Saipal (7,035 m) through the low clouds.

We then descended a steep slope to a small park (2,890 m) resplendent with primulas and gentians amidst magnificent pines. The Chungsa river that joined the Humla Karnali 500 meters beyond rushed beside the grassy flat, heightening the charm of the natural park. After a brief halt at the spot from where we glimpsed a snow peak (5,194 m) above the pine crowns towards the north, we turned west into the narrow Humla gorge. The river flowed here at an altitude of 2,770 meters and the opposite bank covered with pine and poplars, rose abruptly to a peak of
4,402 meters. The river bank on our side was also a sheer cliff and we negotiated it through a rock-hewn trail high above the river and then descended to a flood-plain beside the river. The level ground was covered with grass and Stellera chamamaesme flowers and we rested by the river-bank tasting its cool waters. Here we met a Tibetan refugee Lama with two women on way to Kermi. We continued another hour through a pine forest and reached Yalbang village (3,016 m) sited on a south-dipping gneiss rock platform adorned with a chaitya on the top. Yalbang is a winter village while its counterpart for summer, Puiya (3,400 m), lies four kilometers south across the Humla Karnali in a side valley on the Muchu-Sankha trail. Yalbang formerly depended greatly on salt trade and there used to be a seasonal trade gathering in the village. When we reached Yalbang, the village was deserted, the doors shuttered and no dogs barked.

We then crossed a stream and came to another clearing where we were welcomed by a dozen children of a new primary school. After accepting the wild flowers they offered us, we continued on our journey and were soon overlooking the fields of Yangar. The irrigated fields were fenced with willows and walnut and the cultivated greenery was like an oasis amongst the gaunt rock faces on either side of the river. The village (3,040 m) was located on a rocky pedestal above the fields. The entrance gate to the village was in a ramshackle condition with only its side walls. There was a shrine of Mahakala above the village while the gomba lay between the village and the fields. We put up in the house of the local pradhan panch, Tonjan Lama. The south prospect across the Humla Karnali was dominated by a peak (4,116 m) and behind it lay Garsa Langna (3,992 m) between Puiya and Muchu.

Next day, 30th May, we followed an irrigation channel above the village, crossed a log bridge over the Phupharka Chu and rode through rose bushes. The track climbed higher and Ratna Rana was thrown off the horse just below where the track became steep. Not much damage was caused though both the rider and the horse seemed much shaken. We climbed to the high spur of Illing La (3,500 m) over a steep trail with stone steps.
Illing La provided a panoramic view of the upper Humla valley to the west and Chhuptu Lekh (5,818 m) to the south-west, the high trail across the Garsa Langna to the south and some satellite peaks of Saipal further beyond. The fields of Muchu were clearly visible six kilometers away with Tumo in farther distance. But for some stands of open pine alongside the north facing slopes, the upper Humla valley seemed much drier with extensive bushes of dwarf juniper and caragana. Illing La was indeed a fine vantage-point and below it was the former Khampa look-out for the Yari route. The Khampa leader, Wangdi, on his flight from Mustang in 1975 had come to this ridge after crossing the pass above the Phupharka Chu, descended on Muchu check-post, continued west by the Suna Chu into Tibet in order to by-pass Nara Langna and Khocher (Khojarnah) and then re-entered Nepal only to be cut down by a contingent of Nepalese army at Tinkar Lipu Langna.

The old Khampa out-post was now under peaceful plough. We then descended down a steep slope of brushwood to the wooden bridge (2,969 m) over the Humla Karnali and after crossing it climbed to Muchu (3,100 m). The village was on a high southern terrace near the confluence of the Chhura Chu with the Humla Karnali. We had lunch at the police check-post and as our destination Yari was still another 12 kilometers away we left early. Two kilometers beyond, we crossed the Tumo Chu and the Bumuchhiya Chu that joined the Humla Karnali within a 400-meter distance. The hamlet of Tumo also knows as Tumkot between the Tumo and Bumuchhiya streams had a gomba on a high moraine terrace (3,209 m). After crossing the Bumuchhiya Chu, we lost sight of the Humla Karnali in the depth of rugged interlocking spurs to the north and we would meet it again across the Nara Langna in Tibet.

We followed a plateau high up the left bank of the Bumuchhiya across undulations of old moraines with dwarf juniper, caragana and rose bushes. The occasional juniper tree provided the only shade on the trail although on the opposite north-facing slope were some fine pine. As we looked back, the Humla Karnali meandered east through a deep channel cut through series of moraines, outwash fans and talus cones from the side valleys.
Towards the west, in the direction we were heading, the ground rose gradually and the valley forked into two. We reached the eastern section of Yari (c. 3,500 m) two hours after leaving Humla Karnali near Tumo. The small village was located on a gently-sloping plain at the eastern end of a moraine ridge and had stone-walled houses with piles of brushwood and prayer flags on the roofs. Fields extended down the village with green peas and young barley. Flocks of white pigeons circled above while a snow fox darted across the field at the sound of village dogs barking at us. We were put up in a room on a roof ante-chamber, with the flat roof as our courtyard. We had difficulty in even procuring dried yak meat as the locals told us that all had been consumed during the long winter. Our dinner was made up of parboiled rice which we had brought from Simikot with potato curry and hot chilly. When my companions made fun of me using knife and fork for such a sparse meal I retorted that the gadgets were useful tools for avoiding the chore of washing one's hands in cold water at such heights.

The night was bitterly cold as Yari lies in an open valley with strong winds. The first rays of the sun next morning touched the summit of a peak (5,937 m) directly south of us across the river. We then visited Yangser Gomba, six kilometers to the west in Suna valley drained by a southern tributary of the Jhyakthang stream. As we came down to the main road, there was a kani chorten in a poor state with only its side walls standing. The site and state of the chorten indicated that the eastern part of Yari village (Jhyangoi) where we were staying was a later settlement mainly for agriculture and that with the decline of trade with Tibet, the prosperity of the village had suffered leaving religious monuments uncared for. The western and older section of Yari (Langoi) with a dozen houses was visible ahead of us, straddling both sides of the river Jhyakthang. The police post, school and the customs-post were on the left bank beside the main road to Nara Langna. We crossed the river and turned to the right bank passing a few houses on a high terrace. We then continued westwards along the northern bank of the Suna stream. The opposite bank had pine forests and pastures for yak but the slope we were
traversing was all brushwood and very steep.

We reached the gomba in two hours near the confluence of the Suna stream with a southern tributary which was in spate with fresh snow-melt. We saw high snow ranges to the south and a low pass due west through which Wangdi’s caravan had briefly entered Tibet on their flight to reach Tinkar Lipu Langna. The small gomba, alone among the wilderness, looked most ordinary and the Lama had only one cotton khada (scarf) to welcome us. The Lama, Chhogya Tsering, aged 65 had migrated from Tibet 25 years before and lived with his Tibetan wife and two daughters. The central altar was also a simple affair with terra cotta images of Guru Rimpoche and some Sakya Lamas and a small bookshelf of Kumbum volumes. On the return trip, we scanned the slopes for the blue sheep but could see none. On reaching western Yari village, our guide and local up-pradhan pancha, Gyabu Lama took us to the loft of a large house for tea. Our host, surprisingly, was not one of the natives but a Tibetan refugee from Khocher. He seemed better off than natives of Yari and his collection of Tibetan religious books and thankas (painted banners) seemed a better collection than that at Yangser Gomba. We returned to the eastern Yari village after tea.

The upper Humla region, known as Sat Thaple and composed of the villages of Yalbang, Chala, Yangar, Muchu, Tumo and Yari, had a population of 690 in 1971. They used to have a common council with two gobas (headman) drawn from Limi and one each from other villages. Among the different descent groups Tewa are found in Yengar and Chala, Bista in Yari and Yangar, Gyolgup in Yalbang and Chala, Chhotel in Yari, Chyoba in Yari, Yangar and Tumo. Garas live in Yalbang while there are some Tibetan refugees in Muchu, Yari and Yangar. The local festivals such as Dumje and Lhosar are celebrated according to the Tibetan calendar. July-August is the main salt-trading season although the volume has much declined due to the shortage of grains for exchange which they used to procure from the middle hills. Families with sheep and goats still take their flock down to Achham, Bajura, and Bajhang during the winter months follo-
wing the traditional pattern. The rate of exchange at Taklakhar during the summer of 1977 was 6.3 kg salt for 1 kg of rice, 3.5 kg salt for 1 kg of naked barley or wheat, 3 kg salt for 1 kg of barley, 5 kg salt for 1 kg of wheat flour and 15 kg salt for 1 kg of butter. Timber beams and other wooden products from Humla and bamboo baskets from Bajhang fetched more value against salt and wool in barter exchange at the Taklakhar market in Tibet.

On 1st June, we left Yari on horse-back early at 6 a.m. We first passed the relic of the entrance chorten on the main road and continued up the left bank of the Jhyakthang Chu along a level path lined with rose bushes. A water channel, carried at places by wooden aqueducts across the side of a terminal moraine, 80-meters above the track provided drinking water and irrigation to eastern Yari village. The track rose gently northwards beyond the customs-post at the northern end of the village and on the opposite south side, we saw two irrigation channels one above the other. The upper one, now abandoned due to landslide at its source, had its horizontal alignment intact while the lower one irrigated the entire plain on the right side of the Jhyakthang stream. As we progressed higher towards a gently rolling moorland, we found that the eastern channel on our side was at least five kilometers long and was replenished by two side streams. Half-way up we saw some yak camps and one blue sheep disappeared in among juniper bushes. We left the main Jhyakthang valley at around 4,300 meters and turned into a northern side valley. Our breathing became affected as we climbed higher and the landscape became more open with grassy alpine turf while the snows on the lower slopes of Saipal (7035 m) shone bright in the morning light. We rested on a grassy slope that faced east before crossing the last 90 meters. The whole slope was aglow with pink primulas in full bloom. We lay down on the grass to savour the sunshine and it was with reluctance that we left the lovely lawn.

The final ascent to the pass was a diagonal climb across a steep slope where the much-trodden path had no turf but only scree held together by frost. On the last hump, the track turned
to the right where there was a sizable cairn of stones with three pinnacles (Pl. IXb). In the old Survey of India maps, the height of Nara Langna is given as 16,085 feet (4,902 m). But judging from the lack of snow on the pass itself and the difference of at least 300 meters in altitude between those given in the old and new contour maps of the Humla area, the pass should not exceed more than 15,000 feet or 4,570 m. Since we carried no altimeter, there was no way of verifying the actual height of the pass. From the pass, we could not yet see Tibet because of a hump to the west; but both to the south and north, we saw snow ranges and their summits were partly clouded even at this early hour (9.30 a.m.). Southwards, the summit of Saipal was not visible but its lower slopes and Laijading ridge could be identified and nearer ridges had snow patches on their northern slopes. Due north of the pass, we had the glimpse of a high snow pinnacle through the gaps in the clouds but it disappeared before I could take its compass bearings. It seemed to be a peak south-east of Nalakankar (6635 m).

The small pond on the pass was partly frozen and there was more snow as we descended towards the north. We had to proceed carefully by digging our heels after probing the soft snow for hidden ice sheets underneath. Concentration on each further step was all the more necessary as the ground plunged north steeply down to the Humla Karnali, 900 meters below us. The northern rampart across the gorge in front of us rose high and along its dry craggy face, we could just trace a precarious trail we would follow later in the day. The snow path turned into slush as we descended down diagonally to the west. On turning a small ridge, the western prospect into Tibet was revealed to us. We looked down on the Tibetan plateau, a vast expanse of gray and yellow with low clouds suspended below a deep blue heaven. Immediately below us lay the small border village of Sera (3,500 m) on a high ground on the northern bank of the Humla river. A little further beyond, Khocher village could be recognized as an oasis on the dry plain. Following the dark ribbon of the Humla Karnali farther west, we saw no settlement or trees, not even Taklakhar or Taklakot, the most important township and trade mart
of the Purang area.

We would, however, know soon if some of us would be able to visit it. At Simikot, the chief district officer, Govind Ranjitkar, had told us that the local Chinese authorities were not averse to occasional pilgrims to the Manasarovar Lake but permits had to be sought in advance. But he also warned us that since I and Ratna Rana held high positions in the government, it may not be wise to seek permission at the local level. We were sad as geographers but supported the plan that Prachand Pradhan and Khem Bista, both university teachers, should apply for the permit. We had not yet met the messenger the chief district officer had dispatched to Sera. We planned that if permit were granted, two of our companions would visit Taklakhar and Manasarovar while Ratna and I would tour Limi itself a new geographical area. In case no permit came, we would all do the Limi tour together. While we were walking down the slope, speculating on the prospect of the permit and marvelling at the world around, at the boundary of not only two countries but at the frontier of two landscapes, we sighted some naurs (blue sheep). They were far to our left on a slope about 120 meters away, a group of 16 females and some young, basking in the morning sun. They were not disturbed by our appearance as they must have watched numerous caravans like ours. We arrived at Ranipouwa, half-way on the descent to the river. In the old days of brisk trade, there used to be timber-shed here but there was no sign of it now except its foundation.

The track below Ranipouwa was a steep descent of at least 40 degrees angle along a dip slope covered by frost-shattered pebbles and rocks. It was impossible to ride and even while walking, one had to throw one's weight backwards. As we moved down cautiously, the trail further on to the next lower ridge was in full view and it was not a pleasant sight. Two hundred meters below us, the track leveled off gently after crossing a side valley and traversed two scree-filled gullies. We could hardly see the track among the scree rubble and watched with tension as our porters and horses scurried across those two obstacles. Our thoughts were still on the scree slopes ahead while we had lunch
on a moraine. We then proceeded with great care and the slope looked more dangerous at close quarters. The pebbles on the slope were loosely-held as if a whiff of wind would bring them alive. The stretch to be crossed was hardly 4 meters wide but once on the scree surface the movements had to be steady and regular not to dislodge any pebble that would set off others in train. One false step meant certain death as the prospect below the trail was even more sinister. As if to provide momentum and velocity to anything that fell from above, the gully below was a narrow chute lined with a sheet of green ice like a barrel aimed down into the deep chasm of the Humla Karnali. We could not possibly turn back and at the grim moment I flashbacked to the summer of 1955.

I was going home after high school and when I reached the bridge over the Madi river at Bhorletar, I faced a scary situation. The bridge, left unused during the monsoon, hung in disrepair. The cable hand-rails were intact but the central line was an extension of split bamboo supported by wires at haphazard intervals, I took off my shoes to have a sure footing and hung them by the laces round my neck and proceeded cautiously. I moved forward in slow motion seeking out the next step with great care to land it on the bamboo where the wire supported it. At places where the wires were set apart, I had to stretch far out to the next wire support holding the rails firmly. I had to watch down where I put my step but in the process, the swirling waters of Madi seemed still and frozen and I had visions of the entire bridge swinging upstream carrying me along. I would then hold the cables firm, close my eyes and balance with one leg, hoping the bamboo would not split. Then slowly I would open my eyes in a squint, scan the next wire support all the time trying to avoid looking down on the rushing sheet of water below. I managed to cross the bridge through a slow progression, not between Kaski and Lamjung but between here and eternity. I must have been concentrating utterly on the job for the brief time on the immense task, for when I reached solid ground on the other bank, my feet would not move with knees knocking and I stood there for some seconds, utterly exhausted.
Any amount of reflection would be of no avail as we had to tackle the barrier in front of us. We deliberated on the procedure to negotiate it and who would follow whom. First one of the police constables, Bhyale, went across as sure-footed as a mountain goat. Then he came back half-way and extended his long staff for me. I stretched myself forward with firm feet and connected the staff and I accomplished the balancing act over the scree rubble with great trepidation and managed to secure a foothold on the farther solid ground. Bhyale repeated the procedure for others, all the while being coaxed, encouraged and warned from either side of the obstacle. We heaved a sigh of relief once the ordeal was over. The second scree slope was no less treacherous but it was narrower and the earlier accomplishment provided us confidence and some poise and we managed to cross it. We also had to scan above us from time to time, lest some surprised blue sheep displace a rock and engulf us in a scree avalanche. We then came to a lower ridge with a chorten from where we could see the bridge over the Humla Karnali and Sera village. It was still 1,500 meters down to the river and the trail descended over steep scree covered slopes while the noon sun shone bright and hot. As we were coming down the last steep incline, we met the messenger with the news that Prachand and Khem had permits to visit Manasarovar. They were pleased with the rare opportunity and Ratna and I envied them. A brief walk brought us down to the southern bank of the Humla Karnali and we walked to the lurching wooden bridge of Yulsa beside the boundary pillar No. 9 (2) put up in 1962. We crossed the bridge and stepped on the Chinese territory on the north bank of the Humla river which here flowed at an altitude of about 3,500 meters.

Our party split in two with Prachand and Khem climbing to the next terrace where two Chinese in green P. L. A. uniform were waiting to receive them while Ratna and myself headed up a northern gully still in Chinese territory. A little further ahead, we climbed to a trail leading towards the east. We looked back down on the edge of Sera terrace where we saw our two companions shaking hands vigorously with their Chinese hosts. We waved and turned east towards Nepal that commenced a hundred meters
ahead on a spur. We continued along the narrow trail among caragana bushes, rising once again a thousand meters above the river. On the opposite side to the south we could clearly see the precarious trail we had come down the Nara Langna. It was hot walking across the dry south-facing slopes high above the river and there were no streams or springs on the track. On reaching a steep rocky section, we surprised a flock of naurs (blue sheep) perched on crags immediately above us. They were all males in a group of about 18 with large curving horns and thick grey mantle. They made their flight to the higher slopes jumping from crag to crag, dislodging boulders and pebbles on our path in the process. We clung to the nearest available rock face as scared as the blue sheep until the fusillade of the rock-fall had died far down into the gorge below.

We now proceeded carefully among the rocky sections and a little further on saw another flock of at least 30 blue sheep, all female, browsing on thorn bushes 20 meters above the trail. We met yet another flock of female naurs later in the afternoon and the whole hillside seemed to be swarming with blue sheep. Late in the evening around 6 p. m. we descended down a rocky ledge into a gully filled with an old landslide and one of the huge boulders was inscribed with “Om Mani Padme Hum”. This site known as Mane Peme after the inscribed boulder was to be our camp site for the night. There was a small pool of water nearby and brushwood for fire could be easily found. As we were not inclined to shooting, the blue sheep grazed safely and a chicken we had brought along from Yari served as our delicacy for the evening meal. Ratna Rana and I took shelter under a rock overhang, its floor littered with droppings of the naurs. The cave was small and when Ratna complained of the sparse space, I thought we were far better off than Sarat Chandra Das who while on way to Tashilhungpo in 1881 had to camp over the Kang La (Taplejung) on a rock bare of snow and “with not enough room to lie down we passed the night huddled together, the loads placed on the lower side of the rock so as to prevent our falling off in our sleep.”* The police escort found another smaller rock over-

hang while the Yari porters slept in the open, huddled near the fire. We were camped due north of Nara Langna and could see the narrow trail above the deep gorge of the Humla Karnali.

The following day, June 2nd, we continued eastwards across rocky terrain covered with frost. Lower down where the sunlight had brightened a gentle slope, a flock of female naurs were descending down to the river. We traversed further east and when we reached a rock platform two hours later, we could see a narrow gorge through which the Humla Karnali turned south to Tumo. Across the Humla, was a sheer wall of plunging precipices with some junipers clinging in narrow gullies and we envied the lammergeirs that glided majestically across the canyon. From the rock ledge, we zig zagged up a thorny slope and had lunch on the path beside a small pool of water and continued climbing. On reaching the top of the ridge, I expected on the basis of available maps to see the Takche valley. What I saw from the ridge was only a narrow gorge with an even higher ridge ahead of us.

We descended briefly to an open birch forest and then traversed a section of steep scree slope. The path was then through a steeps cree vent with larger boulders near the top. Reaching the end of the vent with great effort, we were greeted by a line of prayer flags fluttering above two chortens marking the Lamka Langna which must have been above 3,300 meters. The pass provided a good view of the Takche valley of Limi to the east and the fields of Halji in the middle distance. The west-flowing Takche river was bounded by snow ranges on both sides and the Til river joined it from the north nearly five kilometers east of that shown on the map. Although old maps showed the Til joining directly into the Humla Karnali, we discovered that the Til first joined the larger Takche and then the combined waters of the two joined the Humla Karnali three kilometers above where it turns south. From the Lamka pass, we had a better view of the deep gorge of the Humla cutting south across a high east-west ridge. The Yari porters told us that during the deep winter when the river is partly frozen, the gorge can be traversed in a day from Tumo to Til using the frozen river as a passage. Budget for the construction
of a pony track above the gorge had just been approved that would make Limi accessible from the south throughout the year.

We descended down the Lamka pass and on reaching a clear stream, washed and rested in the warm sun. We still could not see Til, our day’s destination, hidden in a side valley to our left by a low ridge. Trails became more numerous as we came to the ridge and we spotted a chorten far to the left and some abandoned home-sites below on the direct road to Halji. On the hillsides was overgrazed gorse with yellow flowers instead of cargana and we sensed human habitation not to be far away. We crossed the last thorny spur and came to a huge pile of mani stones that marked a trail intersection; one descended east to the Til river and another turned to the north. We took the northern trail and at last saw the fields of Til in a narrow ascending valley. The head of the valley was dominated by a triangular snow peak with a glacier descending to lower slopes. The snow peak which we glimpsed through the clouds could be Nalakankar but it was soon covered by dark clouds. On the other side of the Til Chu was a gomba with three out-houses at the end of an old abandoned irrigation channel. A little further to the north, close to the river were the compact houses of Til with its stone-walls like a fort. The lower fields on the right bank across which we travelled were dry but as we came nearer the village, the fields were well-irrigated with channels lined with willow and birch.

We crossed the Til Chu by a solid wooden bridge and entered the village through a well-kept kani chorten. The two chortens below the village were freshly-painted in yellow ochre and white and so were other chortens and the village gomba. The houses had lines of coloured prayer-flags that had been put up during Lhosar, the Tibetan new year. We were lodged at the mani house in the village centre. Most men and women wore sheepskin jackets. Animal husbandry seemed important but the extensive fields now with young peas and naked barley were well-irrigated with a network of irrigation channels. The houses were solidly-built of stone with brackets of timber beams without mortar or paint (Pl. XXXIb). We later visited the house of Tashi Angju, the late
chikyab (headman), and met his younger son. It was a massive three-storeyed house with yak-shed in the ground floor, winter room on the first floor and the main living quarters on the second floor. On the northern section of the second floor was a store room of local woollen and leather goods such as jackets, boots and rugs. The ante-chamber to the north east was a well-furnished private chapel with a set of sacred texts and numerous bronze statues and thankas. From the roof-top, we could see a flock of yaks being driven through the birch forest above the fields across the river. The village had about 30 houses and judging from the local vegetation, the elevation of the village could be above 3,500 meters. We had chang at the chikyab’s house and yak-meat for supper. The night at Til was bitterly cold.

On 3rd June, we left Til after a good meal of fresh mutton. We retraced our steps to the bridge over the Til river and followed down its right bank and crossed it near its confluence with the Takchi river. We saw a pit lined with stone at least four meters deep on the roadside and were told that it was a trap for snow leopard. We crossed the Takchi Chu and followed it upstream along the south bank lined with willows. We encountered a goat-shed and along with sheep and goats were also hybrid cattle. In a stretch of 10 kilometers between Til and Halji, the valley of Takche was marked by numerous rock-falls to the south and some high waterfalls to the north. The track then crossed over to the right bank of the Takche over a wooden bridge near a large rock-fall to the south. After crossing a series of abandoned fields on a small spur that pinned the river to the south bank, we saw the barley fields of Halji to the east. The village was above a stepped crescent of fields facing south at the confluence of a northern stream, the Phu Chu, with the Takche. On the lowest level of the crescent was a level meadow with a clump of willow trees beside the river. The most prominent feature in the landscape was an unusually long mendong (prayer wall) painted red ochre beside the road on the south-eastern edge of the village. The village itself of 65 houses and 400 people was near a stream, rushing down a northern valley.
1. a. Agar village, Jajarkot

b. Chyakhure Langna
II.  a. Jumla valley

b. Fields of Lumsa
III. a. Rara Daha

b. Mugu Karnali
IV.  a. Approaching Mugu

b. Mugu village
V. a. Mandhara traders

b. Lama of Pungmo
VI. a. Phoksumdo Tso

b. Suli Gad valley
VII. a. Beside the Bheri

b. Jang La
VIII.  a. Maikot

b. Dhorpatan
IX. a. Jumla women

b. Nara Langna
X. a. Salt-carriers

b. Sinja Shepherd
XI. a. Annapurna and Pokhara

b. A Gurung house
XII. a. Mule caravan

b. On the road
XIII.  a. Girl in her finery

b. Dhampus village
XIV. a. Fields of Thulibensi

b. Barah Pokhari Lekh
XV. a. Dhaulagiri from Baglung

b. Road near Tiplyang
XVI. a. Dhaulagiri from Thini

b. Syang village
XVIII.  

a. Manang village

b. Marsyangdi valley
XIX.  

a. Langtang from Kyangjin

b. Langtang forest
XX. a. Pressing oil, Melung

b. Sun Kosi river
XXI.  

a.  Tengboche monastery

b.  Ama Dablam
XXII. a. Dhankuta ridge

b. New settlement
We later climbed a terminal moraine above the village and had a glimpse of the glaciated upper reaches of the Phu valley where there was a waterfall of about 100 meters in height. The altitude of the village was above 2,500 meters and seeding of crops here takes place a month later than at Til. The village formed a compact settlement with narrow lanes and chortens at different corners of the village. Although the late chikyab of Til dominated the entire Limi area, Halji had its own three gobas which was hereditary and four laiba (functionaries) by annual rotation. The households in the village belonged to Chokroa (45), Rimjia (30) and Namjia (8) families each with a clan deity and their shrines were located among the rock niches above the village. The main gomba, Rinzin Ling, was in the centre of the village. When we reached Halji in the afternoon, we were welcomed at the village communal hall made up of a large quadrangle. The members of the village council joined us for chang and innumerable cups of Tibetan tea. A goat was slaughtered in our honour and a dance and song program was arranged in the evening. We gathered that raising yak, sheep and goat was the most important occupation of the three Limi villages (Hyul-sum) of Til, Halji and Jang. They maintained large herds of sheep and goats, estimated at 6,000 which they grazed across the border in Tibet. They seemed better off than most other Humlis with their cattle wealth.

Another source of their wealth used to be trade in salt which they trasported south on their large flock of animals. The past universe of Limi traders encompassed three months journey to Lhasa; 34 days journey to Leh via Taklakhar (2 days): Gartok (12 days); Rudok (14 days); 2 days to the salt works near the lake Manasarovar; 15 days to Rajapur; 15 days to Mustang; 10 days to Jumla; 4 days to Mugu and a longer journey down to Tanakpur via Darchula (2 days and 2 nights) and Pithoragah, and then by train through Bareilly, Lucknow, Katihar, and Silguri to Kalimpong for Tibetan brick-tea and docha (boots). The only remaining northern link was Taklakhar for salt while the southern route via Kumaon was now directed to the new tourist stalls of Kathmandu instead of Kalimpong.
In Kathmandu, they sell wooden bowls (phuru) made from maple bole and when we were in Limi, most households had these wooden bowls drying in the sun after application of a varnish derived from some local herb. In Limi, which can be bitterly cold in winter for the handling of metal utensils, the variety of wooden utensils are numerous. Some is a large wooden container made from juniper boards held tight with brass strips for storing water. The tea churner dongmo is also made from juniper as are the chyorphy for pounding grain and chuajum for grinding chilly, swa, water pail and toba for measuring grain. Phuru of varying sizes and gokpor, container with lid, are made from maple. The people of Limi have their own terms for people with whom they come in contact in the course of their trade; Rongma (people of Yari to Yabalang), Mongba (Khasa), Chhyanba (Byansi), Purangba (Taklakhar people), Dokpa (Tibetan) and Gemi (Chinese).

The following morning, we visited Rinzin Ling gomba said to be the most important one in Limi. It had been freshly painted and the entrance had a room with an enormous prayer wheel. The entry was through the mani house on the left of which was a large terra cotta image of Chenreji and on the opposite right wall were the images of Sakyamuni, Guru Ranashree and Chenreji. A little lower to the right was an old feather-bound prayer wheel. The main gomba had a quad with living quarters for the monks on three sides and the temple precinct to the north. The ground floor room to the north was the oldest part of the gomba originally said to be of Sakyapa sect. The central place of the dimly-lit room was occupied by a statue of Nambar Nabje facing the four directions and the intermediate cardinal points were supported by a lion, a horse, a crocodile and an unidentified animal. There were numerous terra cotta images on the south and north side while the book-case on the west wall was empty. In the south-east corner were handwritten volumes of Bum with gold and silver letters on black background and the book Gyadungba.

A steep stair with its worn wooden steps overlaid with stone slabs led to the main shrine on the first floor. In the centre of the room was a metal statue of Sakyamuni in an elaborate frame
with a *garuda* on the crest. On the left side were *terra cotta* statues of Ranashree, Sakyamuni and of two incarnate Lamas. Ranashree was a Kargyupa Lama from Drepung near Lhasa who is credited with the establishment of the present *gomba*. There were six smaller statues on the upper shelf. On the right side of the centre-piece was a statue of Dorje Chang and three large *chaityas* said to contain the sacred remains of previous Lamas. The eastern wall was painted with an image of Tara flanked by two reincarnated Lamas. The south wall, with the entrance door, had Maha-kal to the left and Dakini to the right. The west wall had a bookshelf with 200 volumes of Tengyur while from the ceiling hung 16 newly-painted *thankas*. Across to the right of the main shrine was another prayer room. Dakini on horseback in *terra cotta* was the central image on the altar flanked by Mahakala and Chhe-gyon, also on horseback, to the left and Dakini without horse to the right. The locals seemed to particularly revere the image of the riding Dakini. Immediately above the prayer room was a loft used as a store. On the northern wall was a bookshelf with 100 volumes of Kangyur with a small statue of Sakyamuni in the centre. On the west wall hung 23 masks of varying characters and 7 different hats that are used during the festivals. On the opposite wall to the east were kept 20 drums. From the central four pillars hung two masks of yak and two of birds. The *gomba* is said to have 40 *thawas* (novices) and the head Lama is Syamjor, youngest brother of the late *Chikyab* and who also happens to be the pradhan panch of Limi panchayat with a total population of 760 as recorded in 1971.

We left Halji about 11 a.m. with a procession of ten riders who accompanied us to Jang. The eastern fields of Halji were irrigated by channels diverted from the Takche Chu. Jang was only nine kilometers east of Halji and half-way at Tayen (Sunkhani) we rested in the village panchayat house on the north bank of the Takche. The vegetation on the valley floor was mainly azaleas and willows as we continued up the northern bank of the river. On the northern dry slopes, it was entirely gorse and rush bushes while there were pine, juniper and birch on the southern slope. Near Jang, it was entirely birch forest. When we reached
Jang we were welcomed by gongs and trumpets. There were numerous roadside *chortens* on the west side from where we entered the village located on a grassy slope facing to the south. The village was divided into three sections, two above the road and one below. We were put up in a Tibetan tent in the large compound of the village *gomba* established by Chyangba Lingba, a Kargyupa Lama from Drepung just above the road (Pl. XXXIIa). Shyamjor, the local *goba* and the pradhan *panch*, lived in the better section below the road where we were entertained by his wife with tea and *chang* on our arrival as the *goba* was away on some official business in Simikot. Here also as at Bagarchhap in Manang a few years ago, the guests were offered to sit on the more colourful Tibetan carpets made in Jawalakhel instead of the local ones. Jang which means that the shape of the locality resembles the Tibetan letter Dza had 48 houses with a population of 300. The village was situated above 3,900 meters and pastoralism seemed the most important economic activity.

We set out at noon from Jang on June 5th and the snow peaks of Pumbo Ri (5753 m) and Chyoro Ri (6036 m) dominated the southern horizon. We followed the northern bank of the river and two kilometers beyond the village, we entered a sweeping alpine glade through the centre of which the Takche Chu meandered west. We encountered many cattle sheds and nearby grazed goats, hybrid cattle, yak and horses. Six kilometers further the valley turned towards the north. There were some birch trees on the southern bank and the rest was all grassland and azalea bushes with numerous grazing animals. We saw some pairs of Brahminy ducks in the river; these birds are also found on the banks of Rapti river during the winter months. There were even some fishes in the river at this great height (4000 m). Three kilometers north, we crossed the Takche river and had tea at Majule-patan (4200 m) on the north bank of a tributary stream called the Talung Chu (Pl. XXXIIb). There were numerous mounds of stone for sheltering the tent of the graziers. In the old days of regular Tibetan salt and wool trade in exchange for grain, the place used to be the site of a summer mart where Tibetan, Byansi and Humli traders exchanged their wares during July and August. The
abandoned fields of Guma-Yok, the early settlement of Limi people, was nearby below a ridge where once stood the old Gemu Dzong. The ridge with the old fort was aligned in the east-west direction with Takche pass on its saddle and the old site of Laz Gomba towards the east. Below the ridge we also saw traces of an old irrigation channel leading towards the fields of Guma-Yok.

The main river known as the Chyakpalung above the confluence of the Takche and the Talung Chu emerges through a narrow gorge between Takche ridge and Pulki Lada (5715 m) in the north. Lapche pass (c. 5668 m) on the Nepal-Tibet border lies about 24 kilometers north of Guma-Yok. It can be reached by crossing a bridge over the Chyakpalung Chu west of the ancient fields, then over a pass on Pulki Lada ridge to the border range of Chandi Himal after crossing the Chyakpalung once again that makes a sharp U-turn round Pulki Lada. When we turned due south towards Talung valley, we saw more abandoned fields and ruins of old villages below Laz Gomba. We went up a terminal moranine which from a distance shone white as snow but turned out to be sand dunes. From the crest of the moraine, we saw in front of us a lake, Talung Tso (4300 m) dammed at the confluence of the Talung and the Ling rivers. We descended and crossed the Ling Chu and galloped our horses on the sandy shores of the lake that was nearly 1,200 meters long and then we continued up along the right bank of the Talung Chu. Talung valley, between a 5,490 meters peak to the west and another 4,376 meters peak to the east, had a wide glaciated floor filled with moraines and confined by steep scree slopes. We arrived at an alpine glade at about an altitude of 4,300 meters in the evening and Gulu Lama who accompanied us had three tents put up beside the stream. His yak-shed tended by his son was nearby across the river and we had fresh yak milk. It was cold outside the tent and we warmed ourselves beside the fire.

We woke next morning to discover that it had been snowing and our tent had become taut with fresh snow. We lit a fire inside the tent, had tea and waited for the weather to improve.
A heavy snowfall could block the high Nyalu Langna (4900 m) we planned to cross that day. It stopped snowing about 8 a.m. in the morning and when the sun broke the whole upper Talung valley was in a white splendour. We started up-valley after a quick lunch towards the south, ascending three successive terminal moraines. We encountered numerous yak-sheds and animals grazing on the valley floor, and there were also many snow martens sunning beside their burrows. Two hours later we reached about 3,442 meters and we left the valley and began our ascent up a steep scree slope. The path ascended a bare slope for 90 meters and then we had to slog through deep snow. The horses had to be led with great difficulty over the steeper sections. We then arrived at a level shelf at 4,800 meters with small ponds but the pass was still another 200 meters above to the east. We finally reached it by climbing up a steep narrow gully. Our guides from Halji and Til bid us good-bye at the pass and returned down to Talung valley. From the pass (4,900 m), we now faced a deep valley and another snow range to the south-east beyond which lay our destination, Simikot. The ridges of Tarchila (5200 m) to the north and Lubuchela (5626 m) to the south-west were both heavily snow-covered and so was the western range of Chhercha Nakpo (5897 m) that confined Limi from the south.

We descended from the pass by taking a sharp northerly U-turn down a treacherous eastern slope to the Selima Chu. The path was over snow and slush up to 4,800 meters and then across a steep grassy slope to the banks of a small lake, Selima Tso, (4600 m). The descent from Selima lake was over a terminal moraine of huge boulders to the confluence of a stream outlet from Selima Tso with the Chungsa river at 4,200 meters. We rested on a grassy slope for our afternoon tea but our tea-break was cut short by a chilly rain. We continued down the left bank of the Chungsa first through a deep valley and then a boulder-strewn ravine flanked by stupendous rock walls. We encountered the first trees at 3,800 meters, a pure stand of Rhododendron lindleyi in full bloom. We descended further down through moss-covered birch and pine forest, the clear waters of the Chungsa plunging south in cascades. The rain had stopped and we looked down
towards the densely forested valley of the Chungsa which we had passed earlier between Kermi and Yalbang. We soon left the Chungsa river and turned eastwards to a side valley drained by the Takchi stream. There was a small clearing in the forest and we pitched our tent in the corner of two boulders. We dried our clothes by the camp-fire and tried to raise our spirits with a doze of rum we had saved against such a rainy day. We were glad that we had made over the Nyalu pass in spite of the snowfall in the morning. However, Nyalu was not to be our last high pass. As the route down the Chungsa river was said to be too steep and precarious for horses, we planned to cross another high pass on way to Dhinga.

Next day, June 7th, we went up a birch forest and then a grassy slope on the northern side of the Takchi Chu. Across the river to the south was a steep path climbing to Pali Langna (4400 m) that led to Kermi. Our own track climbed eastwards and reached a bridge at 4,300 m where a more direct higher route from Selima Tso across Kuki Langna (4900 m) joined it. We followed a steep track to the south after crossing the bridge and the slope above 4,300 m was under heavy snow. We entered a snow gully 60 meters below the pass where we had great difficulty in pulling the horses out of the deep snow. When we reached Sechi Langna (4500 m) close to a summit of 4,797 meters, we finally had no more snow passes to cross. But the tremendous slopes were still there. We descended down a long slope of scree and bare rocks, entered an oak forest below 4,400 meters and reached a stream with water-mills. We rested briefly here and then followed the forest path to a ridge and traversed across an open grassy slope down to Dhinga (3600 m). The village had about 35 households and the shortage of water in the village is said to be so acute that villagers quarrel over the snow in the street which they gather to be used sparingly by melting. The polythene pipes provided by the U N I C E F for a drinking water scheme for Dhinga village had been lying stranded over a year at Jumla airfield for lack of aircraft to transport them. The households in upper Dhinga, called Dhinga Laga, are entirely of Bhotias although lower Dhinga, called Dhinga Shyo, 600-meters below
has 50 Bhotia and 90 Thakuri households.

We had lunch at Dhinga and started for the lower levels. It was all the way a steep descent down to Yakba, another Bhotia village. The path down was across treacherous stretches of quartzite pebbles and we saw extensive forest clearings for new fields on the nearby slopes. Our entry into Yakba was not impressive as Ratna Rana fell off his horse. The horse was being led at a brisk pace by its owner and Ratna without reins fell off the horse but with one of his legs stuck up in the stirrup. Luckily the good horse did not panic and run with a dangling, shouting man, and I rushed back and retrieved Ratna from his predicament. Yakba (3041 m) was a cluster of stone and timber houses amidst barley fields on the site of an old landslide. We were put up in an ante-room of a house and retired early with a feeling of relief that we were on the last lap of our journey. On 8th June, we departed from Yakba and after crossing a bridge, turned south along a track high above the north side of the Humla Karnali. There were again many new clearings in the pine forest and we passed through upland hamlets of Nauki (3041 m), Thaya (3041 m) and Gwalekhor (2890 m). After passing through a forest stretch, we rejoined the main track we had left 12 days before during our descent to Dandaphoya on the first day out of Simikot. We quickened our pace through the last pine forest and reached Simikot. We learnt from the chief district officer that Prachand and Khem had been to Khocher, Taklakhar and the Manasarovar and having returned the previous day, had flown down to Nepalganj that very morning by a non-scheduled flight. We had a well-deserved day's rest at Simikot and returned the following day, June 10th, to Kathmandu by air via Jumla and Nepalganj.
Chapter eight

Between the Bheri and Karnali

Lovely are the twenty-five shrines of Bhurti, the fort of Dailekh;

The victory pillar of Dullu, each vying with the other.

—Folk song

The trans-Himalayan rivers, the Karnali and the Bheri, emerge from the mountains to flow south in great curves across the hills of the Far West and join forces at Kuine to cut through the Chure range and enter the plain at Chisapani (196 m). The districts of Dailekh and Jajarkot, corresponding to the old principalities of the same name, occupy the hill tract between the two rivers and south of them lie the longitudinal valley of Surkhet. The valley of Surkhet between the westerly curve of the Bheri river and Dhanras ridge (1750 m) within the great loop of the Karnali river is fairly broad with three distinct sections. The western section known as 'Barah Bandal Athar Khandal' or 'twelve forests, eighteen valleys' is an extensive undulating terrain rich in vegetation and wild life. Two decades ago, tigers roamed in this inner dun and Indian timber contractors brought their lorries across the Chure range. In 1949, Dillon Ripley passed through this valley on his way to Rekcha (1220 m) where he first discovered the Spiny Babbler. The central section of the valley
is occupied by Surkhet proper, a bowl-shaped valley between the Girighat Khola and the Jhupra Khola. East of Surkhet, the third section is again a broad valley of gently-sloping alluvial plains on either side of the Bheri. In terms of human occupancy, the three parts of the valley exhibit different stages of exploitation. The western section is still devoid of large-scale clearance and but for the few settlements at the ferry-points of Sajghat (320 m), Kuta (305 m), Jamu (244 m) and Kuine (234 m), it has good virgin forest. The eastern section along the Bheri has experienced large-scale resettlement from the nearby hill villages over the last decade and the encroachment still continues. In the central section, Surkhet has been a stage of earlier settlement and is now in the phase of modern development. The three valley sections combined together is 104 kilometers in length and constitutes the new district of Surkhet. Just as the long valley is the receptacle for two important rivers of the Far West, innumerable north-south routes traverse the area. The people of Karnali Zone either cross over the Chyakhure (4426 m), Mabu (3040 m) and Hawdi (2890 m) passes or take the lower routes of Gotam (Bheri) and Bharda (Karnali) and then ferry across the Karnali at Kuine or the Bheri at Jamu, Kuta, Ranighat, Rangghat and Subhaghat to reach the Tarai markets of Rajapur and Nepalganj.

I first visited Surkhet on 5th November 1972, the same year it was declared the regional center for the Far Western Region. We had flown from Kathmandu to Nepalganj and our itinerary included brief stops at Surkhet, Tulsipur and Bhairawa to learn about the food situation. Surkhet is 68 kilometers due north of Nepalganj and the flight took us 15 minutes, first over the dry plains and forests of Banke and then the Chure range separated into two jagged ridges by the cleft of the Babai valley. The northern slope of the Chure under pure stands of pine sloped gently towards the Bheri. The first glimpse of central Surkhet was one of a circular depression amidst pine forests and the predominant colour being the yellow of the mustard crop and paddy stubbles. We landed at the airfield, opened in 1967, at the north-eastern corner of the valley for a brief halt. We did not
visit the town but we could see some villages and numerous cattle grazing on the plain during the landing and take-off. We turned due east above the broad Bheri valley and at Subhaghat a north-west/south-east trending rock outcrop made a diagonal natural dam across which the waters of Bheri rippled past. East of Subhaghat, a narrow saddle, Kalchhe (1070 m), led to Sarda Valley and after another saddle, Bije Neta (910 m), we entered the Dang valley.

I visited Surkhet again a month later on December 4, 1972, flying to Nepalganj from Kathmandu and then entered this inner valley. The mustard crop had since been harvested and on the fallow fields grazed numerous cattle and horses. I went to the town, two kilometers west, riding across the rounded pebbles of black phyllites and purple shale along the dry stream-bed of the Itrim Khola. A series of alluvial fans covered with sal trees descended down the northern hill and to our left was the central depression of paddy fields, close to which rose the hillock of Kalimati (730 m). We crossed an irrigation channel and at one of the cross-roads was a stone pillar with carved figures of Maitreya, Tara, Lokeswara and Buddha facing the four cardinal points with some faint letters in medieval Nagari script. A little further ahead were numerous mounds in which were found old bricks, terra cotta images and a sculptured lion dug-up in the course of new construction activities. We descended across the mounds now occupied by government offices and came to a Y-shaped street, lined with shops on the left bank of the dry Khorke Khola. The houses had two-storeys and walls of rounded boulders plastered with deep ochre mud. The bazar was alive with groups of men in dark cotton rags from Dailekh and Jajarkot and those in soiled gray woollens from further Jumla and Humla. A small procession of mules from Nepalganj carrying salt and kerosene completed the picture of a small entrepot. An inscription of 13th century A. D. mentions a certain Asha Sahu and Uda Dei indicating that there was trading here even in the old days. The main items of trade at this winter mart used to be horse, musk, hawk, medicinal herbs, woollen products and Tibetan salt from the north to be exchanged with rice, clothes and other manufactured products.
The trade still continues but the items of export from the hills have changed. Indian salt has penetrated deep into the hills up to Jumla and refined ghiu and tangerine have replaced musk and hawk as expert items.

Archaeological specimens and inscriptions found in Surkhet date back to the 13th century A. D. and a colophon of Abhisama-yalankara manuscript mentions Ripumalla as the reigning ruler in the 14th century. But similar to the story of the relics extant in Dullu and Sinja further north, the archaeological monuments in Surkhet indicate a phase of dilapidation and decay after the fall of the Khasa Mallas. According to a copper plate edict, Sansar Varma became the ruler of Dailekh, which included Surkhet, in 1396 after the fall of the Khasa Mallas. Four hundred years later, the principality was annexed to the Gorkha domain following a military expedition under Sardar Kalu Pande in 1790. The new rulers emphasised resettlement in Surkhet from the very beginning of its conquest. Official letters of 1802, 1822, and particularly one of 1824 order the local Brahman zamindars to resettle people in Surkhet. Further letters of 1840 and 1849 ask for explanation from local headmen on the reported migration of people from Surkhet across the Bheri to the south and warn them to resettle them in Surkhet. Of particular interest is a letter of 1861 from the garrison commander at Dailekh asking about the cause of delay in resettling a group of households under Jaya Upadhaya and orders to do so with promises of facilities including ration for a year. There is further instruction to welcome and show land to some Brahmans from Argha-Khanchi.

These letters amply indicate that Surkhet was sparsely populated and there were official encouragements to settle people in the valley. Surkhet valley was in the past reputed for its endemic malaria and until a few decades ago there were only a few permanent villages of Tharus who had migrated from Dang. Except during the winter, the nearby hill farmers used to retreat to their upland villages by dusk after the day’s toil on the valley fields. The site of the present Surkhet (700 m) used to be the lower fields of Gothikanda (1430 m) and Kathkuwa (1400 m) villages.
In 1889, the total land revenue from the valley yielded a mere Rs. 250 and it increased to Rs. 1,200 after the reconnaissance land survey of 1943. In 1972, at the time of my visit the revenue records showed an annual assessment of Rs. 4,83,000. After the creation of Surkhet as a separate district in 1962, the headquarters were located at Gothikanda on a ridge overlooking the valley. A local governor took initiative of shifting down the headquarters by setting aside about 40 hectares of land in the valley and the government offices were moved down in November of 1966. The offices then were by the year of establishment, Revenue (1908), Court (1933), Jail (1963), Education (1962), Cottage Industry (1963), Veterinary Dispensary (1964), Malaria Eradication (1964), District Panchayat (1962) and Land Reform (1965). The shift of government offices along with increasing success of malaria control as well as shortage of water supply on the Gothikanda ridge made the valley more attractive for habitation. Within a year of change of the site of government offices, about 180 households of nearby Gothikanda, Ramrikanda, Bailkanda, Melpani and Kathkuwa moved down to the valley floor. Many settled in their valley fields but some clustered around the government offices and Surkhet assumed the character of a permanent township. In 1972, the place was declared the regional center for the Far Western Development Region.

On December 6th, 1972, I left Surkhet with a local guide for a brief visit to the western section of the district. After crossing the dry bed of Khorke Khola near the town, we rode due west along a broad path which the local panchayats had recently made level across the rice fields. It formed the section of an east-west road which the district panchayat planned to extend through the entire length of the district and hoped to link it with Dang through the low saddles of Kalchhe and Bije Neta. North of the road, terrace fields climbed to the sal forest below Bailkanda and numerous springs fed the channels for irrigating the fields. South of the road was a broad expanse of paddy fields with some Tharu villages and further beyond a low ridge that closed-in the valley from the south. Two kilometers west of the town, a much-trodden track with lines of porters led off diagonally to the south-
west towards Rani Ghat (361 m) where there was a bridge over the Bheri on the main road to the plains. We continued west after crossing three small streams and arrived at the western rim of the valley at Bange Simal near Kairali. It was a low ridge (670 m) of red soil and gave a good view of the entire 86-square kilometer central Surkhet valley with the forested Kalimati ridge in the centre and the eastern low-point (661 m) near Subh Kuna leading to the Bheri and Nepalganj. The western prospect was entirely of dense forests, sal in the Girighat valley below and pines on a ridge beyond.

We descended through the sal forest to the south-west and forded the Girighat Khola at 400 meters. It was humid and hot under the sal trees and we came across many buffalo-sheds in the forest. The animals were mostly from Dullu and they spent the winter months in these tropical forests. As we started climbing up a narrow ridge between the Girighat Khola and one of its western tributaries, sal trees were replaced by pure stands of pine and the higher slopes were dry. We arrived at a clearing (790 m) with a hut and small spring after six kilometers climb from Girighat. A track to our left climbed south another 400 meters towards Kammegoth and led to Kuta Ghat (305 m) at the confluence of the Bheri and the Swat Khola. Another track descended to the north and we followed it along a long ridge under dense pine forest. The only cultivated patches we could glimpse through the chinks in the forest were those of Lekhagaon three kilometers to the north. We were, however, not passing through a virgin forest as the undergrowth was much grazed over by cattle and apart from occasional animal-sheds, we heard tinkles of animal bells and bleating of sheep and goats. After travelling under the forest shade, we came to another clearing (760 m) at a cross-road where the Lekhagaon-Kuta trail met our own. We continued north-west along the forest ridge for another four kilometers and finally saw some paddy fields in a valley towards the north.

In the late afternoon, we made a steep descent of 450 meters and reached some paddy fields on the bank of the Swat Khola. We forded the stream and climbed to a level ground on its west
bank where there were some mustard fields. So far we had been travelling through a tropical forest belt without encountering any fields or farms the whole day. Badichaur (548 m) was the name of the hamlet we had arrived and the few houses under sal trees indicated that it was a new settlement. We stayed in a Magar house and the owner told us that his father had migrated from Dailekh. I also learnt that the villages further west on the long ridge connecting Lakharpata with Dhanras (1750 m) that separates the deep Karnali valley and plains of Jamu and Kuine were of Chhetris, Magars and Gurungs who had migrated from the east as far as Dhaulagiri and Gandaki Zones. I had found in 1966 that the western Dang plain had been similarly settled by Chhetris and Magars of Pyuthan and Gulmi from farther east. Contrary to the general pattern of eastward movement of population typical in the hill region, the malarious inner duns or Bhitri Madhes like Dang and Surkhet seemed to have acted as new frontiers for settlement for the people of the densely-populated western hills.

When we left early from Badichaur the following morning, the fog was dense and the drip of the night dew splattered on sal leaves like rain. The climb north was gentle for the first 120 meters and then became steep. Enormous chyuri (Madhuca butyracea) trees dominated others of warm sub-tropical variety. The chyuri fruit is valued for its oil but it also attracts other animals and birds, particularly rhesus and langur monkeys, who are in turn hunted by the Raute, a local forest people. We did not meet the Raute as our sojourn in their forest habitat was only brief but we were told that they frequented the nearby villages to exchange wooden bowls for grains. A group of 94 with four infants had crossed to the south of the Bheri at Rang Ghat the same winter. They are normally said to range along the lower Bheri up to Jajarkot but they have also been reported from Dailekh and Dang. Rautes are forest people who shift their habitation from place to place and sometimes moving on in a fortnight. When they move, they are said to burn their huts and destroy those that cannot be burnt. They carry the bare minimum that can be carried in the net used for catching monkeys and set-up their huts fresh from
branches and leaves at the next camp. They don't farm as planting crop is considered a sin that ties them to the land by these nomadic people. They live on wild fruits, tubers and yams and the grain they exchange with wooden artifacts. They make wooden bowls of varying sizes and wooden chests and the measure of exchange is simply according to the grain-carrying capacity of their wooden products. Monkeys are said to be their favourite meat and the method of hunting is by catching them in a net made from wild fibres. They do not use running water of rivers and drink only spring water. The need for seeking new areas for hunting and felling trees for their wooden products seems to entail their wandering within a given range of territory. The Raute may be one of the last nomadic hunting tribes as many have yielded to sedentary agriculture and they are now called Raji.

I was thinking of the Raute as we climbed above the panoply of forest. The western section of lower Bheri valley was covered by a layer of low mist suspended over the vast expanse of forest as far as the eyes could see. An occasional pinnacle and jagged ridge of the Chure range heightened the horizontal layers of mist in the morning sun. After an hour's climb from Badichaur, we were still in the shadows as the forest-clad slope we were struggling up faced towards the south-west. At a height of about 1,060 meters, we reached the warmth of the sun and met a well-trodden path descending steeply to our left. It was one of the main roads that led to Chisapani in the plains across the ferry at Kuta Ghat (305 m) and the pass of Gainekanda (1060 m). Another half-hour climb over sharp-edged quartzite pebbles finally brought us to a grassy ridge at Lakharpata (1220 m). The village was located on the eastern end of a 68-kilometers long Malaka ridge against whose northern slopes the Karnali plunged west and turned sharply east around Dhanras. The views from Lakharpata ridge were of immense contrast. To the south-west, one looked down on the inner dun of Bara Bandal Athar Khan-dal, a broad, undulating plain with extensive forests. Towards the north and east were steep hillsides with sparse stands of straggling pine and rhododendron.

Particularly domineering was the long ridge trending east
from Achham and the deep valley of Karnali that looped around it. Less than two kilometers east and 2,100 meters below Lakhar-pata was the great bend of the Karnali, turning it back north-west to Ra at a point just 2.25 kilometers and 180 meters lower than where the loop began covering a distance of 60 kilometers. An earlier scheme visualised that a 2.6 kilometer tunnel near Ra could produce the cheapest electrical energy out of the Karnali with a mean flow of about 300 cubic meters per second at the low water period. A later scheme conceives of a high dam at the Lakharpata loop with a firm power capacity of 686 MW and a tunnel under Lakharpata to Kuta Ghat to augment the reservoir of Chisapani high dam with a firm power of another 765 MW. Indeed, if such an engineering work were to be accomplished, the low horizontal layers of fog along the Bheri and the Karnali would be replaced by a ribbon of standing blue water around Kuine and Jamu. And then the itinerant Rautes would be hard at work making dug-out canoes of the massive simal tree (Bombax malabaricum) in exchange for a whole granary!

We soon left Lakharpata and walked eastwards across a level grassy ridge where there were many rest-places. On the way, we met flocks of sheep carrying salt to Jumla and another pack of horses on their homeward journey to Jumla. A group of men from Dailekh returning after timber work in Mussorie was busy cooking their morning meal by the roadside. We stopped at Lotharkot (3800 m) in a Magar house for lunch. The owner of the house was an ex-soldier and this was the 11th day of the birth of his grandson. A Badi couple, a minstrel caste, was in the courtyard to entertain the guests (Pl. XXXIIIa). While the husband sang and thumped on two round drums (tabula), the wife danced in swift movements. The Badi told me that they had been earlier to Rajapur, the main grain market in far western Tarai and no doubt some of his tunes had been affected by his more wealthy plains clientele. Apart from their singing and dancing assignments, the Badi was also adept at making clay pipes with handsome designs. It was interesting to hear the interpretation of the Badi about his own status in the caste-ridden Far West region. On my enquiry about their relation with the Gaine, another mints-
trel caste who play the **sarangi** fiddle, the Badi related that they were different and their hierarchy was established in the following manner. In the beginning when the Badi and Gaine had a debate about their respective status, they agreed that each would throw his musical instrument down a hill and whoever's instruments was found on a higher elevation would be considered of the higher status. The fiddle of the Gaine got stuck on a tree branch because of its string while the round drum of the Badi rolled down to the base of the hill and from there on the Gaine was considered of superior status than the Badi.

After lunch we said goodbye to our host and descended to Kollenikant (100 m) on a narrow ridge between the Karnali and the Swat Khola and along which the main trail to Dailekh and Jumla continued north-east. We had a last long look at the sharp bend of the Karnali and then turned south-east over a steep slope of loose shale. As we came down, we could see ahead the valley of Swat, including the saddle of Melpani, 14 kilometers away, trending south-east in conformity to a fault plane. We reached the Swat Khola as it turned south through a narrow gorge and the sand banks were hot in the afternoon sun. We crossed the stream by a wooden bridge and entered the shade of trees on the north side of a ridge which we commenced climbing. After an hour's climb through the forest we reached the fields of Sirchaur (880 m) and Bhorleni a little further. In late afternoon, we passed through a wide section of dense shrubs and reached Dhanigad (1220 m) on a grassy saddle. We spent the night in the verandah of a Chhetri house. The housewife showed us some Raute wooden bowls chiselled entirely with an adze and told us that the Raute visited the village at the interval of a few years. Dhanigad was on a ridge on the frontier of the great forest of the lower Bheri frequented by the Rautes.

Next day, December 8th, the sky was overcast but we could still look down over the green forest expanse below through which we had travelled two days before. Just above the village on the roadside stood a meter high stone pillar. The impressions of sun and moon were clear but the script had been eroded away by ele-
ments of nature and the edges had been much polished off by the sharpening of sickle and axe through the ages. We could not decipher the script but the massive pillar stood there as the sentinel of the medieval past. The track climbed gently towards Phinikanda (1310 m) where there were numerous springs. We then continued on to Lekhgaon (1520 m) on the very top of the ridge from where we could compare the dense sal forest in the Girighat Khola to the south and the sparse pine on the scarp slope across the Swat Khola to the north. We walked further three kilometers along the ridge to Ramrikanda (1460 m) where another stone pillar stood with seven lines of script amongst which the Saka year 1037 (A.D. 1115) and the names of Jachyaraj as king and Satyarupa as queen were legible.

Another kilometer east we arrived at Bailkanda (1520 m) that provided a sweeping view of the Surkhet valley to the south-east. If the fields of Surkhet appeared imprisoned by a ring of pine forests, the Kalimati hill in the centre of the valley looked like an arboreal hostage hemmed in by paddy fields. The jagged ridges of the Chure range stood as an impregnable wall further to the south. Towards the east, the Bheri meandered through a wide valley towards Surkhet only to turn west bypassing it through a narrow gorge. North of Bailkanda was an amphitheatre of millet and mustard fields descending into a series of steps to the Ramche Khola and finally by a steep declivity into the Swat Khola. At Bailkanda, there was a Bhairab shrine and an old fort in ruins and the moat around was overgrown with weed. Kanda is the far western Nepali term for a fort similar to 'kot' in the western region. Two kilometers east of Bailkanda was Gothikanda (1370 m) looking directly down on the new town of Surkhet, a phoenix risen from the ashes of Gothikanda. Gothikanda, which was once a large village with a salubrious climate and the district headquarters for a few years, was now a deserted village. The old home sites were marked by ruined walls overgrown with stinging nettles and the odd fruit and flowering trees were the only reminder of the past human habitation. One house in a dilapidated condition was however still occupied but on enquiry, we found that the resident was a trader from Mugu
who had merely camped there to pass the winter. From Gothikanda, we traversed across a dry and windy slope to Kathkuwa (1370 m). Numerous flocks of Jumla sheep and goats grazed in the forest below the trail. Kathkuwa was a small settlement with a tea-shop located on a level shoulder, a welcome rest-place half-way on the steep climb of 1,340 meters from Surkhet to Ranimata. After a sharp descent of 300 meters through a grassy slope, we came to Banspani where the sal forest began. The undergrowth was much overgrazed by migrant herds of sheep, goat, horses and local cattle. The ground was bare and the air hot in spite of the sal trees. We emerged out of the forest by the side of the Itrim Khola and rode on to the town.

The following day I visited some places of interest in the valley. Just a kilometer south of the town was Mangalgarhi a small mound surrounded with a moat which still had some water. The old remains of a brick and stone structure lie scattered on the ground. In the center stands a stone pillar with human images in relief. The damaged images cannot be identified but the local Tharus worship it as the Bhavani. South of Mangalgarhi began the paddy fields through which we rode towards Lati Koili. There were numerous tents pitched on the fields and I visited one of the tents and met a Mandhara Khamba family I had first seen near Lamri in May 1966. The old man I had tea with six years earlier was not there but his wife recognised me and offered chang. One of her sons told me that they spent the entire winter in Surkhet, making occasional trips to Nepalganj to transport goods on horse-back to Surkhet and finally returned home in the Spring with rice acquired in Surkhet.

I continued south and reached Lati Koili on a low westerly spur of Kalimati. Nearby a grove of bel (Aegle marmelos) trees was a shrine dedicated to Shiva. Part of the structure made with sculptured sandstone was still standing with an inscribed stone plaque over the doorway that identified the builder as Pratap Shahi of Dailekh in the year Saka 1405 (A. D. 1582). The low ridge with open pine rises gently towards the east and culminates to a low summit of 730 meters where lie the ruins of Kakre
Vihara, a temple razed to the ground by some natural calamity in the past. Large pillars, lintels, circular discs of stone carved in elaborate motifs of flowers, animals and figures lie piled in the central mound and others are scattered in the forest. The figures represent gods of both Hindu and Buddhist pantheon (Pl. XXXIII b). On stylistic consideration, the temple seems to date back to 12th-14th century, possibly another architectural heritage of the Khasa Mallas. The key to its past may be hidden under the stone heap but the present prospect from the hill was equally interesting.

Immediately to the north was a stretch of marshland where egrets and migrant cranes stalked their prey and on the paddy fields grazed numerous cattle and horses. At the northern edge of the plain was the town beyond which the ground rose steeply under sal trees to the bare ridge on which were the old village sites of Bailkanda and Gothikanda. Two forested spurs descended down towards the south, one from Bailkanda and another from Jarbuta, like two long limbs to enclose the valley and but for the narrow cleft of the Nikas Kholo, the embrace was complete. The Bharuli, Khorke, and Geruwa draining the valley into a single stream below Lakshmipur (620 m) makes its exit as the Nikas Kholo (outlet stream) through a narrow gorge to the Bheri. Similar to the legends of Khotan, Kashmir and Kathmandu, here also a supernatural being is said to have cut across a hill and drained the lacustrine valley. There were numerous Tharu villages dotting the fields on the valley bottom. We turned east from Kakre Vihara and after passing the Tharu villages of Manpur, Padampur and Naulapur returned to the town.

* * *

In early 1978, I had the opportunity to travel part of the hill area between the Karnali and the Bheri rivers; the itinerary being Jajarkot to Dailekh and then down to Surkhet. Now that there was a weekly flight from Kathmandu to Chaur Jahari during the winter, I could do away with the three-day approach march from Tulsipur which I had done in February 1966. I left
Kathmandu on 21st February 1978 and landed at Chaur Jahari after an hour’s flight. The pile of polythene pipe for some rural drinking water projects that we had seen in May 1977 on way to Humla was still there beside the airfield. A horse had been sent for me from Jajarkot and I rode on northwards after the aircraft took off for Nepalganj. I rode along the high terrace above the right bank of the Bheri and it looked much greener than what I had seen twelve years before. The otherwise parched red soil of the Chaur Jahari plain was now covered with a green mantle of young wheat made feasible by the construction of a long irrigation canal from the Jhari Khola at considerable government cost. Just north of the airfield, where earlier there was only a chautara by the roadside, a few tea-shops and a school had sprung up. Two miles further on, I passed the flat-roofed houses of Tatagaon (770 m) but the village had hardly changed. The only changes brought about by the introduction of air service seemed to be the growth of tea-stalls and some new houses on the former common grazing ground.

From Sialkhola (790 m), I descended to the Bheri and crossed the old steel suspension bridge. I then rode across the Ibar and Pasa Gad and then up a steep slope under sal forest. On the way, I met a pack of ponies driven by Indians returning to Dang after delivering cotton clothes ordered by a merchant of Jajarkot. There were numerous fresh landslides on the slopes below the town. It was nearly 6 p.m. and the moon was up over the Hiunchuli Patan (5922 m) to the east when I reached the guest house near the old palace. The window of my room faced south, down where the winding Bheri shimmered in the dusk.

Next day, I inspected the high school located on a forest clearing east of the town and visited the government offices in the old palace which had been purchased by the government. Although the annual land revenue from the district totalled Rs. 54,000, there were 22 offices with 146 employees mainly from outside. With a monthly bill of Rs. 1,76,577 for their salary and allowances, the annual expenditure came to Rs. 21,18,925. Thirteen of the offices had been established since my last visit.
in 1966. When later in the evening I discussed with the local leaders of Jajarkot district that had a population of 86,564 (1971), their main demands were (1) construction of road to Jumla across the Chyakhure Langla, (2) registration of the newly cleared lands along the Bheri, (3) lifting of ban on the export of wild-growing cannabis, and (4) feasibility survey for mica and semi-precious stones at Kushemushe, an alpine ridge (3906 m), about 50-kilometers north-west of the town.

The following morning, February 23, I went round the main street of the town with a procession to celebrate the Education Day and then left Jajarkot on horse-back with the chief district officer, panchayat leaders and police escort. The track led up the ridge to the west. In spite of the rich vegetation cover, the path was arduous over stony stretches of green phyllites. Higher up there were rhododendrons in full bloom amongst large pine trees and the ridge sharpened along the crest of a south-dipping rock across a huge landslip that choked the upper valley of the Pasa Gad. On top of the ridge (2177 m) were oak and rhododendrons and when we looked down towards Jajarkot, 900 meters below us, we could fully appreciate its strategic location commanding the upper reaches of the Bheri. A short descent brought us to a saddle (2010 m) to the east of which dropped the Kot Khola through a dense forest towards Jajarkot. Malika Lekh (2547 m) above the upland fields of Bhenya enclosed an amphitheatre blocking the view to the north and west. We travelled westwards above Bhenya across new clearings made by Magars settlers in the oak forests. We then entered a dense forest of moss-covered oaks and climbed to a depression on the ridge (2280 m) with a small clearing. Just above the track was a huge rock on which was supplanted some prayer-flags to mark the site of a Malika shrine and where an annual fair is held in July. An old rest-house beside the track was in ruins but there was a hut that served us fresh milk.

The track then followed a ridge towards the west where the snow had not yet melted on the northern side. The tree cover was mainly of oak with Daphne as the undergrowth. The ridge track was nearly four kilometers long and we had glimpses of
snow on Chalna Dhar (4535 m) far to the north above the Saru Gad. At an attitude to 3,210 meters we left Malika ridge to descend a steep zig-zag path towards the north and on the way met numerous flocks of sheep and horses, here being the winter haunt of the Jumla graziers. As we descended rapidly, pine trees reappeared and at 1,670 meters were the wheat fields of Jhapra (1220 m). It was a small Chhetri village on a north-facing slope and we were put up in the panchayat house and had fried fish caught in the Saru Gad for dinner.

On 24th February, we rode down the village and reached the paddy fields on the bank of the Saru Gad. At Dhungel where a small stream joined the Saru Gad, there was an old cantilever bridge put up by the local panchayat in 1963 at a cost of Rs. 1,480. Close by it downstream was the new suspension bridge which cost Rs. 4,800 in spite of the free cable provided by the government and transported by voluntary labour of the vaillagers. The major cost of construction was claimed by cement, one mason from Surkhet and six carpenters from Nepalganj. We reached the bridge-site before 9 a.m. but we had to wait another three hours for the cement on the commemorative plaque to dry and the goat which they had slaughtered for the occasion to be ready for the feast. To me, it provided a pleasant opportunity to bathe in the clear cool waters of the Saru Gad and reflect on the change in technology and cost of the two bridges. At last, the meat was ready and after meal followed by a formal ceremony full of speeches, I inaugurated the bridge and crossed it first.

The far side of the river was a dry slope covered with Acacia catechu and we rode on another kilometer downstream to reach the Subh Gad, a westerly tributary of the Saru Gad. Here another suspension bridge was under construction. The cables had been laid with wooden planks set half the way. I took leave of the officials from Jajarkot, forded the Subh Gad on horseback and climbed up to Baraban (1370 m), a village with sal forest below and pine above it. The track beyond the village climbed still higher along a north-facing rock precipice until we came to a pine-forested low saddle and turned west along the
south face of a ridge that extended 15 kilometers east-west between Baraban and Bhairi Lekh (2863 m). At the first village, Jewa (1700 m), I came across a stone pillar and at the next village Dehere (1610 m) was a water-spout carved in stone indicating that I was on the old road between Jajarkot and Dailekh. I reached Dashera (1760 m) in the evening and inspected the impressive new school building before I retired to the village. The villages of Jewa, Dehere and Dashera lie on a high shelf above the forested valley of the Salma. The area was dry with occasional pines and much farm land had been extended into the rhododendron and oak forest above the villages. At Dashera, a Chhetri village, I stayed in the house of Jaya Bahadur Thapa whom I had met more than a decade earlier at Rampur (Chitawan) during a panchayat training seminar.

I had covered 32 kilometers from Jajarkot and Dailekh was still another 38 kilometers due west. The next day's journey was said to be a long one over a high ridge and I left early on the morning of February 25th. Just two miles from Dashera, I had to clamber up a steep rocky section below a ridge. From the side of the ridge, we could see through flowering rhododendrons, the snows of Chalna Dhar (4535 m) to the north-east and Malika Lekh I had crossed earlier towards the east. Rounding the spur, I came to the fields of Chhanwa (1821 m) with young wheat. The track continued westward along fields and brushwood between Chhanwa and Phalam (1980 m), a village perched high on a rock precipice. I heard the sound of a drum and conch-shell and then saw a funeral procession proceeding down to the Salma Khola. The long white cloth carried by mourners looked like a large serpent winding down the zig-zag trail. Beyond Phalam I met a flock of Jumla sheep grazing among clearings in the rhododendron forest. The track was now across a steep rock face maintained well by the local panchayat. I traversed westwards below the jagged south face of Bhairi Lekh (2863 m) and reached Derkulo (1980 m), the westernmost village of Jajarkot district. The village snuggled close to the oak forest that covered the north-south ridge between Bhairi and Katti (2791 m) that marked the Jajarkot-Dailekh boundary.
We did not cross the ridge but continued south gaining height in slow stages under tall oak trees. There were still some snow in the shadows and the undergrowth was made up mostly of flowering Daphne, a shrub used for making paper. I arrived at a saddle (2474 m) four kilometers beyond Derkulo where the south-trending boundary ridge we had been following bifurcated into two spurs. The saddle was on the eastern branch which turned south-east and the other spur descended south-west. I now descended steeply along the side of the south-west spur and rested for tea near a spring. On the roadside were a large group of men and women packing their loads after their late meal (Pl. Xa). They were all carrying salt from Nepalganj where they had gone with ghii, involving a round trip of back-breaking 17 days. Many of them were from Salma (1820 m), south of Phalam, and others from Majeri (1670 m) and Derkulo. As they parted on the roadside after so many days of company on the trading trip, each bowed to the other doing elaborate salams with one hand and the other touching the corner of the elbow. They were all in rags and smeared with dirt and sweat but the farewells I witnessed in the forest were at once elegant and sublime. I sat there for quite a while, watching the salt-carriers go their separate ways to their respective villages, admiring their high civility in spite of their harsh life.

Then I descended the forested ridge to another saddle (2250 m) through which the main highway and postal route from Dailekh passes onwards to Kasri ferry on the Bheri and Sallyan and farther east to Kathmandu. As I entered the territory of Dailekh district, the track descended steeply through stretches of snow in the forest and I overtook two school boys. They were of about 13 years age from Katti village attending the nearest high school at Dashera, 21 kilometers away to the east across a 2,330 meters pass and were coming home over the weekend to replenish their ration. On the way down, I witnessed numerous scars of landslide plunging down to the Maluka Khola that flowed north to join the Katti Khola. We descended further through rhododendron and Alnus forests and reached a chautara at Thuwa village (1520 m) descending 760 meters in an hour and half. I could see
from here the wheat fields of Katti village below us and the Dailekh ridge was silhouetted against the setting sun. It was almost dark when I reached Katti village (1280 m). It had been a long day’s trek from Dashera across high ridges but here also I could procure no drinks (the inhabitants were orthodox Khadka Chhetris), my third day camp since I had left Jajarkot. My kind hostess, wife of the local pradhan panch who was away on some development business, however procured a chicken for dinner and assured me that I could have the drink of my choice in Dailekh town.

On 26th February, I descended from the village to the wooden bridge over the Katti Khola (955 m) and rode west along the river. Although I was following the river valley, it was no easy track as I had to climb and descend the numerous side spurs between which the river meandered and at times had to ford it to avoid the steeper cliffs. The villages were perched high on either side of the valley and as I travelled through the tropical sal forest, it was uncomfortably hot after the previous day’s hike through temperate forests and snow. There were some clearings in the sal forest but many of these were abandoned fields now overgrown with young sal trees and sal saplings grew even on the track. On a clearing below the road I saw some burnt-down sheds and were told that a group of Raute had camped here the previous month and had moved on up-river. I had not realized that they penetrated so far into the hills but such sub-tropical valleys seemed to provide the Raute distant corridors to roam about. The Rautes had not, however, exhausted the clever monkeys of the Katti Khola as I soon came across a group of rhesus monkeys on the path. They were crossing the Katti Khola towards the north by jumping across the river at a narrow section. They had selected a large boulder as a launching pad and they leaped across the river one by one. I was particularly impressed by the long jump accomplished by the mothers with their babies clasped fast to their breast.

Ten kilometers west of Katti village I left the Katti Khola and after ascending a low spur I came down to the Lohore Khola
with a sandy expanse pouring down the north. The long suspension bridge was in a dilapidated condition but the river could be easily forayed. I had tea on the west bank in a shop and looked down on a series of check-dams made across the river to carry water to the numerous water-mills. A steep ascent of 300 meters through a badly-gullied path led me to a small stream, Hadsaini Khola, draining the eastern flank of Dailekh ridge. The sal forest on the slopes was heavily encroached and there was no undergrowth but only thin stands of stark trees. The Hadsaini Khola itself had been dammed at numerous points its water channelised into narrow strips of paddy fields. The path became steeper as I approached the town and until I reached the main ridge, the only building I could see was the old durbar now converted into an office. I reached the town before dusk and was put-up in the new guest house close to the district panchayat building. The evening was pleasant with fresh air on the ridge and here a tired traveller could choose among the local drinks made by Newars in the bazar or Gurungs and Magars from nearby villages.

Dailekh bazaar (1280 m), the headquarters of Dailekh district, is located on south-trending spur between the Lohare Khola to the east and the Chham Gad to the west. Bilaspur (1840 m), the old site of the former rulers, now in ruins is three kilometers north of the present town. The numerous monuments, inscribed stone structures and stupa extant around Dailekh are ample evidence that it once formed a part of the Khasa Malla empire. After the fall of Malla empire at the close of the 14th century, Dailekh became an independent state under Sansari Bhamya whose descendants ruled until its subjugation by the Gorkhalis in 1790. According to Hamilton’s informants, the Gorkhalis built here a fort after their conquest and the place was then called Matha Garhi. Dailekh then was made up of about 150 thatched huts and the chief’s house was built of stone, covered partly with tiles. The fort is still there on a raised ground but the number of houses has increased to 250, the main extension being towards the north after 1966. Expansion of administrative and development services has been the main cause in the growth of the town. In 1951, there were only the District Headquarters,
Court, Jail, Land Revenue, Army and a Post Office employing 119 persons. By 1969, many new offices had been added and the number of employees increased to 334. Lionel Caplan who made a detailed study of Dailekh bazar, found that in 1934 salaries, allowances and other administrative expenditure totalled Rs. 20,000 and the income (mainly land revenue) from Dailekh district was Rs. 51,000 and by 1969 the administrative expenditure had jumped to Rs. 654,000 while the income increased only to Rs. 144,000. When I reached Dailekh it had numerous government offices and employees and most of the better-off buildings in the bazar were either government-rented or owned.

The following morning, February 27th, I made a brief tour of the town. The first point of interest was obviously the fort at the south-eastern part, a massive stone structure hexagonal in plan. The old parade ground beside the main street provides a good view westwards towards the Chham Gad and Dullu (1425 m), another historic town on the next ridge. The northern view reveals a snow range across which the high road to Jumla crosses through Mabu and Hawdi Langna. The travellers who pass through Dailekh generally use Mabu Langna (3040 m) which is due north of the town. The main centre of activity was the open space beside a shade-tree facing the district panchayat office where petty merchants displayed their wares in the open, mainly cigarettes and cheap manufactured articles. But among the pavement stalls, there were no signs of shoes made from cured deerskin or khukris and swords for which Dailekh used to be famous in the past.

It was past noon when I left Dailekh and I was seen off by the officials at the south end of the town beside a chautara under an old pipal tree. The first part of the descent from the town was along a bare dry slope where the trees were mere pollard stands, shorn of their leaves and branches for cattle fodder. I then descended to the wheat fields of Shadu (1060 m) and an open pine forest near the confluence (700 m) of the Lohare Khola and the Chham Gad. This was not merely a confluence of two streams but also symbolic of the making of a larger Nepal. It was the
meeting-point of a Gad a western Himalayan term for river or stream and a khola central Himalayan Nepali version of the same, just as Dailekh between a western Gad and eastern Khola, represented an old capital of a parochial principality in the process of becoming a modern town. We reached the banks of the Lohare where rested a group of over-laden travellers on their way home to Jumla. There was also a Badi drummer with two dancing girls returning home after spending the winter in Tarai.

The suspension bridge over the Lohore near Rajigaon was not reassuring as sections of wooden planks were missing and many travellers preferred fording the cold waters of the Lohore rather than risk crossing the precarious bridge. The Lohore bridge I had crossed the previous day, eight kilometers upstream, was in an equally bad shape. The state of the bridge at Rajigaon, which was on one of the main highways, obviously reflected the inactivity of panchayats nearer to towns in contrast to the enthusiasm of remote village panchayats such as I had seen in Jhapra and Baraban. I somehow managed to cross the bridge and after reaching a small shade tree with a tea-shop, rode south along the eastern bank of the Lohore. The track headed due south for five kilometers across paddy fields while the opposite bank was forested. We saw numerous fishing traps on the river and also some ducks. At Matela (790 m) where a stream of the same name joined the Lohore from the east, there were six cobbler in a row of sheds plying their trade on the roadside. Most of the clients were Jumlis to repair their shoes in preparation for the snow-bound Mabu Langna. After another three kilometers down the river through a mixed sub-tropical forest, I reached a small settlement with tea-stalls at the confluence of the Parajul Khola and the Lohore Khola. This was Dungeswar (662 m) which had a small Shiva shrine near the river confluence and where a large fair is held every January. A bridge over the Lohore led north-west to Dullu, while the main road to Surkhet and Nepalganj climbed steeply south of the Parajul Khola.

It was nearly 4 p.m., and the local policeman suggested that I spend the night there as the climb ahead was said to be long.
I thought it better to slog up the slope in the cool afternoon rather than sweat in the warm morning sun. I had tea at Dun-geswar and started climbing a steep section through dense subtropical forest. The first relief from the steep climb was at a small shelf, a clearing under tall pine trees with a new water-tap. On the nearby forest grazed numerous sheep and goats from Jumla. On the way up we met many travellers, Jumlis in woollen capes and jodhpurs and Mugsals in bakkhu, returning home loaded with purchases made in Nepalganj and Rajapur. We also met a caravan of mules carrying food grains from Chisapani to Dailekh bazar. Some men travelling south carried slates from Dailekh for the new construction works in Surkhet. Up the Lohore valley, I could see Dailekh ridge far in the north, shining red ochre in the evening light. The steep section continued for another 540 meters and it was nearly dark when I reached Tal Pokhari (1580 m) on a narrow ridge. I continued in the dark along the forest trail and at spring-points were numerous travellers, some hunched beside the fire cooking their supper and others already asleep under the stars with only a blanket. I also heard tinkling of bells and a Tarai tune below the road where camped a mule caravan from the plains. It was past 9 p.m. in the forest darkness when I reached a solitary house at Gai Banya (1860 m) and found a loft to spend the night. Groups of Jumlis returning home with salt, huddled around the open fire-place in the middle of the road and sang sentimental songs. I retired early with a sparse meal and a swig of Dailekh raksi.

When I got up next morning, the Jumlis had already left and their camp-site was now littered with leaves and branches used as bed and the fire-place was a pile of ash underneath half-burnt oak logs. I followed the western flank of a south-trending ridge and as I was on the shady side, it was chilly and cold in the forest. I surprised some wild fowls on the frosty track and finally reached a sunny saddle (2280 m). The track followed the ridge of Ranimatta (2258 m) for another four kilometers and passed two recently-established apple farms on the way. To the south was a deep ravine plunging down to the Swat Khola behind the hog-back of Ramri Kanda-Gothikanda ridge. In the far north was a
high snow range while a densely-forested ridge extended eastwards from Ranimatta towards Bhimchuli (2313 m). After passing the high point of Ranimatta (2258 m), I followed the sunny eastern flank of a spur that fell into a truncated spur at Sita Paila (2040 m). In the forest path, I met two flocks of laden sheep and goats returning to Sinja valley after spending the winter in the lower Bheri (Pl. Xb). Further down near Lade (1700 m), I saw two pine martens sucking the nectar of rhododendron flowers. They had dark snouts with pointed white ears and their amber coats shone in the slanting rays of the morning sun. They shuffled nimbly using their bushy tails as a balance among the branches of the tree emblazoned red with flowers. They would use their forepaws to lower a particular overladen branch and suck fast. I held the reins of my horse marvelling at their lively activity but when they saw me, they jumped off the tree and disappeared in the forest.

The track descended steeply below Lade down a dry slope of mauve quartzites. The hillside was fenced by barbed wire for afforestation and as I arrived at Kathkuwa (1370 m), the tea-house I had visited six years earlier was gone. The villagers of Kathkuwa had been resettled elsewhere in order to conserve the upper slopes of the Itrim Khola from where Surkhet or Birendranagar drew its water source. To me, the abandoned houses of Kathkuwa overgrown with nettle weeds were reminder of the deserted village of Gothi Kanda farther west. Both villages had been victims of changing time, of the inexorable pace of development; Gothi Kanda to give birth to a new modern town and Kathkuwa to sustain and nourish it. They were now a thing of the past, to revert back to their primal verdancy while the future lay down in Birendranagar and the valley around it. I could see the changes even as I rode down through the sal forest, the much richer green mantle on the Kalimati hill, the busier airfield, more new houses in the town and a new storage tank for drinking water at the foot of the hill.

When I rode into the town, the streets were lined with young plants above which extended the electricity line. There were many more official signboards, proclaiming the profusion of administrative and development services. The number of government offices
had increased to 50 and of these 32 had been established since my last visit in 1972. In spite of the construction of numerous official buildings, the annual house rent bill for offices had increased from Rs. 1,07,305 in 1973 to Rs. 1,68,036 in 1975. The first jeep carried by a Sky Van had landed in December 1972 and the first truck by the new Kohalpur-Surkhet Road had crossed the Bheri and entered Surkhet in the winter of 1978. In the old days there were only a few bullock carts, all in Tharu villages. Now the increased construction and other activities engaged 45 carts, five of these with rubber tyres. Apart from its administrative and commercial functions, Birendranagar also claimed an incipient industrial base. While there were only two rice mills in 1972 it now had 40 small scale industries with a total investment of Rs. 1,18,380. Of these industries, 20 were established in 1974 and 19 in 1975. The industries by category were textiles (17), wood and furniture (3), rice and oil mill (6), brick and tile (3), bakery (2), and one each of lime, stationery, candle, and sweets. Surkhet, a forgotten place for nearly 600 years amidst vicissitudes of history and malaria, had now turned into a centre of new development activities.
A glimpse of the resplendent, a-glistening
Baidam, Kaski's lake;
On rumination, recollection realise
This world a deluding image.

-Folk Song.

Pokhara is a place worth visiting and ruminating. Its natural beauty has made it one of the most frequented localities outside Kathmandu Valley. In the past, if Kathmandu seemed the heart of forbidden Nepal, Pokhara was even more mysterious owing to its secluded location. Early accounts gave it a mythical air, a situation well exploited in Han Suyin’s *The Mountain Is Young* wherein ‘Bongsor Valley’ is reminiscent of Pokhara.

The earliest reference to Pokhara was made by William Kirkpatrick who visited Kathmandu in 1793; “To Pokhara; at 3 coss, cross by a wooden bridge the river Seti, a very deep, but narrow (gorge),” while describing the main route from Kathmandu to Beni. Soon after, Francis Buchanan Hamilton wrote of Pokhara as “a considerable town. ...which is a mart frequented by merchants from Nepal [Kathmandu], Palpa, Malebum & C. and afforded duties that in so poor a country were reckoned consi-
derable.” Brian Hodgson, that pioneer of Himalayan research and a prolific writer, mentioned Pokhara casually while discussing lakes in the Hamalayas, “Lakes are small and very infrequent. Three or four in Kumaon and two or three in Western Nepal [Pokra.]” Henry Ambrose Oldfield also referred to Pokhara valley as being “much larger than the Valley of Nepal [Kathmandu]... the largest of these lakes [in Pokhara] is said to be two days’ journey round.” The attractive location of Pokhara was first emphasized by D. J. F. Newall thus: “Pokra(2,600 feet) is at the foot of one of the Dhaulagiri summits (23,000 feet), whose horizontal distance is only 15 miles, with a direct altitude of 20,400 feet above it. These facts may tend to suggest the astonishing scenery that must here be presented.”

The first foreigner to visit Pokhara on record was the Japanese Buddhist scholar Ekai Kawaguchi during his clandestine trip to Tibet from Kathmandu in 1899. He reflected nostalgically that “Pokhara looked liked a town of villas at home, the site being chosen for the beauty of its natural scenery. Bamboo covered ravines, flower-roofed heights, rich in green foliage, picturesque because of its rushing and winding stream, itself set in the midst of high mountains — such were the characteristic features of Pokhara.” Kawaguchi went on to assert “that in all my travels in the Himalayas I saw no scenery so enchanting as that which enraptured me at Pokhara.” The significance of Pokhara was not lost to Perceval Landon which he referred to as the second city of Nepal outside the Kathmandu group and estimated its inhabitants at 10,000. He went on to emphasize that “It is not a place of wealth or of political importance, but its size, its fertile soil and its position on the central east-west road of Nepal combines with its official character to make it a town that is destined to play no small part in the future industrial development of Nepal.”

One might turn to Charles Bruce for whom Pokhara held a particular fascination, “There is, almost underlying this great centre [of mountains], a town and a mart which always attracted my curiosity almost beyond any other town in Nepal. No one has been there, no one has seen it, but we know that its climate is
almost tropical, that it cannot be more than 2,500 ft. in altitude, that it is on the banks of a great lake, that it is an open valley and lies almost immediately at the foot of these magnificent giants [Annapurna Himal]. Phewa Tal is the name of the lake and Pokhara that of the town. Some day and from somewhere someone will arise who will do adequate justice to what must be one of the most impressive and beautiful sights to be found in any mountain country.” The above statement may sound rhapsodic rather than realistic but the scenic grandeur enhanced by Machhapuchhre (6697 m) could alone lead a mountain lover like Bruce to muse subjectively. Even Wilfrid Noyce, another mountaineer and poet who visited Pokhara in 1957 and thought Bruce might not have been disappointed, described the view of Machhapuchhre from Pokhara as the most unbelievable and the mountain itself as one of the most beautiful mountains: “Compared to that vision the Matterhorn would have looked crude, the peerless Weisshorn a flattened lump.”

The myth of Pokhara must have overcome Tom Longstaff who after all his global ramblings still envied, “Mysterious Pokhara, tropical, low-lying by a lake and closely backed by the immense peaks of Annapurna is still beyond our ken.”* Tibor Sekelj was more fortunate and noted after his visit to Pokhara that “although it lies at the foot of mountains covered with eternal snow, we, on our way, kept seeing banana and orange trees full of golden fruit.” We finally turn to Toni Hagen, whose observations deserve special significance for his coverage of over 14,000 kilometers on foot in Nepal and as a scientist: “Pokhara area shows the greatest contrasts in landscape. Nowhere in the world, can the highest mountains reaching 8,000 meters level be admired from such a short distance and from the tropical lowland without any intermediate mountain ranges. Pokhara is certainly one of the most extraordinary and most beautiful places in the whole world.”

The accounts enumerated above amply demonstrate the

particular fascination that Pokhara Valley evoked. Some points of error as on the size of the Valley (Oldfield), identification of the mountain (Newall) and population size or soil fertility (Landon) should not detract us as the statements were based on hearsay accounts. All, however, dwell on the essential character of the area embodied in the regional importance of the town, grandeur of the mountain dominating it, relief contrast and the scenic beauty of the place. We might now turn to the geographic reality of the place in its proper perspective.

Pokhara Valley occupies the most central location in Nepal. The country extends between the longitudes 80° East and 88° and Pokhara lies at 84° East and while the Tibetan border is 72 kilometres north, the Indian border is 78 kilometers south of Pokhara. The plain of Pokhara at the base of Annapurna Himal makes a striking contrast with the rugged relief of the surrounding mountain country (Pl. XIa). About 124 square kilometers area of the longitudinal valley floor of the Seti river is filled with gravels, sand, pebbles and boulders and this diversity in content and morphology suggest a rapid deposition under diluvial conditions. The plain slopes gently downstream to the south-east and the gradient also decreases towards the same direction. The lakes are all located on the edge of the plain and they were obviously formed by the damming-up of the tributary streams by the overflow of superficial gravels along the main Seti Valley (Pl. XXXIVa). The smaller lakes are diminishing in size due to silting whereas Phewa Tal has been enlarged by damming for irrigation and power. The hills encompassing the plain vary in height from 1,200 meters in the south and east to 2,400 meters in the west and north.

The prevailing climate is humid subtropical with mean temperature above 13.3° C. and summer maximum exceeding 32.8° C. Snow falls above 2,400 meters during the winter with frosts lower down. The annual rainfall averages 2,581 mm and 82 percent of precipitation occurs during the summer monsoon. Local convection causes hailstorms in autumn and strong winds during the Spring are usual. The agricultural activity conforms
to the seasonal rhythm and vagaries of monsoon affect the farmer's prosperity or poverty. The vegetation types are zonally distributed from the tropical Shorea robusta to the sub-tropical Schima wallichii-Castanopsis indica zone to the temperate zone of oaks and rhododendrons. There are extensive grasslands on the Seti river terraces and these sometime overlap with the riverine Acacia catechu and Bombax malabaricum stands. Plantations for shade, shelter, fodder and fuel dot the settlements on the plain. Overgrazing, fire and lopping have resulted in the depletion of natural vegetation particularly in the sub-tropical zone where forests have been left only on the steeper slopes.

The highlands north of Pokhara are peopled mainly by tribal Gurungs while on the lower hills and plain, Hindu caste groups, Brahmans and Chhetris, predominate. Most of the villages are located at altitudes between 910 meters and 1,520 meters. The typical rural house is rectangular in plan, double-storeyed and thatch-roofed although some highland houses have slate-roofs. In the bazars, the houses are usually made of brick and tile. The commercial bazars are all confined to the plain along the main roads studded with old chautaras (Pl. XXXIVb). Pokhara bazar (913 m) itself is located at the junction of three roads and the houses are strung for about five kilometers along the main street. Migrations from the hills is directed towards the bazars and new settlement areas on the plain.

The hills and the plain offer different sets of problems in land use. The rural density of population is much higher on the hills than on the plain which has a very low water-table. The Seti river and its tributaries have carved deep gorges through the gravel stratum so that the plain surface is left high and dry. It is indeed a paradox that the resources of the numerous lakes abutting the plain have not been fully utilised. The idea occurred to Jang Bahadur a century ago and the mission remained unfulfilled for obvious reasons as explained by Landon: "The highest level [of the lake] is, however, so much lower than that of the valley that irrigation can only be affected by a large pumping plant. Jang Bahadur had a scheme for installing these pumps and hoped that
he might secure an annual income of thirty or forty thousand pounds thereby. But the presence of an European engineer was regarded as essential, and the traditional hatred of the presence of foreigners, even Jang Bahadur did not care to challenge." The hillsides on the other hand have been fully exploited by terrace farming in spite of the adverse slope. Traditional irrigation techniques are well-developed as paddy enjoys a premium over other crops in value. Farming is characterized by high labour input, little capital investment and low productivity. Livestock rearing is an integral part of crop farming as animals are valued both for manure and draft power. In the highlands, sheep rearing with woollen weaving is a long tradition. In some plain villages like Batulechaur and Hyangja there used to be extensive orchards of oranges.

The plentiful supply of labour consequent to small land holdings make subsidiary employment essential. Porter-work is widely accepted during the lean season and mercenary service in foreign armies still remains the most valued profession. The establishment of Indian and British pension paying camps have given much impetus to the business activity in the town. Native industries differ between the highlands and the plain according to the availability of raw materials. Apart from weaving industry, the highlanders engage in basket-making and extracting forest products. On the plain, occupational castes specialize in primary industries such as metal-works, fishing, pottery-making, and brick-making. Newly introduced industries include furniture works, rice mills, textiles and fruit-processing. Tourism that developed late has immense potentials for expansion. The northern view from the airport commands a majestic panorama of Dhaulagiri (8167 m), Annapurna South (7273 m), Annapurna I (8078 m), Machhapuchhre (6997 m), Annapurna III (7577), Annapurna IV (7524 m), Annapurna II (7937 m), Manaslu (8125 m), Himalchuli (7893 m) and Baudha (6672 m).

A study of evolution of human occupancy in the region yields interesting processes of wider application. In ecological terms, the highlands may be said to represent an area where nature is
more dominant and people try to adjust within the limit set by the physical environment. Here, there is a pronounced localization of culture patterns in spite of the long tradition of the returning Gurkhas as agents of diffusion and change. In the lower hills and on the plain, man’s conscious adaptation of nature for his own needs is more evident as exemplified by the extensive exploitation of natural vegetation. The result of the interaction between these two ecological zones has been the progressive erosion of the indigenous tribal culture to which the physical isolation of the montane habitat provides the last prop. Acculturation is conspicuous in the lower hills where downward drift of the tribals and the upward movement of the caste groups impinge. The commercial bazars are another point of cultural assimilation where an urban milieu drawn from diverse sources is in the making.

This process of culture dynamics may be correlated with changing patterns of land utilization. Change in land use is most intense in the transition zone used for grazing between farms and forests. The extension of cropland creates a chain reaction in the contraction of pasture land and consequent overgrazing of woodland. The land use sequence is mainly the clearing of overgrazed woodland for dry farming and subsequent conversion of unirrigated land for irrigation farming. There has been nearly eight percent increase in irrigated land during the period 1930-60 and the trend has been further accentuated by large-scale irrigation schemes such as the Pardi and Bijaypur projects which together have reclaimed over 4,000 hectares of land since 1961.

There is an obvious limit to the possibilities of extending arable land in the hills and this has resulted in the positive trend of population movement to the lower elevations. In fact, the highland villages represent primary nucleations of greater antiquity compared to the lowland villages which represent a secondary dispersal associated with agricultural extension. The growth of bazars represent a tertiary development in the settlement process with the progressive increase in circulation. In the turbulent past when local chieftains harboured petty rivalries, periodic religious fairs at Dhungesangu, Sunpaneli, Baidam and Satmuhane pro-
bably offered the only opportunity for peaceful exchange of goods (Pl. XIIIa). But with the stability of political organization and administration since the mid-18th century, this periodic exchange of goods was replaced by permanent commercial bazars and along with it, demographic mobility. There were various reasons for progressive increase in settlement on the plain which was once considered a negative zone of occupancy due to its humid and malarial climate. One of the main causes was the sheer increase of population in the hills and the increment was diverted to the lower elevations. This trend was accelerated by the extensive programme of malaria eradication that commenced in late 1950's. The shift from small-scale irrigation to large-scale irrigation farming with government aid also has been instrumental in upgrading the value of the plain for farming and settlement. The central function of Pokhara town and concentration of development activities close to the metropolitan area has further enhanced the relative advantage of the plain settlements.

Pokhara has been an important depot of trans-Himalayan trade as well as a staging-point for the old east-west main road. This nodal character in the circulation pattern has been a potent factor in establishing the region as a precursor of changes in Western Nepal. It is interesting to note that the introduction of modern transport system in Pokhara took place in an inverted sequence: aeroplane in 1952, jeep in 1957 and finally bullock cart in 1961! The introduction of technological innovations in the region is directly related to the various development activities. Community development programme was first started in 1953 and although its impact in rural areas has not been significant, the immediate environment of the town underwent some changes. One of the problems of urban Pokhara town is the dominance of the representatives of peripheral rural wards among the city fathers. There has been significant dispersal of built-up area on old grazing grounds. Pokhara Valley is replete with numerous new development projects. The Pardi Dam irrigates the western part of the plain while the Bijayapur canal irrigates the eastern part of the plain. A hydro-electric power station with a capacity of 1,000 kw was commissioned in 1968. There is a horticulture station,
a sheep farm, a fisheries farm, two Tibetan refugee camps, two pension paying camps, two hospitals and a college in the town.

One significant feature of the metropolitan Pokhara is the extended character of the various development units. The old nucleus of the town, determined by the bridge-crossing at Ranipouwa and the road tri-junction at Nalamukh, indicates a comparative decline over the last decade. The present metropolitan complex actually encompasses a radius of over three kilometers with three areas of distinct development. North of the town at Bagar are concentrated educational and other social service institutions like the multi-purpose high school, teacher training school, degree college, sports stadium, mission hospital and British pension paying camp. South of the town at Pardi are located the administrative colony, airfield, hotels and small industries. The third development zone lies to the east across the Seti river at Ramghat – Ranipouwa, the units being the army cantonment, tele-communications centre, a hospital, high school, Indian pension paying camp, and the sheep farm, farther south. Such a spread-out location of various activities necessitates an efficient internal circulation system which has yet to be affected. The viability of regulating such an internal link will in turn depend on the degree of external connections with outside regions. The laying-out of such an extra-regional circulation has already been completed. The 128-kilometer Sunauli-Pokhara Road (Siddhartha Rajmarg) constructed with Indian assistance and the 176 kilometer Chinese-aided Kathmandu-Pokhara Road (Prithvi Rajmarg) have far-reaching implications in the growth of Pokhara town, the center of the Western Development Region.

* * *

In February 1963, I made a brief trip to the old fortress town of Nuwakot, eighteen kilometers south of Pokhara. The Siddhartha Rajmarg had not yet reached Pokhara and I followed the old main road from Pokhara towards Butwal. The journey began at the town’s road tri-junction at Nalamukh or ‘the mouth of the water-tap’ turning south past the old brick-and-tile Newar houses of Ramakrishna Tol and the stone-walled lanes of Simalchaur.
The white pyramid of Machhapuchhre glittered white high above clumps of green bamboo, scarlet poinsettia and Erythina stricata and Salmalia malabarica in full bloom. West of Pardi I crossed an irrigation channel and the dramatic swallow holes of Pardi Khola and walked across the flats of Chhotepatan past the new refugee settlement of Tashi Ling. The pig-tailed Dokpas astride horses set against the profile of vertical conglomerate gorges evoked scenes of Red Indians from the Wild West.

I descended down the silt-covered western edge of Chhotepatan to the Phusre Khola (207 m). On the banks were piled high a dump of raw wool bound for Butwal and nearby grazed the mules that had transported them from Marpha in Thak Khola (Pl. XIIa). The road then ascended a ridge that rose steeply to the Mattikhan Danda (1533 m). The lower and steeper slopes were covered with overgrazed forest of *chilaune* (*Schima wallichii*) while there were terrace fields of maize and millet on gentler slopes. The village of Ramadi (1150 m) half-way on the climb had some elliptical houses amongst the typical rectangular ones daubed in deep ochre red (Pl. XIIb). The last 400-meters of the path was a diagonal climb across a bare slope. The north view from Mattikhan (earth quarry) encompassed the whole town of Pokhara spread between the hills of Sarankot (1591 m) and Kahun (1443 m). Phewa Tal was partly visible behind the Kalabang Danda (1310 m) and the peaks of Annapurna range dominated the northern horizon.

I walked south of Mattihan along a bare ridge between Aye-rpani and Karmidanda for two kilometers and then looked down into the headwaters of the Suraudi Khola from a southern high point on the ridge. Then it was a steep descent through sal forest with undergrowth of Callicarpa arborea and *Melastoma normale*. I crossed the source of the Suraudi Khola in a deep ravine at 914 meters and then climbed eastwards to the Gurung village of Ahale (1097 m) where I stayed at the house of Capt. Amar Singh Gurung who had been my guardian during my school days in Dehra Dun. Although millet beer and *raksi* still flowed free, the villagers were engaged in listening to the *Swasthani*
Vratkatha (Story of Goddess Swasthani), the Hindu religious text that propounds about Creation, glorification of righteous devotion and repentance, and the miraculous feats of Mahadev and Narayan. The text is read during the mc~th of Magh with a month-long fasting in honour of the Goddess Swasthani whose eight other aspects are represented by Brahmi astride a peacock, Maheswari on a bull, Kaumari on a tree, Vaishnavi and Varahi on lotus, Indrani on an elephant, Chamunda on a crouching man and Mahaluxmi on a lion. On the day I arrived at Ahale, 8th February 1963, the story had reached Chapter 30 that recounted how an irreligious Chandravati was drowned in the Sali Nadi. (In the final chapters, she is redeemed from purgatory by her conversion to religious devotion). The Swasthani devotion at Ahale indicated to me that the Gurungs here, long removed from their tribal homes in the northern highlands, had been greatly influenced by Hinduism.

Next day, I climbed a ridge that rose west towards the historic Nuwakot fort (1535 m). It was a steady climb of nearly 450 meters over an open ridge. The path was laid with stone steps and large stone platforms marked important vantage-points. The summit had been levelled to form a small platform with steep rocky faces on the south, west and north. The place was now overgrown with weeds and trees but in the center, the stone wall of the old fort was still intact. The ground plan of the fort was a well-designed quadrate-cross with twelve corners and triangular peep-holes on the farthest walls at the four cardinal points. The wall was about 1.52 meters high with a thickness of 0.45 meters and the inner courtyard was 3.6 meters square. A shrine marked with a trident was located on the south wall. The peep-holes were carefully sighted with a sweeping view of various approaches and the one to the south was particularly suited to survey the Andhi Khola Valley up which had come many conquistadors in the past. I could see below the small village of Syangja (850 m), which was later to surpass Nuwakot as a town, and below it on the sandbanks of the Andhi Khola, was a long row of Thakali bhattis (inns) at Patalikhet on the main cross-road leading up to Pokhara via Nuwakot and further west to Baglung
and Thak Khola. Outside the fort was a wooden pillar (maulo) where during Chaite Dasain and Dasain, animals are tied and sacrificed (Pl. XXXVIa).

Nuwakot occupies a strategic location in an area where there were numerous petty chiefs during the medieval time. The descendants of Jain Khan of Bhirkot ruled over the four principalities of Bhirkot, Garhun, Sataun and Nuwakot from the beginning of the 16th century. The first ruler of Nuwakot is said to be Mirhanucha and while one of his sons, Bichitra Khan, became the ruler of Kaski, his son Yasobrahm, was later installed as the chief of Lamjung. The Khan lineage of Bhirkot and Nuwakot became Shahi kings in Kaski and Lamjung and expanded further east as Shah rulers to Gorkha, Nuwakot and finally Kathmandu. During the phase of western expansion of the Gorkhali kingdom under Prithvi Narayan Shah, Nuwakot was first attacked in 1772 under a force led by Bansraj Pande, Kahar Singh Basnet and Prabhu Malla and they were defeated by a combined force of Nuwakot, Sataun and Parbat. Much strengthened after the conquest of Tanahu and Lamjung, the Gorkhalis returned later and attacked with a larger force and captured Nuwakot in 1785. And Nuwakot which means ‘new fort’ that had seen better days was on the way of becoming a forgotten place. The historic place had already an air of abandonment and renunciation when I visited it. Though it remained the headquarters of district West No. 4 and later the Syangja district with a revenue office and jail until the late 1960’s, shortage of drinking water and new developments generated by the new highway (Siddhartha Rajmarg) along the Andhi Khola below has led to its further decline.

I walked down the Nuwakot ridge with heavy thoughts of the past drama that must have been enacted on its slopes and returned to Ahale for the night. Next day, I left Ahale and returned to Mattikhan (1533m) ridge. Instead of taking the easier descent along the earlier route I had come, I turned east along a ridge to a small knoll (1188 m) south of the confluence of the Phusre Khola and the Pardi Khola. Here also there was a short-cut track descending north with a flight of stone steps on steeper sections towards
the Phusre Khola and Pokhara. I instead turned eastwards intending to traverse the entire length of the Phoksing-Barsami ridge that confined Pokhara valley from the south. The ridge I planned to follow extended north-west / south-east for 16 kilometers from a hillock (1188 m) to Anpu (1066 m) with an average height of 1,000 meters between the Seti river to the north and the Suraudi Khola to the south. It was an emphatic hog-back ridge with its steep north slope along a geological fault facing towards Pokhara. It was composed of green phyllites and sandstones that dipped south and the slope varied from an average 24 degrees on the south dip slope to an average of 30 degrees on the north escarp slope.

The Phoksing ridge exhibited a strong influence of topography on land use pattern. The ridge top was bare and fields were located on the south slope while the steeper shady north slope was forested with subtropical trees *katus* (Castanopsis indica) and *chilaune* (Schima wallichii). Sal was found only on the slopes of Anpu hill in the extreme east and I came across a fine old *chap* (Michelia excelsa) tree at Barsami (1106 m), obviously a relict of the past larger forest cover. The lower base of the ridge provided an equally interesting geomorphological contrast. On the south side, the lower slopes merged imperceptibly into the northern flank of the Suraudi Khola (600 m) while on the north side, the escarp slope met the level terrace of the Pokhara gravels at about 760 meters in a sharp angle. The villages were located on the higher section of the south slope with dry fields of maize and millet while paddy fields were located down in the Suraudi valley.

Four kilometers east of the hillock (1188 m), I arrived at Phoksing (1134 m) that provided an excellent view of the entire Pokhara valley spread below the Annapurna range. Due north of Phoksing and across the Phusre Khola was the level terrace of Dhungesangu and through a deep cleft in the gravel cliff issued the milky water of the Seti river. Beyond it, I could trace the gorge alignment of the river and the distinct alluvial cone on which Pokhara town is situated between the Sarankot
and Kahun Danda. South-west of the town, the ground descended through dispersed farms of Simalchaur and Baidam towards the blue waters of Phewa Tal and towards the north-east, the level valley was a brown expanse of grass and harvested fields. The monotony of the valley floor was broken by the wooded hills of Dhungesangu, Rithepani and Bhanadik that rose like islands above the level ground. The plain fell off towards the Seti river to the south through a series of grassy terraces with pure stands of Acacia catechu near the river level. Above the valley rose layers of forested ridges and high above them and on the northern horizon was a white wall of numerous snow peaks each with a personality of its own. The first one on the left was the lion-headed Annapurna South (7195 m) leading to its eastern satellite Hiunchuli peak (6700 m). Behind the cone of Hiunchuli, the steep south face of Annapurna I (8078 m) swept up majestically while on the center stage stood the sharp pyramid of Machhapuchhre (6697 m) supported by two symmetrical buttresses. East of Machhapuchhre heaved the elephant hump of Annapurna III (7577 m) and beyond its eastern saddle rose Annapurna IV (7507 m) with a contorted pinnacle, close to Annapurna II (7937 m) like a taut black tent. Further east was Lamjung Himal (6985 m) which the locals liken to a reclining man and then the range dropped at the low saddle of Namun Bhanjyang (5100 m) and petered out among the jagged ridge of Sundar Himal (4355 m). Farther beyond the immediate Annapurna range, Dhaulagiri raised its massive head in the west, and to the east appeared the summits of Manaslu (8125 m), Peak 29 (7835 m), Himalchuli (7893 m) and even Ganesh Himal (7406 m). The Phoksing vantage-point is only about seven kilometers south of the Pokhara airport and can be reached by crossing Phusre Khola below Dhungesangu with a natural bridge over the Seti river.

The track continued east along the ridge to Barsami (1106 m) named after a fine Ficus benjamina (swami) tree shading a chautara at the crossing of the ridge track and a north-south track. The latter track, from Chirgadi bridge over the Seti river, leads south to Keladighat ferry over the Kali Gandaki and then to Butwal. I rested at the Barsami chautara reminiscing on my
first visit here in the summer of 1952 while returning to my Jullunder school from home. There were numerous villages on the south slopes of the ridge between Barsami and Dharapani. I then descended through a pure stand of sal and reached Anpu Bhanjyang (790 m) on a low saddle between Dharapani and Anpu hill (1030 m).

Clouds hung over the mountains to the north but Anpu Bhanjyang provided a good view of the eastern lake Bengas Tal bounded to the south by extensive paddy fields with numerous cattle grazing on stubbles. It was dusk when I walked down to the level terrace of Chirgadi. I walked seven kilometers over the river terrace through stands of simal and bushes of Zizyphus jujuba while jackals howled on the banks of the Seti river. When I reached a bridge-point near the confluence of the Seti river and the Phusre Kholā in the dark, there were some wood-cutters. I had to wait for my turn to cross the temporary bamboo bridge among men and women with loads of fuel-wood. They had come from villages near Pokhara town to collect fire-wood in the Barsami forest at an untimely hour to avoid the forest guards. The clandestine operation was well paid in the town where fuel was scarce. I had good company on the long night trek across the Lampatan or ‘the long plain’ to the town.

In April 1963, I trekked to Siklis, one of the largest Gurung villages, about 24 kilometers north-east of Pokhara. We left Ramghat on April 12th, travelling north past the small spring of Matepani (853 m) and millet fields of Phulbari (883 m) at the base of Kahun hill (1442 m). We soon reached a narrow path along the face of a stone quarry overlooking the Seti river and flights of river terraces across it. The quarry was on phyllitic rock that dipped 39 degrees to the south and on the top terrace of Bhimpatan perched a huge erratic boulder known as Bhimdhunga (Bhimsen’s stone) after the Hercules of the Mahabharat epic. The Seti river issued out of a narrow cleft on a cliff face of the gravel terrace and a kilometer down re-entered another deep gorge.
The Kali Khola from the north and the Bhalam Khola from the east meandered across sandy flats to join the Seti river nearby.

We turned east along the forested north slope of Kahun hill overlooking a high terrace bench north of the Bhalam Khola. We then climbed to Rayelchaur chautara on a ridge (1091 m) between the Bhalam Khola and the Kahun Khola that irrigates the plain of Kundahar. At this time of the year, both streams were choked with enormous amount of sand and pebble debris and it was hot. The path ascended north-east of the Kahun Khola to the Brahmin village of Bisauna and after a further climb of 300 meters through fallow fields and overgrazed forest, we reached Antighar (1751 m) on a high ridge. The village named after its first eight houses (‘Ath Ghar’) had many more Gurung houses mostly with slate roofs. A drinking water scheme had just been completed with government aid in pipes worth Rs. 6,000 and local cash contribution of another Rs. 6,000. There was a shrine of Sansari Devi, a deity much revered by the Gurkhas in Dehra Dun that had been established by Capt. Manbir Gurung in 1954; and around it were planted young Pinus longifolia also brought from Dehra Dun. Antighar provided a good view of the Pokhara plain to the south and the Kaski ridge with an emphatic north escarp face towards the west.

After a brief rest at Antighar, we walked east through Mauja (1371 m), another large Gurung village, and reached the Gyaunje Khola which is called Bijayapur Khola lower down. We crossed a log-bridge (1127 m) and turned east up a dolomite ridge to Thak (1554 m). It is a Gurung village located at the lower end of a forested ridge overlooking the Madi Khola to the east. The houses were solidly-built with stone walls and slate roofs and the row of enormous copper jars on the verandah reflected the economic status of individual households. Thak village was later the subject of an intensive study in resource management by Alan MacFarlane and his book Resources and Population: a Study of Gurungs in Nepal is a serious piece of interdisciplinary research combining demography and social anthropology. He traces the growth of the village population since 1820–21 from the manuscript records
of Brian Hodgson and relates it to the progressive depletion of natural resources and draws a precarious economic prospect in spite of the infusion of external capital in terms of pension and salary from army service.

Next day, we left Thak by traversing a north-facing slope and reached Taprang (1670 m) in two hours after crossing a plunging stream, Andheri Khola. Taprang with both Gurung and Brahmin houses is the northern-most intrusion and highest settlement of Brahmins in the Madi valley. They grow maize and millet near the village and paddy 600 meters below in the Madi valley. The eastern peaks of Annapurna range were hidden behind the clouds. We walked down a long flight of terrace fields along the dip slope of crystalline schist to a chautara with a tea-shop near the confluence of the Madi river and one of its western tributaries the Chipli Khola. Broad sweeping slopes rose on either side of the Madi and villages were perched on high shoulders. We followed the west bank of the river for a kilometer and leaving the higher road to Parje, continued north towards Siklis. At 1,752 meters, we came to a spring beside a chautara shaded by a lankuri (Fraxinus floribunda) tree and we knew we were now above the sub-tropical level of Ficus trees. We had the first glimpse of Siklis village from the chautara but there was still a climb of another 200 meters to the village. When we reached the village in the evening, I realised from the conversation of the villagers that our visit was not appreciated. They spoke in Gurung language thinking that I, with my trekking gear, jockey cap and rucksack, was a Japanese climber. I later learnt that we had arrived at the time of ripening of barley and custom forbade entry of outsiders for fear of hailstones despoiling their crop. I was told that the village had fined a Japanese mountaineering expedition to Annapurna IV a few years ago for trespassing the village during the period of embargo. The village headman was relieved when I introduced myself as a native from the neighbouring district of Lamjung.

Siklis village (1981 m) was a compact group of more than 400 houses on an east-facing slope. Most of the houses were thatch-
roofed and on the small courtyards sat women, weaving blankets and *bakkhu* (caped cover). The blankets were made in black and white cross pattern while the *bakkhu* had linear stripes of black, grey and white conforming to the natural colours of the sheep wool. The village was divided into six quarters called Lamathar, Dhaprang, Gairi, Kuine, Sabha and Harpu and had eight *taluqdars* (revenue-collectors). Many households had army pensioners and some still in active service in India and Malaysia. The village was flanked by two streams, Chhodi and Chyodo and while the former to the south had 15 water-mills for winter the latter to the north had 20 water-mills that ran throughout the year. Siklis is considered one of the early Gurung settlements on the south slopes of the Annapurna Himal from where they later spread out to lower hills. In the past, Siklis provided access to the Namun Bhanjyang (5200m), 18 kilometers to the north-east across which people travelled north to Manang to procure Tibetan salt. Khilang (1670 m), Tangting (1676 m), and Yangjakot (1520 m) are other large Gurung villages in the upper Madi valley.

On the morning of April 14, I climbed to a spot-height of 2,356 meters on a ridge above the village and had a close view of the mountains. Annapurna IV (7507 m) appeared behind a sharp rock pinnacle only twenty kilometers due north and between it and another peak of 6,208 meters to the east was a deep valley filled with overhanging glaciers. Farther east, Annapurna II (7937 m) reared its dark crest of paragneiss above the hump of Lamjung Himal whose steep south face plunged 4,400 meters down to the Madi Khola. The lower slopes were covered with green mantle of dense forest confining the deep Madi gorge. I returned to the village and after lunch at the house of *mukhiya* (headman) Ratna Gurung, left Siklis about noon.

We walked south to Parje (1920 m), looking towards the deep valley of the Madi down which the river meandered south as a white ribbon under the pale April haze. Beyond Parje, we turned a deep recess with numerous waterfalls and then made an easy traverse to the village of Khilang (1740 m). It was a large village spread on a south-facing slope with extensive fields.
A track descended steeply over 600 meters to the paddy fields down below in the Madi river. The fields were dotted with dumps of cattle dung in preparation for the maize. We stayed in the house of mukhiya Dhan Bahadur Gurung and the day being the Nepali New Year of 2020, a Teh Lab ceremony for the welfare of the house was in progress. The ceremony held under a bamboo-mat on the courtyard was officiated by five Klipres (gyabre), tribal priests, with oral invocation to the timing of a gna (one-faced drum) and cymbals. The center-piece of the ritual was a large bow on whose taut string, the chief Klipre beat a symbolic arrow after every canto that gave a hint to the past hunting heritage of the Gurungs (Pl. XXXVa). Near the ceremonial bow were a bowl of grain, a bamboo basket with pheasant feathers and an earthen-pot on an iron tripod. When the recitation reached its finale, one of the Klipre sent fire flames out of the earthen-pot which contained strong raksi, local spirit. He repeated the performance several times that much impressed the onlookers.

After the Teh Lab ceremony followed by raksi and millet beer, a ghantu dance was arranged in my honour. Ghantu is a Gurung ritual dance-drama about a mythical king Pasramu and his devoted queen Ambavati. One day, the queen engaged in make-up in her boudoir sees in her mirror a reflection of her royal husband slain in a battlefield and she immolates herself in the fire. The earlier passages describe methods of raising flowers and weaving of bamboo baskets or the flower offerings. Although ghantu is a distinctive song and dance of the Gurungs, the name of the lead characters, custom of sati and sanctity of cow-dung seem to be Hinduistic importations into a native folk culture. The ghantu dance at Khilang began with prayers to the mountain gods and Saraswati, goddess of music and the madal drum. Two girls danced in slow motion to the rhythm of the drum and song of the teacher and later they seemed to be dancing in a trance. The full epic of ghantu takes nearly a month to play starting from the Sripanchami day of the beginning of the Spring to Buddha Jayanti during the Baisakh full moon.

Next day, we left early from Khilang and traversed west
along the north slopes of the Chipli Khola. The narrow track traversed across numerous steep gullies for six kilometers and we finally reached Chipli village (1737 m) at the head of a valley. We crossed a stream and entered an oak forest with dense undergrowth of Arundinaria bamboo. It was a long ascent of more than 900 meters to a forested ridge that formed the watershed between the Madi Khola and the Seti river. Here, one trail led north and west to Khadarjung in the Seti valley across a 2,590 meters saddle and another turned south. We followed the southern trail and made to a high ridge (2650 m) and turned due south. On the four-kilometer-long ridge track, we passed a stone rest-hut at 2,325 meters and met some goths (cattle shed) in the oak forest. We were denied good views from the ridge by low clouds and a heavy shower. We joined a group of men carrying loads of Arundinaria bamboo to be made into mats and wicker baskets. We left the ridge at 1,980 meters and descended by the western flank of Chohko Danda (2140 m) and reached Armala village. Armala (1430 m) on the dip slope of an east-west ridge was a large Gurung village with stone-roofed houses. The village faced directly north towards Machhapuchhre and from its ruined kot (fort) one could have a bird's eye-view of the whole Pokhara town and Nuwakot further south. We left Armala the following morning, April 16th, descending north through the village of Lower Armala (10161 m) of Brahmins and Chhetris and then to the Kali Khola. We crossed the stream, visited the small limestone cavern at Batulechaur (975m) and reached Pokhara town by noon.

Ghandruk is another large village about 26 kilometers north west of Pokhara in the upper Modi valley. Modi and Madi are subtle variations of the same word and the suffix ‘di’ common to rivers of western Nepal is derived from Magar language in which ‘di’ means water. The river names with ‘di’ in western Nepal and place names ‘bang’ in far west Nepal in areas where there are no Magar settlements at present pose an interesting question in Nepalese cultural history. On the other hand, places in Kaski and Lamjung generally have two names, one in Gurung and the other
in Nepali. Thus Siklis is Chili and Ghandruk is Kond in Gurung language. Other sample place-names in Gurung language are: Paje for Parje, Khilung (Khilang), Mhuja (Mauja), Nwal (Armala), Bijk (Bijaypur), Sabe (Sabet), Thonsu (Thak) and Chhaaju (Chhachok).

I had heard much about Ghandruk and the opportunity to visit it came in March 1967. Claire Geddes, daughter of my Edinburgh teacher and keenly interested in trekking and mountaineering, arrived in Kathmandu on a week's holiday from India. I settled on the Ghandruk trek for its proximity to the mountains. We flew to Pokhara and stayed at the lodge run by the tourist department. The following day, March 2nd, we left Pokhara and walked north along the main caravan trail that leads to Thak Khola. We first passed the stone quarry north of the town and above the road on the left were traces of an old irrigation channel cut across the rock face. We then crossed the boulder-strewn Yangdi Khola and climbed the first river terrace on the west side of the Seti river. The Tibetan refugee camp (875 m), mainly of Dokpas, on the terrace and which I had visited earlier in 1962 was now a well-established village with the greenery of banana trees and forest of prayer flags. We climbed another steep trail up a gully across a boulder-conglomerate cliff and reached the higher terrace at Lower Hyangja (1041 m). Two kilometers further was Upper Hyangja (1066 m) and the two Hyangjas inhabited by Brahmins and Chhetris merged into a wide expanse of millet fields, orange trees and dotted with delightful pink red houses. On the village street, we met a caravan of mules carrying grains north to Thak Khola and also a flock of sheep and goats bought in Ghandruk, that was being driven to a government farm near Nawakot north of Kathmandu.

West of Upper Hyangja, a level flood-plain of the Yangdi Khola spread in front of us. The plain was confined into an anticlinal valley between the steep escarp faces of the Kaski ridge and Dhampus ridge. We walked west across fields with some Thakali bhatti (inn) and we had tea in one of them. The bhatti is a simple shed of bamboo mats tended by women and the clean-
liness of the kitchen and charming service are tempting to tired travellers. They normally sprout up after the paddy harvest and do brisk business through the winter until the owners fold up the establishment to return home to Thak Khola to harvest their buckwheat. The long series of bhattis along the old main trail between Pokhara and Butwal has been dislocated by the construction of the highway and the rent for the use of paddy field for bhatti that once used to be paid in Tibetan salt has now been replaced by cash.

We walked along the paddy fields for two kilometers and then reached Suikhet (1127 m) on the valley floor of the Yangdi river. To our left, a forested slope rose direct to the rocky summit of Kaskikot (1788 m). After walking three kilometers across the hot boulder and gravel path, we climbed west across a slope on the north side of the valley. There were some abandoned fields overgrown with mature stands of Schima wallichii and the forest path led to a high shelf with Dhampus Phedigaon (1370 m). The Gurung houses of Phedigaon, white-washed and slate-roofed, were a contrast to the red, thatched houses of Hyangja. We passed the village spring and crossed over a ridge to Dhampus Dandagaon (1700 m) with 180 houses amidst terrace fields of barley and mustard (Pl. XIIIb). The village had 150 men serving in foreign armies including 18 in the Singapore Police. I also learnt that the progressive villagers had abolished the custom of rodi (singing house) as it conflicted with the evening literacy classes and the traditional five-day pai or arghun (death ceremony) had been condensed into an one-day affair to cut extravagant expenses.

On March 3rd, we left Dhampus and followed the ridge towards the west. We had good views of the Mardi Khola and Machhapuchhre with its twin summit. There was a small ruined kot (fort) with a moat around it on a ridge prominence. We turned north along the eastern flank of the ridge and entered an oak and rhododendron forest. We had then to climb a north-south ridge (2010 m) that separates the waters of the Mardi and the Modi. From the ridge, the two pinnacles of Machhapuchhre appeared even more prominent as the forked tail of a diving fish
The track followed the ridge towards the north for a kilometer and then across a lateral spur down to a stream above Bhichok. We saw some goth (cattle-shed) in small clearings in the oak and rhododendron forest. We traversed two more lateral spurs and across the Modi river were the villages of Dansing Mohariya and Kimche on open slopes with terraces descending to the river. The main Annapurna peak was hidden behind the hump of the Hiunchuli. We reached Landruk village (1610 m) located on a steep slope and rested for an hour. The view northwards presented a series of interlocking spurs and Ghandruk, our destination, was perched high across the river.

From Landruk we made a direct descent to a log-bridge over the Modi river (1180 m) and it was an equally steep climb on the west slope. We rested frequently on the 800 meters uphill trail and it was nearly dusk when we made to the main path linking Ghandruk with the south. The path was wide, paved with enormous stone slabs all the way to the village. Following the gently rising lateral path, we turned a ridge and came to a small stream lined with water-mills, reminiscent of my entry to Siklis a few years earlier. It was already dark when we reached the first houses on the roadside. The large house at the village entrance was locked and we found an adjacent house to spend the night. The locked house belonged to a person who had migrated to Sharanagar (Chitawan) and the same house with Annapurna South as backdrop was later to become famous in picture postcards and even appeared on a Rs. 1,000 denomination bank note.

Next morning, we walked through the stone-paved intricate lanes of the large village. The houses were built of well-chiselled stones and roofed with slate. Dark-coloured doors and windows stood out against the white-washed walls and the courtyards were all paved with flat stones. The village is also called Ghandruk Satsaya (Ghandruk seven hundred), some say because of 700 houses, but I found there were no more than 300 houses. Still it was a sizable settlement in such a remote valley and although smaller than Siklis in the number of houses, the slate-roofed Ghandruk houses looked more prosperous. Similar to Siklis,
the village has six sections: Kotgaon, Tallogaon, Majghaon, Kyauthar and Barathar. The village is spread over a gently north-dipping slope of crystalline schist with some quartzites and provides a close-up view of the Annapurna South and Machhapuchhre. The villagers were used to British Gurkha officers touring these villages that had numerous pensioners and many in active service. They were however surprised to see Claire, a young girl on the trail and they took me to be her Sherpa guide. The phase of young trekkers travelling alone in remote places had not arrived Ghandruk yet.

We walked two kilometers north of the village to a narrow ridge overlooking the Modi valley. The weather was not encouraging with low clouds but we still had a glimpse of Machhapuchhre peak rising steeply up the Modi gorge. Annapurna South and its satellite Hiunchuli (6336 m) appeared as a sheer wall of rock and snow just 14 kilometers north of us. The Modi valley upstream was a narrow gorge confined by steep rock walls and until 1956 the secrets above were the preserve of Gurung shepherds. When J. O. M. Roberts first explored the upper valley in April, 1956 no men of menial caste, meat and eggs were allowed above the gorge. The amphitheatre at the head of the Modi ringed clockwise by Hiunchuli (6336 m), Annapurna South (7273 m), ‘Fang’ (7647 m), Annapurna I (8091 m), Glacier Dome (7193 m), Gangapurna (7454 m), Annapurna III (7555 m) and Machhapuchhre (6697 m) has since become more famous as the Annapurna Sanctuary and is now frequented by numerous trekkers and climbers.

We turned back from the ridge to the village and had tea at a Thakali shop. We left Ghandruk late in the afternoon, scanning down on the tiny fields and houses of Landruk on the opposite slope and the forest path we had travelled the previous day. On the way down to Kimche, Phulbang and Mohariya, across open slopes and narrow ravines, the prospect of the Modi river and villages across it seemed a replica of my earlier trek from Siklis to Khilang. High snow mountains to the north, large villages at the head of a south-trending valley drained by rivers of the same name, oak- and rhododendron-covered ridges,
compact Gurung villages surrounded by dry fields and paddy terraces down to the river reinforced the similarity between the Madi valley of Siklis and the Modi valley of Ghandruk. We arrived at Mohariya (1820 m) and stayed at the house of Capt. Tej Bahadur Gurung whom I had known from my school days in Dehra Dun. Mohariya village was the scene of a field study in Gurung economy, society and religion by Bernard Pignede in 1958 (Les Gurungs: une population himalayenne du Nepal) and his detailed description of religious practices revealed a unique co-existence of Hindu priest, Buddhist lama, tribal Klipre and Pochyu and even Dhami sorcerer in the Gurung society.

The following morning, we had another close look at the Annapurna South and Machhapuchhre peaks from Mohariya and then walked down to Dansing (1730 m). The village was located on a steep south-facing slope and overlooked the lower Modi valley. We had lunch at the house of Capt. Birta Singh Gurung with whom I used to stay during school vacations in Dehra Dun. In addition to an Order of British India and a Military Cross, he had also been decorated with a Russian Star during the Second World War in the Burma front. The hills of Nepal contain many a gallant men like him with wide worldly experience but at last glad to be back home to be at peace with one’s own people and place.

We left Dansing about noon and descended a steep path to Birethanti at the confluence of the Madi Khola and the Bhurundi Khola. The Bhurundi is a small stream descending from the dense forest of Ghorepani but it is an important ethnic boundary between the eastern Gurungs and western Magars. At Birethanti (1188 m) we found 11 Thakali houses, a school and a suspension bridge over the Madi river. We crossed the bridge and climbed east up a forested slope. We met numerous caravans of mules decked out in bright red tassels carrying grains to Thak Khola and the tinkle of their bells resounded in the forest. After a climb of 450 meters, the forest gave way to cultivated fields of Lumle (1520 m). Above Lumle, we re-entered an overgrazed rhododendron forest and reached Kande pass (1700 m). A new agricultural
farm with British assistance was being laid out on a south-facing slope just north of the pass. We left the Modi watershed and turned east along the north slope of a ridge leading to Kaskikot and Sarankot. Four kilometers from Kande, we reached Nagdanda on the Kaski ridge and found a bhatti to spend the night.

Nagdanda (1443 m) which means a ridge like a sharp nose is generally confused with Naudanda (Nine ridges) of Syangja. Next morning, March 6th, we got up early to enjoy the magnificent views of the mountains. Below us and across the deep valley of the Yangdi was Dhampus Phedigaon we had passed on the first day. Above it rose the Dhampus Danda (2155 m) and further north Annapurna I was just visible over a saddle between Annapurna South and Hiunchuli and the center stage was dominated by the impressive pyramid of Machhapuchhre. Farther east, the peaks of Annapurna IV and Annapurna II stood high above blue ridges across the Seti valley.

There are two approaches from Nagdanda to Pokhara. The traditional winter route descends to the Yandgi Khola and follows the valley floor across Suikhet and Hyangja while the summer route traverses along the Kaski ridge and descends to the town from Sarankot. Since we had already travelled part of the lower route, we took the ridge road. In contrast to the steep, forested north slope, the south slope of the Kaski ridge was bare and dry with a gentle slope of average 17 degrees studded with numerous dispersed villages of Brahmins and Chhetris. The presence of many dried water tanks and abandoned fields now overgrown with weeds indicated progressive dessication of the ridge with deforestation. Towards the south, we could see the expanse of Phewa Tal but the large floodplain of gravel and silt at its head waters was another proof of the extensive erosion in the area. We also visited the old kots (forts) of Kaski (1788 m) and Sarankot (1591 m) that provided a bird’s eye-view of Hyangja plain. Kaskikot had a small stone shrine and maulo for animal sacrifices during Dasain and that at Sarankot had a stone wall around the kot shrine. It is said that the early rulers of Kaski used to move between Kaskikot in summer and Batulechaur.
(975 m) in winter and the extensive orange orchards and the large village of Gaine (minstrels) at Batulechaur are credited to the past royal patronage. We descended a winding track from Sarankot to the town beside the Bindubasini shrine (912 m). We had only a few days brief trek but Claire thought that it was a revelation to a new world. Next day while Claire flew to Bhairawa to join her university assignment in Lucknow, I flew east to Kathmandu.
CHAPTER TEN

LAMJUNG: A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

Oh my master, do come, come dancing, Ye my teacher,
Holder of the golden drum and striker,
Do come and possess my body.
Ye, who dwell in the plain
and unto the mountain
Ye, the wanderer of waterfalls
Ye, that haunt wild forests and yawning cliffs!

—Jhankri invocation

Lamjung: a mere place-name somewhere up north to many and a word-sound that may conjure up shamanistic charms on others. Lamjung, said to have been derived from Lama-dzong or the castle of great Lama, holds a special fascination for me, it being my native locality. In prosaic geographical terms, it is the name of an administrative district lying between Gorkha and Kaski in west Nepal. The district has an area of 4,000 square kilometers and a population of 130,650 (1961). The northern frontier of the district is dominated by high mountains—Annapurna II, Lamjung Himal, Manaslu and Himalchuli. Through this amphitheatre of refulgent peaks, meanders south the Marsyangdi river that is joined by numerous tributary streams: Madi, Khudi
Ngadi, Dordi and Chepe. The landscape is one of steep slopes and deep valleys flanked by long ridges. In cultural context, the higher northern part of the district is inhabited by tribal Gurungs and in the southern lower hills and valleys, the Brahmins and Chhetris predominate.

It was a fine October morning in 1966 when I took off from Kathmandu for Pokhara en route to Lamjung. By the time the aircraft was 900 meters above the ground, I could see the summit of Himalchuli far above Nagarjun ridge beckoning me thither, for it is at the southern base of Himalchuli that my village lies. The aircraft landed at Pokhara 45 minutes later but only after feasting me the grand view of a procession of snow ranges. East to west Langtang (7246 m), Ganesh (7406 m), Himalchuli (7893 m), Manalsu (8125 m) and Annapurna Himal provided a panorama of white peaks against the blue autumn sky. The snow ranges heightened by intervening foggy gorges seemed to float in the thin air and although we were flying about 50 kilometers parallel south of the Himalayan crest-line, they looked so near. And when I reached Pokhara, the Annapurna range now shorn of its heavenly myth, was a stupendous wall of rock and ice dominating the northern horizon.

But Pokhara, that enchanting vale of lakes, lies in Kaski district. My own village Taranche was another three day’s journey to the north-east in the Marsyangdi valley. The usual main road to Lamjung is eastwards across the plain of Pokhara and along the Pachbhaiya Danda (853 m) between the lakes Begnas and Rupa Tal. I took a more northerly direct route along the Arghoun Danda (1432 m) as I was in a hurry to be home for the Dasain festival. I travelled alone with a heavy rucksack and turned east of Kundahar (853 m) and this time I was careful to choose my path well. Eleven years earlier as a school boy, I had lost my way on the Pokhara plain during a similar jaunt alone towards home. It was the monsoon season of heavy rains and thick mists and the path passed through wet paddy fields and tall stands of maize. There were few travellers on the road during this busy season and I had to enquire about the road directions at the few
tea shops. From Kundahar, I had made to the dam-site at the Bija-
yapur Khola and instead of turning east along Kandani Danda ridge, I followed the canal bank towards the south-east. When I enquired at Arghoun Pouwa about the road to Khudi, the small bazar nearest to my village, the people directed me further south to another Khudi. I reached Khudi after missing the Lamjung road that turned east from Sisuwa and I found it to be a small roadside settlement of Kumals (potters) on the eastern end of the Pokhara plain. The Kumals redirected me north to Pachabhaiya.

I climbed to Pachbhaiya Danda through maize fields and wet forest in drenching rain. I reached the shrine on the ridge path but the lakes were hidden deep in the dank mist. I must have been tired and exhausted as on reaching the shrine, I followed down a path which later turned out to be only leading back to Pokhara. It was with utter resignation that I climbed back to the ridge-shrine and followed north-east towards the Tal Khola at the head of the Rupa Tal. The frequent loss of way on the Pokhara plain had cost me nearly five hours and the school-boy adventurer had to cry numerous times.

This time I was going to be more cautious and I was no more a schoolboy on a rash adventure. I had my new route well laid-out in advance on a large-scale map. I crossed the Bijaaypur Khola near the irrigation dam and climbed to the Brahmin village of Kandani Danda and then followed the ridge eastwards past Arghoun village, the birth-place of the Nepali poet laureate Lekh Nath Poudyal and rested at a chautara on Arghoun Danda (1418 m). I could look down on the Khalte Tal, a small lake to the west and the larger Begnas Tal to the east as well as the plain villages of Arghoun Pouwa, Sisuwa and Khudi, on whose vast expanse of paddy and maize fields I had lost my way in 1955. Across the Begnas Tal was Pachbhaiya Danda which I remember from an even earlier incident. In 1952, when I and my younger brother were returning to our school in Dehra Dun after summer vacation with a soldier uncle, we met at Pachbhaiya a young wealthy Newar of our age riding to his school in Pokhara. When he stopped his horse on the road and began to ask us the meaning of some English
words such as jackal, tiger and peacock to show off his knowledge and education, I let my younger brother deal with his elementary English. I considered it below my dignity to debate with a novice as I was already familiar with Emil Ludwig’s biographies of Napoleon, Bismarck and the Nile. Brother Narayan was adequate to the occasion and years later when I joined the only college in Kathmandu, I tried hard to seek out this young Newar among my class-mates but our early encounter on the road had been too brief and I could not recall his face. However, I still vividly remember his arrogant attitude, the old chilaune tree that shaded us and the pink phyllite pebbles on which we stood whenever I pass or see Pachbhhaiya Danda.

I followed a narrow trail across a steep rocky face and was caught in a heavy shower. The blanket I carried over the rucksack soon became wet and heavy and the downhill descent along the forest path below Majhthan saddle (1060 m) was virtually under the impetus of the heavy load. I reached the Madi Khola about noon and entered Lamjung district by crossing a bridge at Bhagwatitar (670 m). The Madi Khola forms the boundary between Kaski and Lamjung district and it was while crossing the same Madi at Bhorletar, 19 kilometers downstream, that I had to exert all my youthful determination in 1955. After losing my way at Bijaypur, Khudi and Pachbhaiya, I had arrived at the western bank of the Madi only to find the suspension bridge in a precarious situation. The Majhis (fishermen) of Bhorletar had decreed it so as they could earn more money by ferrying the people on their boats. When one of them approached to ferry me with an exhorbitant fee, I declined and turned on the bridge and it was with great difficulty and risk that I managed to cross the bridge (Chap. VII).

I was relieved that the bridge at Bhagwatitar was a safe one with a short span of solid timber beams. I waited at one of the tea-shops for the rain to stop. It cleared late in the afternoon and I started down the Madi Khola. The path was through a low valley with numerous wet gullies from the north. I followed the north bank of the river for nine kilometers as far as Thadikhoriya.
(580 m). It was getting dark and I climbed north across a new clearing looking for signs of habitation. Then sniffing some smoke in the air, I left the track towards an open slope only to run into a tent with a British couple with two children. They had left Pokhara the day before and the young subaltern leave from the Brigade of Gurkhas in Malaysia was visiting villages of some of his comrades-in-arm. His was also a sentimental trip of its own variety. I was surprised that he maintained an unusual formality even in this remote place and I retreated discretely to the track looking for shelter. I finally found a bhatti (inn) a kilometer further on. While the landlady cooked supper, I mused over a glass of raksi (rice spirit) on the possible themes of conversation if the Gurkha officer had been less formal. We might have talked of London and the Edinburgh festival, and of Tidworth and Beaconsfield, another aspect of my sentimentality. But perhaps he was too tired or wanted to forget all those.

The next day's journey commenced with a steep climb to Mungri village (1060 m) on a north-facing slope near Gorje (1210 m). The climb through the hot sal forest and the heavy load made me search for a porter in the village. The villagers were busy erecting a rote-ping (rotating-swing) for the Dasain and no porters were available. Moreover, it seemed they had less regard for a lahure (Gurkha soldier) which they took me for, who had no large steel trunks and carried his own pack. They instead pointed out to me a small hamlet across the Rudi Khola, another hour's walk, adding that I was sure to find some willing Kami or Damai there. I went down the paddy fields and after crossing the Rudi Khola by a temporary bridge (Pl. XXXVIb) reached Ratain, a Kami hamlet of five houses in miserable condition. I badly needed a porter as my pack felt heavier with the progress of the trek. To my request for a porter at whatever cost, the Ratain men replied that they preferred to stay at home during the Dasain festival and then dwell on their own plight. They told me that they had cleared the forest around Ratain in 1951 and had led a contented life until a Gurung thalu (boss) of Gilung had claimed the area as a village pasture and grazed cattle on their standing crop three years before. When I asked
them whether they had approached the district authorities, they replied that appeals to the Land Reform Officer in Kuncha and the Zonal Commissioner in Pokhara had been of no avail so far. I could only sympathise. I struggled uphill from Ratain overburdened both physically and mentally, saddened by the thought of social injustices crossing my path, be it in Kaski or Lamjung, Jumla or Dolpo.

On the 600-meter steep climb to Gilung, I would walk 15 minutes and rest another 15 minutes in the humid sal forest. The shoulder straps of the heavy rucksack pressed hard against my collar bones and I switched to native style by using a long muffler as a strap across the forehead. The weight was now on the neck and I could use my hands freely as a balance on the narrow trail and as knee support on steeper sections. It was past noon when I reached a clearing on the lower slopes of Gilung ridge where a large group of men squatted round a slaughtered buffalo. The animal had just been killed for the *Dasain* feast and 120 kg of its meat was being shared among the Gilung households. I climbed along the ridge for another 300 meters and reached Gilung (1400m) perched on top of a north-dipping slope. Gilung was a large Gurung village and the houses were a uniform two-storeyed building, white-washed and some with slate roofs. Nine kilometers north of the village and on the eastern higher slope of the Rudi Khola was visible another large Gurung village of Pasgaon and above it were forested ridges and the eastern section of the Annapurna range. The dark summit of Annapurna II rose behind the emphatic wall of Lamjung Himal and Machhapuchhre now appeared as a dull truncated spur descending south of Annapurna III.

At Gilung, I finally managed to engage a young Kami to carry my load. When I left Gilung after lunch and a brief rest with the porter, I felt free without the load and exchanged banter on the path with groups of young women returning to their parents' home for the *Dasain Tika* (blessing) carrying baskets of *shel* (doughnut) delicacies and wooden jars of *raksi*. I also quickened my pace as I was visiting home for a similar purpose. I followed
a narrow north-south ridge between the Rudi Khola and the Midim Khola for six kilometers to Taksar (1240 m) from where I could see the Gurung villages of Ghanpokhara, Ghalegaon and Maling to the north-east. The path then made sharp a descent of more than 400 meters down to the Midim Khola.

I sat on a large boulder to dry my shoes after fording the icy cold waters of the Midim and thought of my earlier encounters with the river lower down. The stream plunged due south from the glaciers above Rambrong (4045 m) down a narrow valley and the river-bed where we crossed it was already in the shadows in the late afternoon. It then turned south-east through a narrow defile between steep interlooking spurs for another six kilometers to emerge at Nalmaphedi. The final twelve kilometers stretch to its confluence with the Madi Khola near Bhorletar was a wide flood plain. Frequent flash floods rushing down the narrow gorge had destroyed and swept away extensive paddy fields below Nalma. Relaxing on its cool banks now, I reflected on a memorable journey of 1952 when I had to struggle up its sand and boulder-filled flood plain, crossing and recrossing the stream eight times under intense heat and then had to climb the steep path to Nalma village in pitch darkness.

The lonely journey of summer of 1955 was even more eventful. I had lost my way in Pokhara and arrived at Bhorletar late in the afternoon after crossing the treacherous bridge over the Madi. It was drizzling and innkeepers at Bhorletar (480 m) invited me to spend the night but I ignored their commercial hospitality and proceeded towards the Midim Khola. The river was in spate and there was no possibility of fording it in order to follow the winter track along the flood-plain. I had to follow a narrow forest trail along its eastern bank. The trail was overgrown with weeds since there were few travellers during the rainy season. There were numerous gashes of landslips across the path particularly following the disastrous flood of the previous summer. While I tried to keep close to the river, I traversed across landslide faces and at times I had to cross the obstacles by hanging to tufts of grass and balancing with toe-holds. I thought it wiser to leave the riverside and climbed
higher to a forested ridge only to encounter a large landslide where the slush and pebbles were still in motion. It was getting dark and although I could see a faint light of a goth near Nalmaphedi there seemed no way across the landslide.

I had to find a biovouac for the night but selecting a site was more difficult. I found myself in a small clearing in the midst of a dense forest. I could not possibly retreat in the forest for fear of wild animals and to sleep on the open field would be making myself conspicuous to highway robbers or face the full fury of the nightly monsoon shower. I chose a large tree at the edge of the clearing that had a large pile of dried leaves. I made a pillow of my rucksack and covered myself with the dried leaves both to hide myself and for warmth during the night. I was most ill-prepared for such a long journey as I carried no umbrella, torch-light, weapons of defence and nothing to eat. I was greatly worried at the thought of the long night in the wilderness but being tired physically, I soon fell sound asleep. I dreamt that I had reached home and was having a good hot bath. The bath scene had obviously been inspired by the rain outside as when I woke up at 4 a.m., the rain water had trickled through the leaves and I was wet and shivering.

I got up and waited for the day light to find my way further. But with the dawn rose a thick fog that engulfed the whole Midim valley. While I waited in the cold morning, I counted out my money to make sure that they had not been stolen during the lonely night. The money was all in rupee coins and I had to count them carefully by placing each coin delicately over the other lest their jingle sound attract some robbers on the prowl. The mist lifted long after the sunrise and when I advanced towards the landslide, I found a narrow trail across its upper face. I went across the steep trail and reached a goth at Nalmaphedi (570 m) after an hour. The Dura, a local tribe, cowherd was equally surprised to see me emerge out of the woods so early in the morning as the last village Bhorletar was ten kilometers away to the south. When I recounted him my harrowing experience of the previous night, he thought I was a fool and advised never to travel alone. I had not eaten anything the previous evening and he offered me some fresh
milk and curd.

I got up from the boulder beside the Midim Khola as if in a reverie but I now had a porter for company. The track went up a steep slope for 700 meters to the village of Maling (1430m) where I spent the night. The village straddled along a north-south ridge between the Midim Khola to the west and a forested amphitheatre towards the east. Directly opposite Maling across a tributary of the Midim was the long ridge of Nalma Danda (1699 m) to avoid which I had settled on this northern route. When the last rays of the setting sun glowed on the west flank of the Nalma ridge, I was again reminded of my earlier bad experiences on that route. As one travels up the Midim valley either along the flood plain in winter or by the forest path in summer, Nalma ridge stands as a veritable barrier at the head of the valley. One has to climb a steep slope of 640 meters from the confluence of the Midim Khola and the Ramche Khola at Nalmaphedi (570 m), to reach Nalma village (1212 m). The lower section is through a hot sal forest and then comes the dry fields near the village. The track climbs further to a pass at 1,676 meters and continues north along a forested ridge. It is a most trying and tiring climb in spite of the large Gurung village half-way on the slope and rows of Fraxinus floribunda and rhododendron trees along the ridge track.

In 1952, on way home for summer holidays, we had to struggle up the steepest forested section in the dark and reached Nalma village past midnight. Again, in the summer of 1955, after spending a miserable night under a tree on the east bank of the Midim Khola, I was overtaken by darkness on the cemetary ridge above the village, an unnerving experience for a native Gurung boy. The worst happening was in November 1962 when I was travelling home with my Japanese friends, Tatsu Kambara, his wife Naoko and Yasuzawa Miyaki. We had started from Pokhara with five porters from my area who had been rejected at the Gurkha recruiting depot in Pokhara. We had camped by easy stages at Sisuwa, Karputar and Nalmaphedi. On the fourth day, we began the long ascent to Nalma village after breakfast. I was the first to reach the village and waited for others. I had some refreshments with
beer and climbed on to the chautara on the cemetery ridge. Yasuzawa, cook Lhakpa Sherpa and the porters trooped in one after the other and I directed them on to set camp at Baglungpani, three kilometers further north. I spent a long time on the chautara surveying the Marsyangdi valley and Lamjung Durbar towards the east and the deep valley of the treacherous Midim Khola to the south and west.

While waiting for the Kambaras at the chautara, I concluded that Nalma must be an old village, judging from the large spread of graveyards on the ridge. I then tried to recapture the past struggle among chieftains wherein the first Thakuri king of Lamjung, Kalu Shahi, had been killed by the men of nearby Ghale ruler during a hunting expedition on this very ridge. I waited a long time and then Naoko appeared on the path below. She joined me at the chautara and told me that they had some beer in the village and Tatsu was on the way behind her. We waited for Tatsu and when he did not appear for a long time I went back to look for him. About 300 meters below the chautara, I found Tatsu lying prostrate with face down on the road. I rushed and tried to raise him. He was pale and cold and could sit up only with great effort. I thought that the liberal dose of native beer and the sudden change of climate between the hot sal forest below and the cold air on the ridge must have overcome him. I called out to Naoko and asked her to massage his face while I rubbed his hands and feet to bring back the blood circulation. Tatsu revived soon later and we made him stand with great difficulty.

It was getting dark and cold and our camp was at least another hour's walk. I put Tatsu's rucksack, loaded with coins for the trip, on top of my own and led him slowly on the path while Naoko and I held him on either side. We made slow progress to the ridge chautara and rested briefly. We then supported Tatsu and made him walk slowly along the wide ridge path with much difficulty, all the time encouraging him that the camp was near. We had passed the ridge crest and begun to descend laterally along its west side when Tatsu slumped on the middle of the path and moaned that he could progress
no further. It was now completely dark and I had to act fast. I put our rucksacks under a large tree below the path and carried Tatsu there on my back. I asked Naoko to rest Tatsu's head on her lap and massage him and remain quiet while I leaped along the forest trail towards Baglungpani as fast as I could. I carried a torch but its light beam swung so wildly with my fast run that I guessed the path only from long familiarity. I must have covered those two kilometers in less than half an hour, for I soon heard a running spring and then saw the dark silhouette of a pitched roof at Baglungpani. I sought out our camp, grabbed the kettle over the kitchen fire and ran back with Yasuzawa Miyaki and two porters. When we reached the Kambaras, Tatsu was still moaning and we gave him some vitamin tablets with warm water. I asked the two porters to carry Tatsu by turns and we reached the camp late at night. With some warm food and good rest at night Tatsu was a fresh man the next morning. Here was another memorable incident that had made me avoid the Nalma route. This time I was spending a comfortable night at Maling but my mind was still on the Nalma ridge.

The following morning, I followed a narrow ridge north to Kabargaon (1645 m) on the watershed between the Marsyangdi river and the Midim Khola. Baglungpani (1645 m) was four kilometers east on the same ridge and the large Gurung village of Ghanpokhara (2165 m) was another seven kilometers due north. From Kabargaon, I had a close glimpse of Himalchuli and Manaslu after four years. The sharp pyramid of Manaslu (8125 m) and the large hump of Himalchuli (7893 m) flanked Peak 29 (7514 m), down whose steep south side plunged south the deep valley of the Nadi Khola. My village Taranche was still in the long shadow of the Barahpokhari Lekh but the snow peaks dazzled pure in the early morning sun (Pl. XVIb). The view of Taranche on the banks of the Marsyangdi and the immense topographic sweep to the high peaks gave me a childish thrill for these were the hills of home. I would have much liked to sit long on the ridge and reflect on my past but I was in a hurry to be home.

I descended north of the ridge to Najre village (1463 m) and
then further down to the paddy fields of Lamagaon in Bhalam Khola (914 m) and had my meal in familiar surroundings. The main track to Pokhara climbed south through a steep slope leading to Baglungpani. At Bhalam Khola, I met a group of young men led by one of my ex-serviceman uncles on way to the Gurkha recruiting center at Pokhara. The recruiting agents who roam the villages are called gallawala for the bamboo staff they carry to measure the height of the candidates. The youths were Gurung lads of 15 to 18 years in age and all were keen to join the army mainly for financial gain and to see the wider world. It is the index of the deteriorating economy of the hills that while in former times, the gallawala had to smuggle the youths or plead with their parents for new recruits, now the gallawala are in turn feasted and bribed by the parents in order to recommend their sons. I wished good luck to the youths and walked down the left bank of the Bhalam Khola and turned north at Sera (800 m) from where I could glance with nostalgia the old simal tree at Simalchaur (910 m) across the Marsyangdi river under which I had spent my first night on my long journey to Kathmandu two decades earlier.

I walked two kilometers north of Sera amidst sal forest and fences of scarlet poinsettia and reached Khudi (790 m), a small bazar at the confluence of the Khudi Khola and the Marsyangdi (Pl. XXXVII a). I crossed the Khudi Khola by a steel suspension bridge with a 'Hendersons of Aberdeen' trade-mark. The bazar has some shops, post office, dispensary, school and a police post. A fair is held at Khudi during Haribodhini Ekadashi in November after the paddy harvest and I remember how we children used to save money to buy sweets at Khudi during this annual event. There used to be a large milling crowd at the fair and while youths competed in shot put, girls shopped and sang in village groups. Khudi is the northern limit of tropical trees such as sal and mango and there are some pleasant mango groves here. There is also a Shiva shrine and a rest-house made in the architectural style of Kathmandu with brick and tile put up by one of the Lamichhane Subbas of Ghanpokhara who once held the monopoly of salt trade along the Larke and Marsyangdi route.
When I left Khudi and turned north along the Marsyangdi, Himalchuli dominated the entire northern horizon (Pl. XVIIIb). Two kilometers beyond Khudi, I had to cross the Marsyangdi to reach Bhubule (853 m) on its left bank. There used to be an iron chain-bridge at Bhubule but when I reached the site, the bridge was gone. A flood during the previous monsoon had dislodged a large boulder that acted as its central anchorage and the broken chains now hung on either bank. In its place was an improvised rope-bridge that swung dangerously two meters above the turbulent waters of the Marsyangdi. No wonder that many government officials had wisely turned back from Bhubule bridge that year. To me the call of home was greater and I gave a sigh of relief on reaching the farther bank. The gurgling springs of Bhubule were refreshing and the place was aglow with poinsettia, hibiscus and marigold. Bhubule used to be a lively place during the Dasain in the past when large herds of sheep and goats from Manang, Thak Khola and even Tibet used to be brought here for the buyers from Tailhu, Gorkha and Kaski.

From Bhubule, I travelled north along the left bank of the Marsyangdi across patches of paddy fields and rested briefly by a 60-meter waterfall. I then traversed a narrow trail across a steep rock face above the Marsyangdi to Nandeswanra (860 m) where I came across an innovation below the road in the form of three large concrete pans as reservoirs for drying salt in place of the paddy fields. They had been set up at considerable cost by the Bureau of Mines only the previous year but were later abandoned when they found that the salt-water directed to the pans had sufficient volume only during the rainy season when the thick fog on the river hindered evaporation. I passed a small stream and came to our village fields at Sirubari near the Ghatte Khola and climbed a flight of stone steps to a chautara and entered Taranche village on a high river terrace (914 m). We formerly lived among the Chhetris of Taranche until a disastrous flood in the summer of 1955 swept seven houses, including ours, down to the Marsyangdi. We had since moved a kilometer north to a Gurung hamlet at Tanklichok (1005 m). I passed our
old home site where I was born and that had now been donated to the village school and reached home in the afternoon. My father had passed away three years before and I was sad to miss his domineering presence and the gurgling sound of his hukkah in the house.

The village was in a festive mood for the Dasain. The festival of Dasain is an event of family re-union when people visit their parents and elders to receive their blessing. I observed that the gang of youths who sang Malashri song of Goddess Durga from house to house was smaller and fewer buffaloes were sacrificed than during my childhood days. A dance was organized in the evening to welcome me but the two best dancers from my early days had migrated to Indrapuri in Chitawan. The song and dance presentation was followed by garlands of marigold and smearing with vermilion and free rounds of drink. I knew most of the people in the crowd and many were my relations and yet we were strangers. Time dimension and my own sophistication had cost us our intimacy. I found little in common with my childhood friends; their world was limited to their family, crops and cattle. Village girls were not only shy but afraid to crack jokes with me. They could sense that our values differed greatly. My own horizon had widened so that my native community could not contain me. Yet I always feel re-invigorated by these homely interludes, for my roots lie here where I spent my best early years.

A week in the village was spent in feasting from house to house and there was plenty of meat and liquor during the Dasain. Apart from the fact that the villagers knew that I had been to Belayet (Britain) beyond seven seas for five years and I was a big man for them, they wanted to know of my position and income in concrete terms. Their enthusiasm was tempered when they learnt that I was a mere teacher (school or university made no difference to them) as the only teacher they knew was the village school teacher. They were even less impressed with my salary, remarking that such and such soldier had brought so many thousands of rupees from Malaya or Singapore. I tell them that our government was poor and could not afford to pay high salaries.
The very mention of ‘government’ leads them to ask numerous questions on land, forest and tax as if I were an encyclopaedia of all departments. I try to quote the statistics the radio blares and the official Gorkhapatara boasts and enquire of them if they have not been enlightened by the local administrative and developmental officials on such matters. They reply, “Oh, they never come this far, Kunchha is their entire Lamjung.”

The villages had been organised into panchayats but the traditional headman still exerted more influence than panchayat officials on local matters and it was at the house of the headman that the first animal was slaughtered for the Dasain. In the field of land reform, although the government had gained little in the form of surplus holdings in such a poor area, the farmers had greatly benefitted from the security of tenancy. With the compulsory saving scheme still in its infancy, cash for loan had gone underground and there was much difficulty in procuring loans in times of bad harvest. The most significant change I noticed was in the balance of resources. Forest areas I knew as a boy two decades ago were now mere scrub land due to overgrazing or had been converted into cropland. And despite the extension of cropland at the cost of forests, there were recurrent periods of food shortages. The main reason contributing to this situation seemed to be the increase in population and consequent environmental stress. The hamlet where we lived had 8 households and 40 persons in 1946 and the same nucleus as in 1966 had increased to 14 families and 74 persons excluding 5 families that had migrated to Chitawan and a particular family that was a mere couple in 1921 now had 36 family members. The old landslide had stabilized but there were many more new scars on the hillside and the Marsyangdi had eaten away a sizable chunk of paddy land at Bimre and Baluwa flats.

I took leave of my people and set out for Kathmandu the day before the Kartik full moon. A chicken was released under a pipal tree beside the Ghatte Khola to placate the evil spirits on my way to Kathmandu. I retraced my steps as far as Bhulbule and instead of tip-toeing across the rope bridge, I continued down
the left bank of the Marsyangdi. The track went up a high cliff over-looking Khudi on the other side of the river and then descended to Badagaon (910 m) and crossed the Bhachok Khola. I spent the night at Chaur (760 m) the northern-most village where sugar-cane is cultivated. The cane was grown on dry fields where otherwise maize and millet would grow. This cash crop specialisation was made possible because the cane-farmers got more return by exchanging khudo (cane juice) against food grains.

Exactly opposite Chaur across the Marsyangdi rose a dominating ridge with the old fort of Lamjung, better known as Lamjung Durbar. I had visited the place in November 1962 during our return from Tarache to Pokhara with my Japanese friends. We had camped at Bensi Shahar or ‘lower town’ (760 m) which used to be the winter residence of Lamjung kings and had then climbed to the fortress town, Gaonshahar or ‘village town’ (1371 m). The stone bastions of the fort were intact and beside the old palace building with a shrine of Kalika was a high school. The place provided a sweeping view of Annapurna Himal, Himalung, Manaslu, Himalchuli and Baudha. It was a majestic panorama that might have inspired the early Thakuri kings of Lamjung to invade north. Until the beginning of the 16th century, Lamjung was under the rule of Ghale kings and who also held sway in Manang. Hindu immigrants and Duras, a local tribe of Turlungkot near Gaon Shahar had installed Kalu Shahi, a Thakuri prince of Kaski as the ruler of Lamjung and when the was killed by the men of Ghale Raja at Baglungpani, his younger brother Yasobrahm succeeded him. It was Yasobrahm’s second son Drabya Shah who conquered Gorkha in 1559 and laid the foundations of a kingdom that was to emerge two hundred years later as the most powerful state between the Teesta and the Sutlej and finally give birth to the kingdom of Nepal. Although Lamjung and Gorkha were ruled by collaterals of the same family, many were the battles between the two kingdoms on the banks of the Marsyangdi and the Chepe Khola. Similar to the fate of other hill principalities, Lamjung was finally annexed to the Gorkha dominion in 1782 after a fierce battle at Tarku Ghat. The invading Gorkhani force was led by Amar Singh Thapa while his
counterpart on the Lamjung side was Bhakti Thapa and both of whom later distinguished themselves in Kangra and Kumaon front during the Anglo-Nepal war of 1814–16.

The following day, I continued south through sal forest and paddy fields of Chiti and crossed the Marsyangdi at Phalesanghu (632 m) over a tilted wooden bridge. Here I met a Gurung from Tap (1370 m), the northern-most village of Dordi Khola, returning to Bombay where he said he owned and drove a taxi. We travelled south together across a wide expanse of paddy fields of Bhote Odar (‘Bhotia Cave’), Siuribar (‘Royliana Fence’) and Tarku (540 m) along the western river terrace of the Marsyangdi. We crossed the Marsyangdi again by a fine suspension bridge and reached Tarkughat (488 m) on the old Kathmandu-Pokhara highway. I left the Tap taxi man at Tarku Ghat and then climbed on to Rainastar (590 m) a seven kilometers long river terrace betweenthe Marsyangdi and the Chepe Khola. I crossed the Chepe Khola by an American-aided suspension bridge and stepped into Gorkha district.

There was another broad undulating river terrace south of the Chepe Khola and I stayed at Thantipokhari (570 m), a group of roadside inns in a mango grove. The first time I had been this way was in December 1946 when it had taken more than a week to reach Kathmandu from Taranche. But now I could fly to Kathmandu from the nearby Palungtar airstrip. Next morning I proceeded to the airstrip walking down the boulder-strewn track under gnarled trees of dhainro (Pyracantha crenulata) and a new clearing in the sal forest. The clearing had been made by new settlers from Siranchok in the upper Chepe valley who had returned here after their new settlement area in Chitawan had been converted into a wild life sanctuary. The aircraft took off from Palungtar (152 m) about mid-day and the distance I had toiled for five hard days two decades earlier was covered in 25 minutes. Times had changed and so had I, for whom Lamjung now was merely a sentimental retreat.
CHAPTER ELEVEN

DESTINATION MUSTANG

Surrounded on all sides by a garland of white mountains, with perpetually flowing streams of cascading waters, clear and clean like a crystal orb, [such is] the palace of King of Mustang.

-Kun-dga’-grol-mchog, Jo-nang (1507–66)*

The high road to Mustang in the upper Kali Gandaki valley heads north-west of Pokhara to Tatopani and then turns due north through a tremendous gorge between the Dhaulagiri and Annapurna. I took a more circuitous route visiting Andhi Khola, Kusma, Baglung and Beni on way to Tatopani. For the long journey to the Tibetan borderland, I had an excellent companion in Pasang Kambache who has travelled widely in the Himalayas. Between Baglung and Jomosom, we were joined by Onkar Prasad Gauchan, a Rastriya Panchayat member of Baglung district and a keen student of Thakali lore. Pasang and I left Pokhara on 9th October 1973 by jeep along the Siddhartha Rajmarg

towards Syangja. We drove westwards above the northern bank of the Phusre Khola, crossed the stream beside an old landslide and made over the pass at Kubhinde (1158 m). We travelled south along the turns and twists of numerous steep rocky spurs and descended to the Seti Khola, a tributary of the Andhi Khola. In about an hour from Pokhara, we arrived at Naudanda (1060 m) or ‘Nine Ridges’, two kilometers due west of the Nuwakot fort and five kilometers north of Syangja (850 m). Since the completion of the Siddhartha Rajmarga in 1967, Naudanda has superseded Putalikhet (760 m) as the main starting-point for the road journey to Baglung and Thak Khola beyond. Its importance as a break-of-bulk point was clearly evident from the large pile of polythene pipes for drinking water schemes and cable wires for bridges bound for some remote villages in the north. At Naudanda, we had a horse and two policemen waiting to escort us to Baglung.

From Naudanda, we descended a slope of quartzite-schist to Seti Dobhan (762 m) at the confluence of the Andhi Khola and its tributary, the Seti Khola. In 1943, Seti Dobhan had only a rest-house and a temporary bridge over the Seti but since the installation of a new Seti bridge at the cost of Rs. 6,500 in 1960 and another one close by over the Andhi Khola at Rs. 3,400 in 1961, the place has assumed a bazar status with 84 houses. We had lunch in a Thakali bhatti at Seti Dobhan and started up the Andhi Khola about noon. The Andhi Khola flows in the south-easterly direction along a synclinal axis between the high ridges of Panchase Lekh (2508 m) and Dahre Danda (2265 m). We walked past the field terraces along the river: harvesting of paddy had not yet started. We saw itinerant Indian carpenters from Bhairawa busy making furniture in the schools while the easy-going locals played cards at the roadside tea-shops. Near Range-thanti (910 m), we were overtaken by a procession of 20 mourners carrying a corpse for cremation to the Modiben, the confluence of the Modi Khola and the Kali Gandaki, at least 22 km away. They were Brahmins and the dead body was wrapped in a saffron cloth and the guide carried a white scarf. The corpse tied to a a bamboo pole was being carried by two men in turn at
We followed the Andhi Khola for four hours, fording it numerous times. At the head of the valley, we climbed up a steep slope and half-way below Athghare (1120 m) a village council meeting was in progress and the agenda concerned tree-felling by some Syangja men in an area claimed by Parbat district. Athghare is located within the watershed of the Andhi Khola in Syangja but the district boundary is said to come far to the east of the ridge for customary reasons. I considered it wise not to intervene in a local dispute and in any case we had still another 250-meters climb to Karkineta and it was getting dusk. We reached Karkineta (1580 m) on a narrow saddle and spent the night there. The village had 66 houses with some shops, a school and a piped water supply installed in 1969. The place provided a good view of the low Kali Gandaki valley and Dhaulagiri range to the north-west.

Next morning, we descended a west-facing slope of mica-schist down to the Malyandi Khola that joins the Modi very close to its confluence (830 m) with the Kali Gandaki. On the path down through a sub-tropical forest, I was surprised to meet the mortuary party who had overtaken us the previous afternoon returning so early. I guessed that they had either just thrown the dead body into the sacred waters of Kali Gandaki without burning it into ashes or the men were good marathon runners by habit. Further down on the road was a new rest-house put-up by an ex-servicemen as indicated by a row of framed photographs on the front wall with the donor's portraits in full army uniform. At about 890 meters, we came across an incomplete concrete barrage on the Malyangdi river-bed and scanning ahead to our right, we saw traces of an irrigation channel, tunnelled through a conglomerate slope. It was a canal to irrigate the fields of Gyan-dichaur and the project, initially started by the local panchayat and now being undertaken by the government, had been going on for nearly eight years. After a brief walk down the stream, we left it and climbed to a high terrace at Gyan-dichaur (850 m). Two kilometers beyond we descended a conglomerate cliff and crossed the Modi river by a recently completed suspension
bridge at Jhaprebagar.

The track again climbed a boulder conglomerate cliff to the millet and mustard fields of Kusma (880 m). Kusma, located on a high level terrace between the Kali Gandaki and the Modi rivers, was a mere garrison depot at the turn of the century but since it was made the headquarters of Parbat district in 1962, it has a piped water supply, shops, government offices and a high school. Kusma is located on one of the numerous river terraces that flank the Kali Gandaki river between Baglung and Phalebas. The terraces represent a Quarternary phase of alluvial deposition and the matrix consists of schists, quartzites and sandstone at various states of compaction and conglomerates are particularly conspicuous around Kusma and Baglung.* The river terraces have at least four distinct levels corresponding to the successive phases of uplift and deposition and the towns of Kusma and Baglung occupy the more extensive upper levels. Although marginal from agricultural point of view and generally avoided for its hot climate, the terraces suspended between the neighbouring hill slopes and sheer cliff faces above the rivers, provide a dramatic landscape.

We left Kusma after lunch and soon descended down a sal forest to a lower level at Amadi (730 m). Across the Kali Gandaki to the west, rose a sheer cliff of nearly 200 meters from the river-bed to the airstrip of Balewa (1000 m). We followed the east bank of the river along a narrow trail between the swollen river and vertical cliffs. Half-way between Amadi and Baglung, we passed a waterfall, Sahasradhara (Thousand springs), issuing out of the cliff face with its waters splattering on the bamboo grove beside the track. On the way, we met numerous porters going south carrying tins of ghiu and also a group of 17 Magar youngsters with a gallawala (recruiting agent) on way to the Gurkha recruiting depot at Gorakhpur. The Magars form the largest group in foreign armies and it is estimated that 37,877

Magars were enlisted in the Indian Army during the World War II along with 18,725 Gurungs. The sacred grove of Kalika shrine on a promontary between the Kali Gandaki and the Kath Khola came into fuller view as we progressed upstream. We continued along the left bank of the river, sometimes traversing fresh landslips and at times we walked the broad sand banks. We then came to a wide beach littered with uprooted trees and logs washed ashore by a recent flood. They had been marked by flat stones to indicate that they had been claimed by some one. The logs with the ownership seal of stones on them would then lie on the beach to dry for months to be later chopped into fuel-wood by the original claimants. When we later reached Khaniyoghat (760 m), the few houses there were all surrounded by piles of driftwood similarly retrieved from the river. We crossed a solid suspension bridge over the Kali Gandaki and made a steep ascent of 180 meters to Baglung bazar.

Baglung bazar (1120 m) snuggled close to a western foothill to spare the level ground on the east for fields. But increasing construction activity since it was made the headquarters of the Dhaulagiri Zone had now encroached on fertile fields. The first school was established in 1950 and it now had a liberal arts campus, a rice mill, a small furniture works, a hospital and 36 government offices. Similar to other hill towns the inhabitants were mostly Newars and many of them had migrated from Tansen. The local politics was however dominated by the Khadka and Gauchan family. The Khadka (sword) family is said to have come to Baglung at the close of the 16th century as standard-bearers of the image of Goddess Kalika brought here by a daughter of Mukund Sen of Palpa who was married to Pratap Narayan Malla, the ruler of Parbat. The Kalika shrine is set in a pleasant grove east of the bazar. The Gauchan family had migrated to Baglung from Saurung in Thak Khola two generations before as a cloth merchant.

On October 11th, Pasang, Onkar Gauchan and I left Baglung on horse-back turning north through paddy fields. Dhaulagiri appeared as a massive head due north (Pl. XVa). The path
down to the river along the conglomerate cliffs was paved with stone slabs. We were now on the main trans-Himalayan trade route between Thak Khola and lower hills to Palpa and Tribeni in the Tarai. The importance of this road had however much declined with the drying-up of supply of salt and wool from Tibet, and growth of Pokhara as a break-of-bulk point with modern highways. We followed north along the west bank of the Kali Gandaki. While the dark whistling thrush flitted in the side streams, the white-capped Redstarts hopped from boulder to boulder on the Kali Gandaki. The effects of the recent heavy rain was much in evidence as the track was cut-off by landslides at numerous places. We met a retired Gurkha captain from the British Army who was making rounds of the damaged villages as a welfare officer for the area. The higher slopes on either side of the river were inhabited mostly by Magars with long army tradition. The lower slopes were covered with forest patches of Cedrela toon, Alnus nepalensis and Albizia mollis. Beni was only 12 kilometers from Baglung and we reached it by crossing a new bridge over the Mayangdi.

Beni (670 m) on a narrow river terrace between the Mayangdi Khola and the Kali Gandaki is connected to Mallaj and village on the east side of the Kali Gandaki by a suspension bridge while another track leads west along the Mayangdi to Darbang and Gurja on the south flanks of the Dhaulagiri. Beni used to be the winter capital of the Malla rulers of Parbat and one of the prominent rulers, Malebarn, is said to have built a Shiva temple at Beni in 1697 and a palace seven years later. Parbat was one of the most powerful among twenty-four states of the Gandaki region and it had helped Sataun, Syangja, Kaski and Lamjung against Gorkha. The numerous copper mines and its control of the trade route along the Kali Gandaki was the state's main economic strength. Beni used to be a flourishing town until the late 18th century while Baglung was only a seasonal hat (mart). When Parbat was finally defeated by the Gorkhalis in 1786 with a three-pronged attack, Baglung became the new administrative center for the region and Beni was left only with a local mint and salt depot. It had further set-backs when a landslide below Histan
in 1850 and another landslide at Darbang in 1932 greatly affected its access routes. However, the designation of Beni as the headquarters of the new Myagdi district in 1962 has rejuvenated the place and it now has about 100 houses and 29 government offices. A large fair is held during Maghe Sankranti in January at the site of the old chain bridge over the Mayangdi Khola, two kilometers west of Beni.

Beni marks the alignment of a major geological fault along the Mayangdi and separates the crystalline schist, green phyllite, slate and quartzites of Baglung area with those of higher grade metamorphism to the north. The quartzite, mica-schists and calcareous schist north of Beni exhibit steeply north-dipping strata and the topography becomes more rugged. We left Beni after negotiating two landslides and an hour later reached Galeswar (880 m) near the confluence of the Rohu Khola and the Kali Gandaki. At Galeswar, there was a small stone shrine dedicated to Shiva on a large rocky platform and near it a Sanskrit school and numerous rest-houses for saddhus all of which were now deserted. The distinctive feature of Galeswar was a well-preserved grove of Pinus roxburghii on the western slope above the shrine. Vegetation on the hillsides were mainly subtropical warm forest on shady aspect and pine on drier slopes.

Immediately after crossing the Rohu Khola by a wooden bridge the track climbed steeply for 200 meters and then skirted a wide convex slope below the large village of Rakhu (1610 m). Along the way were numerous rest-places such as Bogati Chautara, Ranipouwa and Bagale Chautara that indicated a heavy traffic in the past. At Bagale Chautara was a large boulder prominence with a perpendicular crack with a rock pellete stuck in it. According to a local legend, the place denotes a site of a theological debate between a Lama and a Jhankri and the crack is attributed to the power of the Lama and the pellete of that of the Jhankri. Whoever won the religious debate, Lamaism could not penetrate south to Rakhu and in spite of Brahmin priests in Rakhu, the Jhankri sorcerer still is an active force in the neighbouring villages. There is also a small shrine near Bagale Chautara where the
novice dhakhre (load carrier), known as panthi are ragged and initiated on their first journey into Thak Khola. Similar to hatarus (marketeers) of the Far West, the load-carriers along the long and treacherous trade routes must have developed their own peculiar customs and social rituals through the ages.

We descended laterally to the confluence of the Beg Khola and the Kali Gandaki with good views of the dark limestone crowns of Nilgiri (6839 m) and dense forest of pine across the Kali Gandaki. The country was pronounced with steep slopes and the Magar villages were perched on narrow benches high above the river gorge. Immediately after crossing a native bridge over the Bega Khola, we had to follow a track carved across a rock overhang along the right bank of the river (Pl. XVb). I discussed long with Onkar Gauchan about stone masonry and wire-pegging of the Bega bridge and the fine excavation work on the cliff track and he explained to me the traditional techniques of rock blasting with native ingredients and rock-cutting by use of chisels of various sizes according to the rock type, an old inheritance of the local people from the mining days. And there on the quartzite cliffs far above the roaring Kali Gandaki, Onkar convinced me on the validity and economy of suspended bridges against expensive suspension bridges with towers and on return to Kathmandu, I approved Rs. 2 lakhs from the budget of the Remote Areas Development Board for 22 bridges for Baglung as a pilot scheme.

We continued along the west bank of the Kali Gandaki under towering cliffs and reached Tiplyang, a small group of houses near a steel suspension bridge over the river. A new two-storeyed house belonged to one Tal Bahadur Pun from Baduk village (1670 m), a recent Victoria Cross hero from the British Gurkhas. We crossed the bridge to the east side of the river and passed the paddy fields of Gharamdi (2190 m) close to the river. The fields are at an altitude of 1200 meters and the altitudinal difference between the precious paddy fields and the village is to the order of nearly 1,000 meters across steep slopes. Beyond the fields we entered the narrowest section of the Kali Gandaki gorge enclosed by sheer rock cliffs. The track went across Maha-
bhir (honey cliff) with two sections: the shorter one had steps cut into the solid rock and climbed about 20 meters and the longer one with similar stone-steps extended 30 meters through a carved overhang large enough to provide passage to an unmounted horse. Beyond Mahabhir, the track climbed another 600 meters across an open face of Dobabhir where the thundering sound of the Kali Gandaki and the circular flights of the rock penguins below gave an eerie feeling. There were dark honey-combs on the cliff overhangs from which the local Pun Magars still extract honey by swinging down the ropes as their original ancestor Khar Pakhye did. In the old days of brisk trade along the axis of Kali Gandaki, large caravans of animals laden with sal, wool and grain passed through this precarious trail.

It was a relief when we finally crested a ridge descending from Sikha and came to a chautara with a wider prospect to the north. We could not see the mountains as it had been raining. I could however make out through the clouds the Magar village of Doba renowned for its fine variety of tobacco, on the west side of the river. We saw no prospect for the rain to cease and we hurried down towards the north and were caught in a heavy downpour near the confluence of the Ghar Khola and the Kali Gandaki. The swollen Ghar Khola flowing west between Sikha and Pakdwar had swept away the bridge just before we reached it and we had to cross the stream by make-shift logs while the horses had to be taken further upstream to ford the stream at a narrow point. It was already dark and we found a temporary shelter north of the Ghar Khola in a house but it was already overcrowded with numerous travellers. When the horses joined us, we started in pouring rain in the dark and crossed the suspension bridge over the Kali Gandaki with the help of torch-lights. The river roared down in the dark abyss below and the long bridge swayed in the thunderstorm. The occasional flashes of lightening brightened our path and we were thoroughly drenched when we finally reached the village of Tatopani or 'hot spring' (1180 m). We revived our spirit with liberal dozes of warm arak and dried meat in a friendly Thakali house.

It rained the whole night and the next day until noon.
When we left the next day after lunch it was still drizzling. We were in no mood to drench ourselves further in the nearby hot spring as we were more worried about the condition of the path ahead. The heavy downpour during the night had damaged sections of the track and we had to turn back our Baglung horses from a landslip on loose shales near the confluence of the Kali Gandaki and the Miristi Khola. There was an interesting contrast in the colour of the two rivers: the Kali Gandaki, less affected upstream by the late monsoon rain, had a lighter colour than the dark muddy waters of the Miristi Khola. We walked another three kilometers under light rain and reached Dana (1490 m).

Dana used to be an old customs-point of trade and the substantial houses of Thakali Subbas with sub-tropical fruits were a proof of its past prosperity. It had also been briefly the headquarters of newly created Mustang district and the district court with a judge from Lamjung was still there. The place had the look of a deserted village with the decline of trade with Tibet and the shift of the district headquarters to Jomosom. Dana is not only the last limit of paddy cultivation and buffaloes in the Kali Gandaki valley but also where a thrust fault demarcates the contact point of the lower black phyllites and sandstone rocks of the lower Himalaya and the overlying gneisses of the main Himalaya. I could look down valley and trace narrow benches of ancient river terraces that dip south indicating the later rise of the mountain. Across the river to the east were the northern-most Magar villages of Garpar on a terrace and Narcheng (1990 m) perched high on a ridge above the clouds.

We acquired another relay of horses at Dana and left the place in the afternoon. The terrain became rugged with hard gneisses dipping at an angle of 45 degrees to the north. We went up the west bank of the Kali Gandaki and crossed it below Rupse Chhahara, a fine water-fall plunging down into the river. The old trade route continued by the west bank of the river to Kabre (1830 m) and by a cliff-hanging trail to Ghasa. We took the east bank route and climbed opposite the waterfall to a hut
manned by a Tibetan. I discovered later that it was actually a
discrete Khampa check-point, camouflaged as a tea-house to
keep tag of suspicious travellers, and they maintained similar
establishments in Tukche, Jomosom (right under the nose of the
local administration) and Kagbeni. We passed a flock of sheep
and goats between Kopchepani and Talbagar descending to war-
mer valleys. On the opposite side was Kabre hamlet, originally
said to be the site of a cattle farm for the supply of milk and butter
to the Parbat rulers. We passed an old landslide now colonised
by Alnus nepalensis and on the roadside was a stone cairn mar-
king the traditional boundary between Parbat and Mustang.
The landslide had impinged against a rock cliff on the west bank,
temporarily blocking the river that had left behind a sandy flat
thus called Talbagar.

While we continued beyond the landslide along a new mule-
track across a rocky slope on the east bank, we could see on the
opposite gneiss rock face traces of two old trails. The higher one
said to have been initiated by one Manlal Gurung of Ghanpok-
hara was 450 meters above the river and the lower one whose con-
struction was paid for by a royal priest in 1935 cut across an
overhanging rock-wall. The higher trail that went up and down a
hump had rocky ledges as well as some steep sections with tufts of
grass as hand-holds that seemed fit only for goats or hunters.
The lower one was shorter along a carved-out gallery and sections
of it had been damaged by rock falls. There is still another
higher route for larger animals farther west across a pass
(1100 m) near Pahiro Thaplo. The precarious situation of this cliff
section aptly called Bandarjong or Monkey Bastion meant that
the travellers had to cross the river twice over hazardous bridges
and during flood time the gorge remained inaccessible. The
purpose of my visit was to inaugurate an alternative mule track
along the eastern side and a suspension bridge at its head at Gha-
sa both financed by the Remote Areas Development Board.

We crossed the Kali Gandaki by the new bridge and climbed
to Ghasa (2010 m). The village was entirely Thakali and as
Dana used to be merely a trading-post and winter retreat of the
Thakali Subbas, Ghasa can be said to be the southern-most out-post of Thakali rural settlement. With a kani chorten and numerous roadside chortens and a gomba (repaired in 1945), the village was also the lower limit of Lamaistic culture. It was indicative of the cultural persistence that the Ghasa houses were flat-roofed although the rains penetrate deep into the gorge and had actually damaged a few buildings only the previous night. The village was located on a terrace 150 meters above the river and the variable composition of deposited materials was a proof of diverse geomorphological processes in its formation. The materials ranged from ungraded material of an ancient glacier to a coarse, heterometric and unbedded material of diluvial nature and rounded pebbles of later alluvial phase. The slopes around the village were covered with pine with some broad-leaved species. We spent the night at Ghasa and next morning I inaugurated the new suspension bridge over the Kali Gandaki and the mule track.

We left Ghasa at noon by riding over a rough path of conglomerate stones north of the village and arrived at a western tributary stream called Kai Kyu. ‘Kyu’ which is equivalent to ‘Chu’ in Tibetan for water or river is an archaic Tibetan word still preserved in Thakali and Gurung languages. I remember the feeling of anticlimax during my first visit to a Bhotia village in Karan when my host ordered ‘chu’ for me which means butter in Gurung language and it turned out to be just plain water to wash my hands. At Kai Kyu, in the root zone of the main Himalayan axis, we were dwarfed under towering slopes of gneissic rocks with a sharp northerly dip. The track then passed under a dense pine forest with fresh landslides and here we were shown a place where a few years earlier a fleeing Khampa had been ambushed and murdered by another feuding group. Nilgiri was hardly 14 kilometers to the east but the peak was hidden behind dark clouds and we could only see a series of ancient terraces on the far side. We crossed a fine wooden bridge over a stream flowing from the west and climbed to the moraine plain of Lower Lete (2430 m). At Lete, we were directly under the eastern slope of the Dhaulagiri (8167 m) and although its crown was hidden in thick clouds, we
could see glaciers coming down its steep flanks. Chhoya village on the edge of a dried-up lake was across the river. A little beyond Lower Lete was another settlement, Upper Lete (2530 m), where we met an F. A. O. expert making a survey of goat and sheep breeding in Thak Khola.

Then we reached the doomed village of Kalapani (2530 m) where on the night we were drinking warm arak in Tatopani two nights earlier, a heavy flash flood from a nearby stream had buried four houses and killed 12 people. The overcast sky, sad chore of recovering dead body and salvaging property and cattle carcasses from the rubble, still under progress, cast a gloom over the whole place. I asked the district panchayat chairman, Dirgha Prasad Gauchan, who was accompanying us, to collect full information on the extent of the damage and promised official help. We comforts the bereaved families and continued on our journey.

Just beyond Kalapani where the western moraine plain petered out was a rickety bridge leading to Dhampu (2590 m) and Taglung (25560 m) to the east but the Kali Gandaki here could as well be forded easily. If Ghasa is the cultural boundary between the Lamaistic north and Hinduistic south, Kalapani certainly is a geomorphological boundary in the sea-ward journey of the Kali Gandaki river. The Thakali name for the vast moraine expanse around here is Kyu-la which means 'water passage' and describes well the sudden hydrological change from a quiet meandering river of the north to a raging mountain torrent below. The Kali Gandaki flows over a broad alluvial flat and falls 400 meters in a horizontal distance of 35 kilometers between Chele and Kalapani while beyond Kalapani, it plunges 1,200 meters in a mere distance of 13 kilometers to Dana through one of the deepest gorges in the world. The high summits of Dhaulagiri (8167 m) and Annapurna (8091 m) are only 30 kilometers apart on either side of this gorge. The area around Kalapani and Dhampu is also a major transition zone of geological and botanical phenomena. Here the various Himalayan crystalline gneisses that dip 50 degrees to the north are overlaid by Tibetan Tethys sediments
and at the same time Tsuga dumosa, Aesculus indica and other broad-leaved trees are replaced by a drier forest of Pinus excelsa.

We continued north along the west bank of the river, now a sluggish stream wriggling over a vast sandy expanse. We traversed delightful pine-forested ridges and after crossing the Chhokdam stream below Syokung ('small place valley') and the Ghatte Khola below Nabrungr, reached Larjung (2560 m) at the confluence of the Larjung stream with the Kali Gandaki. The weather cleared next morning or rather we were beyond the grasp of the dark clouds and we had magnificent close-up views of the neighbouring peaks resplendent with snow cover. At Larjung, we were in the heartland of Thakali settlement surrounded by Nabrungr to the west, Khanti to the north and Saurung to the east across the river. The villages were a compact group of flat-roofed houses with gombas and shortens and close by at Nakum were the traditional tombs of the four Thakali clans, Dhimchan (Sherchan), Chyoki (Gauchan), Salki (Tulachan) and Bhurki (Bhattachan), each a pile of stones crowned with tarchho (flags). Willows lined irrigation channels to the fields and the group of houses made of dressed stone stood like miniature fortresses.

At Khanti (Narsang), I visited the local gomba and a modern water turbine. The gomba with some fine frescoes and old thankas was in a dilapidated condition as the laity had turned to newer beliefs. Thakali religion represents a syncretism of Tibetan Lamaism, Hinduism and a native shamanistic belief called dhom and the progressive transition of the Thakali people from tribal to Hinduistic society has been well described by Shigeru Iijima and other anthropologists. The turbine, set-up by an enterprising Thakali in 1968 and commissioned two years later was doing a good business in mustard-pressing with clients from as far north as Mustang town. Kobang village panchayat which includes the core of the old Thakali settlements had 162 households and it was from this diaspora that the Thakalis or Tamaang of Thak Satsaya had spread to other commercial centers and the 12-year festival Lha Phewa (appearance of god) is now the only
sentimental reunion. The *Lha Phewa* invocation to the four gods of the five elements is clearly indicative of the northern heritage of the Thakalis:*

Oh Lha Langba Nhurbu, please bless us,
so that our wishes can be fulfilled,
let the flowers turn into fruits.
Oh Lha Chhyuring Gyalmo, please bless us,
so that we can earn fame.
Oh Lha Ghangla Singhi Karmo, please bless us,
so that we can receive many head-cloth.
Oh Lha Hyawa Rhangjyung, please bless us,
so that we can get success in our trade.

We left Khanti under a clear blue sky dotted with two long columns of cormorants migrating south. We left the last Pinus excelsa trees on the west bank of the river and rode across the sand banks north towards Tukche. There were still some pines on the east slope while the western slope was an open Cupress (Cypresus torulosa) forest. When we arrived at Tukche two hours later by crossing the Yamkim stream that originally flowed north of the village, the open Cypress forest was replaced by Caragana and Artemisia bushes and there were high terrace benches above the village. The level valley floor covered with yellow and dark coloured sand and silt, deltaic deposits of an ancient lake that extended 35 kilometers between Larjung and Jomosom, could possibly be reclaimed if the wide meandering rivers were channelised by building dykes along the central axis. The valley floor is enclosed by sheer cliffs of gravel and conglomerate terraces and bare slopes of sharply folded limestone, sandstone, shale and slates of the Tibetan geological series.

Tukche (2586 m) which means ‘flat place for grains’ was a

---

large settlement of solid houses complete with enclosed courtyards for pack animals and stores for transit goods aligned along the north-south road. If Kobang was the cultural hearth of the Thakali people, Tuckche was the economic center that provided them economic power and prestige. Lying astride a trans-Himalayan route between the humid south and the cold barren wastes of the north, it not only provided a break-of-bulk between the laden porters from the south and pack animals from the north but also acted as a caravanserai and storage-point for goods that reached it at different seasons. Because the routes along the southern mountainous terrain are favourable in autumn after cessation of summer rains and grain harvest while the northern passes are open only during the warm summer, the Thakali merchants of Tukche profited greatly by storing and exchanging the goods between clients who hardly came into direct contact with each other.

Thak Khola must have been an important trade route since early times but written records on trade are available only after mid-18th century, particularly after the Nepal-Tibet war of 1855-56. A customs post was established at Dana in 1862 and by 1869 the customs contract was held by one Balbir Dhimchan of Kobang, whose family later named themselves Sherchan, held the contract in spite of brief interventions by a local Gauchan family and Lamichhane Gurung from Lamjung until the salt contract system was terminated in 1928. However, the importance of Tukche as a center of salt and grain trade continued up to the late 1950's when events across the border in Tibet finally led to the dislocation of trade. Tukche today is more of an abandoned town with its wealthy residents settled in other larger towns such as Pokhara, Baglung, Bhairawa and Kathmandu engaged as traders and industrialists or as contractors and politicians. We found most of the houses vacant and the few residents were either local elders or caretakers from the northern Bhotia villages. Similarly abandoned were the Rani Gomba or Tashi Chholing said to have been built in 1621 and the numerous chorten and mendong although it is doubtful that their fate would have been any better even if the wealthy residents had stayed on as the Thakali Subbas had
already by late 19th century begun to adopt Hindu values at the
cost of Buddhist religion and Bhotia culture along with the growth
of their economic power and prestige in the context of the pan-
Hinduistic state.

The stone-paved main street of Tukche echoed under the
hooves of our horses as we rode north towards a wide lawn past
two mendongs and visited the Samba Gomba. Although the
gomba is called ‘New Monastery’, it was a dark hall with little
religious verve and monastic activity as most of the vitality of
the remaining community seemed to be diverted to the secular
school nearby, a fact of modern Nepal. We continued north
along the right bank of the Kali Gandaki and the vegetation, tho-
ugh sparse, presented a contrast according to altitude and aspect.
The valley floor had bushes of Caragana and Artemisia, the south-
east facing slopes had open Cypress forest and the north-west
facing slopes across the river had pine. The characteristic strong
valley wind of Thak Khola seemed to cause more aridity on the
valley floor than the higher side slopes where there were open
forest as far north as Lubra.

About two kilometers north of Tukche and west of Chi-
mang (2740 m), I was shown some boulders on the roadside that
was said to demarcate the area between Thak Satsaya and Panch
Gaon. The trans-Himalayan section of Kali Gandaki valley is
generally divided into four regions: (1) Thak Satsaya (Thak
Seven-hundred) from Ghasa to Tukche, (2) Panch Gaon (Five
villages) from Chimang to Jomosom, (2) Barah Gaon (Twelve
villages) from Lubra to Geling and (4) Mustang or Lo, north of
Geling. The whole area is inhabited by people of Tibetan origin
and although the more Hinduised Thakalis of Thak Satsaya claim
a higher status, there is much linguistic and cultural similarity
between the two lower regions Thak Satsaya and Panch Gaon.
They represent an older strata of society with a strong remnant
of pre-Buddhist religion. The Thakali clan history claim that
their ancestor Hanja Raja who had migrated from Sinja married
Nyima Rani, a princess of Thini (Panchagaon) and got the land
south of the Dhumpa Kyu as the dowry. But according to a
local tradition of Panch Gaon, Chimang used to be their southernmost settlement with a border post.

The Thakalis call themselves Tamaang just as Gurungs call themselves Tamun and there is much affinity among the languages of the Thakali, Gurung and Tamang of central Nepal that are said to have branched off the main Bodish section around 350 A. D. according to Swadesh's lexico-statistical system of glottochronology. But Tamaang, Tamun or Tamang could as well be regional variations of a common Tamihn, a term that refers to highlanders (Ta=up; mihn=people) and the epithet can also be applied to neighbouring Panch Gaon people who share a similar language. Since Thakali could mean inhabitants of Thak Khola even beyond the limits of present Thak Satsaya, the specific appellation of this term only for the people of Thak Satsaya must be a later phenomenon due to the wider southern contact of these trading people. The suffix ‘li’ or ‘le’ to denote natives of a certain geographic locality is derived from the Nepali language and not Tibetan or Tibeto-Burman language where it is rather ‘ba’, ‘ma’, ‘pa’ or ‘wa’. In spite of this ethnographic diversion regarding the similarity in basic culture of the lower two regions, the boundary marker above Tukche does have validity in the context of present land use, social relations and community management. Though there are historical records and oral traditions about the existence of local kings ruling sections of the upper Kali Gandaki, particularly Mustang and Se-rib, in the past, all the villagers of Thak Satsaya have a common council of 13 headmen while the villages of Panch Gaon each have their own village authority.

We soon reached a government horticulture farm opposite Chhero which Pasang Kambache had nurtured so carefully. The farm was not a sudden apparition of modern development in a cold desert but the consummate creation of a dedicated man. Pasang who was born in Solu, educated in Shigatse and Lhasa, had taught Tibetan in Darjeeling, Bhutan, London and Paris, had also travelled extensively in the Himalayas. He was trained in vine culture at Montpellier (France) and unlike other horticulturi-
sts who merely enrich the garden of the affluent, he had, like my other friend Keiji Nishioka in Paro (Bhutan), chosen the path to revolutionise the economy of a remote valley. The cabbages at the Marpha farm were of enormous size, the apples delicious and almonds did well in the crisp dry climate. But when we later toured the grape nursery that Pasang had established with numerous varieties from California and France, we discovered with utter chagrin that a flash flood of 12th October had turned the whole garden into a rubble ground. For Pasang, it was a bitter sight and I tried to console him by promising an extra budget to reclaim the nursery land.

After making rounds of the government farm, we approached Marpha (2670 m) by a mendong and entered the village at the base of a north-east facing gravel cliff. On the roof-tops were white prayer flags and neat piles of brushwood. The houses of dressed stone were well-built with courtyards for pack animals. The white-washed gomba stood above the tier of houses and on the nearby hillside was a triangular rock face painted red that stood out as a chorten. The inhabitants of Marpha are called Punnel derived from the Tibetan word Pundi which some interpret as meaning ’close fraternity.’ Similar to the Thakalis of Thak Satsaya, the four kin groups of Marpha have adopted new Hinduistic clan names: Jucharchan (Gumli Thowa) Hirachan (Bhuti), Lalchan (Rhoten) and Pannachan (Gumli Chhangba). They are also called Marphali by people from the south where they engage in long distance goods transportation by mules and donkeys while the women run roadside inns like other Thakalis. Before the arrival of trucks in Pokhara, the pack animals of Marpha plied on the old road between Pokhara and Butwal but they have since shifted their activities to transporting Indian salt, cement and chemical fertilizers to Lamjung, Gorkha and Baglung.

It was late afternoon when we left Marpha after refreshments at Om Chyalba Hirachand’s house and a large crowd came to see us off beside the village irrigation channel. I was about to turn a corner on the narrow path when a rider followed by another galloped from the other direction and stopped right in front of
me. The rider was a hefty Khampa with two revolvers holstered on his sides and the follower had a gun slung over his shoulder. We faced each other on the middle of the track and as he was drunk he swayed on the saddle. When I tried to hail him, the response was only a grunt with a twisted smile. On the narrow mountain roads, it is a matter of prestige who first gives the right of way. I tried to stand my ground although I was armed only with two cameras and local reputation had it that my police escort armed with 303 rifles would be no match to these seasoned Khampas with more modern arms. But before I could fully grasp the situation, my host Hirachand's son pulled my horse by its mane towards the inner side of the hill slope and the drunken Khampa brushed past me and was gone at full speed followed by his companion. My Marpha friends later told me that it would have been unwise to involve oneself with these armed Khampas who had dominated Thak Khola for nearly a decade.

We forded a small stream, Pong Kyu, that formed the boundary between Marpha and Syang villages and continued north along the right bank of the Kali Gandaki. We reached the lower fields of Syang (2740 m) about dusk when large herds of goat and some lulu cows, native cattle of tiny size, were being herded towards the village. Syang was located on a high terrace and above it another old terrace hung across a bare slope. The irrigated fields on the valley floor had been won over from riverain steppe of Sophora moorcroftiana and Oxytropis sericopetale and there were numerous isolated stands of Cupressus torulosa near the village fields. Syang villagers also have four kin groups, Pashi, Saka, San and Syang and on the basis of primitive shrines under the Cypress trees, existence of lulu cattle, distinctive graveyards and linguistic features, Jiro Kawakita, a Japanese ethno-geographer, has conjectured that the culture and religion of Syang may represent a relic of an older society pre-dating the introduction of Buddhism in the Thak Khola. The village raises mainly goats as the land around is covered with thorny bushes. We crossed a small stream and rode past the airstrip and reached the new section of Jomosom on the right bank of the Kali Gandaki. We were received by the local administrator Narayan Prasad Raj-
bhandary who is an authority on Nepal-Tibet relations. He was however unable to explain to me satisfactorily about the rash behaviour of the Khampa within his jurisdiction.

Jomosom (2710 m) is situated on a terminal moraine and there are still some ice-hollowed lakes nearby. It is the headquarters of Mustang district with 28 offices, a hospital, a wireless station and a small army garrison. Next morning, October 16th, I crossed the bridge over the Kali Gandaki and visited the much larger and older section of the village. We then walked two kilometers south to Thini across a long stretch of dry terrace fields. The open Cypress forest had some junipers and thorny bushes while willow and apricot adorned the village fields. Thini (2830 m), located on a high moraine bench, occupies a commanding position overlooking the entire Panch Gaon area and it is said that in times of war in the past, signals used to be sent to Marpha and neighbouring villages by blowing a conch-shell from the gomba on the Dhumpa ridge. This long ridge south of Dhumpa Kyu projects west towards the valley floor and its dry slopes exhibit a ribbed pattern caused by wind erosion. We had good views of the north side of Dhaulagiri (8167 m) and Tukche peak (6920 m) from Thini (Pl. XVIa).

Thini is a large village and the distinctive feature of the houses were the roof altars of red earth mounds embedded with wild sheep horns and Cypress branch. The village gomba seemed to be fairly old and the caretaker showed us some reliquaries. He opened an wooden chest and took out a bundle. He unwound the wrappings of nine coloured clothes layer by layer to reveal a copper casket. Inside the casket was the upper dome of a human skull with impressions of the first Tibetan vowel ‘A’. The relic was said to be part to of the skull of a high lama Ngojer Tsultrim. Other items included a pair of cloth sandals and a brocade jacket said to have belonged to Padma Sambhava himself. The old Garab Dzong fort was in ruins but we later saw some ancient arms and armours including massive swords, shields and matchlocks now preserved in the village hall. Garab Dzong was an important
fortress-town in the ancient kingdom of Se-rib that included the present Panch Gaon and Barah Gaon areas. Tibetan documents credit the founding of a line of rulers at Garab Dzong near Thini to one Gyal-dong-mig-jen and the Bon-po monastery at Lubra (Serpent Crag) is said to have been established during the rule of one of his successors in the mid-12th century by a Dolpo lama Lubra Tashi Namgyal.* According to local legend, King Gyal-tang-po-chen, who was said to have three eyes (probably a reference to his strength) and later died at the hands of his own subjects, was the last king of Thini.** Se-rib came under the sway of the Tibetan kings of Gunthang during the 13th century and was followed by the rule of Mustang. The latter struggle between Mustang and Jumla for the control of the area was a long drawn-out affair until the defeat of Jumla by the Gorkhalis in 1789.

I returned to Jomosom and in the afternoon inaugurated the new high school building. The school cultural programme presented later were mostly of popular Nepali song and dances and when I heard the names of local student performers on the stage, they had all been Hinduised or Bahadurised (Bahadur as middle name) if not bowlderized! I learnt later that apart from the deliberate attempt of the local people to discard Tibetan names in favour of Hindu ones, a particular school inspector had a decade earlier decreed with a missionary zeal that only Hindu names would be enrolled in the school register.

While Onkar Gauchan returned to Baglung, Pasang and I left Jomosom on October 17th about noon. We were lucky to be spared by the proverbial furious winds for which Jomosom is famous. We rode north-west along the left bank of the river under a clear blue sky and from the level sand bed rose bare ridges with their rock strata folded in recumbent curves. We followed the track along the base of the eastern rocky slope for five kilo-


meters and the valley widened where the eastern tributary Panda and western tributary, Panga, joined the Kali Gandaki (2756 m). Three kilometers upstream of the Panda Khola was the village of Lubra (2981 m) which has an old Bonpo temple much revered by the Jhankris of western hills.

We climbed above the river to a gravel terrace and arrived at a fork on the road two kilometers beyond the Panda Khola. The one to the right climbed north-west across a rolling steppe towards Muktinath (3749 m) and continued further east to Manang across Thorung La (5416 m) while the left one continued due north towards Kagbeni. We took the latter direct path and continued north facing range after range of bare slopes. We then descended to the flood plain of the Kali Gandaki and met a mule caravan carrying wheat flour from Mustang town to the Khampa garrison camp at Kesang (3444 m), three kilometers south-east of Thini. The deep blue sky hung over the yellow and ochre tableland and the light breeze inspired us to race our horses on the vast dark sands. The name Kali Gandaki or 'the dark big river' must have been derived from these sands of black shale and slate just as the shaligram (ammonite) stones that abound hereabout had given sanctity to this river. We were no pilgrims in search of ammonite stones (worshipped by Hindus as representing god Vishnu), and we rode on towards the wheat fields of Kagbeni.

We came to another road junction above the fields and its significance was marked by a chorten. We had come up from the south and the northern one led to our destination Mustang while the eastern road led to Muktinath and the western one to the bridge over the Kali Gandaki continued further beyond to Dolpo across Sangda La (5110 m). We took the northern road, crossed the Jhong Khola that drained the Muktinath area and entered Kagbeni (2810 m). Although I could not ascertain the exact boundary between Panch Gaon and Barah Gaon, it was at Kagbeni that I felt I had entered a different culture world. In spite of the fact that the place-name had a Sanskrit suffix of ‘beni’ for a river confluence, Kagbeni with its markedly arid climate, mud-walled
houses, Tibetan dress and language was more representative of the northern borderland.

The close-packed mud houses with enormous walls gave Kagbeni an appearance of a fortress-town which it was in the past. The old fort that once occupied a strategic location at the cross-roads was now in ruins. It was here that in the 18th century, a Jumla King had imprisoned the Mustang ruler Tsche-dbang and his Ladakhi consort. They were later rescued by a Ladakhi general Tsultrim Dorje who then was in Mustang as an escort for the Ladakhi princess and following which Mustang and Jumla entered into a peace treaty in the Kagbeni fort before the protector image made of a black image and on the Jumla King’s iron rosary in 1719. The old houses and the narrow dark alleys gave an air of antiquity and the only new structure in the village was a Khampa building with a shop.

The track north of Kagbeni traversed across a gravel terrace of black shales, dark sandstones and red quartzites (Pl. XXXIXa). The slopes were covered with thorny bushes and looked an ideal goat county. Up in the blue sky, we could see numerous columns of cranes and cormorants heading south on their migratory flight from Central Asia. They flew at great heights and sometimes we could see the columns being scattered like beads of a broken string when attacked by falcons. Some birds so broken from the main flock circled above the vast sands of the Kali Gandaki with high pitched calls and a few stragglers landed on the ground. Five kilometers beyond Kagbeni, we left the steep east bank of the river and climbed towards north-east over a gentle ridge (3178 m). Across the Kali Gandaki to the west were patches of open Cypress forest on either side of the Cha Lungpa stream and towards the north, we looked down on the village of Tangbe and its green fields. We descended to the Dhin Kyu and it was nearly dark when we reached Tangbe (3017 m). The doors along the massive walls confining the narrow main street were closed and when we knocked at one of them and shouted to let us in, mastiff dogs of the village responded with a chorus of booming barks. After a long wait, a man appeared on a house roof and directed us to the loft of the
village *kani chorten*. He also provided us provisions for supper and some blankets that proved most useful during the cold night. The village had about 30 houses and the people claimed to be Ghales and Gurungs and said they had migrated from Manang. They grew buckwheat in summer and travelled south in the winter after sowing wheat and naked barley. They kept some mules and maintained large herds of goats for which they had grazing land disputes with Tetang and Chhuksang villages.

When we left Tangbe the next morning, we saw fort-like ruins above and below the village. These could as well be old village sites as the close-packed mud houses here look like forts from a distance. We went past the northern fields of the village irrigated by a long channel lined with willow trees. We descended to the Kali Gandaki and after fording it, rode north along the west bank. The pebbles and sands on the river bed were of dark lacustrine shales, black slate, grey and green sandstones. On our left was the Gomba Kang, an impressive *gomba* with sweeping walls perched atop a red cliff. We followed the river-bed for two kilometers and then forded the river to reach Chhuksang at the confluence of the Kali Gandaki and the Narsing Khola. Chhuksang (2920 m) had about 60 houses and grew buckwheat, wheat, naked barley, potato and even some maize. The village had about 120 mules and horses and 1200 goats and some *dzo* brought from Manang and Rasuwa. There was also a primary school and the police check-post assigned for Mustang town had come down here for the winter. A smaller section of the village on the north side of the Narsing Khola had been much damaged by river erosion. About two kilometers east of the village lay Chhonnang (3041 m) and Tetang (3170 m) on either side of the Narsing Khola and close by them were the salt mines operated by a Thakali contractor.

We had lunch at Chhuksang and after crossing Narsing Khola, descended again to the Kali Gandaki river bed. The flood plain with gravels of light sandstones, bluemarls and violet shales shimmered in the noon heat. The higher cliffs above the river were sculpted by wind into vertical ribs like giant organ-pipes.
We rode along the east bank of the Kali Gandaki for an hour and then crossed it by a log-bridge at the point where the river emerged from a tunnel formed by one huge cliff that had collapsed against the other. We had followed the Kali Gandaki all the way from Kusma but now we would have only distant glimpses of the river since its passage north of here was through an impassable gorge. Our path now lay along higher grounds to the west. When we looked back from the bank of the tributary stream Gyagar Chu, the west-facing cliff had a row of 21 cubicles dug into a horizontal mud vein about 30 meters above the river. Although it is yet to be resolved whether the numerous caves of upper Kali Gandaki are relics of an old troglodite settlement stage or mere hermitages for meditation, this particular one provided a perfect vantage-point for meeting the invaders from the Gyagar route. We came across four more caves complete with steps leading down to the now dry stream when we entered the deep ravine of the Ghyagar below Chele (2921 m).

The path along the Gyagar ravine climbed between enor-cliffs of gravel-boulders and conglomerates. We then zig-zagged up a thorny slope towards the north and reached a pass (3600 m) and looked back on a high moraine terrace with Gyagar (3261 m) village and its irrigated fields. The upper slopes to the west were covered with open Cypress forest. We then traversed two kilometers north to Samar (3292 m) with a clump of poplar trees beside a stream. The village had 13 houses each decorated with sheep horns above the entrance door. The villagers had some dzo and raised barley and turnip. We stayed at the house of Tharjin Ghale who said that his family had migrated from Braga in Manang four generations ago. His mother was from Dangarjong and his own wife was from Geling. It is possible that Tharjin’s ancestors did come from Manang but the claim of a large number of Barah Gaon people to be Gurung but who spoke Tibetan language indicated that these people were also in the process of climbing a social ladder above the amorphous Bhotia mass.

The next day, October 19th, we started early on the long road to Charang. We crossed two mountain streams through
steep slopes of open shrub and juniper and passed a new clearing of young barely planted by Khampas for hay to feed their horses. We soon reached a pass of 3,810 meters and crossed three more ravines to climb again to a ridge at 3,932 meters. The track turned along the contour and we had good views of Annapurna, Damodar Himal and snow ranges around Muktinath towards the east (Pl. XXXIXb). The nearby ridges had bare, bleached faces of sandstone, shale and chalk but the rest of the landscape was a maze of rolling ridges and terraces covered with enormous deposits of moraines and gravels of variegated colours. The Kali Gandaki was hardly four kilometers to the south-east but it was hidden in a deep gorge.

The track then descended steeply into a small alpine valley where there once used to be a salt trading-depot. A steep ascent of about 1,000 meters brought us to a high pass of 3,840 meters overlooking Geling to the north (Pl. XLa). Geling village was located on an old moraine and indeed on our route to the Mustang town, we traversed a series of ancient moraines that descended towards the east from the high ridges to our left. When we reached Geling (3597 m), buckwheat had just been harvested and the fields were being ploughed for naked barley. On a steep slope facing the village, we saw some caves and the ruins of an old fort nearby. A large chorten on the roadside coloured in red, yellow and black blended well with the surrounding landscape. We met here two traders from Tarakot on their way to Mustang town to sell cigarettes which they had purchased in Baglung after selling Jumla goats. They planned to return to Baglung with more goats from Mustang.

After Geling, we climbed to another pass, Nyi La (3952 m) that marks the traditional boundary between Bara Gaon and Mustang proper. There was still some snow on the pass but we crossed it easily under a sunny windless sky. We descended north of the pass towards the Tangmar stream across a slope of Caragana and Lonicera steppe. The lower Tangmar valley of old morainic materials was surrounded by cliffs of red conglomerate and therefore the name Tangmar which means 'Red Crag.' The red cliffs
stood out distinctly against yellow, light blue sandstones and dark shales exposed on the nearby slopes and one might conjecture that the three basic colours, red, yellow and black used on the chortens and gombas in upper Kali Gandaki may have been inspired by these natural colours. Gemi village (3500 m) was located on the south side of the river and on the opposite bank were the ruins of the old village with a vast extent of abandoned terrace fields. I first thought that the village and fields had been deserted due to increasing dessication in the Mustang region. However, the villagers later told me that the old site had been abandoned when an irrigation channel along the left bank of the Tangmar river was eroded away beyond repair.

We descended from the village to the Tangmar Chu and climbed to the site of the old village and on the roadside was an unusually long mendong (mani wall) that bespoke of the past grandeur of the village. The track beyond the mendong climbed steeply to a pass (3,006 m) overlooking Charang valley to the north. We met three groups of man on the pass: Marpha men returning with wheat from Mustang town, Larjung men with Mustang mustard seed and Thini men with sheep bought from the Dokpa nomads. We had crossed numerous steep ridges and ravines from Samar to this pass but the prospect beyond was quite different. We had come closer to the central axis of the Kali Gandaki valley and the topography was more of a sweeping open slopes and wide valleys. The land was covered with extensive ancient moraines overlaid with interglacial fluviatile gravels representing various stages of the past Ice Age.

The descent from the pass was long but pleasant with wide views across the Kali Gandaki to the east where I could discern three major moraine levels. Charang village (c. 3600 m) was located on a broad plain like an oasis amidst long moraine humps and bleached grey hillsides. We entered the village through a massive kani chorten daubed red ochre on a white base. Buckwheat had just been harvested and the greenery of the willow trees contrasted well with the white-washed houses and the dark pile of brushwood on the roof. In summer, however, when the
Charang plain turns green with alpine grass, large herds of grazing animals enliven the landscape. The Japanese Buddhist monk Ekai Kawaguchi, who left Kathmandu in 1899 on his clandestine visit to Tibet through Thak Khola and Dolpo stayed over a year in Charang and wrote:

"In summer, simple is the contrast between verdant fields of luxuriant wheat, interspersed with patches of white and pink buckwheat, and the majestic peaks that keep guard over the plain and look even grand in their pure white robes of perennial snow, the combination makes a striking picture. Throw into the picture a buoyant army of butterflies, that flutter up and down, keeping time, as it were, to the stirring melody of sky-larks."

We were welcomed in the house of Lobsang Bista, the brother-in-law of Mustang Raja and where we spent the night. Next morning, we visited the gomba and the castle. The gomba was a large multi-faceted red-ochre building on a raised ground close to the village. The south side of the gomba was in a dilapidated condition but the interior held many treasures. The main altar had the image of Maitreya (future Buddha) in gilt bronze along with images of Sakyamuni and Dorje Chang. The walls were covered with beautiful old frescoes representing Dorje Chang, Hevajra, Sakyamuni and others of the Buddhist pantheon but a leakage in the roof had damaged some murals. Other items included a 16-volume Tibetan text of Prajnaparamita (Perfection of Wisdom), numerous old thankas, and set of musical instruments that had been since silenced with the decline of the old monastery. The most impressive sight was however the Charang castle on a high bluff just south of the confluence of the Charang Chu and its tributary Tholung Chu from the north. The massive white edifice with small dark windows rose vertically above the ground to five storeys with an open balcony on the roof. The small chapel on the third floor contained some bronze images and religious texts. In a room on the next floor were kept old weapons of war such as swords, match-clocks, mail armours and shields of animal hide. The top-floor gave a good view of the village
to the south and the entire Charang plain. There were some caves on the bare cliffs across the river to the east.

After a brief tour of the castle, we left Charang by crossing the Charang Chu towards the north (Pl. XVIIa). We headed due north along the western flank of Tholung valley and two hours later rode past a large chorten and ruins of an abandoned village. We were going up a gentle steppe slope when we sighted ahead a group of men on horse-back riding towards us. Some had rifles slung across their back and we wondered if these could be armed Khampas to intercept us on the threshold of our destination. Had I provoked the last Khampa I met head-on near Marpha? Such were the thoughts inspired by the wild and desolate country we were riding through where anything could happen.

The group of men on the road ahead was no mirage and then they dismounted on approaching us. We were indeed relieved to learn that they were men of Mustang led by the Raja himself to receive us (Pl. XLb). We dismounted as the etiquette demanded and greeted the Mustang Raja and his men in exchange for their welcome khada (white scarf). Then we all turned north on the road to the town and when the Raja gave a shout, we all whipped our horses and galloped at great speed along the wide path. We stopped on reaching a ridge over 4,000 meters overlooking the Mustang town on the wide plain of Monthang ('Plain of Aspiration') that was reminiscent of a Mustangi author's description reproduced at the beginning of this chapter. The plain, enclosed by snow ridges, sloped gently towards the east and numerous cattle and horses grazed on the harvested fields. The town was made up of over a 100 mud houses close-packed within the confines of a thick wall in the center of the vast plain. On a northern hill prominence overlooking the town was the ruins of Kesar Dzong (c. 4764 m) fort and the north-west of the town appeared the portals of the Namgyal monastery. The highway to Tibet across Kore La (c. 4,400 m) passed through the gentle valley of the Dhokpa Chhung between the fort and the monastery.

A crisp cold wind from the Tibetan plateau began to buffet
us and we descended down the gentle north slope to the valley, crossed the Dhokpa Lho stream and entered the town through its enormous gate. We set about exploring the town after a refreshing Tibetan tea at the Raja’s residence. The Mustang town at about an elevation of 2,800 meters, was laid east-west about 230 meters by 150 meters into a rectangle with a recession at the northeastern side with the town-gate. The thick wall that enclosed the town was buttressed by look-out towers at regular intervals. But for a tall pink-and-white chorten just outside the gate and two willow trees in the south-west corner all were enclosed within the security of the wall. A view from outside at ground level revealed only the upper parts of the Maitreya temple and the palace and the rest was a massive rampart of grey mud. The founding of this walled city is credited to Ama Pal, a powerful king of Mustang, dating back to the early half of 15th century. According to the historical documents of Mustang, Molla of Tsarang, A-ma-dpal (Ama Pal) was the grandson of a Gunthang general, Serab Lama (Shes-rab-bla-ma) who conquered the territory around Lo Monthang following the decline of the Malla empire of Jumla at the close of the 14th century. Ama Pal and his descendants ruled over a large territory in upper Kali Gandaki valley and Ngari in Tibet and their authority extended as far as Guge and Purang. They later had marriage relations and political alliance with the rulers of Ladakh. During the reign of young Tenzing Namgyal, Jumla reasserted its hold in Thak Khola and Mustang had to pay tribute to Jumla. The next ruler Namgyal Dorje later regained some of the territories following the defeat of Jumla at the hand of the Gorkhalis who gave him due recognition as a local ruler.

We visited important places of worship inside the town. We first went to Dhakar-Tharje Ling located near the northern wall. It is said to have been established in 1785 by re-instating the image of Maitreya from the old gomba at Dhakar across the Dhokpa Chhyung. It contain terra cotta images of Maitreya, Padma Sambhava, Avalokiteswar and Amitab, elaborately carved wooden pillars and fine frescoes. The library contains a biography of Ngorchen Kunga, the lama who built the first
monasteries in Mustang in the 15th century and the Tibetan Book of Dead among other religious texts. We then walked to Champa Lakhang (Temple of Maitreya) under a tall red tower said to have been established in 1759. The main image was a 15-meter high terra cotta of Maitreya and the walls were covered with exquisitely painted mandalas (mystic circles). The third temple we visited was Thukchen Gomba with a massive hall with 36 pillars. On the main central altar was the statue of Sakyamuni flanked by numerous statues and gold-plated chortens and the frescoes here too were rich and elaborate.

We returned late in the evening to the Raja's four-storeyed palace. The main landing was guarded by mastiff dogs and numerous pet apsos roamed in the living quarter. Jigme Parbal Tandul (now Bista) said to be the 25th descendant of the early King Ama Pal wore a large turquoise ear-ring and was an amiable host. The Rani who comes from a noble family of Lhasa was active in the local panchayat. The Raja holds an honorary rank of colonel in the Nepalese army and visits Kathmandu and Lumbini during the winter. He maintains a retinue of 30 servants in the palace and owns fields in Manthang, Charang, Gemi and Namasung. He also has about 40 horses, 100 yak and 200 sheep and goats. Wheat and peas are grown in summer on the fields around the town while wheat and mustard are grown in Thengar and millet in Chhoser. The local price of new wheat was Rs. 6.50 a pathi; Rs. 19.50 a pathi of rice, Rs. 4 per mana of salt, Rs. 8 per mana of mustard oil, and Rs. 5 per mana of kerosene during the time of our visit in October 1973.

Next morning the Raja showed us around the palace. The third floor had a library with numerous religious books including Kangyur and Tengyur with the title in letters of gold. On the fourth floor, we were shown a chapel with an elaborately carved altar-piece and gold-plated chortens and another chapel on the east wing was being used as a study. In another room, dedicated to Mahakala, there were images of Hevajra and Dakini and nearby was a small cloister housing the Raja's ancestral altar complete with old weapons and armours. The flat roof had a pile of wild
sheep horns immediately above the ancestral altar and *gyalchen* copulas marking other chapels below. We could survey the whole Monthang plain from the roof and also trace out the trade route that led north to Kore La and Tibet.

We could not visit the frontier pass and other places of interest around Monthang as we were expecting a helicopter that morning, October 21st. The helicopter arrived at 11 a.m. and landed outside the eastern walls of the town and we took leave of our royal hosts. We flew down the Kali Gandaki valley and the characteristic feature of the landscape was a vast expanse of bare ridges choked with morainic and gravel deposits. The gentle warped feature of the upper section of the valley was replaced by intensely folded ridges that rose higher south of Kagbeni. We then left the placid sandy flats dwarfed between Nilgiri and Tukche peaks and entered a deep gorge between towering mountain peaks. The Kali Gandaki continued on its southwards journey amidst green hills while we turned south-east above Tatopani (Pl. XLIa). We had traversed a compressed world from the frontier of Central Asia to a tropical valley in less than an hour when we landed at Pokhara.
CHAPTER TWELVE

MANANG AND MARSYANGDI

"Long ago, the people in our northern valley were being harassed by invaders who came over the southern mountain. At that time there was a lama in our northern valley, who by some device made it impossible for the invaders to cross the mountains. By the same token, we were unable to get out. Hence, though we are all Gurungs, our customs differ on opposite side of the mountains."

-Gurung Lama of Braga*

Manang lies about 50 kilometers due north of Pokhara across the Annapurna range. One fascinating aspect of viewing mountains is their changing mood with the interplay of light. Another interesting phenomenon about mountains is the transformation in their shape and personality when viewed from different directions. If the Annapurna range presents itself as a dramatic wall of rock and ice and the limit of the northern horizon at Pokhara, the same mountain range is transformed into a massive hump of white mass as seen towards the south from Manang

and the individual peaks take on an entirely different character. Again, Manang is the source of the Marsyangdi river and a trek along its long course enables one to witness the various stages in the journey of a Himalayan river.

I had planned to trek for three weeks up the Kali Gandaki and then fly down direct to Manang and walk down the Marsyangdi. I had invited the outgoing director of U. S. A. I. D., William Carter Ide and his wife Helen for the Manang-Marsyangdi trek. The helicopter arrived at Mustang town on the scheduled day, 21st October 1973, after depositing Carter and Helen at Manang but it had to make a long detour. After the helicopter had been repulsed twice by strong westerly winds over the Thorung La (5416 m), it had to return down the Marsyangdi gorge then fly west over Pokhara and up north to Mustang. The pilot was cautious about the gale force wind on the Thorung La and we flew down the Kali Gandaki (Chapter XI). The helicopter refuelled at Pokhara and droned due north-east drawing closer to the eastern peaks of the Annapurna Himal. We overflew numerous high forested ridges dotted with large Gurung villages of Yangjakot, Pasgaon and Ghanpokhara, their slate roofs shining against the noon sun.

After Ghanpokhara, we turned north of the dense forests on Sundar Himal and made a dramatic entry into the gorge of the Marsyangdi between Annapurna and Manaslu Himal. We flew north between enormous steep walls towards Thonje and when we turned west above the Marsyangdi, the passage was hemmed in by perilous summits that seemed to overreach each other. We headed close to the eastern flank of Annapurna 1 and then north through a narrow gorge and when we again turned west as if to avoid a huge rock amphitheatre, the wide valley of Manang was revealed to us (Pl. XXXVIIIa). It was a broad valley enclosed by snow mountains on all sides with green forests on lower slopes and patches of fields on the valley bottom. We could make out the fluttering prayer flags on the roof tops of Pisang, Ngawal, Braga and Manang as the helicopter began to lose height. When the helicopter landed beside Manang village
II. MANANG & MARSYAGDI

Author's route

Motorable road

Ridges above 3000 m.
at 2 p. m., three hours after leaving Mustang, we were again in a remote valley but much greener and in the heart of high mountains.

Contrary to reports of rude behaviour of Manang people by earlier visitors, particularly H. W. Tilman in 1950 and D. L. Snellgrove in 1956 (both of whom I had met in their native habitats in Barmouth and Berkhamsted in Britain), we were given a warm reception with piles of *khada* and bowls of *arak* including a sizable sheep as a welcome provision during our brief stay. I presumed that this was no partiality to a native from a neighbouring district but rather the expression of the local people's keen desire to participate in development activities as my visit was concerned with the inspection of some government projects. We were first taken to an elder's house and offered Tibetan tea, boiled eggs and warm *arak*. We than visited the village *goniba* where the main images of Amitabh, Padmasambhava and Avlokiteswara were flanked by rows after rows of newly-commissioned *terra cotta* statues of thousand Buddhas. In the evening, we discussed about the old customs and new problems of the area with the elders while youths and girls danced outside and the rhythmic thumping of their feet and chorus of lilting songs continued far into the night.

The upper valley of Marsyangdi, called Nyeshang locally, extends 20 kilometers in the east-west direction and lies at an average elevation of 3,500 meters. The inhabitants known as Nyeshangba or more popularly Manangba are said to have migrated from Tengar in Tibet and have been settled in the area for considerable long time. An earlier site of the village known as Tengar with foundations of houses lies on a hill north of Manang. Khe and Phalma are the main descent groups with numerous clans and although some have adopted Gurung surnames like the people of Barah Gaon in Mustang, the population of Nyeshang does include many Ghale and Gurung people. The old tradition of Ghale kings and past battles are still enacted during the *Badde* festival held every three years. The Hinduised Gurungs of the south tend to dissociate themselves from their more northerly Lamaistic neighbours like the Manangbas by inventing or subscri-
bing to mythical genealogies and claim Aryan descent against the reality of physical anthropology. On the contrary there might be some validity in the statement of the Braga Lama quoted at the beginning of this chapter. The dialect used in Manang is closely related to Gurung language. In the past, Nar and Manang were the main bastions of Gurung and Ghale rule in Lamjung area. One might even conjecture that Manangbas include some sections of Ghale and Gurung clans who after crossing the Nar La (c. 5700 m) from Tibet stayed on in Manang and were later converted to Buddhism while the others migrated to the southern flanks of Annapurna and Manaslu-Himalchuli. The southward migration of Gurungs is supported by the progressive shift of their settlements from higher to lower elevations that can be reconstructed by tracting a series of abandoned old village sites in Lamjung and Kaski and the process still continues.

Manang (3505 m) with over 300 houses is the largest village of Nyeshang and other villages are Braga, Pisang, Ngawal, Ghyaru, Tanki and Khangsar. Of these Braga, Manang, Ngawal and Pisang are older settlements while Ghyaru is an off-shoot of Ngawal, and Tanki is an extended village of Manang (Pl. XVIIIa). Khangsar in a western side valley may have originally started as a monastic community. Although some people from Barah Gaon and Nupri have been absorbed in Nyeshangba population, the bulk have migrated from Nar valley in the north-east with whom they still have cultural and trade links across the Kang La (5321 m). Manangbas are great traders but unlike other communities near the Tibetan border, their trade is directed mainly towards the south and even beyond the sea. The Nar route to Tibet is said to be a difficult one but their minimal involvement in Tibetan trade and southern orientation might have something to do with past historical events.

I had earlier heard a legend in Gaon Shahar that the Manang people were granted trade privileges by the Lamjung Raja as a reward for their fine workmanship in the construction of the Lamjung fort at Gaon Shahar. The Lamjung fort indeed is a massive stone structure re-inforced in three tiers but I could not
confirm this version when I asked the Manang people. The oldest royal grant the Manangbas have on trade privileges dates back to 1784 during the time of Rana Bahadur Shah when Lamjung had already fallen to Gorkha kings with their capital in Kathmandu. A later grant of 1844 concerns about the movement of Manangbas to trade freely within Nepal and exemption from customs duties. A third document refers to an appeal by Manang traders to the Kathmandu government against the levying of duties at the Thori customs-point (Chitawan) and their appeal was later honoured. A fourth document of 1940 issued during Juddha Shamsher's time refers to the poor agricultural productivity in Nyeshangba and thus their dependence on trade in local herbs and dogs and then established their annual tax obligation to the central government as Rs. 1,783 (it was Rs. 1,241 in 1905) along with one musk deer, one blue sheep skin and a pair of Tibetan boots.

The trade privileges enjoyed by the Manangbas must have some historical basis as the poor agricultural productivity of their land referred to in the documents is in no way different or more acute from similar other Himalayan valleys. Nyeshang grows one crop of barley, wheat and buckwheat and potato during March-November and rice and maize are procured from Lamjung against cash. They have also large herbs of yak, horses, sheep and goats but the Marsyangdi route being hazardous, pack animals are used only for the Larke and Thorung La route. The long engagement in southern trade seemed to have precluded the Manangbas from venturing directly in trans-Himalayan trade and a later document sets their quota of salt import from Kali Gandaki under Dana customs post at 500 sheep loads, 400 yak loads and 100 men loads twice a year.

In the past, Manangba traders used to be active mainly in eastern India (Assam, Bengal) and Burma and sometimes sailed farther with Indian passport. The items of trade used to be herbs, musk pod, other animal products from Nepal, herbs from Assam forests and semi-precious stones from Burma. Since the introduction of bonus system in Nepalese export trade in 1962,
they shifted their activities to Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Borneo. At the time of our Manang visit in October, 510 men were said to be trading in South East Asia: Manang, 230; Braga, 70; Tanki, 50; and 40 each from Khangsar, Ghyaru, Ngawal, and Pisang. They may be away for over a year on trading trips from one country to another dealing in various regional commodities with minimal establishment cost as they normally board free in religious establishments such as Buddhist temples, mosques and Sikh gurudwaras and sell their wares on the pavements or open markets. The extension and dilution of Manangbas’ special facilities for passport and foreign exchange facilities to the people of entire Manang district later led to the undoing of their long trade privileges and these were curtailed in 1976.

A document of 1824 reaffirms local autonomy in Nyeshang with the exception of panchakhat or major crimes. Even in 1973 after more than a decade of introduction of the panchayat system, there were no village panchayats in Nyeshang and the village affairs were managed by traditional local councils known as Dhapa with the larger villages of Manang, Braga and Ngawal dominating the scene. The number of members in the Dhapa council varied according to the size of the village, two in Khangsar to fifteen in Manang and was composed of elected members whose term varied from one to two years. The local councils discussed and decided on matters of agricultural and pastoral schedules, passed judgements on customary issues and imposed financial penalties for crimes and quarrels. The local councils even joined forces in devising general rules such as banning of smoking and hunting in the entire Nyeshang region and as late as 1960, a mountaineering expedition to Annapurna II was fined Rs. 100 for shooting a blue sheep. The resolution of dispute among villages was not however always by means of peaceful discussion as a famous conflict between the two largest neighbouring villages, Manang and Braga, in the early 1950’s involved armed confrontation and a Japanese scientific expedition then travelling through Manang had to make a hurried exit.

When we got up next morning, we were greeted by a brilliant
blue sky and a panorama of white ranges all around. The two ends of the valley were enclosed by Yumre Gang (6091 m) and Gango Dhar (5312 m) to the east and Nilgiri (7061 m) to the west and north of the valley rose the peaks of Gundang (6419 m) and its eastern satellite peak of 6,059 meters. The most impressive sight was towards the south where a huge mass of snow and rice rose directly above the Marsyangdi and although Annapurna I was hidden behind Roc Noir, the peaks of Gangapurna, Annapurna III (Mala Kang), Annapurna IV (Bhojo Kang) and Annapurna II (Sabche Kang) could be identified. Annapurna II was particularly distinctive with a high snow shelf close to the summit ridge. A glacier down the northern flank between Gangapurna and Annapurna in frozen cascades deposited a vast amount of morainic debris on the Marsyangdi valley floor directly south of Manang village. The moraine tongue that had blocked the Marsyangdi river temporarily had been divested of much of its ice content and now was a mass of rubble with a large glacial lake flanked by two enclosing lateral moraines which the river skirted, eastwards through a narrow trench.

While Carter and Helen stayed on in Manang to explore the village, Pasang and I headed five kilometers west towards Khangsar, the western-most and highest village in Nyeshang. We went across a small stream coming down from Tanki (3566 m) and descended to the Marsyangdi to cross a bridge. We then rode west briefly over the old lacustrine flat dammed behind the Gangapurna glacier and had a glimpse of the deep valley of the Jargeng Khola joining the Marsyangdi from the north-west. We covered two kilometers along a pine covered slope and then crossed to the north bank of the Marsyangdi with Caragana steppe and reached Khangsar (3733 m) after a lateral climb of 200 meters. The village had 50 houses and grew wheat, buckwheat and potato and raised yaks and goats. We could not visit the local irrigation project under construction owing to landslide on the path caused by recent rains that had also damaged some houses and killed 25 cattle.

There was a path continuing west along the north slope of the
river and a brief look convinced me that the 18-kilometer track to Tilichho lake (4919 m) must be a difficult one. The path climbed laterally to a high ridge (4785 m), then descended 850-meters to the Marsyangdi only to climb again through an eastern side valley to a col (4846 m) overlooking the large glacial lake first mapped by the French expedition to Annapurna in 1950. The track then skirts along the northern edge of the lake, sometimes over its frozen surface and climbs to Mesokanto La (5099 m) that provides access to Thini and Jomosom. The source of the Marsyangdi river is not Tilichho which has no outlet but a much smaller glacial tarn at a height of 5,090 meters about 6 kilometers north-east of Tilichho and directly below a peak of 6,047 meters. The river drops 1,463 meters from its glacial source to its confluence with its first tributary the Jargeng Khola within a distance of 19 kilometers.

We did not venture beyond Khangsar but we had a fine view of the white wall of the Grande Barrier between Rock Noir (7454 m) and Nilgiri North (7061 m) that separates the waters of the Marsyangdi river and the Miristi Khola. We instead climbed a small ridge (4145 m) east of Khangsar and had the entire upper Marsyangdi valley spread before us. The valley occupies a synclinal depression filled with glacial and interglacial deposits and landslide materials and the Marsyangdi river, flanked by ancient moraine terraces, flows east along the center of the longitudinal valley. The surging mountain stream changes its character on the valley floor into a meander falling 344 meters in 26 kilometers between Manang and Pisang.

Immediately below us lay the village of Manang with white prayer flags on the flat roofs and the fire-smoke rising in the morning fresh air. A track to our left passed below Tanki westwards to the Jargeng Khola and Thorung La (5416 m). Across a small stream beyond Manang, Bhojo Gomba was perched on a ridge promontary, the prayer flags fluttering like regal banners over a medieval castle. In the middle distance, the harvested fields of Braga and Mungji overlooked the meandering Marsyangdi river and further beyond were the villages of Nyawal and
Ghyaru strung between pine forests and scree slopes. The lower slopes of the valley sides were covered with Pinus excelsa and Juniperus indica and the higher slopes had Caragana-Lonicera steppe on drier slopes and fir and birch in sheltered corners. Then the alpine meadows climbed to the level of scree, snow and rocky ridges. There were only two exits out of the valley towards the east: one high saddle, Kang La in the north-east led to Nar valley and the other was down the Marsyangdi which we intended to follow (Pl. XXXVIIIb).

We descended to the Marsyangdi from our vantage-point and returned to Manang village. We had lunch and set out about noon on our journey down the Marsyangdi. Numerous yaks, dzo and horses grazed on the stubbles in the field: Manang village alone is said to have 200 yaks, 200 horses, 100 cows and 1500 goats. We crossed a stream and passed below Bhojo Gomba believed to be the oldest Buddhist temple in Nyeshang. We soon reached a grassy slope and climbed to the village of Braga (3510 m) on the contorted flanks of an ancient landslide material. The 100-odd houses were clustered along the steep face like a honeycomb and the house roofs with streaming prayer flags provided the only flat space. The cliff towering over the village had been eroded into fantastic shapes by wind and water and on it clung dark clumps of hardy plants. The Nyeshang house roofs do not have the pile of brush wood so characteristic in other northern Bhotia valleys as timber is plentiful in the nearby forests. At one corner of the village was a large gomba repaired recently with government aid. The gomba had a whole series of terra cotta statues of Kargyupa lamas and images of Tara, Samantbhadra and Maha-kala. The smaller statues of brass and bronze were locked up in a steel safe (which I had earlier helped transport by helicopter) as a security against idol-lifters and are displayed only during ceremonies.

We descended from Braga to the main track and rode two kilometers to Mungji (3414 m) on an alluvial terrace close to the river. One track crossed south of the Marsyangdi river and turned east along the south bank of the river across the plain of
Hongde to Pisang and the other continued along the north bank to Ngawal and Ghyaru. We followed the latter route and continued east for four kilometers and then struck north into the valley of the Chhetaji Khola with fine stands of fir and birch. We climbed 300 meters on the forested east slope and reached a steppe plateau. Here was the new monastery and more than 30 houses for the religious community established by Lama Gyalpo. The 60-year old Lama, born in Braga and trained by a Lama from Nupri (northern Gorkha) had been quite influential in reviving Buddhism in upper Marsyangdi. Although the gom-bas of Bhojo and Braga are said to be more than 500 years old, Manang people used to sacrifice yak for clearing lakes and slaughtered sheep to placate the spirits of rock-falls and turbulent rivers until Lama Gyalpo put a stop to such animistic practices two decades ago.

We took leave of the old ailing Lama and descended down to Ngawal (3536 m) by crossing a small side valley. Ngawal lies on the main track to Nar valley and I had heard that the village had a genealogy of Ghale kings but when I enquired after it, I was told that the keeper of the document, Kalu Ghale, was away from the village on some business. It was late when we left Ngawal and the path traversed over an old moraine slope covered with fir and birch. Ghyaru, our destination for the night-stop was five kilometers east and as we were directly north of Annapurna II and Annapurna IV, their towering north cliffs overshadowed us and it soon got dark. We passed the ruins of an old fort below the path at Thewal and the black silhouette of its gaunt walls were a dramatic reminder of past turbulence in these remote valleys. Nyeshang used to be the stronghold of Ghale rulers who came from Phu and Nar and later held sway in northern Lamjung. The last Ghale Raja, Phaichan, is said to have been defeated by a Thakuri ruler of Lamjung in the 16th century at Bahun Danda.

It was dark when we reached Ghyaru (3688 m) with the aid of torch lights. We stayed at the house of a man who earlier used to have a shop at Bhulbule. We had not quite appreciated the precarious location of the village in the dark of the night the
previous evening. It was perched on a steep slope of at least 40 degrees angle directly beneath Gango Dhar (5312 m) and 480 meters above the Marsyangdi. The river that flowed due east for 15 kilometers after its confluence with the Jargeng Khola made a sharp south turn below Ghyaru. The village is an extended settlement of Ngawal as suggested by its name Ghyaru which means ‘goat pasture’ and they still share the same village council. Ghyaru provides a good close-up view of the north face of the Annapurna II and Annapurna IV with all the geological details and the snow and ice overlay. Towards the west, the view sweeps across the entire upper valley, the Grande Barrier and the snow ranges north of Khangsar.

Next morning, we came down a steep gravelled trail through a pine forest to a high bench above the Marsyangdi where there was a roadside mani wall consecrated by the Lama of Shang in 1956. We could see on the opposite side of the river the main road we had left at Mungji. We followed the alignment of the river that now flowed due south for two kilometers and then turned south-east. We passed a small pond on an old moraine terrace and climbed west through a pine and juniper forest and reached Pisang with 70 houses above a semi-circular expanse of fields. Pisang (3353 m) used to be the southern limit of yak but they have now given up raising these animals. Immediately south of the village rose the massive northern flank of Annapurna I with dark limestones and series of yellow band and the whole mass was intensely folded and faulted. The peak of Annapurna II was just 10 kilometers south and its steep walls plastered with green ice in the gullies was an overpowering presence.

We then crossed the Marsyangdi and continued along its south side under towering rock cliffs. We soon reached a delightful section of the path over an old lateral moraine covered with pine and juniper and with small lakes on either side. And it is hereabout that the Marsyangdi river changes its character: a river that travels easily down the upper valley eroding loose morainic gravels is transformed into a raging torrent tearing through solid bedrock. Below the spot-height 3,130 meters, the Marsyan-
gdi strikes against the base of Paungda Danda and plunges south in roaring cascades amongst huge boulders and falls 184 meters within a distance of less than three kilometers. The trail down this narrow gorge entails the crossing of three bridges within two kilometers to avoid the sheer rock precipices.

A little south of the glade of pines and ponds, the path descended through a dense forest towards the first bridge. Near this forest, where the first spruce and Tsuga now appeared, were two features of natural and cultural significance. Beside the forest track and called Kyoh Theb (Important Place) by the Manangbas and Simi Krong (Guardian of the Dead) by the Gurungs are numerous stone cairns with small tree branches offered by Gurung travellers. The Gurungs revere the site as representing the most important stage in their lives’ journey and on reaching it, make offerings of leaves and branches on the cairns and then face Paungda Danda (4559 m) and shout out their ancestors’ names above the din of the roaring Marsyangdi. The ancient names echo back from an enormous rock face that sweeps 1,645 meters directly above the river to the east. It is a sheer bare slab of dark limestone with a sweeping curvature facing west. This impressive rockface compressed into an upward-flaring symmetrical amphitheatre between two prominent spot-heights of 4,504 meters to the north and 4,410 meters to the south represents the axial rise of the Manang synclinorium towards the east. Whatever its geological significance, the native Gurungs consider this unique rock face the arduous route to heaven. Near the summit of the rock face is a small rock pillar as a sharp tooth that may act as a perfect peg for rock climbers to scale to its top and explode the long-held myth.

We descended from the cairn-site in the forest across a terminal moraine and crossed a log-bridge over the Marsyangdi. The famous Paungda rock stood directly above our heads like a giant awning as we negotiated the narrow trail along its base to the south. Sections of path were held with log-beams but these were wet and decayed with continuous sprays of the plunging river. About 60-meters lower down, we had to recross the river to
its right bank over another log-bridge. We then followed the west bank of the river under a dense forest of spruce and reached Brathang a kilometer below. Brathang (2985 m) lying on a steeply south-sloping boulder terrace was hemmed in by towering cliffs on all sides. Annapurna II was hardly eight kilometers horizontally to the south-west but vertically 4,877 meters above us while a glacier plunging down the north face of Lamjung Himal was suspended high with its chandeliers of icicles pointing sharply towards us. Brathang with its suffix thang which means a plain in Tibetan was indeed one of the smallest thangs I have seen so far in my travels.

Brathang had a camp of 27 armed Khampas, a splinter group from Wangdi's Kesang headquarters and they had managed to grow some vegetables even in this shady depth. The camp commanded the bridge over the Marsyangdi that was built in Bhutanese style complete with timber roofs to protect the wooden gangway against the rain. They literally held the key to the only road between the upper and lower Marsyangdi as the bridge had doors on either end and which they kept locked at night. We found them friendly and they offered us coffee and biscuits and passage over the bridge. Once again on the left bank of the river, we rode across a narrow river terrace with young stands of spruce and turned south-east and still we had no respite from the overpowering rock cliffs. After six kilometers we reached the old village of Chame (2651 m) with a small hot spring. We crossed a bridge to a group of houses on the south bank of the river and here was the headquarters of Manang district with some offices and a police check-post. The inhabitants were mainly Bhotias and the houses had stone walls and roofs with a low pitch were of wooden planks pressed down with boulders. Most of them were one-storeyed and both the modest houses and men seemed dwarfed under towering cliffs. The police chek-post had a record of 18 tourist visitors to Chame that year and the area further north to Nyeshang was still restricted to foreign tourists.

Next day, October 24th, we departed from Chame down the right bank of the Marsyangdi through a dense forest. We had
now left behind not only the land of large gombas and yaks but also steppe vegetation. We now passed through tall stands of Picea smithiana and Tsuga dumosa with dense undergrowth that indicated the deep penetration of rain-bearing clouds through the Marsyangdi gorge. We had a last glimpse of the tremendous reverse foldings on the north-eastern flank of Annapurna I and turned eastwards to newer mountains. Two kilometers east of Chame, we could see to the north the hamlet of Kyupar (2571 m) on a terrace at the confluence of the Marsyangdi and its northern tributary, the Nar Khola. The trail up the Nar Khola to Nar and Phu villages and leading further to a pass on the Tibetan border is said to be a difficult one across treacherous cliffs that involves 18 crossings over the river. Our own track eastwards was through a pleasant forest with good views of snow peaks of Junam (6932 m) and Chemi (6699 m) north of the river and we reached Than-chok (2682 m) around noon. The village located on a moraine terrace had about 20 Ghale and Gurung houses and was the northern limit of maize cultivation in the Marsyangdi valley. This was also the northern-most village with men in foreign army. They also grow wheat and buckwheat and the apples first introduced in 1968 had begun bearing fruit. The villagers breed dzo and maintain large herds of sheep and goats which they graze in Nar valley in summer and take down to Khudi during the winter. Gone here were the swagger of Manangbas and Tibetan dresses of Chame although the people employ Lamas from Nar for their religious ceremonies.

We left Thanchok (Dzong-gyu in Tibetan) after crossing a fresh landslide on an old moraine slope and re-entered a temperate forest. A little further beyond in a small clearing was Tibang (2621 m) with a tea-shop. The place provided brief glimpses of Himlung (7125 m) and Cheo (6812 m) to the north east and Manaslu (8125 m) to the east through moving clouds. Down below, we could see the village of Taje (2347 m) on a moraine shelf north of the river and Bagarchhap below it. At Tibang, the main track descended sharply to the east but there was also a rough track through dense undergrowth climbing towards the south. There used to be much salt traffic along this high road across
the Namun Bhanjyang (5784 m) prior to the improvement of the gorge route along the Marsyangdi and which is also said to be the past migration route of Gurungs to Siklis and beyond.

The forest path below Tibang had been much damaged by the recent rains and I could not ride. We descended over gashes of landslips on morainic boulders and gravels and finally entered the lower forests of oak with thick undergrowth of mountain bamboo. We made a long traverse along the south side of the Marsyangdi passing fields of grain amaranthus and buckwheat and reached Bagarchhap (2072 m). We rested here briefly and had some refreshing chang and tea and the carpets they had laid for the guests were not locally made but bought at the Tibetan carpet center at Jawalakhel. Bagarchhap with 23 houses on the main road was more cosmopolitan with some Ghales and Gurungs, three Thakali families and numerous Bhotia migrants from Nupri. It was the southern-most village with a gomba. I noticed that Bagarchhap was the meeting-place of two types of bakkhus, the long Tibetan-style over-all in dark red or black and the typical Gurung cape with black, brown and white stripes.

After Bagarchhap we turned south along the right bank of the Marsyangdi for two kilometers and after crossing a bridge, reached Thonje (1920 m) at the confluence of the Marsyangdi and the Dudh Khola which drains the southern flank of Himlung Himal and north-western flank of Manaslu. It had about 30 houses in the style of Chame with stone walls and pithched roofs of wooden flanks while some modest houses had roofs of bamboo mat. The neighbouring Ghale and Gurung villages of Taje (2347 m), Odargaon (2133 m), Tamra (2316 m), Tilje (2182 m) and Naje (2164 m) however had single-storey flat-roofed houses with some mat-roofed houses. The house types and the people suggested that we were at the transition zone of the higher trans-Himalayan region and the hill region to the south. The area centering around Thonje is known as Gyasumdo or ‘Meeting of Three Highways’ referring to the convergence here of roads from Lamjung (south), Nyeshang (west) and Nupri (east). The local economy is dependent on dry crops particularly maize and raising
of large herds of sheep and goats. The villages have no sizable gomba but roadside and village chortens are very much in evidence while Lamas and the tribal priests officiate at the religious ceremonies. The priests of tribal or highlander (lekhali) Gurungs are Klipre and Pochyu both of whom follow a religious tradition of strong Bon-po influence. While the Gurung lamas turn to Nar for their religious education, the Klipre and Pochyu consider the Bon-po monastery at Lubra as their main center of learning. They however have subtle differences in their ceremonial robes and languages. The Klipre uses a more archaec language and the flowing robe and head-dress are of Tibetan origin. The Pochyu tradition is more oral and uses a colloquial Gurung language and the head-dress of pheasant feathers and sacred belt of cowrie shells is suggestive of the tribe’s transition from the ancient Bon-po religion of the northern borderlands to their present highland habitat. The people of Ghyasumdo in a way represent the Ghales and Gurungs in their original tribal stage who have otherwise been Tibetanised in Nyeshang and Hinduised in southern Lamjung.

In the past, Ghyasumdo was an important center for salt trade that came across the high passes of Gya La (5334 m) and Larke La (5214 m). A Lamichhane family of Ghanpokhara used to be the government contractor for the salt trade and caravans of hill men from Lamjung travelled along the precarious Marsyangdi trail with grains to be exchanged with salt. Since the decline of this trade, the economy of the region and the importance of Thonje has also suffered and a new settlement, Dharapani, has sprung up on the main road west of Thonje to cater to the needs of the travellers. Thonje is also an important stage in the course of the long journey of the Marsyangdi river. The river here descends to an altitude of 1,880 meters with a fall of 9,906 meters in 21 kilometers from Brathang or 3,910 meters from its source following its 76 kilometer course mostly in the easterly direction along the northerly slope of high mountains. At Thonje, the river breaks south through a deep gorge carved across the enormous thickness of rock strata of the main Himalayan exit.

We visited Thonje briefly and inspected the local school. After
a glimpse up the deep Dukh Khola leading to the old salt-depot of Bimthang (3719 m), we recrossed west of the Marsyangdi and stayed for the night at Dharapani (1889 m). The following morning, October 25th, I inaugurated a new suspension bridge below Thonje. The bridge, aided by the government in materials and money, had been designed and executed by an ex-serviceman, Havildar Hark Lal Gurung of Chiplag. The Marsyangdi gorge route used to be a dangerous trail and no pack animals ventured below Thonje even in the days of brisk salt trade. All the goods, grain upwards and salt downwards, used to be transported on human-back although flocks of sheep and goats without loads used to travel down this track for sale and grazing in Lamjung during the winter. The bridge I inaugurated was one of a series along with improvement of trails for pack animals that would considerably cut down the cost of living in upper Marsyangdi. The Manangbas depend greatly on grains from Lamjung and the high cost of transportation by men (mostly women in Manang’s case) is demonstrated by the fact that the porterage cost of maize for example, is the same as the per unit cost of the grain in Dumre.

We crosed the gaily decorated Dharapani bridge and rode down the left bank of the Marsyangdi under enormous cliffs of biotite gneiss below Naje village (2164 m). We were now entering the root zone of the main Himalaya composed of gneiss, granite and migmatite dipping sharply to the north. The steep valley sides were covered with oak (Quercus glauca) and some rhododendrons. There were spruce and Tsuga dumosa higher up and waterfalls cascaded down narrow gullies overgrown with mountain bamboo. After travelling six kilometers south, we had a brief respite from the tyranny of steep slopes at Tal (1645 m), a narrow stretch of alluvial flat obviously created by a temporary damming of the Marsyangdi as the place-name tal (lake) indicated. At a tea-shop here, I met two Gurung women from Naiche. They were visiting their brothers in Odargaon for the Tihar festival. The distance between their place of birth (Odargaon) and place of marriage (Naiche) was more than two days journey and the opportunity they availed of to visit their parental homes was a
Hinduistic festival when sisters worship their brothers. Tal was a satellite hamlet of Naje village for overseeing the cultivation of maize. We had last seen the flat-roofed houses at Bagarchhap and at Tal we left the last shingle-roof houses.

We walked past the level stretch of Tal and climbed across a huge pile of boulders left by an old landslide down the east slope that had temporarily blocked th Marsyangdi. On the opposite slope across the river, we faced the Myardi Khola which marked the boundary between Manang and Lamjung districts. With its source at Namun glacier, the stream headed down to the Marsyangdi over north-dipping rocks in a series of waterfalls. We continued south along narrow rock ledges high above the river. Dangerous sections that previously had paths over tree logs held with pegs had now been improved by rock cutting. We passed one particularly difficult section locally known as Kamero Gauda. Kamero means clay but there were no signs nor possibility of finding clays in this zone of crystalline gneiss and granite rocks. I later learnt that the name was actually derived from kamara (slave) and was called Kamara Gauda (slave’s check-point) where the Ghale Raja used to provide passage only to those who crawled through his outstretched legs on the narrow path and thus became his subject. The story goes that many were the independent spirited Gurungs who preferred to use the higher snow-bound Namun Bhanjyang route than succumb to the indignity of crawling under the Ghale’s legs. Just south of Kamara Gauda is another difficult section with a side tunnel through which the new dhakre (load carriers) to Manang had to pass as an initiation ritual.

About three kilometers south of Tal, we descended to the river level by zig-zagging across an enormous rock outcrop by a narrow track supported by stone walls. The place is called Sattale (seven storeys) after the previous trail system that involved crossing seven rope ladders laid across the bulging rock face. The old bridge of lianas held by V-shaped tree branches at Sattale (1420 m) was replaced by a steel suspension bridge in 1962 under the Swiss Technical Assistance Programme. The track then
a. Seti bridge. (p. 12)

b. Dipail valley (p. 14)
a. Baitadi basket. (p. 25)

b. Bhatna landslide (p. 23)
a. Jumla valley
   XXV
b. Jumla town
a. Stone pillars (p. 48)

b. Masta shrine (p. 43)
a. Girls of Mah XXVII (p. 59)
b. Mangri village (p. 59)
a. Lama of Mugu (p. 61)
   XXVIII
b. Mugu valley (p. 60)
a. Children of Siyalgarhi  
   XXIX  
   (p. 70) 

b. Kagmara Lekh  
   (p. 73)
a. Phoksumdo Tso (p. 78)
XXX
b. Ringmo waterfall (p. 78)
a. Humla valley  
XXXI  
(p. 101)

b. Til village  
(p. 111)
a. Crowd at Jung XXXII (p. 116)
b. Majulepatan, Limi (p. 116)
a. Badi couple
XXXIII
b. Ruins at Kakre Vihar (p. 133)
a. Pokhara valley  (p. 151)

XXXIV

b. A chautara  (p. 150)
a. Gurung priests (p. 164).

b. Modi Valley (p. 168)
a. Shrine at Nuwakot. (p. 156)

XXXVI

b. Temporary Bridge (p. 177)
a. Khudi, Lamjung. (p. 184)  
XXXVII  
b. Gurung shepherds. (p. 246)
a. Manang valley, west view (p. 225)  
XXXVIII  
b. Manang valley, east view (p. 231)
a. Forest of gravel cones (p. 213)  
XXXIX  
b. Annapurna and Nilgiri (p. 216)
a. Pasang near Geling. (p. 216)  
XL  
b. Raja of Mustang (p. 218)
a. Dhaulagiri & Kali Gandaki (p. 195)

b. Marsyangdi valley (p. 247)
a. Rhinoceros (p. 257)
   XLII
b. Crocodile (p. 258)
a. Langtang Himal
   XLIII

b. Langurs of Langtang  (p. 284)
a. A Mani wall (p. 297)  
XLIV  
b. Janaki temple (p. 303)
a. Kunde village  (p. 311)  
XLV  
b. Ama Dablam  (p. 312)
a. Pumo Ri and Kala Pathar
XLVI
(p. 317)
b. Northern walls of Khumbu
(p. 317)
a. Sagarmatha or Mt. Everest (p. 329)
   XLVII
b. Border peaks from Camp I (p. 326)
a. Girls of Bung (p. 338)
   XLVIII
b. Hongu valley (p. 338)
a. Everest massif (p. 329)
XLIX
b. Rai family (p. 344)
a. The Arun
   L
b. Limbu grave
   (p. 365)
followed down the west side of the Marsyangdi and on the opposite side was a waterfall that plunged 190 meters from the Chharchhare Khola. We were still within the biotite gneiss zone of steep slopes and there were no large villages along the 15 kilometer gorge section between Naje and Upallo Chiplag (1737 m). The few houses in-between were satellite hamlets or temporary sheds for the cultivation of grain amaranthus and yam. However a small hamlet, Chyamje (1400 m), two kilometers below Sattale marks the northern limit of paddy cultivation and raising of buffaloes while Sattale itself is the last limit for fishes. We camped at the small hamlet of Jhite (1341 m) opposite Upallo Chiplag. We celebrated our safe passage through the gorge trail with a bottle of Scotch which Carter had brought.

The valley was still narrow overshadowed by Thul Nagi (3980 m) to the east and a southern outlier of Sundar (3438 m) to the west but it was warmer and the slopes were covered with subtropical wet forest. Wild vines hung over the path and red seeds of wild-growing ginger gave a dash of colour to the scene. On October 23rd, we left Jhite and crossed the last cliff-hanging section of the track. For the dhakre from the south, this cliff track used to be the first obstacle and on crossing which as part of the initiation ceremony the new ones used to shave their heads and ask the rate of exchange of salt in Manang by shouting across the Marsyangdi. Two kilometers below Jhite, we passed close to a 100-meter high waterfall. I turned back my Manang horse as the bridge at Syange (1066 m) was too precarious for the horse and we crossed the Marsyangdi and walked down its eastern bank. On the opposite bank we had a full view of a large landslide at Tagring, the northern-most Chhetri village. It is said to have first commenced during the earthquake of January 1933 and fresh gashes on the sides gave evidence of its continuing activity. The Tagring landslide caused by landslip over a north-east dipping granite-gneiss slope was extending headwards in spite of the dense oak forest. H. W. Tilman who trekked along this way in May 1950 made a most rational observation on witnessing the landslide at Tagring:

"Whether it takes place little by little or in one swift cala-
Inity soil erosion is generally attributed to man's careless greed, his idleness or neglect. It would not, I think, be fair to blame the people of these valleys on the Himalayan fringe for the frequent landslips which occur here. In turning the steep slopes into fruitful fields they have neither been lazy nor neglectful... One might say that on such hillsides the forest should never have been cleared, in which case the country must be left uninhabited; or that belts of trees should have been planted which would imply first the giving up of their goats by the villagers."

There used to be a flourishing salt-brine on the river bank at the nearby Nunkhani (1036 m) until the Tagring landslide brought down a large mass of earth and boulders that dammed the Marsyangdi and submerged the site.

We negotiated a difficult cliff section and ascended to Bahun Danda (1310 m). The village was perched on a ridge as prominent as an Aryan nose. It is the birthplace of Nepali poet Madhav Prasad Ghimire as well as the northern-most limit of Brahman settlement and Newar shops in the Marsyangdi valley. The place also marks the transitional zone of the main central thrust of the Himalayas with gneiss above and crystalline schists below. The geomorphological character of the river valley also changes dramatically from a narrow gorge to a wider valley with alluvial terraces down below. From Bahun Danda, one can have a good view of Gurung villages of Bhirpustun to the north, Ghale village of Usta, Gurung villages of Nayagaon and Rindang and Siurung to the south and west. With the exception of Bhirpustun, which clings half-way on a scarp face of the Thul Nagi ridge, all these villages are located on north-dipping slopes. They are compact villages dependent on dry crops and sheep-rearing (Pl. XXXVII b.) The houses are partly slate-roofed and partly thatched and although the villages are marked by ordinary chortens, here called chhorje, as a protection against landslides, the people still cling to their old tribal faith with Klipre and Pochyu as their priests. Steep slopes descend below these highland (Lekh) villages and on the old alluvial terraces, are found the smaller villages inhabited by Gurung and Chhetri rice cultivators. The Gurungs in the lower
villages have been considerably Hinduised in spite of the fact that they still resort to their tribal priests for mortuary rites (pai). The thatch-roofed houses in this zone, plastered red below and white above, are symbolic of the syncretism of two cultures and ecological levels. The red colour represents the sun and gold and an evocation of sanctity for the Hindus of the tropical realm. White is the symbol of supermundane and celestial, the absolute and pure, and stands for the mountain world.

The track from Bahun Danda descended across a grassy hill flank dotted with kaphal (Leontice berberis) trees to Lampata (1036 m), a prominent river terrace near the confluence of the Marsyangdi and its eastern tributary the Ngadi Khola that drains the south flank of Peak 29 (7835 m). We then crossed the Ngadi Khola by a small cable bridge and reached the river confluence (888 m) of the Marsyangdi and the Ngadi Khola after walking over the paddy fields of Usta near a landslide. From Thonje to Lampata, the Marsyangdi maintains its southerly course falling 992 meters in 28 kilometers. The gorge area of the Marsyangdi is locally known as Chaud Khola (Fourteen Rivers) although the river has no major tributaries along this stretch. South of Lampata, the Marsyangdi receives many large tributaries and it is interesting to note that the river develops conspicuous bends after each confluence. With the augmentation of additional water from the tributary stream, the main river swings to the direction opposite to the flow of the tributary. Below the Marsyangdi-Ngadi confluence, the river leaves a large terrace on the east side and cuts south-west under a rocky cliff. We walked south along a lower river terrace dotted with Gurung grave-yards between the Marsyangdi and Sisneri Khola and climbed to my village Tanklichok (1005 m) on a higher river terrace.

I met my relatives and learnt that my mother had left that very morning to be with her brothers for the Tihar festival in Naiche village. We spent the night at home and while Carter and Helen continued on the southwards journey next day, Pasang and I had a day of rest. The following day, we retraced our steps to the Lampata Chautara and then leaving the Manang road to the left, turned north-east high above the right bank of the Ngadi
Khola. We soon passed the Chhetri village of Thulibensi (1097 m) on a sloping shelf below Bhirpustun (Pl. XIVa). We then turned east into the narrow Ngadi valley and at its head loomed large the vertical south face of Peak 29 flanked by Himalchuli and Manaslu. We followed upstream along a deep valley with dense subtropical forest and reached Naiche about noon.

Naiche (1402 m) village is perched on a ridge promontory high over the Ngadi Khola and is a compact village of 54 houses. My father had migrated from Naiche lower down to Taranche where there was more paddy land and in the village, I had to call on many relatives on both sides of my parents. Naiche, Bhirpustun and Sanjaba had splintered off from an older village on the higher slopes of Thul Nagi at 2,590 meters now a ruin in an oak forest. Naiche is the last Gurung village in Ngadi Khola and five kilometers further upstream is the hamlet of Ludi recently settled by Tamangs from Gorkha. Naiche provides a good view of Peak 29 and Himalchuli that are barely 24 kilometers to the north as well as the densely-forested Barahpokhari Lekh due south.

Next day, October 30th, I took leave of my mother and relatives and returned to Tanklichok. Pasang and I this time took a different route travelling down the left side of the Ngadi Khola. We crossed the river south of the village by a rope bridge made from nylon ropes that some Naiche shepherds had retrieved from one of the higher camps of an abortive Japanese climbing expedition to Peak 29. We soon passed the Chhetri village of Tarachok (1310 m) and crossed the Chhim Khola in a deep ravine covered with Alnus nepalensis and Arundinaria bamboo. We then climbed to the Ghale village of Usta (1402 m) on a high spur. The village has a grove of Castanopsis indica to check soil erosion and provides a commanding view of the Manaslu-Himalchuli massif and the villages along the Marsyangdi from Tagring to Tarapu.

Usta is inhabited entirely by Ghales of Samari clan and most of them are migrants from the village of Ngawal in upper Manang. The Ghales once ruled over the Gurung territory in Manang, Lamjung and Gorkha until their defeat at the hands of
According to a Kirant legend, the word 'Gurung' is derived from Gu (nine) and Rong (chief) when the Gandaki region was ruled by a confederacy of nine chiefs. One of these Gurung chiefs, Nuchni Rong of Kaski, is said to have helped the Ghale Raja of Lamjung against the attack of a Khadka chief from the south-east. Most writers on Gurungs have dwelt on the conflict among the Char Jat (four clans) and Sorah Jat (sixteen clans) within the tribe and have relied on later versions of Ghale, Kon, Lama and Plon as the Char Jat. However, it is said that a Tibetan document once in the possession of the Bodnath Lama assigns the original Char Jat or Plih-gi (in Gurung) and Krohmai (chiefs) only to the four Ghale clans of Dange, Ghaldang, Rildi and Samari. Although the Char (in Nepali) may be equated with the Plih-gi (four lineages), there is no equivalent Gurung term for the Sorah Jat and the prevalent term Tharmai for them is rather a later combination term of Nepali thar (clan) and Gurung mai (people). The older term for Gurung clans other than those of the Plih-gi is Ku-gi or 'nine clans' which corresponds closer to the Kirant version of nine chiefs.

The preponderance of Ghales in upper Marsyangdi, the highland location of their villages in Lamjung and Gorkha, greater hold of Lamaism in their religion and their food taboos (against goat and chicken) distinct from the Gurungs all suggest that the Ghales represent a later migrant group from the north. Similarly, amongst the Tamangs of Rasuwa there is a Ghale clan who are considered to be of royal descent. The Ghale chiefs and their Gurung functionaries must have later intermarried and thereby the Ghales became part of the Gurung tribe. The schism for status among Gurungs, recorded even in court battles since the mid-19th century when the caste-oriented Muluki Ain had come into effect, seems to be due to the impact of castesystem whereby influential sections within egalitarian tribes tried to upgrade their status according to Hindu caste values. We find similar attempt for status differentiation among the Tamangs (Barah Jat and Athara Jat), Sunuwars (Das Thar and Barah Thar) and Chepangs (Pukunthali and Kachhare).

We descended a steep path from Usta and returned to Tan-
The following day, October 30th, we left Tanklichok and passed through Taranche, Nandeswara and Bhulbule. We crossed a wire-and-bamboo bridge at Bhulbule and walked down the right bank of the Marsyangdi to Khudi (822 m). From Lampata to Khudi, the Marsyangdi flows in the south-westerly direction with a fall of 124 meters in eight kilometers and then turns south-east after the confluence of the Khudi Khola. We left the last high ridges at Khudi and turned south along the wide river terraces inhabited mainly by Brahmmins and Chhetris. The Gurung villages are located mainly in the side valleys and on higher slopes.

The lowe· Marsyangdi valley is a zone of mixture between the Khasa Hindus and tribal Gurungs and most places have two names, one in Nepali and the other in Gurung language. Some examples of such place-names with Gurungs equivalence in brackets are Baglungpani (Syaru), Bhirpustun (Pui.li), Chaur (Chor), Daduwa (Tadwa), Dahre (Pajö), Ghamrang (Komron), Ghanpokhara (Ponju), Gilung (Klihnu), Khasur (Khasu), Maling (Mhili), Naiche (Tojo), Nalma (Ngada), Pasgaon (Paigön), Sanjaba (Sonbu), Taksar (Tasa), Tangting (Tonde), Tarachok (Tahjo), Taranche (Ngadi), Usta (Singu) and Yangjakot (Yojgain).

We travelled down the right bank of the Marsyangdi and passed Besi Shahar (792 m), the old winter residence of Lamjung rulers and the district headquarters of Lamjung since 1971. Nineteen kilometers south of Khudi, the river is joined by one of its major eastern tributaries, the Dordi Khola which descends from the south flank of Hinchuli. The course of the Marsyangdi is in short loops amidst high terrace benches and the fall is 236 meters. The river then flows south of the Marsyangdi-Dordi confluence with a fall of 44 meters in seven kilometers.

The Paundi Khola, demarcating the boundary between Lamjung and Tanahu districts, joins the Marsyangdi from the west at Paundi Dhik (504 m) where the river again turns south-east. We stepped into Tanahu district after crossing a small suspension bridge over the Paundi Khola and arrived at Tarku Ghat (488 m) two kilometers south. We spent the night at Tar-
ku Ghat which now had a high school and even a diesel-operated rice-mill. The following day, November 1st, we re-crossed the large suspension bridge and walked down along the west side of the Marsyangdi. The river between Paundi Dhik and Chepe Ghat follows a south-easterly course, falling 47 meters in the kilometers. The landscape is one of extensive river terraces and low hills covered with sub-tropical wet forest. At Chepe Ghat (426 m), the main river is joined by the Chepe Khola that marks the boundary between Lamjung and Gorkha districts.

We walked through tropical sal forest to Turturre (426 m), a new settlement of tea-shops opposite the Palungtar airstrip. The final 10 kilometers' trek was across lateral gullies and a long terrace of lower Bhansar. We finally climbed a higher terrace and reached Bhansar (487 m) so called because of its old heritage as a custom-point between Tanahu and Gorkha principalities. From Bhansar, we descended south-west to Dumre (426 m) across the Chundi Khola. Dumre at kilometers 135 on the Prithvi Rajmarg is a new settlement of Bandipur Newars that has sprouted since the completion of the Kathmandu-Pokhara highway. At Dumre, we got into our waiting land-rover and turned east on our ride to Kathmandu. We followed the Chundi Khola to its confluence with the Marsyangdi at Bimalnagar (397 m), another new settlement of Bandipur merchants below a huge overhang of dolomitic limestone.

The river falls 20 meters from Chepe Ghat to Bimalnagar and then turns south-east to Majhuwa Khairani (304 m) at its confluence with the Darondi Khola. It then enters a deep gorge between the high ridges of Chhimka (1550 m) and Manakamna (1314 m) to join the Trisuli River at Mugling (218 m). The last stretch of eight kilometers descends 53 meters across a series of anticlinal and synclinal chloritic phyllites and quartzites and the road follows down the rocky slopes above the right bank of the river. The Marsyangdi concludes its 175 kilometers long journey across the Himalaya at Mugling by joining the larger Trisuli river. On our way east towards Kathmandu, I had some last reflections on the river I had followed for nearly two weeks. The Marsyangdi traverses four districts and is spanned by 21 bridges of
which only one at Tarkughat is a steel suspension bridge. The river has a catchment area of 3,850 square kilometers and its enormous volume of water from 40 cubic meters per second in winter to 8,500 cubic meters per second during the summer flood joins the Trisuli river without being used for irrigation or power generation.
“My grandfather was said to have sacrificed buffalo every year at the shrine, in my father’s time it was more expensive so he slaughtered sheep instead... But I have been so impoverished that I cannot even buy a sheep, so I sacrificed only a chicken.”

-Majhi of Thori

The Sanskrit word yatra for travel has two different meanings in Nepali language. When used and pronounced yatra (as Yusuf in in Hebrew) in its classical form, it means a journey. It is however used particularly in connection with pilgrimage or travel for religious merit. In the Nepali variant jatra (as Joseph in Teutonic), the word has connotations of a religious festival and public pageant. The two words however converge at the time of religious festivals when people travel to witness the procession of deities along prescribed routes or when people congregate at some important river confluences during the Maghe Sankranti. It is then truly a yatra (travel) to jatra (festival).

A popular Maghe Sankranti gathering takes place at Devaghat at the confluence of the Kali Gandaki and the Trisuli Gandaki rivers. The Maghe Sankranti Jatra is held in mid-January to

* Dor Bahadur Bista, People of Nepal, Kathmandu, 1967.
mark the movement of the sun's course from the Tropic of Capricorn to the northern hemisphere and many people travel to Devaghat to bathe in the sacred waters of the Sapt Gandaki. I left Kathmandu on 14th January 1967 by an ambulance car of the Nepal Red Cross Society to provide medical aid during the Maghe Sankranti Jatra at Devaghat. It was a crisp cold morning when I and some medical volunteers drove down the Tribhuvan Rajpath. There was no visible impact of the decade-old highway on the economy of Tamang and Chhetri hamlets of the upper Mahesh Kholo where the farmers scratched thin soils on steep slopes and grew traditional corps like maize and millet. Neither the cultivation of sugar-cane and groves of mango and litchi lower down could be credited to the highway or the government farm at Dhunibensi as these commercial crops had been long there to cater to the needs of the Kathmandu market. The road twisted and turned 52 times on the short stretch between Thankot and Naubise amidst steep slopes with narrow fields and modest homesteads. There were smells of fresh cane-juice being boiled for jaggery around Dhunibensi and we zig-zagged up across Sopyang to Tistung Deorali (1981 m) marked with white Tamang chortens. The road then descended to Palung valley (1758 m) and again rose to the pine and rhododendron covered ridge of Daman (2322 m). The panorama of the snow ranges seen from the view tower stretched 386 kilometers between Dhaualagiri and Sagarmatha (Mount Everest) and even the Kangchenjunga massif could be traced in the far eastern horizon.

We climbed over fresh snow to the high pass of Sim Bhangiyang (2487 m) and descended south through oak forest. The road was all the way down across the long Lami Danda to Bhainse Dobhan (701 m) on the banks of the Rapti Kholo. Outwards from Bhainse, we would be following the Rapti river for 65 kilometers as far as Jhawani. We reached Hetauda (466 m), a fast-growing township and turned west. We first crossed the Rapti river by a cause-way and travelled west along the 84-kilometers long Rapti Road and were badly covered in clouds of dust rasied by the convoy of buses and trucks on way to Devaghat. The road passed through large stands of Bombax mala-
baricum and Acacia catechu and dense Shorea robusta forest with small clearings of mustard crop. West of Debichaur (243 m) where the Rapti river is joined by the Lothar Khola from the north, the valley of Chitwan widened considerably with extensive fields and farms. We crossed a narrow forest belt at Tikoli (198 m) and after by-passing the new town of Bharatpur (205 m) to the left, we re-entered a dense Shorea robusta forest and reached Devaghat late in the evening.

At Devaghat (182 m), where converged all roads for the jatra, we encountered a swarming mass of humanity who had come by buses, trucks, tractors, boats and on foot. The dense Shorea robusta forest was alive with babbling men and honking horn of the vehicles. The path leading to the river was lined by sheds made from leaves and branches and there were many more along the wide sand banks on either side of the Trisuli Gandaki and at night the flicker of the camp-fires and hurricane lamps multiplied in the reflection of the water. The people gathered at Devaghat were of immense variety and of diverse tribes and castes. There were Majhis and Kumals in loin-cloth, Tharus and Darais in simple cotton, Chepangs, Tamangs, Gurungs, Magars, Newars, Chhetris and Brahmins in their hill dress. The women were more colourful ranging from blue dresses of the Tamangs and Newars, dark maroon shade of Magars and Gurungs and scarlet red of the Hindu Brahmins and Chhetris. The native Tharu and Majhi women in pony-tails wore strings of cowrie shells and colourful beads and their hand and feet were elaborately tattooed. The people huddled around camp-fires and cooked, drank, gossiped and sang. Here was a group swaying in religious chant, there another group singing folk tunes and further beyond a duet song in full swing. The rhythmic beat of the Jhankri drum reverberated in the forest night and the diversity of sound and variety of light gave an air of carnival to the scene.

Next morning, people were up early to bathe in the sacred river. While some bathed and performed sraddha for the deceased on the south bank of the Trisuli Gandak, the more enthusiastic crowded the boats and dug-out canoes and ferried across the
river for ablution at the confluence of the Kali Gandki and the Trisuli rivers. Men in loin-cloth and women in cotton dhoti took quick dips in the cold water and prayed to the sun-god. On the sandy beach was also a colourful platform that had been erected for a spiritual discourse. The mike blared rhetorical Sanskritic phrases and it was doubtful whether the pontification of the spiritualists made any impression on the rustic crowd. What was clearly evident however was the co-mingling of diverse native cultures at Devaghat, the confluence of the traditional seven Gandakis—Bari Gad, Kali Gandaki, Seti Gandaki, Madi, Marsyangdi, Burhi Gandaki and Trisuli Gandaki.

The pilgrimage crowd at Devaghat, numbering about five thousand and spread over about a square kilometers of the fair ground was on the whole orderly and the only casualties we treated were some cuts by broken glasses and a bleeding nose after a raksi brawl. Beggars were conspicuous by their absence and the few clothes spread on the path by the poor for pilgrims to throw rice grain and coins were left unattended. (But when I visited the same festival at Deveghat a decade later, the place was swarming with lepers and the physically-handcapped pestering the pilgrims)
The crowd was in constant flux. Those who had stayed overnight left in the morning while more continued to pour till late on the afternoon of January 15th. Those returning home trickled away slowly, many more on foot and by truck-loads to the south. While the Tamangs and Chepangs turned into the forest trail, some Brahmans and Chhetris returned north along the main track to Bandipur and towards the west across the river went groups of Magars from eastern Palpa. Larger boats that had come up with merchandise for sale from Bagahghat in Bihar sailed down the Narayani river.

We climbed a high terrace north of the river confluence and visited Bateule (224 m). There were ruins of some old shrines and a statue of four-armed Narayan said to date from the third or fourth century. Mukund Sen (1575–1610), the king of Palpa breathed his last at this holy place. We took a canoe and floated down the Narayani. The large river that carries down 347
cusecs of mean discharge during the January low and 4,750 cusecs during the August high surged south through a narrow gorge of Siwalik sandstone and shales. Six kilometers south, the river struck against a six-meter high bank and turned south-west. We landed at Narayanghat (182 m), the main commercial center for Chitawan district as well as the nearby hills.

* * * * *

Chitawan valley drained by the Rapti river extends about 100 kilometers east-west and is nearly 40 kilometers wide in the western half. It is a spindle-shaped dun valley bounded by the Mahabharat Lekh and the Chure range and the western boundary is demarcated by the Narayani river. The south flank of the Mahabharat Lekh is made up of Lower and Middle Siwalik shales and sandstones while the Chure range of the same geological series are capped by upper Siwalik conglomerates. The central valley with an average altitude of 190 meters is covered with alluvial soils. The climate is warm and humid. The mean monthly temperatures vary from 14.7°C in January to 38.5°C in May and annual rainfall is about 1,600 millimeters. The surrounding hills are covered with rich tropical vegetation made up of large stands of Shorea robusta with some Pinus roxburhii on higher ridges. The vast plain was once covered with tall grasses of Saccharum, Imperata and Phragmites species. Bombax malabaricum and Butea frondosa dot the older river terraces while on the flood banks grow Acacia catechu and Dalbergia sissoo.

When Mukund Sen of Palpa parcelled off his vast kingdom among his sons in the late 16th century, Chitawan is said to have formed a part of his third son Bihang Sen who ruled Tanahu. Harkumardutt Sen, the last ruler of Tanahu, had established contacts with the East India Company in the last quarter of the 18th century against the expanding Gorkhali force but Chitawan and Upardang Garhi was finally captured by the Gorkhali force under Abhiman Singh Basyant in the summer of 1777. In the past, Chitwan valley was considered a kalapani (death valley) owing to endemic malaria. Apart from the few Tharu and Majhi natives,
the place became alive only during the winter when traders moved between Bhikhna Thori (275 m) and Narayanghat and the area later became famous for big game hunting.

In the winter of 1861, Jang Bahadur assembled 975 elephants at Hetauda and organised a hunt in Thori and went as far west as Banke and caught 21 wild elephants and shot 31 tigers, 7 stags, 1 rhinoceros, 1 boa-constrictor, 11 wild buffaloes, 10 wild boars, 1 alligator, 4 bears, 20 deer, 6 pheasants, 2 hares and 3 leopards. Chitawan was the scene of an elaborately arranged shikar for King George V in December 1911. The royal camps at Sukhibar (151 m) at the confluence of the Rapti river and the Reu Khola and at Kasara (158 m) were furnished with all the amenities of civilization including electric light and hot and cold water. The camp of the host, Chandra Shumsher, included 12,000 followers, 2,000 attendants and 600 elephants. The total bag during the five day shoot was 58 tigers, 28 rhinoceros and 6 bears excluding other small games. A decade later, another royal hunt was organised in Chitawan for the Prince of Wales (Edward VIII) in December 1921. Thirty-six miles of motorable road was constructed from Bhikhna Thori to Kasara and Shikaribas and thirty-two miles of telephone lines were also laid along the road. The Prince’s entourage included 49 Europeans and 253 Indians, and 418 elephant were mobilised for the shoot. The week long shoot accounted for 18 tigers, 10 rhinoceroses, 2 bears and 2 leopards. The last distinguished visitor for shikar in Chitawan was Lord Linlithgow in the winter of 1937.

While the rulers engaged in the feudal pastime of big game shooting in Chitawan, the native Chepangs hunted birds and small games with bows and arrows on the slopes of Mahabharat Lekh, Majhis and Danuwars fished in the Rapti and the Narayani rivers and the Tharus and Darais farmed small patches of land amidst the vast grassland and Sal forest. The peaceful Tharus led an easy life with abundance of agricultural land. Their ploughs had no iron tip and no weeding was done. Harvested crop would be stored at leisure and no measurements would be taken of the quantity. The farmers kept large herds of cattle and grain formed
the main commodity of exchange. The entire district made up of Chitawan proper, Belauad, Kalabanjar, Tandi and Madhi areas used to be administered from Jhawani and the land revenue collected through zamindars amounted to Rs. 43,755 in 1954. The main cultivated land then was concentrated in the narrow eastern half around Jhawani and the plain south-west of modern Bharatpur was a vast grassland.

Chitawan long remained an area of negative occupancy. In addition to its malarial condition, the area was discouraged for settlement initially as a forest buffer against invaders from the south and later as a hunting preserve of the rulers. However, in the early 1950's hill men in search of land began trickling down to the valley and the calamitous rain of 1954 and deliberate government program of large-scale resettlement transformed the face of the Chitawan valley. Chitawan that formerly used to be known as '16,000 Chitawan' had a population of 40,000 composed mainly of Tharu, Kumal, Darai, Danuwar and Chepang during the mid-1950's. A development proposal drawn at that time visualised a reclamation of 20,500 hectares of land with large-scale malaria eradication programme, land clearnance, irrigation extension and a road link with Heatauda. The population to be resettled was estimated at 30,000. The Rapti Valley Development Programme launched then with U. S. assistance had a far reaching impact and large numbers of people from Dhading, Gorkha, Lamjung, Kaski and Tanahu poured into the valley. The traditional economic space of the peaceful native as illustrated by the statement of the Thori Majhi quoted at the beginning of this chapter, was greatly reduced by the large-scale settlement of hillmen with energy and resource.

Chitawan had a population of 20,520 in 1920, 26,239 in 1941 and 42,833 in 1954. In 1961 the population increased to 67,882 and the population density was 27 persons per square kilometers. In the next decade 1961–1971, the population rose to 193,644 with an increase of nearly 40 per cent and reached a density of 73 persons per square kilometers. Chitawan had food grain production of 73,800 metric tons in 1971 and is still one of
the important districts for the export of rice, mustard and timber. The district now has three agricultural and horticulatural centers, two educational campuses and a fast-growing Narayanghat town with some industries. Chitawan which was a forest wilderness less than three decades ago, has how became one of the most dynamic districts in the country.

* * *

Travel whether pilgrimage or secular tour involves not only geographical dimension. It also pertains to changes in perceived images and symbols. If the devout derive spiritual satisfaction from pilgrimage, there is similarly an element of mental satisfaction and relaxation in modern travel for tourism. It is even more so in the case of visitors to southern Chitawan in search of the sight and smell of wild nature. It is a journey into the past when men did not dominate but shared verdant nature with other wild denizens.

The credit of conceiving a national park for wild life in Chitawan goes to naturalist E. P. Gee who briefly visited the area in 1959. The Royal Chitawan National Park covers an area of 543 square kilometers on the north facing slopes of Someswar and Chure ranges south of the Rapti river. The park encompasses dense tropical forest, riverain vegetation and savannah grassland. The land varies form forested low hills to the marshy flats of the Rapti and Reu streams and a series of sand-bars and island on the Narayani river that provide an ideal shelter to tiger and one-horned rhinoceros. The Park is said to include 36 other species of mammals and more than 250 species of birds.

It was the winter of 1977 when I drove with my family from Narayanghat by land-rover along the southern bank of the Narayani river. The dirt track climbed to a higher dry terrace at Kachpachiya and turned due south-west past the fields of Mangalpur, Rampur and Chanauli. The villages along the way were mostly of hill settlers until we reached the Tharu village of Meghauli. Large number of cattle grazed around the Meha-
uli airstrip and vultures surveyed the scene from the tall Bombax malabaricum trees.

At Meghauli, we transferred to the heaving elephants on our way to the Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge. We forded the Rapti river at the point where there was a wide beach on the south side. White-breasted kingfisher fluttered bright blue over the water, plovers scurried and lapwings scattered on our approach. We rode under Acacia catechu and tall Bombax malabaricum trees festooned with giant creepers. The elephants were soon ploughing through a dense cover of grass at Bhimali between the Rapti and Reu Khola. The thicket of Saccharum and Imperata grasses were nearly four meters tall with white tufts and where they were particularly dense, the elephant made its way ploughing with its head and sweeping the long stems with the trunk. The elephants thrust ahead amidst crackle of reeds and rustle of leaves like a ship riding the waves. The ground was undulating with marshes on old river channels. We saw one large male rhinoceros at the edge of a marshy pond and it retreated into the tall grass (Pl. XLII a). It was a hot afternoon and we did not see much game except some rhesus monkeys and peacocks perched on the tall simal trees. We crossed the Reu Khola and reached Tiger Tops Lodge (140 m) situated on its south bank. The loud call of the Red-wattled Lapwing and the mate-call of the Ruddy Shelduck continued long into the night on the banks of the Reu Khola.

I had little hope of seeing the Bengal tiger as I was not keen on tip-toeing to the nearby bait-site. I tried to make-up the deficiency by talking to Charles MacDougal who was working on a book on the behaviour of Chitawan tigers*. I had first heard of Chuck in London as an anthropologist doing research among the Kulunge Rais of Hongu valley. Later, I met him as a scholar making an economic Survey in the Far West of Nepal. And here he was at Chitawan for the last five years tracing the pug marks, scats and kills of tigers to study their behaviour. He

told us that although tigers normally lead a solitary life, they nevertheless possess a social organisation and maintain regular contact with others. They visit recurrently parts of their home areas to check on the activities of other tigers and leave visual and olfactory signs to establish their territorial imperative.

Next morning, we drove west by land-rover towards Bagmarra along a narrow forest trail. We passed a small pond, remant of an old river course, with some Mugger crocodiles (Crocodilus palustris) basking on the grassy ledge (Pl. XLII b). We soon reached Khoria Mohan and crossed the wide Narayani River by a dug-out canoe. We landed on a sandy island with a dense growth of Acacia catechu and Zizyphus jujuba. The Tented Camp was a group of tents in a delightful park. The swift waters of the Narayani river rushed on both sides while large flocks of cormorants swarmed on the banks. They moved in large flocks and the colony would overwhelm the patch of water in splashes where they landed. White terns and sleek dark swallows swooped on the waters and flocks of teals and mallards wheeled up and down the river. The Ruddy Shelduck, invariably in pairs, seemed less afraid of men. We had a good bath in the cold river and basked on the sand. Curlews, sandpipers and ducks flew over us and on the far north-western bank a group of Tharus from Nawalpur had built a shed to dump grass collected from the island. Flocks of cormorants wheeled in the dusk, their flapping wings silhouetted against the large golden disc of the setting sun and darkness was soon upon us. We spent the night at the Tented Camp.

The following day we took a boat down the western distributary of the Narayani River. The current was swift and the Majhi boatmen steered deftly across the rapids. Flocks of ducks fluttered downstream and a group of Gharial crocodiles (Gavialis gangeticus) lying like logs on the farther sand-bank suddenly slithered into the river at our approach. We scanned long into the river but failed to sight the Gangetic dolphin (Pliantanista gangetica) said to be common here. When we joined the main river between Amaltari and Chumka, there were numerous boats
on the river. These were loaded with long grass cut from the park area and there were many thatch huts on the broad Amaltari beach to the west. put up for the grass-cutting season. We landed on the south bank where a land-rover waited for us.

We rode on towards the east along the forest road that traverses the park for 40 kilometers. After tea at the Tiger Tops Lodge we forded north of the Reu Khola and turned east along the savannah grass of Bhimali. Flocks of chital deer (Axis axis) were grazing in the late afternoon. At Sukhibar where an old course of the Rapti joined Reu Khola, we entered a dense forest. We surprized a barking deer (Muntiacus muntjak) near the cross-road to Thori and it bounced off into the dense undergrowth. On the way, we made a brief visit to Kasara Durbar (158 m) on a high bluff south of the Rapti river. It was a large two-storeyed building said to have been built in the 1930's by Juddha Shumsher who was a keen sportsman. The durbar now housed the headquaters of the Royal Chitawan National Park.

East of Kasara, we drove between the dense forest on our right and grassland on the left. It was getting dark and we put on the head-lights. We saw many hog deers (Axis pornicus) hopping out of the woods with their distinctive short front legs to graze on the grassland. A large sambar deer (Cervus inicolor) crossed our path but it was an anticlimax to find that it had been radio-collared. We encountered some jackals and cats, their eyes glinting ruby and emerald in the dark night. We drove across a wide grassland near Bankatta (182 m) where we could have seen more rhinoceroses during the day time and then crossed across the shallow Rapti river and arrived Saurah (195 m) where were located the main government elephant stable (Hatisar) and the two new lodges, Hotel Elephant Camp and Gaida Jungle Camp.

We had a delightful barbecue beside an open fire with Kirtiman Tamang as our host. Kirtiman was a researcher with the Smithsonian Tiger Ecology Project and he was later badly
mauled by a tigress. Kirtiman was the right man to tell us of the jungle lore in the cool night beside the fire in the dark. Smithsonian Project was involved in a detailed behavioral and ecological study of tigers, impact of tiger population on its ungulate preys and evaluation of the relation between prey animals and vegetation. The movement of animals were recorded by radio-telemetry. The technique involved temporarily immobilizing the animal with the Parke-Davis drug CI-744 dart and then releasing it with a radio tag round its collar. Apart from the collared sambar we had met on the road earlier, Kirtiman had darted and radio-tagged three tigers and six tigresses. Each transmitter operated on a different frequency to enable the tracking of individual animals and radio transmission receptions ranged from 1.6 to 3.2 km in grass areas to 0.4 to 0.8 km in the Sal forest and 10 to 15 km from an aircraft. The study so far had shown an increase in tiger population and although the tiger was essentially a solitary animal, social interaction was observed in the course of hunting and feeding on kills. The project had been doing similar studies on leopards, sambar, gaur, hog deer, barking deer and wild boar.

We spent the night at the recently-opened Hotel Elephant Camp and left the place next morning by riding north across an old course of the Rapti River called the Burhi Rapti. We joined the main highway near Tandi (198 m) and drove north west towards Bharatpur. The people of Chitawan had not yet been reconciled to the new fence around the national park at the cost of their free supply of fuel wood, timber and grazing space for their animals. The native Tharus must have, two decades ago, similarly resented the influx of outsiders in their natural area. But just as the Tharus and Chepangs have adjusted with the new immigrants to make a larger society, the people of Chitawan will realise in due course of time the utility of the national park as a unique resource and heritage.
CHAPTER FOURTEEN

PILGRIMAGE OF GOSAINKUND

Rhododendron flowers on the other side;
Dwarf mushrooms on the Deurali pass,
Eat not the mushrooms raw, roast it;
And eat not alone, share it.

—Folk song

The seasonal movement of people from one ecological level to another, from bensi (lowland) to lekh (highland) fields in the hills or between ghunsa (warm) to yersa (cold) huts in the mountains is related to economic exigency. In religious context too, the various festivals ordain the devout to make pilgrimages according to seasonality. During Maghe Sankranti in mid-January, the beginning of summer solstice after the long winter, many visit the lower valleys to bathe at the confluence of important rivers. The festival antipodal to Maghe Sankranti is the Janai Purne during the full moon of August when large number of pilgrims trek to the mountains to bathe in glacial lakes and pay homage to Mahadeva or Shiva who is said to haunt the snow heights. The Janai Purne marks the time when Hindus change their sacramental chord and although the sacred thread is the concern of the high-caste Hindus, the annual pilgrimage during Janai Purne is a sacred event irrespective of caste or religious
denomination. The pond at Kumbhesar at Patan, believed to be linked to the Gosainkund by a subterranean channel, for example, is revered greatly by Buddhist Tamangs. During the Janai Purne, the temple court-yard of Kumbheswar where Brahmin priests peddle sacred threads, becomes alive with the rhythmic drum and dance of the Tamang Jhankris who congregate there.

It was for the Janai Purne of 1973 that I and Pasang Goparma started from Kathmandu to visit the sacred lakes of Gosainkund. We chose the clockwise route by way of Betravati and Dhunche, the route taken by the Newar king Jaya Yakshyamalla in August 1447 and the couple whose fate is the theme of the Newar song Silu me sung during this season. We drove by land-rover through Balaju early on the morning of August 12th. Kathmandu Valley was a vast expanse of green paddy and as we reached Madkhu (1530 m) just outside the western rim of the Valley, the fields were a maze of terraces, some along the contour of the slope in the traditional manner and others down the slope across the contour. The gravel road had been damaged at places by recent rains and it was with great difficulty that we managed to reach the narrow pass (1831 m) between Kakani (2063 m) and a higher western ridge Luchhe Danda (2145 m). It is said that it was on Luchhe Danda, also called Kahule, that the British Residency bungalow was first built and was later shifted to the present site at Kakani. Four kilometers further on we came to Ranipouwa (1645 m) where the street was lined with piles of white radishes for sale. These radishes of Japanese variety and of recent introduction had done so well here that the people of Ranipouwa exchanged its dried chips with paddy in the Tadi valley. We could not see Ganesh Himal as the northern horizon was covered by a mass of cumulous clouds but below their horizontal base, wet fields gleamed on the banks of the Likhu Khola. However, there were no signs of the airstrip on its sandy shore and the stone embankment for river control built by F. A. O. under the U. N. D. P. special fund that I had visited three years before.

The main foot trail from Kathmandu descended from Ranipouwa...
pouwa through Barmandi and Dharapani to Malakot (518 m) beside the Tadi Khola. The gravel road continued west of Ranipouwa but a landslide had damaged part of the road and some buses and trucks were stranded there. Our land-rover, however, managed to cross the landslide section and we continued along narrow sweeping curves above Darme, Betyani and Amare streams and then descended to the Tadi Khola near Pipaltar (487 m). We followed the road to a high terrace (597 m) between the Tadi Khola and the Trisuli River after crossing the Tadi. The 15-kilometer long Battar terrace 60 to 80 meters above the Trisuli river was dry and on its red soil grew black pulse and some sugar-cane. It was a hot tropical valley and the only trees we saw here were the groves of mango and lichi, private gardens of the rich in Kathmandu. The value of these old tropical gardens had greatly declined with cheaper and better supplies from the Tarai along the Tribhuvan Rajpath since 1956 and the fruit trees were being cut down to yield space to agricultural crops.

The Battar terrace became narrower northwards and we drove close to the western flank of a ridge on which was located Nawakot. Nawakot (944 m), the winter seat of Kathmandu rulers in the past, had an importance of its own as a gate-way to the Kyirong trade route. It had been attacked by many invaders from the west as a probe on their onward march to Kathmandu: Jitari Malla in 1289 and Aditya Malla in 1378. The Gorkhalis attacked it in 1737, 1743 and finally succeeded in capturing it on 26th September 1744 and made it the base for their later conquest of Kathmandu. The following year, 1745, Prithvi Narayan Shah went on a pilgrimage to the Gosainkund and returned by way of Galphu, Pati Bhanjyang and Garkhar (560 m) at the confluence of the Likhu and Tadi rivers. Nawakot is now only a historical relic since the district headquarters has been shifted down to Bidur (579 m) on the main road while Trisuli Bazar (548 m) across the river is the commercial hub. There was a group of modern quarters at Bidur inherited from the Trisuli Hydel Project office about a kilometer south of the Trisuli Bazar. We had lunch at Trisuli Bazar, called Chhumje by Tamangs, a town
that had much changed since my first visit in December 1946. The number of shops had increased and the once placid river-side bazar had now electricity and vehicular traffic. Although its early importance as the first stage on the main road west of Kathmandu had declined because of the construction of Prithvi Rajmarg linking Kathmandu and Pokhara, it now acted as a break-of-bulk point where human porters took over from trucks and lorries.

We left Trisuli Bazar about 11 a.m. and drove north across paddy fields and sal forests and the dirt track terminated at Betrawati (320 m) near the confluence of the Phalangu Khola and the Trisuli river. Betravati or Lungu in Tamang, marking the northern limit of vehicular comfort for us, was a historical landmark from the Nepal-Tibet War. In the summer of 1792, the Chinese army assisting the Tibetans had penetrated as far south as the Dhaibung (1524 m) a ridge overlooking Betrawati. The Nepalese defenders faced them on Dudhiya Thumka on the opposite ridge south of the Phalangu Khola. The final Chinese attack overseen by General Fu-Kang-an himself was repulsed after a fierce battle on the Betravati bridge on 19 September 1792 and soon after peace was concluded. When more than half a century later hostilities broke out again between Nepal and Tibet, a Nepalese army under General Bam Bahadur passed through Betravati in 1855 to capture Kyirong.

We crossed the steel suspension bridge at Betravati and started climbing up the route along which armies and trade caravans had moved in the past. It was no different from other hill trails and the few improvements on the road had been made possible by the grant of maize for road-work to relieve acute food shortage in the area a few years ago. The track passed through Bogota (760 m) to an open shrub country on the western slope of Dhaibung ridge and continued climbing past Manigaon (1,196 m) or Chhuta Lung in Tamang and entered a side valley choked with huge boulders, remnants of an old landslide. Here we were overtaken by a heavy downpour and the steep trail turned into a
small rivulet through which we slogged wet pestered by leeches. After a steady traverse of two kilometers, we reached Ramche (1,790 m) on a high spur overlooking the Trisuli valley. The rain had stopped and from the roadside chautara beside the tea-shop, we saw on the other side of the river to the west, a series of waterfalls cascading down the Dandagaon rock-face.

We spent the night at Ramche and started early next morning, under a clear sky. We turned north through a belt of rhododendron forest and saw far to the north the gray summit of Chhyubar Danda (5151 m) down which plunged a mountain stream to join the Trisuli at Malung (871 m). The villages on the other side of the main valley were perched on narrow shelves about 450 to 600 meters above the river and numerous were the scars of recent landslides. We ourselves were walking across millet fields wrested from an old landslide at HanripHora (1709 m) two kilometers beyond Ramche. We reached Grang (1859 m), a Tamang village, after crossing two mountain streams. We then entered an oak forest and came to a spur (1920 m) about a kilometer from the village and from where we had the first glimpse of the Langtang peaks. The next three kilometers was through oak forest mixed with rhododendron and the appearance of stone chortens on the roadside indicated that we were now fully in Tamang territory.

The Tamangs are a Mongoloid group with strong Buddhistic influence. Their language is closely related to that of their western neighbour Gurungs and the Tamang terminal funerary ceremony called gheva is similar to Gurung pai. The Tamangs are called Lama for their faith in Lamaistic Buddhism, Mulmi after the title of their village chief and sometimes referred to also as Kagate for their occupation of making paper out of the Daphne bark. They are most numerous in upper Trisuli valley and the hills due east of Kathmandu valley. They are engaged mainly in dry crop farming and are adept at clearing forest land. A particular technique of tree-felling they have developed is to partly cut a row of trees along a slope and then bring them all together down by crashing the upper-most one over the
others. In their search for new land, they have colonised large forest areas in the Mahabharat Lekh and the inner Tarai. One of the local explanations for shifting cultivation goes like this: when a farmer sees his first maize crop, he moves to a new place if the crop is bad and he moves even if the crop is good, thinking that the other one might be even better.

Then came Thare (1889 m), a small village in a forest clearing, and as we advanced along the contour, a broad concave slope facing northwest came into view. The upper oak forests were in their pristine state while those at lower sub-tropical level on a gentler slope had been cleared for cultivation. The biggest of these clearings was at Bokajhunda (1920 m) with a cluster of well-built houses above the road and one of these belonged to Layul Tamang, the first Rastriya Panchayat member from Rasuwa. Narrow terrace fields green with millet fell off steeply below the road. Here there was a lone old Michelia kisopa tree by the roadside on whose branches, the story goes, an advance patrol of Nepali soldiers hung a slaughtered goat as a directional marker to those after them during one of the war campaigns against Tibet and thus the name of the village Bokajhunda which means ‘where the goat was hung’. The storyteller was not sure whether it was the Nepal-Tibet war of 1792 or 1855 but the derivation of the village name is suggestive of the former wilderness of the place and the later settlement of the village. For another nine kilometers, there were no villages until one reached Dhunche and the path was mostly through subtropical forest with numerous streams. We came across a particularly bad section of landslide which was still on the move. We had to climb about 120 meters to avoid the worst section of the slide and then slither down again to the main track. On rejoining the track, we met the first group of pilgrims who were hurrying down to the lower and warmer levels. We met more groups of pilgrims mostly Brahmins and Chhetris from Gerkhu and Chaughada as we reached Dhunche about 3 p. m. in the afternoon.

Dhunche (1950 m) is the headquarters of Rasuwa, one of
the smallest districts created in 1962. It is located on a gentle dip slope sweeping down to the Trisuli Khola to the north. The fields of Dhunche make a 450-meters wide ribbon sandwiched between a dense forest above and a steep section with pines lower down where the Trisuli Khola from Gosainkund joins the larger Bhote Kosi from Tibet and imposes its own sacred name after the confluence. The houses were made of stone with liberal use of timber and the lanes were paved with flat stones. There were some shops and as in other districts headquarters, better houses had been rented to government offices. The only concrete modern building in the place belonged to the Land Revenue office in a district where the annual revenue totalled Rs. 15,300 only. Nearby was a new government horticulture farm and a technical survey for drinking water project for Dhunche had just been completed. Dhunche had the only middle school of the entire district that had a total population of 17,517 in 1971.

We left Dhunche on 15th August on horse-back. We passed a row of massive stone chortens near the village and the fields had maize above and millet below the road. The older main road that descended further down to a log-bridge over the Trisuli had been abandoned recently due to landslides and the new road instead turned east along the contour below the village. After crossing the horticulture farm where some new varieties of pasture grasses had also been introduced, we crossed the Trisuli river by an old cantilever bridge (1,700 m). Once on the north bank of the river, we had to climb through a steep narrow chimney, wet with splatters of a small stream under overhanging trees. A steep ascent of 200 meters brought us to a shelf where there was a chautara with a full view of Dhunche and its environs. The chautara was the junction or for us the parting of the ways for Langtang and Rasua Garhi laterally to the west and for Gosainkund which climbed direct to the north-east. Here we were met by Dawa Phinzo of Bharkhu village who had brought us some apple specimens from his farm. Dawa had been one of the first enterprising farmers to take advantage of the government's horticultural extension programme in the district.
We took leave of Dawa Phinzo and started climbing through first pine then under a dense oak forest. The track zig-zagged up under a dense forest of oak mixed with rhododendrons and we reached Dimsa (2743 m). It was the site of an abandoned village on a south-facing slope where trees had been cleared by burning. After another half an hour’s climb we were at Chenchenbari (3353 m) on the western flank of a high ridge. Chenchenbari had a government cheese factory manned by Dil Bahadur Sunwar of Jiri who had been trained by Emil Schulthess, the first Swiss expert to introduce cheese-making in Nepal. Close to the cheese factory was Sing Gomba under the care of Lama Rinzin Dorje, a Hirachan from Marpha who had ended up at this gomba via Shigatse, Darjeeling, Kathmandu and Malemchi. Nearby was a recently-established apple orchard with about 600 young plants.

From Chenchenbari one track followed north to Shyabru and beyond to Langtang while another track climbed eastwards to Gosainkund. We took the latter track and then turned a corner under a 3,567 meters summit and followed a wide path along a long ridge that had recently been improved as a horse trail. We rode up under tall crowns of fir trees and then arrived at the higher slopes with alpine grass. We continued climbing higher with good views of the densely-forested Langtang valley to the north and reached Chalong Pati (3668 m). The snow peaks of Langtang Himal were hidden behind grey clouds when we finally reached two yak goths in a depression on the grassy ridge. We stayed for the night in one of the huts that belonged to a Shyabru villager. We were told that the high alps around Gosainkund were used in summer by three herds of sheep from Yarsa, two herds of yak from Shyabru and four herds of yak from Helmu.

When we left the goth for Gosainkund next morning, we could see numerous yaks grazing on the grassy slope below Ghopche (3840 m) on the direct high road to Langtang. The morning was clear and crisp and we had good views of Langtang Lirung (7246 m), Ghenge Liru (6581 m), the border ranges north-west of Rasuwa Garhi and the fine peak of Paldor (5959 m) to the north-west. After a climb of about a kilometer above the goth, we came
to a *chautara* with a large pile of freshly-cut wooden staffs. The *chautara* was at a height of 3,932 meters and the place was called Lauribina or 'the place of discarded sticks'. I learnt that pilgrims who visit the Gosainkund cut trees into staffs as a support on the alpine heights and discard them on the way down at Lauribina as thanks-giving for their safe journey, similar to Buddhistic custom of placing stones at the pass cairn *laptsé*. Since the last and highest pass for those who approach Gosainkund from the east was also called Lauribina for similar reason, we might call the *chautara* we now were as the *Lauribina West*. The reason that the alpine staffs left by the pilgrims over the years had not overwhelmed the two Lauribinas may be due to their great utility as fire-wood for the shepherds in the nearby *goths* as there are no trees beyond Lauribina.

We climbed on beyond Lauribina West and beside the track were numerous miniature shrines made of two vertical stone slabs with a horizontal flat stone cover put up by pilgrims in memory of their ancestors. After a steady climb of 300 meters across grassy glades, we had the first glimpse of a small lake far down in a valley to the south-east. The lake, called *Saraswati Kund* (4054 m) was oval in shape on a rocky shelf hung between sheer precipices above and below. In spite of its small size, the lake had a grandeur of its own with a 230-meter waterfall that plunged into the dense forest below to give birth to the *Trisuli* river. We then traversed a bare ridge towards the east and finally the sacred lakes came into view in succession. The lake that fed the waterfall to Saraswati Kund was a large one with ominous dark waters and was called *Bhairav Kund* (4267 m). The next one beyond a 300-meter stretch of huge boulders just about *Bhairav Kund* was the main *Gosain Kund* (4380 m) or the lake where the Shiva reclines. According to Hindu legend, once upon a time gods and demons churned the ocean for ambrosia. In the process there appeared poison and fearing that the demons might use it against the gods, Shiva drank it and was so overcome with its scalding sensation that his throat turned blue (therefore *Nilkantha*) and he retreated to the Himalayas to plunge into a cold lake
amidst a mass of icy mountains at Gosainkund. The Tibetan book of geography Dzam-gling-rgyas-bsad that considers the image as not of Shiva but Arya Avalokiteswara (Phags-pa Thugs-rje Chen-po) has the following description of Gosainkund: “There in a pond not unlike a lake, there is a natural stone figure that has human shape. It is of grey-blue colour, its face hidden by a saffron-coloured scarf, and it seems to be lying on its back protected by nine cobra heads.”

We reached the northern shores of Gosainkund about 7 a.m. and some pilgrims had already started leaving the place after the full moon vigil of the previous night and early dip while many were still bathing in the cold water. The northern bank of the lake was crowded with pilgrims cooking their morning meal and drying their clothes. The stone rest-house put up only a few years before had no doors and some of the rafters had been burnt away by some shivering travellers. We joined the crowd and tried to bathe in the lake and the water was indeed cold. We learnt that only two days before one Yakar Tamang of Rautbensi had died in the lake under an unusual circumstance. He had come up for the Janai Punne gathering with a group of girls from his village. While taking his dip, he had somehow lost his loincloth and as he squatted in the cold water to hide his nudity he developed cramps and was drowned.

We washed ourselves and basked on the sandy shore in the warm morning sun. The pilgrims would approach the lake with offerings of flowers, rice grain and coins in leaf-platters, place them on the water and then bathe shouting “Har Har Mahadev” and mutter prayers. Some young boys were busy retrieving coins from the water not by swimming or diving but by using long poles with improvised metal ladles at their ends. Silver and aluminium-gilt coins showed up more prominently in the water than the copper and bronze ones and watching the young coin-fishers, a novel idea flashed through my mind. I thought that if a keen numismatist could somehow search with a more developed tool or dredge the lake bottom he could possibly land a harvest of medieval or even older coins! For, historical records indicate
that it was customary for Malla kings of Kantipur (Kathmandu) to bathe in this lake after their coronation and their monetary offerings as well as coins other pilgrims had thrown through the centuries must lie somewhere in the lake bottom.

We saw no reclining Mahadev in the cold depths of the lake but only the reflection of surrounding peaks. Direct south of us were two craggy peaks of 4,865 meters and 4,857 meters and on whose higher flanks are located the nine glacial tarns called the Nau Kund. To the east was a high bank of terminal moraine made up of huge boulders descending towards the lake and above the moraine was a stark slope culminating at the highest peak of the Gosainkund Lekh (4903 m). We relaxed by the lake-side long after most of the pilgrims, estimated to be about 4,000, had left. It was past eleven when we started on our journey eastwards after lunch. We went along the northern shore of the lake and above us on grassy slopes grazed numerous flocks of sheep and goats. There were four goths beside the lake and the Nuwakot shepherds who spent the summer by the sacred lake had again been abandoned to their loneliness after a few days of hectic business in milk and butter. We then passed the source of the lake, a small spring gurgling under huge boulders and one of these was smeared with red vermilion. The consecrated boulder marked the site where Lord Shiva is said to have struck his trident (trisul) bringing forth three springs to quench his thirst and thus the name 'Trisuli' for the river below. We then turned south-east over heaps of morainic boulders and looked down into the lake. We could make out the faint outlines of a huge boulder under the water. It was a massive oblong rock, probably of mica-gneiss contributing to its lighter tone in the blue depth and the main object of veneration as the reclining Shiva in the pious belief of devout pilgrims.

We then continued along a narrow ridge towards the south-east. On the way up, we saw three small lakes in a side valley on our right and to our left were two more lakes that drained their waters into the Gosainkund lake under a large
mass of morainic debris. The main source of the Gosainkund lake-water was, therefore, not the spring underneath the red boulder but the two glacial tarns further east on the northern declivity of the high pass, Lauribina East (4608 m), which also formed the divide between the waters of the Trisuli and the Tadi Khola.

Lauribina East was about two kilometers south-east of the Gosainkund lake and south-west of Gosainkund peak (4903 m) at about the same distance. When we had the last glimpse of the sacred lake from the high pass, it had turned ominously dark under the gathering monsoon clouds. The southern prospect revealed another lake, Suraj Kund, just below the pass and beyond it a deep ravine plunged south towards the Tadi Khola. If Lauribina West (3932 m) was only a mere convenient notch on the west-descending Chalongpati ridge, Lauribina East (4608 m) was a true pass on the Gosainkund Lekh. Lauribina East also had a large dump of sticks discarded by pilgrims travelling from the west, our way, but we hung to our own since the further descent seemed to need them as we had turned back our horses at the lake side. It started to rain and we hurried down the scree slope and slithered down the path with abandon to get rid of the mountain sickness we had developed on the pass. We came across more yak goths and flocks of sheep and goats. When we descended lower into the birch zone, the trail down was so steep and precarious that horses would have been of no use. There were numerous landslips on the way and it was only with great difficulty that we found narrow footholds on the north-dipping strata of granitic gneisses. We traversed a series of rocky ridges interspersed with numerous streams that cascaded down to the Tadi below. As we descended lower into the juniper forest (3658 m), our heads cleared but our feet were woobly after the long descent. There were no villages or even goth in the area and we just had to continue descending in pouring rain.

At about 3,350 meters, we turned south-eastwards and followed a trek through dense oak forest. After crossing numerous side streams in wild torrent, we reached a ridge hoping to
see Tharepati but ahead of us lay another densely forested valley. We then came down to a small stream beside which was a rock overhang and decided to spend the night under it. It rained the whole night and we were grateful to whatever force that had overturned the huge rock into Ghopte Odar (3261m) to provide us the only shelter. The sparse dinner our Waiba porter managed to prepare tasted wholesome after the day’s trial. We retired early with a liberal dose of rum to fortify ourselves against the cold wet night. But it was an unpleasant bivouac with constant splatter of rain drops, scurrying rats and crawling ants.

The following morning, August 17th, the rain had stopped and we left Ghopte early and traversed across a dense oak forest. The thick undergrowth of bamboo was dry and they crackled under our feet. The Tamang porters told us that the mountain bamboo Arundinaria had died of flowering which occurred at about every twelve years. They should know better, for the Tamangs are adept at working with bamboos. I had similarly heard of economic hardship among Chhantels, who make beautifully-carved sticks, pipe for hukah and writing pens of Arundinaria, when a bamboo belt in upper Mayangdi valley south of Dhau lagiri had died after flowering. In the dense forest trail we surprised some jungle fowls scratching dried leafs for insects. It was with relief when we finally saw the potato fields of Tharepati, the first fields since we had left Chenchenbari two days before. Tharepati (3486 m) had a few Sherpa houses and in one of them we had a meal of boiled potato, rice and wild mushroom: our porters had picked on the way. We left Tharepati and turned south along a high ridge that formed the watershed not only between the Indrawati Khola and the Tadi Khola but also a major water divide between the larger drainage systems of the Kosi to the east and the Gandak to the west. Walking along the narrow ridge, I felt like rolling down some boulders on either side of the ridge, knowing that derived though they were of a single block of mica gneiss, they would have separate destinies, borne by elements down either to Chatra in the east or Devighat in the west. But like all things elemental, they would then flow down the Ganges and the Kosi as sand particles and silt to meet again below Bhagalpur to
be finally laid down together in the sea-bed of the Bay of Bengal to await another orogenic upheaval.

There was a path turning east towards Malemchi (2529 m) two kilometers south of Tharepati but we continued south along the ridge and reached a chorten (3488 m). The path along the ridge was cool and pleasant through oak and rhododendron forest. But soon clouds began building up in the low valley on either side and we could see little although an occasional goat with barking dogs brought life to the wilderness. After a kilometer from the ridge chorten, we descended and traversed along the western flank of the ridge, dna ascended Mere Danda (3353 m) in the south-westerly direction. We then descended into a rhododendron forest on the eastern flank of Panghu Danda (2245 m) to regain the ridge once again. Two kilometers south, we met some girls from Suljing collecting fire-wood in a dense forest. They began singing provocative songs on our approach but we had no time to exchange jokes with the comely Helmu girls as dark clouds began to overwhelm the sky. We descended through the forest and were soon engulfed by dense mist swirling up the valley and it started to rain. The forest track was slippery and swarmed with hungry leeches and we were drenched wet by the heavy downpour. It was nearly 6 p.m. when we barged into a Tamang house at Kutumsang (2471 m) in heavy downpur. The home-brewed raksi soon warmed up our spirits and we hung our wet clothes to dry above the fire-place where our hostess prepared a chicken for the dinner.

The rain had stopped at night but when we climbed on to a ridge towards the south next morning, the path was still wet and slippery and the tree branches that whipped our faces, drenched us. We left the ridge at 2,560 meters and walked through a dense forest on the western flank of Thodang Danda (2676 m). We then ascended a ridge (2590 m) and looked south at a low saddle on a narrow ridge. We descended the forest path to some wheat fields and arrived at Galphu Bhanjyang (2140 m), a Tamang hamlet with some shops. The pass was astride an east-west fault along which the Galphu Khola flowed east to join the Tadi Khola. The
fields of Lung in Sindhu-Palchok approached the pass on the eastern side while the large village of Galphu to the west in Nawakot was marked by numerous white chortens. We had lunch at Galphu Bhanjyang and started again due south along Jogin Danda (2468 m). After walking a kilometer, we entered oak and rhododendron forest and followed the ridge towards the east and then descended to Chipling (2164 m) on the frontier of Sindhu-Palchok district. Indeed, beyond Tharepati, we had been walking more or less along the ridge that formed the boundary between the districts of Sindhu-Palchok to the east and Nawakot to the west.

We descended about 300 meters from the boundary ridge to another saddle from where we saw numerous waterfalls on either side. We walked further down two kilometers along the western side of a hill and reached Pati Bhanjyang on a saddle between the Likhu Khola and the Sindhu Khola. Pati Bhanjyang (1737 m) lies on the main staging-point between Kathmandu and Helmu, and has some shops, shrines, rest-houses made in the Kathmandu style of brick and tile. It must have been a much frequented place in the past when the lovely girls of Helmu used to be in great demand in the numerous Rana harems in the capital. There were Euphorbia on the drier slopes and Castanopsis trees around Pati Bhanjyang and we knew that we were once more in the subtropical zone since we had left Ramche five days before. We had tea at Pati Bhanjyang and started south for the long climb to Sheopuri Lekh. As we climbed higher, we left behind the garnet-mica gneiss zone we had been traversing since Chenchenbari and entered a zone of injection gneiss with granite intrusions. The first 250-meters climb was over cultivated fields and then followed a grassy ridge with shrubs. At 2,220 meters we re-entered a forest of rhododendron and oaks. the tree branches festooned with moss and lichen. We then skirted a forest-covered prominence (2318 m) and turned west along a level ridge with some ponds where some buffaloes wallowed.

We were once again caught in the rain and tried to find shelter under the oak trees. Varieties of orchids in full bloom clung on the branches but we had no respite from the heavy shower to
appreciate them fully. We considered it pointless to wait for the rain to cease as the regular afternoon downpour would most likely continue through the night. Since it was getting dark, we hurried in the rain and after reaching Borlang Bhanjyang (2438 m) began our descent through the forest. On the way down we could see the faint lights of Patan and then we arrived at a Sherpa house at Chyaubas (2286 m). It was a new settlement with potato fields in the oak forest and the house was a solid two-storeyed one with a long balcony. The balcony however faced towards the north and east and we were deprived of the night view towards Kathmandu valley. The following morning, August 19th, we descended first through oak and rhododendron then Schima forests with a full view of the east face of Sheopuri Lekh (2731 m) and part of the Kathmandu Valley. We then came down through the maize and paddy fields of Mulkharka village occupying a broad ridge (1645 meters to 1970 meters) above the Sundarijal reservoir (1585). We were down at the Sundarijal power house by 9 a.m. where our land-rover waited and we then drove to Kathmandu.
CHAPTER FIFTEEN

A VISIT TO LANGTANG

White snow would not have stayed above
Without the rocky foundations below,
And the fishes would have no place to frolic
Without the green depths in the river.

–Folk song

Langtang Lirung or Gangchen Ledrub in Tibetan is about 51 kilometers due north of Kathmandu (Pl.XLIIIa). While other distant snow peaks that are visible from Kathmandu valley lay bare their butresses or pedestals, Langtang Lirung reveals only its conical crown above the jagged ridge of Gosainkund Lekh beyond Sheopuri Lekh. The summits of Sheopuri (2731 m), Gosainkund (4903 m) and Langtang Lirung (7245 m) rising northward en echelon are separated by broad valleys that drain towards the west. Sheopuri Lekh is linked to Gosainkund Lekh by a 30-kilometers long narrow ridge on whose western flanks originate the Likhu and Tadi rivers. And between Gosainkund and Langtang Lirung lies the valley of Langtang Khola or Changbu Chu that drains a long glaciated valley between two ridges that trend south and west from within six kilometers of the Shisha Pangma or Gosainthan (8013 m) in Tibet.

I first had a glimpse of the terrain between Sheopuri and Langtang in January 1970. We had flown by a Pilatus Porter
from Kathmandu, first above the low-lying tropical valleys of the Likhu and the Tadi and then north to the valley of Trisuli. There were numerous scars of landslides from the previous monsoon on the steep slopes of the Trisuli valley as if to convince the enormity of the problem of soil erosion to an F.A.O. expert on erosion control who accompanied us. It was particularly bad around Hanku and Bokajhunda, on seeing which the expert gave a long sigh and thought that the whole mountain side was on the move. Near the confluence of the Langtang Khola with the Bhote Kosi, we saw a large labour gang busy constructing a new suspension bridge near Shyabru Bensi. The lower valley of Langtang was covered with dense forests and so were the upper reaches of the Bemdang Khola and the Chilime Khola to the west we had clear views of Langtang Lirung and the border ranges above Thuman (2316 m) as well as Paldor peak (5926 m) to the west.

We flew in succession over the compact Tamang villages of Gadlang (2225m), Goljang (1920m) and Chilime (1706m) with houses of timber planks pressed down with stones as we circled to land briefly at Thangmejet (1676 m). Our pilot Hardy Furel was furious when a local Tamang youth approached us with a request to deliver a package to a businessman in Kathmandu who I guessed was a musk and hashish dealer. We then took off down the Bhote Kosi-Trisuli valley to examine the river-control work under construction at Likhu Khola north of Kakani. We landed on an improvised airstrip on the sand-banks of the river. We inspected the long check-dam made of piled boulders bound with wires along the south bank. The Likhu, similar to other Himalayan rivers, had hid waste a vast expanse of paddy fields by dumping boulders and gravels during the flood season and the F.A.O. expert working on the dam believed that erection of similar embankments in other rivers would reclaim many hectares of agricultural land. However, the mountain torrent undid both the stone embankment and the airstrip in the following few monsoons.

I had an opportunity to visit the upper Langtang Valley by helicopter a few years later when I accompanied Kenneth Rush and Joseph Sisco from the U. S. State Department. We first
went to Tarke Gyang and visited the *gomba* and talked to the local people. When we later flew over Tharepati and skirted the Gosainkund lakes on way to Langtang we had a memorable sight of rhododendrons crimson to red and white blanketing the hillsides of lower Langtang in their April profusion. We rested briefly by the Jathang airstrip east of Kyangjin Gomba on the banks of a placid stream to marvel at the mountain scenery. The glaciated valley was enclosed by a series of scree slopes alternating with rock buttresses and moraine tongues and the horizon all around revealed numerous snow peaks. Langtang Lirung was close towards the north-west and from its eastern flanks plunged a glacier close above Kyangjin. The grass was still brown after the long winter and the yaks had not yet arrived. After a brief breath of the fresh mountain air we flew down the valley westwards amidst enormous cliffs. We flew very low in order to better observe the country but the close rattling sound of the helicopter dislodged a rider from his frightened horse near Langtang village and on later enquiry we learnt that the man was not seriously hurt. We returned down the Trisuli valley overflying the rhododendron oak forests and young maize fields of Kakani in quick succession.

Maps even those with contour lines fail to give the correct impression of slopes on mountain terrain. On the other hand an oblique view from the air tends to exaggerate the declivity on the ground. It is while walking on the ground one realises that the terrain is not as level as the maps suggest and trails that appear as mere ribbons from the air may indeed provide passage to two laden yaks. Thus in October 1977 I left Kathmandu with two planners, Ratna Rana and Mohan Man Sajja, for a brief trek in Langtang valley. We took a Pilotus Porter from Kathmandu at 3 p.m. in the afternoon and flew due north across the Sheopuri Lekh and the Likhu and Tadi valleys. The veteran pilot, Emil Wick, turned the aircraft, an ascending full round over Yarsa, and we were over the hump of the Gosainkund Lekh. As the aircraft turned, we had a sliding panorama of the high mountains from Mount Everest to Himalchuli in the afternoon light and right ahead of us was the white snow pyramid of Langtang Lirung with Gosainthan to the east and Ganesh Himal to the west. We
turned north-east half-way through the Langtang Khola above dense forest, brushwood and grassy slopes in succession all hemmed in by rock walls. The aircraft flew east past the airstrip, took a sharp turn short of Langshisa (4,080 m) and raced back to land on a grassy plot (3,500 m) at Jathang east of Kyangjin. The airstrip had no attendants nor communication links but there was a group of German trekkers led by Norman Dyhrenfurth waiting for the return flight. We came out in the thin cold air and the waiting tourists embarked in a rush as the pilot warned that he had three more sortees to make and the weather did not look promising. We waited by the airstrip until the aircraft had taken off down the valley and it was soon lost in the clouds. The air was chilly and low clouds masked the mountains around us.

We then walked slowly towards Kyangjin Gomba, two kilometers to the west. The track climbed up an ablation slope with a cold glacial stream. When we looked back from the top of the moraine, the cloud had descended lower over the valley and the next three flights never came. We did hear its drone above the clouds but it obviously had turned back. A short walk across huge boulders deposited by an old moraine brought us to a group of stone huts with potato fields below Kyangjin Gomba (3750 m) and nearby was the government cheese establishment. We entered a lodge run by a Tamang youth from Shyabru with a charcoal fire-place in the centre of a large room with eight cots. The fire-place was crowded with trekkers and a few porters and the bed cost Rs. 5 a night. The price of bottled beer served at the lodge was Rs. 21, cheaper than those in three-star hotels in Kathmandu. We had our supper at the cheese factory and retired to the lodge. Most of the tourists were young trekkers including a high school student from California. There was also a French couple who owned a restaurant in Grenoble in France and told us that it was their third visit to Nepal. The Frenchman rightly observed that a wireless facility at the airstrip during the tourist season could save much aviation fuel which the aircraft consumed during its numerous unsuccessful bid to land unaware of the weather situation at the Langtang airstrip.

Next morning, October 30th, the weather cleared and we
had good views around the valley. We were within eleven kilometers but 3,250 meters below Langtang Lirung (7,245m). There were tufts of clouds on the northern peaks although the valley below and the southern horizon was clear. Beyond the stone roof of Kyangjin Gomba, we could see the eastern shoulder of Langtang Lirung and a long snow ridge ascending to an eastern peak, Tsangbu Ri (6,745 m). The upper section of the Lirung Glacier descended into a valley north of us but the main glacier was blocked to our view by a high terminal moraine bank above Kyangjin (Pl. XIX a). A low horizontal cloud soon descended into the Lirung valley and we turned to the south-eastern panorama along the main valley. The valley was broad and the Langtang Khola or the Changbu Chu flowed west meandering amidst tongues of old moraines and fresh scree. The white sand banks shone out amidst the grass and dark clumps of dwarf rhododendrons covering the valley floor. The enclosing sides of the valley presented a contrast in vegetation. The dry slopes facing south were covered with grass and low bushes while the shady slopes facing north had dwarf rhododendrons and stands of birch above them.

On the south-eastern horizon ranged a series of snow peaks and a snow-filled gully led up to Ganja La (5122 m). The higher peaks towards the east were still in the shadow and the most prominent was Gang Chhenpo (6,397m) just south of Langshisa (4,080 m). What we were witnessing was only a part of the once hidden valley. A local legend has it that the upper Langtang valley was first discovered by a man who went searching for his stray yak. He followed the spoor of the animal up-river and found it grazing at Langshisa. The yak, however, as if acting as a mere guide to this new land, soon died and the owner had the yak skinned and spread the skin on a rock. However, it remained stuck there and the locals now point out a large reddish rock at Langshisa as a proof of this story. Langshisa is said to mean 'the place where the yak died' and Langtang as 'in pursuit of yak'. The inhabitants of Langtang village are not Tamangs but Bhotias who are said to have migrated from around Kyirong ('village of happiness') across the border in Tibet.

The discovery of Langtang valley as a valuable pasture
ground might have been made several generations ago. But the true configuration of upper Langtang valley is yet to be fully established in spite of the fact that both the south and north side of Langtang range had been visited early by Western climbers-explorers. Heinrich Harrer and Peter Aufschnaiter reached Kyirong in January 1945 on their flight from the P. O. W. camp in Dehra Dun across Gartok, Tokchen and Tradom. During their nine months' sojourn in Kyirong, Aufschnaiter did some survey work in the 'unsurveyed' area north of Langtang and west of Shisha Pangma. At the time of their visit as described in Heinrich Harrer's book *Seven Years in Tibet*, Kyirong had about 80 houses and during the autumn some 15,000 sheep used to pass through Kyirong in exchange for grain for the *Dasain* slaughter in Nepal. They avoided the week-long trek to Kathmandu suspecting their possible re-internment in India and instead escaped to the wild wastes of Changthang plain and turned up in Lhasa in January 1946.

Langtang Valley was again one of the first areas in Nepal to be visited by climbers and explorers when the country was opened to foreigners. H. W. Tilman led a group of British explorers and scientists in June 1949 and spent nearly four months in Langtang valley and Chilime Khola to the west. In Langtang, they visited five glaciers, reached six high cols for plane-table survey and crossed over the Dudh Pokhari on their return journey. The sketch map prepared by the British expedition shows Langtang as a rectangular valley opening towards the west and the latitude of Shisha Pangma is placed only four kilometers north to that of Langtang. The main Langtang Glacier at the head of valley is shown to be ten kilometers long flowing in the west-south-west direction. Peter Aufschneiter, who later worked in Nepal as a consulting engineer, visited Langtang valley in the 1960's and mapped the same area. Aufschneiter's later map shows Langtang as a right-angled valley with the latitude of Shisha Pangma to be eleven kilometers north to that of Langtang and Langshisa as the turning-point in the valley's alignment. North of Langshisa the main valley filled by the 30 kilometers long Langtang Glacier is shown aligned north-south that turns due west below Langshisa. This means that if the conventional principle of water-
shed is followed, the Nepalese boundary would extend 26-kilometers north of Dorje Lakpa (6,908 m) and within six kilometers of the Shisha Pangma (8,013 m). The upper Langtang valley that penetrates deep into the north has numerous glaciers and it has a possibility of becoming a popular skiing resort area if regular air flights could be established between Kathmandu and Langtang valley.

We had no time to visit the higher glaciers and therefore turned west after a short visit to the cheese factory at Kyangjin set-up by the Swiss in 1956. We left Kyangjin by walking down the steep moraine slope and crossed the melt-water channel of the Lirung Glacier by a wooden bridge and travelled west along the north bank of the Langtang Khola. The ground sloped gently towards the south-west and was covered with low bushes of dwarf rhododendron. We had a last look towards the upper Langtang valley: snow shone white on the sun-lit shoulders of Gang Chhenpo (6,397 m), series of screes streamed down the dark pinnacle of Tsergo Ri (4,850 m) like volcanic ash over the yellow grassy slope and a huge boulder perched chorten-like atop the front of the Kyangjin moraine. The Langtang river pressed against the steep southern slope after the confluence of the Lirung stream by numerous moraine tongues from the north. We weaved our way through large boulders set against bushes of dwarf rhododendron, Spiraea and Barberis with colourful leaves, russet to ash brown.

After an hour, we arrived at a high moraine bench with overgrazed grass and nearby were the first buckwheat fields at 3,850 meters. High cliffs of massive gneiss towered to the north with fleeting shadows of the golden eagle soaring above us and across the river to the south, rhododendron and birch forest clung on the south slope. It was a pleasant walk through shrub thickets under which laughing thrushes scratched autumn leaves while choughs and rose finches flitted against the clear blue sky. We soon reached a mendong (mani wall) which ran along the road-side for nearly 250 meters. After an easy two hours walk from Kyangjin, we were in Langtang village (3,850 m). The village had
about 25 houses and was located on a high moraine terrace with
the village gomba across a stream. We met here a medical team for
population control programme and also a few trekkers going up
to Kyangjin. We had lunch at a roadside inn and then set out
downstream. We were soon engulfed by thick mists swirling
up valley and fir trees began to appear. We continued down the
valley in the south-westerly direction across numerous tributary
streams and the terrain now fell off gradually. We passed some
fields and out-houses at Chamki (3261 m) and Thangseb (3200 m)
in the fir and rhododendron forest. We came across a large
group of langur monkeys in a meadow amidst the forest. They
ambled off to nearby boulders and tree branches and perched with
their long dangling tails and an expression of disdain on their
dark faces (Pl. XLIII b). We were now travelling through mixed
forest of silver fir, blue pine and evergreen oak.

Seven kilometers beyond Langtang village, we reached Ghora
Tabela which literally means 'horse stable', and that used to be
a former government horse farm. At Ghora Tabela (3048 m)
were some solidly-built timber houses once occupied by Khampa
refugees but now housing the office and guard-post of the Lang-
tang National Park. The Park gazetted in 1976 covers 1,243
square kilometers of a mountainous area with such
wild life as the musk, Himalayan thar, serow, ghoral,
black bear and a valley with rich temperate forest.
We were within five kilometers of Ghenge Liru (6581 m)
at Ghora Tabela but the thick clouds rising up the valley and the
tall trees confined our views only to nearby forests. These were
made up of Quercus semecarpifolia, Rhododendron arboreum,
Blue Pine and Silver Fir with rich undergrowth of bamboo and
ferns. The yellow leaves of the maple tree stood out clearly among
the dense greenery and covered the path. On the way down,
we were caught in a brief shower as if to remind us that our passage
was through one of the best stretches of wet temperate forest.
Rain dripped from moss-covered branches and splattered on
swards of ferns and stinging nettles beside the track. We walked
down a steep slope below Ghora Tabela, probably the morainic
front of the ancient Langtang glacier that has since receded
nearly 30 kilometers upstream.

The Langtang Khola plunged south over large boulders and the vegetation along the bank was so dense that sometimes we could hear only its roar. In the late afternoon after descending an hour from Ghora Tabela, we reached a newly-built shade covered with corrugated sheets. It was a tempting place by the river bank and we stopped here for the night. The weather had cleared and across the river, rose a steep wall to 4,693 meters whose lower slopes were covered with dense mixed forest while mountain bamboo clung on steep faces. Late in the evening after dark, four policemen and one horse arrived from Dhunche to meet us. They had left Dhunche the same morning by way of a newly-built trail via Shyabru and they told us that the forest section along the south side of the Langtang river had been badly damaged during the rains. We needed two more horses and the policemen set off again for the pastures above Ghora Tabela to fetch some Khampa horses. They returned two hours later empty-handed since the Khampa horses had been already engaged to carry loads to their new camp at Batar.

It was a clear sunny dawn on the following morning and we washed in the cold Langtang Khola. Th higher slopes across the river and above the evergreen oak and blue pine was swathed in morning mist like a Chinese landscape with subtle perspectives (Pl. XIX b). When we started from our camp, I preferred walking to riding along the forest path that went downhill along the right bank of the stream. It was a delightful walk under shafts of sunlight through the tall trees. We also met a group of French trekkers with a Sherpa guide and a long line of porters on their way to Kyangjin Gomba. They walked silently and I could not make out whether they were breathless with the climb or were admiring the beauty of the wild forest in silence. An hour later, we arrived at a small hut in a small clearing beside the road where we had our lunch in full sunshine. When a pack of Khampa horses laden with butter for their resettlement camp down in Batar overtook us here, we knew why the policemen could not get the horses the previous night. The
Khampa driver whipped and chased the horses along the path beyond our reach, fearing we might harness them for our own use. We continued on our downhill trail after lunch. We could have taken a shorter route to Shyabru due south by crossing a log bridge (2682 m) over the Langtang Khola but desisted from taking the precarious route on the advice of our police escort. We instead turned west climbing high above the river which also trended westwards below the bridge site. The dense forest was replaced by grassy slopes with pines as we climbed higher westwards. The north-facing opposite slope across the Langtang river was a green expanse of pine and fir that continued on to Chalnpati Lekh (3669 m).

We traversed westwards 300 to 450 meters above the river along grassy slopes and section of bare granitic gneiss. After traversing five kilometers of the high path we came to Syarpa Gaon (2590 m), a cluster of houses amidst fields won from steep slopes. Although the name of the village is Syarpa Gaon, the inhabitants are not Sherpa but Tamangs. The villagers were busy preparing their fields for the winter crop. We had tea in a Tamang house and left the village. The track climbed west to a high ridge (2743 m) and after reaching another ridge (2895 m), we surveyed the surrounding countryside. Immediately to the south across the Langtang Khola was visible the Tamang village of Shyabru (2194 m). The houses were strung one above the other in a row for 150 meters on a narrow spur with pine and fir forest above. To the south-west yawned the deep valley of the Bhote Kosi and the ridge of Jarsa Danda (3190 m) across the river. Sheep and goats that had come down from the higher pastures of Langtang were grazing on the slopes above us. We made an easy descent of about 300 meters over an open slope and entered a mixed forest. The path then descended further down through oak, blue pine and rhododendron forest. We reached Khangjung (2209 m), a Tamang village, perched high on a shelf above the right bank of the Bhote Kosi. We climbed to the first floor of a house with beautifully carved wooden windows where we had chang and boiled potatoes. The village fields were green with young wheat and dark clouds hung over the Chilime Khola.
across the Bhote Kosi to the west.

We rested an hour at Khangjung and began our final descent down a steep grassy slope with some pines. We joined the main road to Rasua Garhi at 1,210 meters and turned south towards Syabru Bensi at the confluence of the Bhote Kosi and the Langtang Khola. Shyabru Bensi (1249 m) had numerous large stone *chorrens* on the road and a *kani chorten* at the northern entrance of the village. The houses and fields were located on a high terrace above the river confluence and two rows of houses lined the main road to Rasua Garhi and Tibet. Two decades earlier, over 5,000 manloads of rice to Tibet and salt and wool to Nepal used to pass annually through Syabru Bensi but with the decline of trade, the old rest-places were now overgrown with stinging nettles and weeds and the *chorrens* were also left uncared. The village has the advantage of being on the main road between the old suspension bridge over the Langtang Khola and the new bridge over the Bhote Kosi. The place has a Tibetan refugee colony with a handicraft center and a school and the only respectable lodge in the village was run by the Khampa refugees. We caught up with the Khampa horses at the lodge where we spent the night. Suspecting we would conscript his horses at the cost of his valuable loads, the driver made off early next morning before we were up.

Next day we made a brief tour of the Tibetan refugee handicraft center and left Shyabru Bensi by crossing the old steel suspension bridge over the Langtang Khola. A narrow track climbed east of the bridge-point towards Shyabru high up on a ridge. Our path led down the left bank of the river along great cliffs that confined the Bhote Kosi in a narrow gorge between the high ridges of Phulung Danda and Jarsa Danda. It was in this very gorge that the Gorkhali forces had set up their defence in June 1792 after their retreat from Kyirong and Rasua Garhi. But a flanking attack from the eastern Phulung ridge (2449 m) by a large Chinese army had forced them to retreat further south to Dhunche.

We ourselves had to traverse a narrow trail across a grassy slope through the gorge and came to a narrow trail cut across a
cliff face. Then after traversing a long stretch of grassy slope, we reached a strip of paddy fields. A steep climb of 150 meters above a small stream brought us to the small Tamang hamlet of Munga. The chautara on top of the hamlet at nearly 550 meters above the river gave a magnificent view to the north and west. The main summit of Langtang Lirung (7245 m) and its western satellite Ghenge Liru (6581 m) rose towards the north-east above forested ridges that plunged steeply into the Bhote Kosi. The smaller snow peaks of the border ranges were visible in the far north-western horizon beyond Jarsa Danda and due west across the gorge were perched high the precarious upland fields of Siya (2011 m) and Gre (2024 m). The eastern ridges were still in blue forested shade but the lighted western slopes revealed innumerable trails traversing the steep face linking hamlets, fields and pastures.

We travelled across a grassy slope with pines and reached Bharkhu (1920 m) at the northern limit of paddy cultivation in the Trisuli valley. Bharkhu was a large Tamang village and the houses were solidly-built of stone walls and timber roofs. The windows were well-carved and the white prayer-flags fluttering atop each house amidst green wheat fields made a picturesque sight. In the kitchen garden were numerous apple trees and their bare branches in autumn defoliation looked like upturned brooms. We had lunch at Sonam Chewang’s house, a former Rastriya Panchayat member and brother-in-law of the present Rastriya Panchayat member Dawa Phinzo. Both were away in Dhunche but we were well-feted by Sonam’s wife. A new horse trail had been constructed form Bharkhu direct to Syabru and Langtang across Phulung Danda, the way our police escort had come, in order to by-pass the narrow gorge below Syabru Bensi and the long climb above Khangjung.

We set out for Dhunche after lunch and the track now followed south through dry pine forests. As we turned a ridge corner, the extensive fields of Dhunche came into view. In 1973 the revenue office was the only building with corrugated sheet but now at least a dozen other buildings shone white with in
roofs. The white ribbon of the Bhote Kosi (now Trisuli) shone bright to the south, meandering between a series of inter-locking blue ridges saddled with low clouds. Across the main valley, towards the west, on an east-facing slope that plunged down to the Trisuli river was the village of Hanku (1981 m), one of the numerous Tamang villages in the area that were said to have been granted to the Dharm Raja of Bhutan by Prithvi Narayan Shah as land grants for the maintenance of the Swayambhunath temple. We turned east through pine and rhododendron forest along the northern slope of the Trisuli Khola and reached the chautara where I had met Dawa Phinzo with his apples four years earlier. Directly opposite the chautara was the government horticultural farm and it looked much greener and had more buildings. We rested briefly at the chautara and then descended down a narrow gully along a steep stream bed. The large Michelia excelsa tree I had seen earlier beside the bridge had been cut, probably for the new bridge. We crossed the new bridge over the Trisuli Khola, passed the horticulture farm on the way and climbed to Dhunche (1950 m) along the stone-paved path lined by enormous stone chortens.

There were many more new buildings, government offices and employees in Dhunche now. The place had just been provided with a new drinking water system of 41,596 litres per day capacity and there were more shops. Rinzin Dorje, the Thakali Lama I had met at Sing Gomba in 1973, had succumbed to his Thakali propensity for trade and profit and was now a prosperous businessman with the largest general store in Dhunche. Dawa Phinzo who welcomed us here had a large building under construction and he had already been approached by a couple of government offices as prospective rental clients. Another former Ras triya Panchayat member from the district, Layul Tamang of Bokajhunda was planning to start a tourist lodge at Dhunche which now had an annual tourist flow of over 2,000. I was particularly pleased to meet Dil Das Thapa again, the district education officer who was a mere school inspector here during my previous visit. I had known him first in 1962 as a dedicated school teacher at Dhampus (Kaski) where he had initiated a literacy programme
for village girls with encouraging results. I met him again with his young wife on the bank of the Bheri river near Dunaihi in 1966 when he was journeying from Kathmandu to work as a school inspector in Dolpo. In the evening, he related to us the difficulties he faced earlier in the district in sending boys to Kathmandu boarding-school even on government scholarship and how the parents hid their children on his approach. He now had the unpleasant task of declining the demands of pester parents for similar opportunities and the Dhunche school which had only 17 students in 1973 was now a full-fledged high school. Dil Das had utter faith in education as the key to all other developments and it was gratifying to see that his dedication was finding response in a remote backward district.

We left Dhunche early on November 2nd with three horses. We rode on to Bokajhunda (1920 m) under overcast sky and the landslide I had struggled through in the summer of 1973 had stabilised with young Alnus trees. But there were fresh landslips at other places. Bokajhunda now boasted of a tea-shop on the road and the first apple trees introduced with much persuasion was at last bearing fruit. We rode through swirling mist in the forest to Grang (1859 m) where a lady Pradhan Panch offered us tea and boiled eggs at her roadside tea-shop. We then descended through the villages of Phalek (1767 m) and Handiphora (1708 m) where fields were being manured by flocks of sheep and goats from higher pastures. We soon reached Ramche (1790 m) and had our lunch at the roadside inn where I and Pasang Goparma had spent a night in 1973. The owner now planned to convert the tea-shop into a tourist lodge with government loan.

The track beyond was all the way down and the deep gully where we had been caught by a heavy rain earlier had expanded into a large landslide. The numerous waterfalls of Dandagaon we had marvelled at during the earlier summer visit were also dry at this time of the year. Further south towards Trisuli Bazar, the water reservoir sparkled bright in the evening sun and we quickened our pace downhill to the comfort of vehicle and well-furnished guest-house. We were soon down in the tropical
valley of Betravati where a group of French tourists camped on the northern bank of the Phalangu Khola near the suspension bridge. We took leave of our horses, syces and police escort after crossing the Betravati bridge and rode on our waiting land-rover to the government guest-house at Trisuli Bazar. Next morning we drove down the flats of Battar (697m) and the dry terrace was now served by a network of new irrigation channels fed with the waters of the Trisuli river lifted by electrically-powered pump. We descended the red-soiled river terrace towards the east and after crossing the Tadi Khola turned towards Kathmandu by the narrow road that had now been black-topped. The road swung and curved up to Ranipouwa and the pass near Kakani and then descended to Balaju. Our trek down the Langtang and Trisuli valley had been short and brief but it provided a glimpse of the whole gamut from alpine to tropical eco-zones and there were signs of some changes even in these remote valleys.
CHAPTER SIXTEEN

KODARI TO JANAKPUR

I will irrigate the paddy seed from Kathmandu
With the waters from Tibet,
From that rice, I shall ferment beer,
And make its offering to my deity.

—Folk song

Nepal has the shortest width at the Longitude of 86° East. This narrow strip of 135 kilometers however encompasses a wide variety of landscape. I chose a trek from Kodari to Janakpur close to this alignment when I had to lead a group of geography students of Tribhuvan University for field study. We set out from Kathmandu on 7th January 1968 by bus along the new 104-kilometer Arniko Rajmarg. We soon left the green wheat fields of Kathmandu valley and sandstone ridge of Dhulikhel (1554 m). The road then descended to the tropical valley of Panchkhal (871 m) with its laterised red soil, sugarcane fields and mango groves. After crossing a low saddle of hornfels with quartzite injections and covered with sal forest, the road turned into the narrow valley of the Chak Khola enclosed by steep slopes of green phyllite and sections of loose shale. There were intricate channels for water-mills along the stream and the villages were perched high up on the dry ridges. The road continued south along the right bank of the Indrawati river to Dolalghat (626 m) at the confluence of the Indrawati and the Sun Kosi. The name Sun Kosi or ‘the river of gold’ is probably derived from the fact that in the old days, people used to sieve sands for gold dust on its banks.
The road then crossed over the Dolalghat bridge and climbed to a ridge strewn with large rounded pebbles deposited by an ancient river. The highway ran north east along the right side of the Sun Kosi across alterations of sandstone and green phyllite exposures. The vegetation on the shady south side was of warm tropical variety dominated by Shorea robusta. Balephi (691 m) bazar at the confluence of the Balephi Khola and the Sun Kosi was also located on an old river terrace. The Sunkosi valley widened briefly beyond Lamosangu (long bridge) in the mica-schist zone where the smaller eastern tributary stream, the Sun Kosi, joined the Bhote Kosi and imposed its own name lower down to the larger river from the north. The road crossed the Bhote Kosi about two kilometers north of the river confluence and near the bridge was Barbise (853 m) that had 130 houses with some shops and a high school. The place was the starting-point for journey to the eastern hills and we saw loads of Tibetan wool bound for the handicraft center at Chyalsa (Solu). We had a good bath in the cold waters of the Bhote Kosi and spent the night in the school building.

The next day, we got into a truck and travelled north along the highway which was still to be black-topped. The 24-kilometer gravel road to Kodari passed through a deep gorge across a succession of mica-schist and limestone cliffs and a section above Chako (1127 m) was particularly bad with a large landslide. There were only a few isolated hamlets along the road and most villages were located on higher ridges above the river and Ghumthang (1889 m) through which the old trade route to Lhasa used to pass was visible on the western horizon. We crossed the Bhote Kosi in a deep gorge below the old fort of Dugungarhi (2130 m) and reached Tatopani. Tatopani (1396 m) with a hot-spring was located on the west bank of the Bhote Kosi and near it a border stream, the Jung Khola, joined it from the east. The confluence was marked by a boundary pillar (no. 54) and the land north of the two streams was in Chinese territory. The place is a revelation to many with the conventional notion of a snow range as Nepal's northern boundary when they see at Tatopani a south-facing mountain complex rather than the level Tibetan plateau.
We visited the hot springs and the site was covered with loose earth and stones excavated from the road above. Tatopani lying astride a metamorphosed biotite zone marks a major thrust fault of the main Himalayan garnet-mica gneiss over the mica-schist zone of the Lesser Himalaya.

We walked past the customs-post and an army garrison at Kodari opposite a plunging waterfall on the Chinese side and reached Bhainse in an hour. The site of the new Friendship Bridge (Miteri Sangu) was actually at Bhainse (1645 m) while the Kodari village was on a ridge lower down. Nepalese and Chinese check-posts faced each other at either end of the Friendship Bridge and although the center of the bridge was ‘Thus Far and No Further’ for us, we did see many local Nepalese crossing over to the Chinese territory with vegetables for petty trading at Khasa (1737 m). There was a building at the bridge-head on the Chinese side with a P. L. A. guard in green uniform. The road climbed to Khasa by four sharp turns and large posters of Mao Tse-tung and red banners were much in evidence at the bridge and at Khasa. *I had an opportunity to visit Khasa five years later with my colleagues in the National Planning Commission. Jungle fowls were common on the uphill road to Khasa and the place with a community of about 300 persons was provided with electricity. There was a standard department store and a one-man bank. On the roadside were parked two heavy vehicles that had come all the way from Sining, the rail-head in Kansu province. The journey across Tibet had taken two weeks, each truck with three drivers to take turns, and they had arrived at Khasa with steel trusses for the bridge over the Madi Khola on the Prithvi Rajmarg.*

The Sino-Nepalese boundary generally aligned along high mountains, penetrates south of the main Himalayan range at Kodari and Kyirong. In spite of the dangerous track, the route across Kodari and then to the Kuti pass used to be an important trade route in the past. Ippolito Desideri who travelled through the place in early 18th century noted that “There are many merchants with large houses, and warehouses in Kutti, who receive travellers in their houses, provide animals, men and anything
they need, and pass their goods through the customs houses."* Nepal lost Khasa and Kuti during the Nepal-Tibet war in 1793 and although recaptured in 1855, it was restored to Tibet after the conclusion of the treaty of peace between Nepal and Tibet in 1856. Khasa occupies a strategic location commanding the Bhote Valley.

We left Bhainse at noon and returned to Barbise after lunch at an inn at Tatopani. The next day, we started from Barbise for our journey south to Janakpur. We crossed the Sun Kosi and climbed 13 kilometers south-east to Jaljale (2133 m), a group of dispersed houses with roofs of wooden shingles pressed down with stones. We found shelter in a cattle-shed for the night and learnt that the village was inhabited by Newars who had migrated from Sankhu seven generations before. On a ridge south of Jaljale was another large Newar settlement at Tauthali. Earlier on the uphill climb, we had met some Kathmandu Newars returning after visiting the Bhimsen shrine of Dolakha and who carried their loads not in the hill style of doko (basket) with a head-strap but by balancing two kharpan baskets on a pole. The Newar settlements in the area were obviously a vestige of the past trade with Tibet that flourished along the Lamobagar route with Dolakha as the main center.

On January 10th, we left Jaljale and walked south through oak and rhododendron forest. After a steady climb of three hours and over fresh snow near the pass, we reached Rol Bhanjyang (2651 m) on a high ridge that formed the boundary between Sindhu-Palchok and Dolakha districts. The sky was overcast but we could still make out the western panorama stretching from Langtang peak to Phulchoki ridge near Kathmandu. We turned east from the grassy ridge to Rolkhani village (2590 m) where we met some young Nepalese geologists prospecting for magnesite at Kharidhunga nearby. The track then descended south over limestone and slate slopes to the Charange (Sanskritised as Char-

navati) Khola. We crossed the stream, passed villages of Tamang and Chhetri and reached Charikot (1950 m) on a ridge between the Charange Khola and the Tamba Kosi (copper river). Charikot is the headquarters of Dolakha district and although every third house bore an office sign-board, we met no gazetted officer there.

Charikot was very cold due to heavy snowfall on the higher ridges and we decided to rest a day. Gauri Shankar (7146 m) the main peak of Rolwaling Himal dominating Janakpur Zone was 45 kilometers north-west of Charikot but we hardly had a glimpse of it while we were there as the thick mist welling up the Tamba Kosi valley provided a constant screen. We made a brief visit to Dolakha Bazar (1722 m) about three kilometers north of Charikot next day. It was a pleasant walk across maize and millet fields and patches of forest. The bazar was a large settlement, traditionally of 700 households, on a gentle slope of gneiss rock facing south. The houses had stone walls with thatched or shingle roofs while the carved windows, narrow paved lanes, a large chaitya and numerous temples and shrines gave the place an air of a Kathmandu habitat. The local Bimeshwar temple has a much wider fame and is visited by many devotees from Kathmandu valley. Dolakha was once an independent kingdom and exerted great influence among the rulers of Kathmandu owing to its advantaneous location on the Lamobagar-Laptse route for trade with Tibet. It was a bone of contention among the rulers of Kathmandu and Bhaktapur for some years when finally Prithvi Narayan Shah managed to win it over to the Gorkhali side in 1746. The bazar’s old prosperity has declined but it is still an important cultural center with numerous religious festivals. Dolakha has also a weekly fair on Saturdays and is thus the westernmost limit of weekly hat (fair) prevalent in East Nepal. Close by was a large grove of Pinus roxburghii and the view down the Tamba Kosi revealed a series of interlocking spurs that we were about to traverse.

We left Charikot on January 12th and the track descended down a ridge with sub-tropical pines. On the roadside was a
rectangular stone structure with a trap door to lure leopards with goat bait. We came down to Kairantichhap (1320 m) on the main cross-road to Solu-Khumbu. While following some heavily-laden porters, we missed the south trail and descended east towards the Tamba Kosi bridge. And when we realised the mistake half-way down the track, we considered it wiser to traverse due south instead of climbing 400 meters back to Kirantichhap. But we had to fumble through a pine forest and then across a undergrowth of Butea frondosa and young Shorea robusta. We finally managed to reach a patch of paddy fields at the confluence of the Tamba Kosi and the Charange Khola. There was a small Shiva shrine and a bridge over the Charange Khola where we rejoined the main track. It was nearly dark when we climbed 400 meters through a dense forest of Shorea robusta and Pinus roxburghii across the deep cleft of the Andheri Khola. We then traversed south above numerous landslides on biotite gneiss and finally reached a Newar hamlet, Deoral Dobate (1240 m), and made ourselves comfortable in a cattle-shed.

The next day’s track continued south across a series of spurs descending down the eastern flank of Sailung Lekh (3159 m). Sailung appears as a recurrent theme in Tamang folk songs and judging from the numerous chortens and mani walls with plaques of the sacred Buddhistic formula ‘Om Mani Padme Hum’ along the track, we were now traversing through a Tamang culture area (Pl. XLIVa). Along the roadside were also old rest-houses, chautaras and mile-stones indicating the past importance of the track when much trade flowed between Lamobagar and Sindhuli. The weather cleared partly and we were rewarded with some glimpses of Gauri Shankar and Choba Bhamare while 400 meters below us to the east flowed the Tamba Kosi through a deep valley. We passed along alternating stretches of fields and pine forests and reached Melung after crossing the streams Ghyang, Larke and Phadke. Melung (1585 m) that once housed an army garrison was a small village on a prominent spur with a levelled tundikhel lined with Fraxinus floribunda. There were a few shops and the place has a weekly hat on Wednesdays. We descended south-west of Melung through a pine forest and found a Tamang
house at Nigasi (1371 m) to spend the night.

On January 14th, we descended a steep path to the Milti Khola, a western tributary of the Tamba Kosi that marks the district boundary between Dolakha and Ramechhap. Although Milti means 'union', the epithet for the stream seemed ill-founded when I learnt that the turbulence of the stream during the rainy season necessitated throwing mail-bags from one bank to another and many postal missiles would be swept away by the swift stream. A langur monkey watched from a vertically inclined rock outcrop when we forded the Milti Khola in knee-deep water at 1,000 meters. We then turned south-east to traverse a wide cultivated slope and passed Phulasi (1600 m) village. At Phulasi, we left the last augen gneiss rocks and then climbed on the north-dipping quartzites. We soon came on green phyllites over Chinn Danda (1980 m) due west of the Tamba Kosi-Khimiti Khola confluence. The southern prospect from the pass (1706 m) on Chinn Danda revealed a large Newar village of Chisapani (1524 m) on another north-dipping slope, sandy flats of the Tamba Kosi, the red ridge of Ramechhap and the forested Mahabharat Lekh in the far horizon.

The path then followed the narrow ridge of Mane Danda and descended steeply to Natila (1000 m) over quartzites and conglomerates. The thatched houses were dispersed among terraces of dry crops and oil was being extracted from mustard seed at a roadside oil-press (Pl. XXa). On the way down to the confluence of the Mahadev Khola with the Tamba Kosi, we re-entered the warm tropical Shorea robusta belt where the red soil revealed large water-worn boulders high above the present river level. We then crossed a new 80-meter long suspension bridge over the Tamba Kosi built with American aid. It was dusk when we climbed over a steep rocky section on the east bank of the river and I had to console and help the Kathmandu girls who were crying of exhaustion and fear of the cliffs. After following the river two kilometers south, we arrived at Karambot (560 m) a riverside hamlet of Danuwars and Kumals. We spent the night with a Kumal family who told us of the community's prob-
lems as the consequence of the new bridge. The Danuwars and Kumals had little agricultural land and lived mainly by fishing and ferrying the people across the river. The construction of the bridge had displaced their boats and deprived them of their chief livelihood source. The fine bridge we had crossed at Karambot was indeed a symbol of new development contributing to easier communication but the traditional Majhis affected by it needed a more subtle solution that had been so far overlooked in development dimension.

The following morning we walked across sugar-cane fields beside the hot sand-banks at the confluence of the Tamba Kosi and the Ranajor Khola. We followed upstream of the Ranajor Khola for a kilometer and climbed up a small ridge to enter another equally dry valley of the Sukhajor Khola. We panted under great heat for five kilometers along the dry river bed without springs and shade trees. We finally ascended 600 meters south to the Ramechhap ridge. Ramechhap (1432 m), the head quarters of Ramechhap district, was located on an east-west aligned phyllite ridge and there were numerous government offices. The place had an army garrison, health center, high school and even a windmill that had been damaged by a gale-force wing. Looking at the heavily deforested slopes, it was not surprising that Ramechhap faced acute water shortage. The night was cold with strong winds although the local administrator, Rama Prasad Bhardra, had tried to find us good accommodation.

Next morning, we found the clouds that hung low over Sailung Lekh the previous day had cleared and we had fine panoramic views of the snow ranges from Choba Bhamare (5958 m) to Gauri Shankar (7146 m) and Numbur (6959 m). To the south across the Sun Kosi valley rose the long ridge of the Mahabharat Lekh. We turned west along the Ramechhap ridge and on the path saw some slags of an old smelting-work derived from iron ores from Those. The track then traversed a wide amphitheatre of Lyang-Lyang on a south-facing slope. The sub-tropical forest was much cleared and the dry fields had been ploughed for maize. The dispersed houses had high pitched roofs of shingle and thatch grass with ochre and white-washed walls.
Lyang-Lyang (1371 m) which once had a iron-smelting work must have been a better known locality in the past for there was an old milestone quoting its distance from Hanuman Dhoka. The path then followed an open ridge descending west towards the Sun Kosi. The warm south slope had a good forest of bel (Aegle marmelos) with sal lower down. We crossed the Sun Kosi at Seleghat (457 m) by a suspension bridge originally put up in 1870. We stayed at Khurkot village (487 m.) on a wide flood plain on the south side of the river and where joined the traditional highway between Kathmandu and East Nepal along the Sun Kosi valley.

We left Khurkot on January 17th by turning south along the Andheri Khola. The track climbed over a succession of crystalline limestone and schist, various gneisses and sandstone. The slopes were covered with sal and dense undergrowth. On a shelf on the north slope of Mahabharat Lekh, we came across the Newar village of Nigale (1219 m). During our track, we had seen many similar hill villages of Newars who worked on farms, divorced from their traditional trade pursuits. It was interesting to learn however that trade in these parts was still dominated by Dhulikhel Newars who make a circuit of fairs at Sindhulimadi in January (Maghe Sankranti), Dumja in February (Shivaratri), Dolakha in April (Chaite Dasain) and Bardbise bazar in May.

We could see the bare ridges of Lyang-Lyang and the snows of Gauri Shankar, Numbur and Karyolung from the high trail above Nigale. On the way up, we met an old man, Ambar Bahadur Thapa, who had served in the Ramechhap militia for 17 years and he gave us some glimpses of the past. We learnt from him that the militia at Sindhuligarhi had been established by one Kirtiman Khatri in the last century and who had also been the patron of the numerous fine shade trees along the road between Khurkot and Dhungrebas. We had earlier wondered at his name engraved in a commemorative stone plaque at the Seleghat bridge and we were later to find a copper-plate dedicated by him at the Mai shrine at the head of the Kamala river.

After passing a forest section over granites, we reached Sin-
Dhuligarhi (1461 m) on the Mahabharat ridge. The old durbar of the district administrator had been converted into a police-post after the headquarters of Sindhuli district was shifted from here to Sindhulimadi lower down. We visited the old fort on a nearby ridge prominence. The fort was surrounded by a stone wall with an elaborate ground plan. A flight of stone steps led to the only entrance on the north side and inside the enclosure of the outer zig-zag wall was a large circular court with entrances at the four cardinal points. On the south gallery between the inner court and outer main wall was a hexagonal well made of brick and mortar and about 10 meters deep. The eastern gallery had a large cannon captured from the first British expeditionary force in 1767. Sindhuligarhi was the Gorkhali outpost that shattered the 2,400 strong assault led by Captain Kinloch. The fort was now overgrown with weeds and shrubs but it still evoked an air of the romantic past. We could see a series of ridges and mountains of Rolwaling and Khumbu to the north and dense forests on the Chure range to the south. Patches of white clouds hung over the flat valley of Sindhulimadi between densely forested ridges.

We descended a steep slope south of the fort down which Kinloch's men must have tumbled on being attacked by bows and arrows, stones and even nests of hornets. A little below, we passed through a massive gate with huge doors that once formed the check-point for invaders and travellers and whence a stone-fence ran along the higher Mahabharat ridge. We then passed through small clearings in the dense forest and descended to Dhungrebas and Shindhulimadi (518 m) at the head of a small valley between the Mahabharat Lekh and Chure range. The place had been cleared of forest only two years earlier and there were now numerous timber-sheds with shops and office buildings, some still under construction. The headquarters of the Sindhuli district at Sindhulimadi had grown fast at the cost of the older Sindhuligarhi town. The settlers were mainly Brahmins, Chhetris, Tamangs and Magars from nearby hills and the shops belonged to Dhulikhel Newars.

The following morning we hired a jeep that had come to
Sindhuli from Kathmandu to transport passengers for the big fair at Kamala Mai shrine or Maithan. We drove south along the sandy bed of the Gwang Khola crossing its low water 27 times and reached the fair site. The shrine of Kamala Mai was located at the confluence (457 m) of the Kamala river and Gwang Khola. We had missed the large Maghe Sankranti Jatra just by three days. We did however meet on the road near Khurkot some men carrying lambs and pigeons slaughtered for sacrifice at the Maithan. The place was still littered with temporary sheds of leaves and branches and the stone idol inside the shrine was heavily smeared with the blood of sacrificed animals. We later met a party of the government publicity department who had been to the Kamala Mai fair for showing documentary films to the large gathering from many districts. I wondered why the team had not filmed the fair itself which we gathered was a rare cultural event when varieties of folk songs reverberate through the full moon night.

The valley of Kamala river widens considerably east of Maithan into a dun valley and is called Kamala Khonch. The indigenous population of this valley, mainly Danuwars, have been displaced by the more enterprising hill migrants in recent years. We drove along a rough track by the south bank of the Kamala river and crossed over the low Chure range by a deep defile (426 m) over the Siwalik sandstones and then came down to the head of the Rato Khola. We wound our way along the dry bed of the Rato Khola amidst dense forest of Shorea robusts, Lagerstroemia parviflora and Adina cordifolia. Where the stream cut against the rock outcrops, the bed rock strata dipped gently to the north. At Lalbhit (204 m) we came to a gravel plain with large-scale clearing of forests and dotted with timber houses of the new settlers. Further south, we came to more paddy fields and grain stores in the courtyard were made of bamboo baskets plastered with ochre clay that looked like giant urns.

We crossed the alignment of the East-West Highway still under construction at Dhalkebar (leaning bar) and south of the road junction, fields became more continuous and the villages
larger with numerous ponds. We had now entered the level Tarai plain where herds of cattle grazed on paddy stubbles and the monotony of the landscape was broken only by occasional mango groves, lines of green bee-eaters on the cable wire or the swoops of white-bellied drongo or the blue brilliance of the Indian roller. We crossed the Bighi Nadi and then a disused railway line that once connected Janakpur with Ramanagar estate for timber extraction and then entered Janakpur town.

Janakpur (73 m) was a typical Tarai town with a number of rice mills and business houses. Janakpur in the heartland of ancient Mithila is reputed to have been once a large well-planned city and a great center of learning. It is credited to be the capital city of King Janak, the father of Sita of the Ramayana epic. The present town is enclosed by an eight kilometers long brick-paved ring road within which are 24 large tanks and 21 ponds, numerous Hindu shrines dedicated to Rama, Sita, Laxman and Hanuman. No animal slaughter is allowed within the limits of the ring road. Janaki temple, dedicated to Sita, is the heart-throb of the town and was built by a queen of Tikamgarh (Bundelkhand) in 1910. This elaborate temple of marble that forms the focus of Hindu devotees however is incongruously a specimen of 17th century Mughal architecture (Pl. XIVb). Janakpur town has market days on Sundays and Tuesdays in addition to the numerous religious fairs visited by many pilgrims from India. The railway station is at the eastern end of the town and connects Janakpur with Jayanagar in Bihar. The Indian border is about eight kilometers south across Jaleswar where there is a Shiva shrine.

On our return flight from Janakpur, the aircraft steered 340 degrees north-west towards Kathmandu flying at an average altitude of 2,300 meters. We overflew the fertile Tarai fields, heavily encroached forests of bhavar zone scarred by dry river beds, sal forests of the Chure ridge, the inner valley of Marin dun and the Mahabharat Lekh in quick succession. When we turned north-west along the Sun Kosi, we could see the hills we had recently traversed and the snow ranges farther beyond. We left the Sun Kosi above Dumja and veered west up the Rosi Khola and the
green Banepa valley and finally entered Kathmandu valley. I remembered with indulgence now the inquisitiveness of police-posts at Barbise, Kodari, Charikot, Ramechhap and Sindhuli asking us the motives of our visit and I tried to console myself that the overt surveillance may have been the hang-over of the confinement of the old Rana days. However, the fascination of discovering one’s own country beckons one to keep wandering and wondering.
Chapter Seventeen

An Everest Interlude

Everest: terror and love:
No veil is upon you, no cloud
Doubts the huge hump, mighty monument set on earth,
Harp of the wind, snow-song and avalanche tears,
And tinier tale of men. But men are so proud.
Their mole-story is hill-high.

-Wilfrid Noyce*

It is quite an experience to be with a large expedition on a big mountain. The mountain I visited was Sagarmatha-Chomolungma-Mount Everest itself and the team consisted of 31 members from 12 countries. I am no serious climber but I had an opportunity of joining the International Himalayan Expedition 1971 to the South-West Face of Everest. I was invited to join the expedition by Col. J. O. M. Roberts, one of the joint leaders, I think for two considerations. He knew well of my keen interest in mountaineering as I had written him as far back as 1960 while still a student in Patna, offering to join an expedition he was leading that year on Annapurna II (7927 m) and he had politely declined. Moreover, the inclusion of a Nepalese member in the

* Wilfrid Noyce, South Col, London, 1954
international team would have been a good gesture to the host country as well as an asset in smoothening the various administrative formalities. On my own part, I had no ambitions of reaching higher than visiting the Western Cwm above the Ice Fall and which not even serious trekkers could ever hope to see by themselves. That was how I got tacked on as a geographer on the big expedition studded with some world famous climbers. Since the publication of my book *Annapurna to Dhaulagiri* my credentials were more of a mountain chronicler than a climber. Although Jimmy Roberts associated me in the planning and processing of the big venture from its initial stages, I could not be with the expedition through its full course and therefore I consider my association with the expedition merely as an interlude.

I met trucks carrying 36 tons of expedition gear from Bombay escorted by Michael Cheney on the Tribhuvan Rajpath below Lami Danda on February 13 while I was driving to Kalimpong to a relation’s wedding. I returned Kathmandu on February 19th and set about helping in the final preparations. The concourse of climbers, television men, 60 Sherpas and 1,000 porters left Kathmandu on February 28th. I could not accompany the expedition owing to official duties during the march-in that provided a good opportunity to members to know each other. On March 10th when I accompanied the other co-leader Norman Dyhrenfurth with a B. B. C. television cameraman on an aerial photographic flight, the expedition carvan was struggling up the slope below Kharte. We made a flying sweep above Namche and returned to Kathmandu.

The expedition reached Base Camp on March 23rd after rests at Tengboche and Pheriche. On the March 23th, I left Kathmandu by Pilatus Porter to join the expedition. I was travelling with my brother-in-law Capt. Surendra Gurung who had been seconded by the Gorkha Signals to supervise the expedition communication system. Our flight route to Lukla was the same as that of the regular Mountain Flight but at a lower altitude. The impressive summit of Gauri Shankar (7146 m) dominated the northern horizon until we crossed Chyangma pass (2194 m).
We then flew low over the passes of Lamjura (3529 m) and Taksindu (3200 m) and very close to Number (6945 m) and Karyolung (6181 m) down whose steep slopes plunged south the Likhu Khola, Basa Khola and Beni Khola. Then we turned up the Dudh Kosi (milky river) hemmed-in between steep mountain slopes. Lukla (2834 m) airstrip was on a narrow shelf, 600-meters above the river with an appreciable gradient to the west. The aircraft took a sharp tilting round turn and the white stranded body of a damaged aircraft beside the airstrip was not a reassuring site. We approached the runaway from the river side to the west, touched down and raced uphill to come to an abrupt halt close to the stone walls of potato fields.

We were met by Kanchha Sherpa of Kunde with two porters and we left Lukla soon after lunch. Two kilometers beyond Lukla, we had a sharp encounter with Prof. Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf and his wife Elizabeth who had started from Chaurikharka (2712 m) that morning. They had stayed in Khumjung for two months earlier in 1953 and another seven months in 1957 for a more intensive study of the Sherpas and had written the book *The Sherpas of Nepal: Buddhist Highlanders*. They were now in Khumbu to study the changes in Sherpa life since their last visit. We were now road companions for about seven kilometers from Chaurikharka to Bengar. We walked through rhododendron and pine forests and in spite of the roar of the Dudh Kosi, we talked of the School of Oriental and African Studies (London) where I had worked for nearly two years and about our journey in Jumla in 1966. The Dudh Kosi flowed swiftly south amidst stupendous slopes of the nearby mountains, Kwangde and Thamserku. The track followed the eastern bank and then a bridge above Phakding (2621 m) led it to the western bank with a pleasant pine forest. After the small hamlet of Gomila (2743 m), we reached Benkar (3000 m), another hamlet near a bridge over the Dudh Kosi. When we looked up towards the south-west face of Thamserku (6623 m) above the clouds, it appeared as a huge overhang directly above us.

We left Christoph and Betty at Benkar to their leisurely
pace and continued north by crossing the bridge. The river gorge became considerably narrow and we had to cross the Dudh Kosi three times within less than two kilometers to avoid the rocky cliffs. We were at Dobhan (2880 m) at the confluence of the Dudh Kosi and the Bhote Kosi (Nangpo Tsangpo) about 3 p.m. The old road used to follow the east bank of the Dudh Kosi for another 800 meters above the river junction and turn west by crossing a bridge over the Dudh Kosi. The new improved road continued west of Dobhan and then crossed the Bhote Kosi (Tibetan river) to its northern bank. We climbed a steep pine covered slope after crossing the bridge and the trail zigzagged up for nearly 320 meters to a point where the old road joined it. The track then rose gradually towards the north-west across an overgrazed pine forest. On the opposite side across the Bhote Kosi were steep rock walls interspersed with gullies filled with ice. On turning a minor hump at 3,400 meters, the amphitheatre of Namche Bazar came in full view. There were about 90 houses between terrace fields that spread for 200 meters along a stream.

We passed the site of the Saturday market on the southern end of Namche and walked through the bazar and entered a Sherpa house near the gomba. The houses were all solidly-built of stone walls and shingle-roofs pressed down with stones. On the ground floor was the cattle-shed and the first-floor living room had a cosy atmosphere. The long wall nearest to the ladder was lined with copper, brass and wooden pots and jars along with a large variety of more modern plastic jerry-cans and utensils inherited from successive mountaineering expeditions. The opposite wall had glass-panelled windows facing the village fields, a large chorten below the prayer-wheel sheds and the main road beyond. One side of the rectangular room was given to the private chapel while the house-wife sat by the hearth at the other end. We settled on raised carpet seats beside a low wooden table by the window and the flow of Tibetan tea, chang and later arak was a well-earned repast after the two hours, stiff climb from Dobhan.
Namche Bazar or Nauche in Sherpa is an important settlement of Khumbu area inhabited by Sherpas. On the basis of local written documents, Michael Oppitz has revealed that the Sherpas or ‘the easterners’ originally immigrated from Kham to Central Tibet and entered Khumbu around 1533 and was later followed by another Tibetan group from Tingri about the middle of the eighteenth century. Namche Bazar is the gateway to two high roads: one leads north west into the Bhote Kosi valley through Thami (3800 m), Chhule (4470 m) and crosses the Nangpa La (5776 m) to Tibet while the another turns north-west into the Imja Khola towards Tengboche (3867 m), Dingboche (4412 m) and to Sagarmatha (Everest). In consideration of developments over the last few decades, one might say that if Namche Bazar had come into prominence owing to the Nangpa La trade route, it was now being sustained by the Everest tourist route.

Sherpas of Khumbu enjoyed trade monopoly with Tibet over the Nangpa La across which trade flourished as in other trans-Himalayan routes. Namche traders visited Ketrak (4663 m) in Tibet and Tibetan traders came as far as Namche, a trade entrepot where laden yaks from the north and hill porters from the south exchanged their goods. The main items of import from Tibet were salt, wool, carpets, Tibetan artifacts and dogs. Salt was exchanged against grain in the middle hills but carpets and dogs would be exchanged for Indian manufactured products at the Maini fair (Kamala Khonch) in December. The main Nepalese exports used to be raw iron from Those (till the early part of the present century), various kinds of grain, dried potatoes, hand-made paper and cotton cloth. Dzo, raised in Solu by cross-breeding hill cattle with imported Tibetan nak formed an important export item. In former times, Sherpa traders in dzo are said to have travelled as far as Taklakhar, selling their animals on the way through Tingri and Tradom and then descending down to Brahmdrv Mani near Tanakpur with Tibetan merchandise. After disposing off their goods, they would travel by train from Tanakpur to Darjeeling and buy Tibetan tea, boots, hats and other manufactured products to return home via Ilam, Chainpur and Dingla.

Trade with Tibet declined considerably following the ope-
ning of the Gangtok-Chumbi route after the Younghusband mission of 1904. The traditional trade relations were further disrupted as a result of Chinese occupation of Tibet in the 1950's and limited transactions resumed only later in grain and salt. Unlike other Himalayan trading-posts such as Walungchung, Tukche, Mugu and Yari that never recovered their past prosperity, Namche had an alternative outlet owing to its unique location close to Mount Everest. The transition from trade to tourism in the economy of Namche however did not occur as an abrupt event. Darjeeling was a familiar out-post for Sherpa traders and itinerant labourers and where one Dr. A. M. Kellas introduced Sherpas into climbing ventures as early as 1907. The subsequent British expeditions to Mount Everest from the Tibetan side invariably included Sherpas who not proved valuable load-carriers on the higher slopes but had sentimental links with the Rongphu monastery. The closure of trade across Nangpa La in 1959 was preceded by a decade of opening of the Nepal side of Everest.

The first foreign visitor to Namche Bazar if we discount the Tibetan traders that frequented the place for centuries, was one Dr. Banerjee of the Indian Meterological Survey who left a snow and rain gauge there in 1949. He was soon followed by an Anglo-American reconnaissance party led by Oscar Houston and other members included H. W. Tilman (who led the 1938 Everest expedition from the north), Charles Houston, Mrs. E. S. Cowles and A. Bakewell. They reached Namche Bazar on 14 November 1950 and went as far as the rock prominence (5545 m) above Gorak Shep that had not yet been christened as Kala Pathar or 'Black Rock'. Namche Bazar has since become the gateway to expeditions to the peaks of Khumbu Himal as well as increasing number of trekking tourists who wish to have a close look at Everest. The Lukla airstrip, first constructed by Sir Edmund Hillary in 1964 is a convenient entry-point to Khumbu area for those unable to make the long trek from Kathmandu while the new Hotel Everest View above Namche beckons further influx of tourists. Trekking and climbing tourism has become a new economic basis on which Namche Bazar now prospers. Namche has some government offices and also a weekly market, instituted
by an enterprising local administrator where grains, chicken, eggs and vegetables are brought from as far as five day's journey in the lower hills.

The following morning, March 25, we started climbing the trail above Namche close to the gomba. As we climbed higher, we were surrounded by numerous peaks, Kwangde (6187 m) to the south, Thamserku (6608 m) to the east and Khumbilia (5761 m) to the north. We left the main track to Thami about 3,600 meters and turned north climbing a gentle slope covered with azalea and rose bushes. Half-way up the climb, Kangteaga (6685 m) revealed itself behind Thamserku and north-east to it, the magnificent head of Ama Dablam (6858 m) reared above the tree crowns of Shyangboche. A delightful walk through pine trees brought us to a ridge (3800 m) that looked down on an enclosed valley at the foot of Khumbila sloping to the south-east. The houses of Kunde (3840 m) and Khumjung (3790 m), each a substantial two-storey affair with pitched roofs stood apart and the dark slots of two doors on the ground floor and three windows above, all facing south, provided a uniform pattern (Pl. XLVa). We descended down the forest ridge, passed a large chorten surrounded by smaller chortens and entered Kanchha's house at Kunde for lunch. Nearby to the west was an aluminium hut that housed a hospital run by the Himalayan Trust with S. D. R. Lang and Ann Lang as resident doctors.

We then walked east through stone-walled fields that were being prepared for potato after the long winter. We went past the grounds of the Khumjung gomba with the famous Yeti scalp that catapulted Konje Chumbi of Khumjung round the world with Sir Edmund Hillary and which on scientific verification turned out to have been moulded from the hind quarters of an antelope. Whatever the scientific verdict, the scalp had retained its sanctity among the Sherpas and was kept locked only to be displayed during ceremonial occasions. At Khumjung, I sought out Phu Dorje's house but he was away with a South Korean expedition to Lhotse Shar (8393 m) and his wife entertained us with chang. I first met Phu Dorje in 1966 while touring in Jumla, Mugu and Dolpo and knew him as an efficient Sherpa with good climbing
records. He was first with the French on Makalu in 1955 and then with Sir Edmund Hillary's Himalayan Scientific and Mountaineering Expedition 1960-61. He carried loads over 8,530 meters while with the Indians on Everest in 1960 and 1962 and later jointed a Japanese team to Numbur in 1963 and Germans on Cho Oyu in 1964 and Gangapurna in 1965. In 1969 he was the sirdar of the tragic American expedition to Dhaulagiri and in 1970 accompanied a Dutch group to Kanjiroba.

We descended eastward from Khumjung through a gully and joined the main road from Namche to Tengboche at 3,600 meters in a birch forest. The road turned north past a rock buttress, 400 meters above the Dudh Kosi and across which we had a full view of the north-west aspect of Thamserkhu (6608 m), a 900-meter section of scree and rock capped by fluted ice. On the north-eastern firmament stood the majestic Ama Dablam (Pl. XLVb) and below it on the farthest tip of a long spur from Kangtga (6685 m) was perched the monastery of Tengboche. The Everest group was hidden behind the cloud. We passed below Tashinga (3400m) and descended to the river through a pine forest. We crossed the Dudh Kosi below its confluence with the Imja Khola at Phunki (3250 m) where were some water-powered prayer wheels. We began our ascent through a dense forest after a brief rest at a tea-shop. It was a steep climb of nearly 280 meters and the air resounded with the roar of the Imja Khola.

The track then turned east along the south side of the spur for another 300 meters ascent to the flag-festooned chorten at the gate of Tengboche (3867 m). The monastery ridge was fully exposed to gusts of cold mountain air and Everest was still hidden behind the afternoon clouds. We pitched our tent on the lawn in front of the gomba. Although other gombas at Pangboche and Thami are of greater antiquity, the one at Tengboche ('great high place') has acquired more prominence owing to its exposure to numerous climbing expeditions. The gomba was founded by Sanga Dorje, a Lama of Khumbu who later was said to have reincarnated in Tibet as the abbot of Rong-phu monastery on the north side of Everest. The present three-
stored gomba was built around 1919 at the initiative of Lama Gulu of Khumjung in which enterprise all villages of Khumbu contributed. The incumbent head Lama was discovered in 1936 as the reincarnate (tulku) of Lama Gulu who had died shortly after an earthquake had damaged the gomba in 1933. The young Tsawi Lama took charge of Tengboche after completing his studies. Although the gomba complex looks better-off materially since the first climbers camped on its hallowed grounds on 15 November 1950, the monastic spirit has declined not unlike the successive recession of the nearby glaciers. When W. H. Murray visited the place with a reconnaissance team to Everest in September 1951, forty monks lived at the monastery.* In 1957, Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf found thirty-two monks and there were only a dozen at the time of our visit in 1971. The head Lama of the monastery whom we met next morning was indeed worried about the depletion of his flock as more and more Sherpa youths turned to other secular schools and activities.

On Friday morning, March 26th, we emerged out of our tent, walked on the frosty lawn and viewed the scene around. We felt like being at the center of a mountain universe. Whatever his spiritual propensity, Lama Sanga Dorje had chosen the site of heavenly contemplation indeed well. Up valley, towards the north-east stood the high wall of Nuptse-Lhotse with the dark summit of Everest peeping over it. The rampart looked menacing with a steep face marked by distinctive yellow bands and it seemed an anticlimax to see so little of the highest mountain from so near, only 24 kilometers. Directly north of us towered high the peak of Taboche (6542 m) sending down a rocky spur to Phorche (3840 m) just across the Imja Khola. Westwards, the rocky buttress of Khumbilha descended to the fields of Khumjung. Beyond Shyangboche ridge with the white facade of the new Hotel Everest View in a dark clump of fir trees rose the northern face of Kwangde (6187 m) in full morning sunlight. Thamserku (66608 m) and Kangtega (6685 m) immediately south of us were still in the shadows with the Phunki Glacier suspended between them.

Of all these panoply of peaks, Ama Dablam (6856 m) only 11 kilometers to our east, was at once majestic and overpowering with a proud head supported by two raised shoulders (Pl. XXIb). The fact that M. J. Harris and G. Fraser were last seen on its upper slopes at about 6,553 meters on 21st May 1959 and no trace was ever found added mystery to this magnificent mountain. One could just sit for hours by the chorten marvelling at the surrounding peaks. However, our destination lay further north among the wilderness of snow and ice where harsh nature dominated. We visited the head Lama to receive his blessings. We found him seated in a small sunny courtyard by the south wall of the temple. We presented him khada and he proffered good wishes in our venture and offered us tea. We then made a round of the gomba guarded by mastiff dogs. The fresco on the courtyard wall lit-up in the morning light and we entered the main chapel. On the central altar was the seated effigy of the previous head Lama, flanked by two golden chortens enshrining sacred relics and on the side walls were numerous square pigeon-holes full of cloth-bound religious texts. We made our obesaince to the huge figure of the meditating Sakyamuni and were on the road to Everest.

We walked north along the meadow and then through birch and juniper forest under which coveys of blood pheasants (Ithaginis cruentus) scratched dried leaves quite unafraid of us. A little further down we reached Deboche (3760 m) where we were invited for chang by Dawa Tenzing whom I first met in London in 1966. Dawa Tenzing, one of the veteran Sherpas who had climbed with Hugh Ruttledge, H. W. Tilman and Eric Shipton between the wars and accompanied both the successful British expeditions on Mount Everest in 1953 and Kangchenjunga in 1955, now leads a life of contemplative retirement here. Dawa wished us luck and we walked to the bridge over the Imja Khola past the hamlet of Milingo (3820 m). The river rushed below the bridge, churning down milky white froth against enormous boulders. The north bank was much drier compared to the forested south bank and at Pangboche (3900 m) were numerous boulders inscribed with ‘Om Mani Padme Hum’. We had lunch at Pangboche and continued
north upstream of the Imja Khola. We walked over stony stretches with dwarf junipers and azaleas while the opposite bank was clothed in pine and birch forest. The summit of Everest disappeared behind the Nuptse-Lhotse wall and the main peak of Ama Dablam peered over its western shoulder.

At Tsuro Og (4135 m) where the Lobuje Chubung, the meltwater of Khumbu Glacier, joined the Imja Khola, we crossed the former stream and climbed east on a moraine bank. We planned to make a brief detour of Dingboche (4412 m) on way to Pheriche. About four kilometers east of Dingboche lie one of the highest cultivated fields of Khumbu at Chukhung (4730 m). We were still far from Dingboche when the sky suddenly became dark and it began to snow. We had to turn west towards Pheriche across a saddle separating the old moraine terraces that now formed the fields and pastures of Dingbohe and Pheriche. A snow storm caught us on the saddle and it was with some difficulty that we reached the shelter of a house at Pheriche (4243 m). Pheriche was a summer settlement of 21 huts surrounded by stone-walled fields. The snowfall had converted the whole valley into a white expanse and it was bitterly cold. We huddled by the fire-side of a Sherpa hearth through the long evening, sipping arak and munching dried yak meat and later had dinner and retired to our tent for the night.

The morning of March 27th dawned bright and we were surrounded by an array of snow peaks that dazzled in the early sun. We now had a full view of the northern face of Ama Dablam and towards the west rose menacingly the conical summit of Taboche, its dark granitic face turned towards us. Up the valley, beyond the white moorland of dwarf junipers stood high the three Lobuje peaks (6110 m, 6145 m and 6169 m) and due north was the sharp peak of Pokalde (5806 m) first climbed by Tom Bourdillon, Wilfrid Noyce and Michael Ward on 14 April 1953. We started from Pheriche about 9 a.m. across the level plain covered with dwarf rhododendron and azalea bushes that still preserved the snow drift from the previous afternoon and reached Phalow Karpo (4343 m), another summer settlement of nine huts. We then began
a slow ascent up the terminal moraine of the Khumbu Glacier and
for the first time my breathing became laborious as we reached
above 4,400 meters. A little further on the roadside stood six
large chortens in memory of the Sherpas killed by an avalanche on
the Ice Fall the previous April while working with the Japanese
Skiing Expedition. Ama Dablam still dominated the southern
horizon and to the south-west a glacier descending between
Taboche and Cholatse (6440 m) blocked the glacial lake of Chola
Tso.

Our progress above Duglha (4620 m) was even slower as
we had to labour across a pile of boulders at the front of the
Khumbu Glacier. The sky became overcast about noon and we
hurried as fast as we could along the right ablation valley of the
Khumbu Glacier. At about 4,880 meters, we came across the
true ice of the glacier and we clung to the solid base of a
slope that confined the moraine. We were in Lobuje (4930 m)
at 1.30 p.m. and the lone hut there was a welcome shelter from the
heavy snow fall. We could have tried for Gorak Shep, another six
kilometer up-valley but there was no let-up in the snow fall and
it was considered unwise to rush at these heights. While it snowed
incessantly, Kanchha Sherpa put up our tent and we sat by
the fire-place in the hut warming ourselves with tea and chang.
There was nothing else to do but wait for the night and the dull
afternoon passed into the peculiar glow of mountain dusk. The
snow stopped later in the evening but it was a chilly night when we
retired to our tent.

The next day, March 28th, we woke in a clear morning and
the snow-covered rock, boulder and moraine all shone white
under a blue sky. The Khumbu Glacier with its mass of
rock, ice and snow stretched northwards like a frozen river and
east of it a jagged ridge ascended towards Nuptse. We started
from Lobuje at 8 a.m. after an early breakfast and first skirted
the tongue of the Lobuje Glacier and the small stream that issued
from the glacier was frozen. After crossing the terminal moraine
of the Lobuje Glacier, we followed an ablation valley west of the
Khumbu Glacier across another frozen stream. About three
kilometers further, we had to find our way through a pile of rocks over the Changri Glacier that joins the Khumbu Glacier from the west. Inspite of the fact that we were surrounded by a world of snow and ice, we were sweating as the insolation on the moraine was intense. The long valley filled by enormous mass of rock debris with increasing snow patches and larger boulders headwards stretched all the way to the north where Lingtren and other peaks between Pumo Ri and the west shoulder of Everest marked the northern horizon. We crossed an ablation stream after climbing a low ridge and looked down on Gorak Shep (5150 m). It was a sandy stretch beside a small lake that had been trapped by the lateral moraine of the Khumbu Glacier. Gorak Shep which means 'crow's death' was the Base Camp site of the Swiss Everest Expedition of 1952. A herd of yak foraged on the edge of the sandy flat and directly above the lake rose the dark ridge of Kala Pathar (5545 m) framed against the white snow dome of Pumo Ri (Pl. XLVIIa). It was not merely the sight of a level flat amidst steep ground that delighted the eye but also a pleasure walking on the soft sand after the labourious effort over harsh boulders. The summit of Nuptse (7879 m) rose as a east sharp pyramid to the and the top tip of Everest, identifiable by a snow plume, peeped over a cleft on its northern incline.

Once past Gorak Shep, we descended on the main glacier and encountered more snow and at places the thick mantle of snow on the glacier had been melted by the sun into a maze of ice pinnacles. Although standing 20 to 25 meters above the moraine floor, they looked like a world of miniature snow peaks set against the dark rock-face of the border ranges (Pl. XLVIIb). Apart from the forest of ice peaks, there were also huge blocks of stone perched atop stalks of ice several meters above the ground and some thick sections of green ice that had been sculptured into vertical walls. We made slow progress through the strange shapes in eery silence and as the previous day's snowfall had obliterated the path, we had to pick our way carefully through the drift snow. Breathing became harder as we gained in height and I felt a splitting head-ache. There was no respite from the glare of snow in the desolate landscape and we plodded on fearing the
usual afternoon snowfall. It was with great relief that we at last saw a group of orange tents at the base of the rocky walls of Khumbu Tse. We reached the Base Camp about 4 p.m. in clear weather and the sight of camp life revived our spirits. While Kanchha Sherpa set-up a tent for us, I met Jimmy Roberts and had a hot tea in the mess tent. My head-ache had not subsided and I retired early to my tent. The head-ache was obviously due to high altitude but I slept right through the evening and night without any breathing trouble. When I woke up next morning, my head had cleared and I could better appreciate the scene around.

The Base Camp (5500 m) at the outside corner of the right angle where the Khumbu Glacier turned sharply south had numerous tents pitched on a pile of moraine debris. The Sherpa tents were at the south end and other tents were spread on an undulating ground between a melt-hollow to the west and a minor depression to the east beyond which lay the oxygen cylinder dump and the latrine area. The kitchen under the supervision of Danu Sherpa was near the melt-water hollow used as a water source and close to it was the mess tent. The hospital tent under the charge of Dr. Peter Steele and assisted by Ang Tsering was a little north-west of the mess. In the center, near Jimmy Robert’s tent stood two upright poles lined by a nylon string with national flags of Austria, France, India, Italy, Japan, Nepal, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States and West Germany. It was not only the row of flags that flapped violently in the afternoon wind. Naomi Uemura had a pair of carp streamers sent by his girl friends hanging by a pole above his tent. My own tent which I shared with Capt. Surendra Gurung was below that of Harsha Bahuguna and across a path was the wireless tent that crackled with messages from Kathmandu and higher camps each morning and afternoon.

Work on the Ice Fall had already started by the time I reached Base Camp on March 28th and most expedition members were busy forcing the way up the jumbled mass of ice and snow. I stayed at the Base Camp meeting the climbers occasionally
when they came down as I was neither a good climber to blaze a trail nor strong as a Sherpa to carry loads. I had however no opportunity to reminisce about Edinburgh University with Dougal Haston where he had studied philosophy after I left as he was always dashing to the higher camps. On March 31st, a route was found to the top of the Ice Fall and three days later Camp I was established. In another three days, the Advance Base Camp or Camp II was set up at the far end of the Western Cwm close to the foot of the South-west Face of Everest. There was much activity in ferrying the supplies to the higher camps and optimism reigned high while nine climbers on the Face and ten climbers on the West Ridge set working on their respective routes. I proposed to go higher later when the work tempo could tolerate passengers like me.

I hung around at the Base Camp for nearly three weeks following the progress higher up over the wireless. Sometime, I would walk west of the camp to explore the glacial lakes amidst enormous boulders that had rolled down the east face of Pumo Ri. At other times, I would head south-east across a pile of moraines to marvel at the fantastic shapes of ice cones and penitents. One never ventured to go far as the track could be easily lost in the mist and the pile of moraine boulders was only a superficial layer over a moving glacier with unknown caverns and crevasses underneath. Following the ablation valley southwards, one could easily make out sections of green ice on the flanks of steeper slopes. The surface of the glacier with ice pinnacles *en masse* and isolated ones and undulating mass of rock-debris extended south with an easy gradient, losing only 400 meters in a distance of nine kilometers between the Base Camp and Duglha. Great masses of rock debris from the surrounding mountain flanks accumulated on the lower Khumbu Glacier owing to the low-gradient and slow ice movement, estimated at 50 meter a year. A series of lateral moraines high above the present glacier surface, indicated retreat of the glacier and indeed the flats at Pheriche (4243 m) and Dingboche (4412 m) and even lower down at Phorche (3840 m) and Tashinga (3400 m) were the remnants of a more extensive glacier regime in the past. Fritz Muller who
spent eight months investigating the Khumbu Glacier in 1956 recorded an annual precipitation of 39 cm. at Gorak Shep (5300 m) indicating the relative aridity of the Everest region thus causing accumulation of vast quantities of debris amidst masses of dead ice in the lower ablation zone.*

The Khumbu Glacier had an immediate because we were living on it. The pile of rocks on the other hand would sometime make me turn to the enclosing walls from where they had been carried down. Immediately to the west of the Base Camp, rose high the eastern ramparts of Pumo Ri (7145 m) or ‘Daughter Peak’ named after George Leigh Mallory’s daughter. The summit was a cone of snow with ice channels plunging down to the Khumbu Glacier across slabs of light-coloured granite. A Japanese expedition was attempting it from the south side that season. Pumo Ri held a certain fascination because its summit caught the first rays of the morning sun when we peeped from our tent from the cold of the freezing night. A snow-covered ridge descended north of Pumo Ri to a saddle of 6,150 meters and rose east to Lingtren (6697 m), a tent-shaped peak on the border and first climbed by Eric Shipton and David Bryant in 1935 from the Tibetan side.

East of Lingtren was a dark tooth-like point and named ‘Domino’ by the Swiss Everest Expedition of 1952. Then began a sharp ridge between Lingtren and Khumbutse (6640 m) followed by ice channels that enclosed the valley from the north and an outlier of Khumbutse reared above the camp. This northern wall had a particularly dark visage with a series of granite ribs down which rocks rolled down with high frequency. East of Khumbutse was the snow-covered broad saddle of Lho La (6006 m) reached by George Mallory and G. H. Bullock in July 1921 that provided the first glimpse of Khumbu Glacier and the Western Cwm whereupon Mallory later wrote, “The single glimpse obtained last year of the western glacier and the slopes above it, revealed one of the most awful and utterly forbidding scenes ever observed by man.” The pass was visited again by H. W. Tilman and E.H.L.

Wigram during the Everest reconnaissance of 1935. The Lho La side was particularly liable to frequent avalanches and we would watch with awe the mass of snow thundering down with a white puff in its wake and which some expedition members named 'the milk train' for its morning frequency. East of Lho La, the west shoulder of Everest rose to 7,205 meters, its northerly declivity conforming to the dip of the Tibetan slab. The Everest west shoulder was separated from the Nuptse massif by a low gap occupied by the Ice Fall while Nuptse (7879m) with its intricate structures on granitised gneiss dominated the eastern horizon as a sharp pointed peak. The Ice Fall that descended down the Western Cwm towards the Base Camp was like a frozen lava spilling over a volcanic cone or to give a more hydrologic imagery, a mass of white waves churning down a cataract and suspended in the act. Issuing forth through a 700-meter wide but steep valley, it swept down in cascades from 6,200 meters to 5,400 meters and the whole face presented a jumbled mess of ice and snow. The route to the higher glacier shelf lay through this maze fraught with dangers as it alone provided the access to the Western Cwm.

However, the rambles and ruminations on the geology and glaciology of the Everest region could not engage me fully during my long stay at the Base Camp. I would sometime visit Dr. Peter Steele in the hospital tent to talk of his travel experiences in Bhutan on which he had written a book, *Two and Two Halves In Bhutan*, and where I too had been two years earlier. Sometime I frequented *The Sunday Times* correspondent Murray Sayle's tent to read his latest dispatches although back in my student days I was more inclined to its rival, *The Observer*. The Nepalese group consisting of myself, my brother-in-law Surendra, liaison officer Bishnu Prasad Sharma and radio operator Lil Bahadur Gurung tried playing cards to while away gloomy afternoons but we soon got tired of the yellow glare and heat inside the tent. Occasional bad weather and snow storms forced me to re-read *The Ascent of Everest* by John Hunt, *South Col* by Wilfrid Noyce and *Annapurna* by Maurice Herzog. From the composite volume *Mount Everest: Formation, Population and Exploration of the Everest Region* by Toni Hagen, G. O. Dyhrenfurth, Christoph
von Furer-Haimendorf and Erwin Schneider, I took the satisfaction of having personally known all the authors and used Schneider's grid sketch of the Everest region as a chess puzzle to remember the numbers of trigonometrical points for various peaks. I even managed to find a large paperback on Oliver Cromwell from the mess table and read through it in three days.

My own opportunity to go up the Ice Fall came in due course. The expedition was going well and the other co-leader, Norman Dyhrenfurth, was coordinating the activities at the Advance Base in the Western Cwm. Don Whillans and Dougal Haston had established Camp III (7,000 m) on the Face while on the West Ridge, Wolfgang Axt and Harsha Bahuguna had pitched their own Camp III at a height of 7,200 meters. There was nothing unusual in the weather and with most climbers busy working on higher camps, one could move to the Advance Base Camp without straining the facilities there. When Jimmy Roberts informed me and Murray Sayle that we could go up the Ice Fall the following day, I retired to my tent with excitement and apprehension on the night of April 17th. Jimmy deputed Sonam Girme, one of the Sherpa sirdars to accompany us and we started early at 8 a.m. on April 18th. It was a bright morning and we headed eastwards to the left-hand base of the Ice Fall. We came to a snow-filled depression after traversing two moraine ridges and began the climb. We strapped our crampons and three of us were on one rope, Sonam Girme leading, myself in the middle and Murray Sayle at the tail. We were still struggling up the lower section of ice slopes when it began to snow lightly. It was only 9 a.m. and hoping that the weather would improve, we continued following the red flag-markers along the route. Small crevasses had been bridged with logs and steeper sections had aluminium ladders with fixed nylon ropes as hand-rails.

The route became steeper after an hour and we had to climb more rope ladders. By the time we arrived the Dump Camp, a small snow plateau amidst huge towering seracs about 11.30 a.m., the snow-fall had become heavy and visibility was poor. The route ahead seemed even more difficult and Murray
Sayle, who now semed tired, wanted to be left at the Dump Camp to which we refused. Sonam Girme warned us against the risk of taking rest or delaying as the track could be oblitrated by the snowfall. We climbed on through a maze of ice walls and blocks separated by dark crevasses and sections of deep snow. My role as the middleman in the rope became really trying on steeper slopes and short vertical wall ladders. The rope round my waist tightened progressively between the upward pull of Sonam Girme who wanted to hurry to the security of the next camp in the worsening weather and the downward pull of Murray Sayle who became more tired and heavy. I was strung between two emotions, cajoling and inspiring Sayle and restraining and reassuring Sonam. We could not slow down because of the continuous snow and neither could we hurry because a few steps would soon exhaust us. Inspite of the eery place, I wished I were alone or the snow would stop so that I could climb at my own easy pace.

Beyond a snow ridge, we came to a depression where an aluminum bridge spanned a deep chasm of blue green ice. We crossed the bridge and climbed two steep sections by rope ladders and then faced an even more dangerous section. The route lay up a narrow snow ridge to the ledge of a huge ice-wall above a dark abyss and one had to tiptoe across a wire caving ladder. This led to a narrow gallery on the upper face of the ice cliff and the exit on top of the steep wall was by a vertical ladder. We were almost on top of the Ice Fall after climbing the vertical ladder but the route to Camp I was still a winding path across natural bridges to avoid crevasses that lay between us and our destination. It was nearly 2.30 p.m. when we finally reached Camp I. Indeed, we had been through the dangerous Ice Fall when a snowstorm had just started that would continue for a whole week. David Isles and David Peterson and some Sherpas were at Camp I and Murray and I retired in a tent completely exhausted. It snowed heavy and the wind howled and whined through the night.

The next morning, April 19, the weather was calm but the sky was overcast. Camp I (6200 m) with half a dozen tents was located at the western tip of the Western Cwm near the site where
the Swiss Expedition in 1952 and the British Expedition in 1953 had established their Camp III. It was at the transition-point where the upper Khumbu Glacier after collecting the snow and ice of the Everest-Lhotse-Nuptse horse-shoe plunged down to the depression of the lower Khumbu Glacier. A series of crevasses stretched across the surface of the smoother upper glacier and those in the western extremity peeled off into a mass of ice blocks below on the Ice Fall. We were close to the site where Maynard M. Miller, who accompanied the American Everest expedition in 1963, had measured the stratigraphic thickness of retained firn and ice to be 20 meters thick representing an accumulation of 1.7 meters per year.* The pervasive influence of nuclear fall-out was seen even in this remote realm of the earth as Miller used tritium concentration caused by thermonuclear explosions to date the annual strata and identified stratum 16 (1.2 m) as laid down in the summer of 1954 following the "Castle" Test series and stratum 10 (0.6 m) formed in 1958 following the spring-summer U. S. and Soviet nuclear tests. Camp I was perched on a narrow snow-field between two deep crevasses and a false step would have been a disastrous plunge into the dark blue recess below (Pl. XLVIIb). Since bad weather had dislocated our communication link with the Base Camp below and the Advance Base above we had no inkling of the previous day's tragedy higher up on the mountain in which one of the climbers had been killed. On the following day while Murray and I rested in our tent, the two Davids and Sherpas headed for the Advance Base with loads. They made slow progress in deep snow and later returned after dumping the loads on the way as they could not reach the higher camp.

The following day, the Davids and some Sherpas again headed east to break the way to the Advance Base, while I and six Sherpas led by Sonam Girme tried to open the lower route to the Base Camp. The two-day snow had buried the flag-markers and we

had to make our own way in knee-deep snow. Apart from the sheer physical effort of pounding our feet in deep snow, kicking it out, we had to be cautious of hidden crevasses under fresh snow. We were all roped together and progressed slowly, guessing the place of flag-markers and probing the snow with ice axe. We were hardly 100 meters from the camp when Ila Tashi, a young Sherpa of hefty physique who was leading the rope, suddenly disappeared in the snows ahead and we all tightened our rope. He had fallen through a crevasse whose lips had been covered by snow but the rope held. We shouted out to him but it was only a whimper that echoed up the crevasse. We tried to pull the rope carefully but it tightened. The friction of the nylon rope had cut the upper crevasse edge and Ila Tashi was stuck against the wall overhang. Further loosening and pulling manoeuvres could possibly break the rope itself. While the Sherpas muttered prayers, Sonam Girme took the initiative befitting a sirdar. As we held fast to the line holding Ila, Sonam gave himself a long rope and jumped across the crevasse where it was narrow and came opposite us. He then threw a rope down to Ila to secure himself. Sonam pulled the rope by himself as we gave a little line making Ila free of the crevasse lip. Once the rope was freed from the ice groove, we carefully pulled Ila over with coordinated manœuvre on either end of the crevasse and he lay utterly exhausted on the snow. We then helped Sonam Girme jump across the abyss by holding the rope fast. We raised Ila who was now shaking all over his body with shock and cried on Sonam’s shoulder. We were all shaken by the mishap and turned back to the camp in gloom. Later, the party heading for the Advance Base also returned having failed to open the way through the deep snow.

I could not sleep well that night since the afternoon incident came flashing as a warning of the dangers lurking around. This was also the time when I came to appreciate the full meaning of CLAUSTROPHOBHIA. The feeling of impasse came in many layers. We were stranded on the precarious tip of the glacier cut off from the camps below and above and lack of wireless contact accentuated our predicament. Heavy fresh snow pressed the sides of our tent as if in a pincer movement; shoveling them
became our morning ritual but by night fall they would be again upon us. Our body heat created a depression where we lay, particularly below the rump, and the hummock profile was an uncomfortable stance for resting or sleeping. But I admired the patience of my tent mate Murrary Sayle who rarely stirred out of the tent and lay prone munching a tooth-pick and read on and on. We would have long talks when we could not sleep at night and he would then tell of his recent adventures in the Vietnam War as a correspondent for the Newsweek magazine and he also planned to cover the trouble brewing in East Pakistan and which he later did. I could not read in the suffocation of the tent pinned down by snow and outside was also another layer of engulfment. Most of the time we would be enveloped in grey wilderness without a sense of direction or perspective and when sometime visibility descended briefly, we would only confront the precipitous walls of Nuptse and the west shoulder of Everest while the deep chasm down the Ice Fall further heightened our precarious situation. On rare occasions we felt we had contact with the world below when yellow-billed choughs flew up the Base Camp but they would soon be gone riding the strong air drafts.

It was only on the third attempt on April 21 that contact could be finally established with the Advanced Base (Camp II) and later in the evening Anthony Thomas, the B, B. C. film producer, came down with frostbite to join us. It was through him that we came to know of the tragic death of Harsha Bahuguna on the West Ridge on April 18th, the same day we were struggling up the Ice Fall. That afternoon, Harsha Bahuguna and Wolfgang Axt were returning after moving their Camp III a little higher when a storm broke about 2 p. m. Harsha Bahuguna had somehow failed to unclip his karabiner while traversing a steep section on fixed rope through the raging storm and was stuck in the cold mountain face. A rescue party that rushed later in the evening found him suffering badly from exposure and close to death but the violent storm and the impending darkness forced them to leave him suspended in the rope exposed to harsh elements. The tragedy engulfed the climbers at Camp II in gloom while lack of food, its supply disrupted by bad weather, further added to
their problems. I now had no intention of intruding into the gloomy atmosphere of the higher camp but there was no passage for retreat down either.

On April 22, while the West Ridge climbers at Camp II discussed the possibility of the South Col route as an alternative, the weather got worse. It snowed heavily and wind outside moaned and howled while we were stuck up in our tent. Everest seemed to be in one of its bad moods and we tried to read and talk and thought all the while of getting out of the hell hole. The Sherpas who fed us had a tougher time as there was no fire-wood and water. Water had to be melted from snow and they struggled hard with temperamental paraffin stoves. The route to Camp II had again been blocked by heavy snow and it was imperative to breach a passage to the Base Camp for fresh supplies for both our camp and higher up. The venture to breach a way down began in earnest on April 23rd and would take up the next three days. The first day, led by Peterson and Isle, we forced four way in deep snow as far as the vertical ladder on the steep ice wall and this took us more than three hours. The path down the gallery seemed treacherous and we had to turn back. I had all my gear in my rucksack hoping to escape from Camp I and it felt indeed heavy when we climbed back to the Camp. The next day we went down past the gallery and two vertical ladders above a large crevasse where there used to be an aluminum bridge. The geography of the site had been much transformed by the heavy snow of the last six days and there was no sign of the bridge. I still had my heavy rucksack hoping to make the Base Camp and it was with utter depression that I turned back. The four-hour labour to the bridge had been a futile exercise and we had another two hours' climb back to our dreary Camp.

On the third day, we started down again about 10.30 a. m. and reached near the bridge in two hours following the path we had made the previous day. I was roped with Pasang Sherpa and we were descending down a snow slope when we sighted some climbers from the Base Camp who had struggled up to the other side of the bridge site. I was immensely relieved that the two
parties working on either and had re-opened the Ice Fall route, and in my excitement to wave to the colleagues lower down, I stepped on a soft snow, lost my balance and fell head-long in a side gully of hard ice. Pasang pulled the rope but a sharp ice edge had cut into my skull through three layers of the balaclava and my thick hair. I felt dizzy with blood streaming down my face. But there were many helpers around and in any case as the Base Camp route had been opened, there was no more up hill climb for me. Pasang took my rucksack and I was roped with Jon Teigland who led me to the Base Camp. I felt weak and giddy but the track was all the way down. We reached the Base Camp in about four hours. I went straight to the camp hospital, had three stitches to my head injury and slept there.

The weather had cleared a little but the news from the Advance Base was not encouraging. Many climbers were sick and dissension on the choice of the assault route was brewing. My wound had not yet healed when I had an unpleasant task to do. Bahuguna’s body that had been retrieved after the storm was brought down to the Base Camp on a sledge by a group of Sherpas and I accompanied Jimmy Roberts to Gorak Shep to cremate it. We cremated the frozen body at the northern end of the Gorak Shep lake on a huge pile of brushwood, fueled with kerosene. The body was frozen stiff and the melt-water hissed as the Sherpas poked the fire to burn it fully. My tent was close to the funeral pyre and the fire crackled late into the night. The wind moaned outside and I could vividly remember Harsha’s lively face when we had been briefly together at the Base Camp a fortnight earlier. We shared the same first name Harsha (Happiness) only that he as a Brahmin had retained its original Sanskrit form while I had adopted a colloquial version to reflect my tribal heritage. He lived at Rajpur Road in Dehra Dun, an area I knew well from my school days, and he had a great ambition to reach the summit of Everest since he had been up to 8,500 meters in an earlier attempt. Harsha had tried his best but Everest had taken toll of another determined mountaineer.

Next morning, we collected some ashes to be later picked up by a helicopter to be taken to Kathmandu and then India while
Jimmy Roberts engaged a Sherpa artist to carve Harsha Bahuguna's name on a nearby rock. I later climbed up to Kala Pathar (5545 m) ridge below Pum Ri between the Khumbu Glacier and the east Changri Glacier. It was a lonely climb burdened by thoughts of mountain tragedy and the frequent calls of the Tibetan snow cock (Tetraogallus tibetanus) lurking in the nearby crags awakened me from the reverie. The ground became more rocky as I climbed higher and in about an hour, I was on the famous vantage-point first visited by H. W. Tilman in November 1950. It was a clear sunny morning and the huge dome of Pumo Ri (7145 m) rose immediately to the north while there was an array of peaks all around. Beyond Lho La (6006 m) and framed between Khumbutse and the west shoulder of Everest, stood high Changtse (7550 m) a fine peak in Tibet and on whose slopes, British expeditions had camped on seven occasions during their pre-war Everest attempts. The rock strata on its face was remarkably horizontal in contrast to the contortions of the nearby Nepalese mountains and it held a broad ribbon of snow across its dark facade. The area around our Base Camp was an extensive pile of moraines that pressed the mass of snow and ice from the Ice Fall against the base of Nuptse. The west shoulder of Everest appeared as a false peak behind the northern flank of Nuptse and to its right stood high the summit of the Everest itself. (Pl. XLVIIa). The whole south-west face was plastered with snow and from its northern flank rose a small tuft of snow-drift like an incipient bonfire. The mighty peak looked remote and forbidding and on it, our expedition had already suffered a setback. But some of the members were still clinging on its face to do battle with it. The most impressive sight from my vantage-point on Kala Pathar was the needle point of Nuptse (7879 m) whose west face plunged down steeply for 2,300 meter, an abrupt truncation of a 12-kilometers long sharp ridge all the way from Peak 38 (7589 m) and Lhotse (8501 m) as if to yield passage south to the Khumbu Glacier. The peaks of Ama Dablam and Taboche confined the southern horizon while the vast surface of lower Khumbu Glacier pockmarked with banks of fresh snow, swept across the middle distance.

I then walked down from Kala Pathar taking a more direct
route to join the main track to the Base Camp. The atmosphere at the Base Camp now had become tense with the cancellation of the South Col route since the leaders had thought it proper to concentrate on the South West Face, the original objective of the expedition. Pierre Mazaeud (France), Carlo Maori (Italy), Michel and Yvette Vaucher (Switzerland) quit the expedition after much acrimonious debate. But there was still a chance on the mountain, with Camp VI having been just established by Don Whillans and Dougal Haston at over, 8,230 meter. I thought I could contribute little to the beleaguered expedition after my own traumatic experience at Camp I and told so to Jimmy Roberts. I left the expedition on May 1st with Ang Norbu of Lukla who had come up to the Base Camp with a load of fire-wood. We left about 9.30 a. m. after breakfast and reached Gorak Shep in two hours. Pairs of snow cocks sauntered on the nearby slope and the tailless pika scurried among boulders in the warm sun. The Sherpa artist had finished his job on the Bahuguna memorial and the ashes on the pyre had been blown away by the wind leaving only a dark burnt patch on the ground. In another two hours we were at Lobuje hut where we had lunch. After weeks among rocks, snow and ice, the first sight of blades of grass at Lobuje was a great excitement. I then came down the terminal moraine of the Khumbu Glacier and reached the first trees of dwarf junipers above Phalong Karpo and the tang of their resin was a sublime smell of the good earth. It was a delight walking among green grass and pink primulas along the left bank of the Lobuje Chubung and we reached Pheriche before 5 p. m. and stayed in Ang Mingma's house.

We departed Pheriche next morning, May 2nd, and on the way, violet and crocusses had come alive around Pangboche. The green of the pine and white trunks of birch along the Imja Khola and pink rhododendron near Tengboche added colour to the scene. The grounds and tea-house of Tengboche was bustling with life with numerous trekkers. On the way down to Phunki, we met a group of Japanese lady tourists visiting friends on the Pumo Ri expedition and I told them that two of the climbers were at the Tengboche tea-house suffering from snow
blindness and altitude sickness. I met Dawa Tenzing returning from Namche while I was climbing through the pine forest near Tashinga. He asked of the expedition progress on the mountain and opined that the weather this year had been unusually bad. We parted after a brief chat and I climbed on to Shyangboche past the fields of Khumjung. The Everest View Hotel was still under construction and Ang Kaji put up a tent for me on the hotel grounds. Most of the stone-work had been finished and work on the wooden furniture was in progress. The hotel dinner was a welcome change from the rigourious diet of the expedition. I left the hotel next morning and visited Sonam Girme’s house in Namche. Azaleas has become alive with colour on the slopes above Namche and potato had been planted in the fields. The frozen streamers of ice along the steep gullies on the Kwangde face had now melted into numerous waterfalls that cascaded down to the Bhote Kosi. It was nearly noon when I left Sonam’s house after a sumptuous meal. Dark clouds hung above the Dudh Kosi gorge and I descended to the river confluence. I then walked down the green forests along the Dudh Kosi and reached Lukla after an eventful five weeks in the mountain and here I met Takasi Miyahara of the Everest View Hotel and stayed in his camp.
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

ACROSS THE INUKHU AND HONGU

For dreadfulness nought can excel
The prospect of Bung from Gudel;
And words die away on the tongue
When we look back at Gudel from Bung.

—H. W. Tilman*

I had been with the International Everest Expedition for nearly five weeks. I took leave of the expedition after an harrowing experience in the Western Cwm and arrived at Lukla on 3rd May 1971 in three days from the Base Camp (5500 m). The fields were green with young buckwheat and on the hillsides were pink rhododendrons. The weather had turned warmer and dark clouds swirled up the Dudh Kosi valley bringing rain that frequently dislocated the air service. The Sherpa houses around the Lukla airstrip were crowded with numerous tourists waiting for the flight to Kathmandu. The prices of eggs, chicken, bread and even tea soared with each delay of flights and all vestiges of civility would be abandoned among the rushing passengers vying for the limited number of seats on the small aircraft that managed to land. The day I left Lukla on my trek eastwards, an aircraft landed at

Ridge above 3000m.
about 8 a. m. for a shuttle service but was stranded there till 3 p. m. owing to bad weather.

On May 4th, I walked down to a small hamlet south of the airstrip and had my morning meal at the house of my porter Ang Norbu. As I had not travelled much in the eastern hills, I engaged Ang Norbu as my guide and porter to Dharan. I had left most of my climbing gear at Lukla for onward air transportation to Kathmandu and travelled lightly. We started at about 11 a. m. from Ang Norbu's house under an uncertain sky. The path descended down a brushwood slope and joined the main road between Namche and Solu and Kathmandu. It traversed through pine and rhododendron forests on the steep east bank of the Dudh Kosi. After walking about an hour and crossing three streams, we reached Surke (2438 m) It is a Sherpa hamlet in a small clearing on the banks of the Surke Khola. We had tea at the house of Nyima Sundar who has accompanied J. D. A. Station on his numerous botanical excursions in Nepal.

South of Surke, the track climbed through a dense forest and we were soon caught in a heavy rain. We tried to take shelter under a large oak tree and here we met three porters carrying packets of noodles to Namche Bazar all the way from Kathmandu. After a brief halt we continued to climb in light rain and reached a ridge spur (3048 m). On the way down from the ridge, we overtook a pack of young dzos bought at Rs. 1,699 a pair that were being driven for sale to Rasuwa. The track turned east from the ridge at 2,890 meters altitude and two kilometers further was Puiyan (2773 m). The rain had ceased but the small Sherpa hamlet of Puiyan was a sad place as a recent hailstorm had badly damaged its barley crop. The hamlet looked poor with modest single-storey houses and the one where we stayed for the night had no carpets but only animal hides for flooring. The liberal use of bamboo for household utensils indicated that we were entering a wet temperate zone. For the evening, we procured rice of rough variety at Rs. 3 for two mana and two eggs for Rs. 1 and a skinny chicken for Rs. 12.
When we left Puiyan just after 9 a.m. the morning was clear and sunny. I had a good bath in the Polyang Khola after a long time while Ang Norbu dried our rain-soaked clothes on the boulders. We then turned south along a forested slope and reached Kharte Tham after a climb of 400 meters where there was a tea-shop run by a Khamba. We saw a large flock of sheep and goats form Aisalukharka in the rhododendron forest on the way to Kharte. We also met a policeman from Namche going down to Salleri in Solu, a journey of four days, to collect the monthly salary for the men at the Namche check-post. We reached Kharte (252 m) before noon and had lunch at the house of Sange Sherpa. The house was newly-built with a substantial balcony and the owner had taken full commercial advantage of its location at the junction of the road to Kathmandu and the main road east to Dingla. The latter road that passed across Salpa to Dingla and Ilam used to be much frequented in the past by Sherpas during their seasonal trade and work trips to Darjeeling. It was on the steep slope below Kharte that I had seen the long caravan of our expedition during the filming flight with the B. B. C. team on March 10th.

We left the main road to Jubing (1828 m), the northernmost Rai village in the Dudh Kosi valley and turned east through oak forest. On the eastern road, we met numerous porters carrying rice, lentil and eggs to the Saturday market at Namche. They were mostly Chhetris and Rais from Sotang, four days march from Namche and some even came from Irkhuwa valley another two day's east. Sotang (1676 m) is a large Rai village between the Inkhu and Hongu rivers with a weekly market on Wednesdays. The influx of tourists and flow of cash through trekking and mountaineering in recent years has however made Namche Bazar the focal-point of dhakres (load-carrier) of Solu and northern parts of Khotang and Bhojpur districts. Unlike in the old days when grain-carrier dhakres to Namche returned with Tibetan salt, they now return home with cash and travel down to the Tarai bazars of Katari, Beltar and Dharan to buy Indian salt during the winter. We had been travelling across the extensive mass of Himalayan migmatites between Tengboche and Ghat.
followed by various gneisses up to Puiyan. East of Kharte, the track now traversed narrow sections of mica-schists, calc-shists and quartzites in quick succession. We crossed a narrow ravine of the Khari Khola and climbed to Pangum where we spent the night. Pangum (2895 m) is a Sherpa village on the north slope of Pangu peak (3436 m) at the upper limit of cultivation in Khari Khola. They grow barley and potato and the cattle are taken to Dig Kharka at the headwaters of the Inukhu Khola during summer. There is an old *gomba* and also a school built by Sir Edmund Hillary.

It rained the whole night and when we started early next morning on May 6th, there was still heavy mist and brief showers. The track climbed above the village and the higher ground under rhododendron forest still held some patches of snow. It took nearly an hour to reach Satu La (3170 m) on a sharp ridge that forms the water divide between the Dudh Kosi to the west and the Inukhu Khola to the east. From the pass, we looked down into the deep gorge of the Inukhu Khola penetrating far to the north while the snow peaks around Nau Lekh (6357 m) were hidden from us by heavy clouds. Across the Inukhu river, a steep forested slope led up to another ridge that divided the waters of the Inukhu and the Hongu. The land between the Dudh Kosi and the Arun River is an area of steep slopes being the southern front of the main Himalayan massif capped by Thamserku (6623 m) and Chamlang (7319 m). It is drained by the Inukhu and Hongu rivers that plunge south through deep gorges to join the Dudh Kosi below Wapsa. The valleys are alternated by long south-trending ridges. The first ridge on which we stood at Satu La trends south from Kangtega (6808 m) to Peak 43 (6769 m) and Pangu (3421 m) between the Dudh Kosi and the Inukhu Khola. We later crossed the next ridge to the east which descends down Peak 41 (6654 m), Mera (6437 m) and Nau Lekh (6529 m) between the Inukhu and the Hongu Khola. The third high ridge lay further east between the Hongu Khola and the Arun River comes down from Chamlang (7318 m) and continues all the way down to the lower hills through Mayam Danda and Temke Danda and forms the boundary between Khotang and Bhojpur.
districts. It is a wild country of steep slopes and dense forests that penetrate deep north to an altitude of 4,500 meters in Inukhu valley and 4,400 meters in Hongu valley.

The area was visited by Oscar Houston and his party that made the first reconnaissance of the south side of Everest in November 1950. They came up from Dharan and trekked through Dhankuta, Phedi, Gudel, Bung and Pangum, a tortuous route I was about to follow in the reverse direction. The following Spring, K. Becker-Larsen passed the same route from Darjeeling to Namche Bazar and then crossed over Nangpa La (5776 m) to make a clandestine attempt on the Everest from the Tibetan side. The Inukhu-Hongu trail was traversed in summer 1951 by a British Everest reconnaissance team and later two of its members Eric Shipton and Edmund Hillary visited the passes on the north, east and west of the Hongu Glacier. In 1953, J. O. M. Roberts after helping the transportation of oxygen equipment to the British Everest expedition, visited the headwaters of the Inukhu and the Hongu and made the first ascent of Mera peak (6437 m).

The snow peaks whose glaciers sustain the foaming waters of the Inukhu were hidden behind dark clouds as I started walking down towards the gorge of the Inukhu Khola. The path first skirted eastwards below a 3,555 meter prominence and then reached a new Sherpa settlement at Bhasme (2773 m). We then walked across the wheat fields of Sibuje (2560 m) and the view from a rock promontary by the roadside revealed the deep gorge of the Inukhu at close quarters. Within the gaps in the rolling mist we could just make out Cherem (2500 m) the northern most village in Inukhu valley on the opposite slope. The track descended steeply below Sibuje through rhododendron and oak forest. It was a descent of more than 600 meters across narrow exposures of phyllites, quartzites and mica to the river which here flows at an altitude of 1,859 meters. The fast rushing river had carved the migmatite basement rock into a long chute. We balanced carefully across a newly-built log bridge and climbed to the other bank by a series of stone steps placed precariously on a steep rock face.
The path then ascended 300 meters through a dense forest to Gai Kharka (3133 m), a small hamlet recently established by the Sherpas of Khiraule. After another climb of 450 meters, we reached a pleasant meadow at Najing (2651 m) where there were some goths of Chhetris from Sotang. A narrow valley drained by the Cherem Khola to the north—descended from the Panch Pokhari ridge (4465 m) to join the Inukhu just above the bridge-site we had crossed. We continued climbing under dense rhododen-dron and oak forest and crossed the ridge at Sipki pass (3109 m) in the late afternoon. The ruggedness of the terrain may be guessed from the fact that the track after Pangum involved a climb of nearly a 300 meters to Satu La, a descent of 1,300 meters to Inukhu Khola and again an ascent of 1,250 meters to the ridge that formed a divide between the Inukhu and Hongu rivers. The track from the pass turned south through oak forest and here we heard the sharp call of the barking deer. We were caught in a heavy downpour on the way and we hurried downhill and found shelter in a goth at the edge of the forest. The rain slackened and we were on the trail again past a roadside chorten. After rounding a ridge, we saw below the road a gomba in a delightful setting surrounded by a circular row of trees. We had arrived at Khiraule (250 m) an island of Sherpa community in Rai territory. Khiraule seemed to be originally a monastic settlement and the people here still shaved their head and abstained from smoking. We walked passed the fields where barely was being harvested and stayed in a Sherpa house for the night.

On May 7th, we left Khiraule under a dull sky down the western slope of Buha Khola, a tributary of the Hongu Khola. We passed the potato fields of Khiraule and then an overgrazed forest that formed the boundary between the Sherpa settlement of Khiraule and the Rai village of Bung lower down. We came across a chautara on the path with a stone tablet inscribed with the donor’s name indicating that we were now beyond temperate heights and Lamaistic culture area. When we reached Bung after two hours, we were in no doubt that we had now entered the sub-tropical belt of Rais with tribal culture. Bung was a large village spread over a broad shelf on the west bank of the Hongu.
The houses were scattered among dry terrace fields that climbed from 1,370 meter to 1,860 meters. Most of the houses were single storeyed with roofs of woven bamboo mat and only a few were thatched. The inhabitants made liberal use of bamboo for building purposes and household utensils and the water containers were made from bamboo of varying sizes. Maize and millet were the principle crops and pigs and poultry roamed in the village streets. The inhabitants were all Rais of the Kulung tribe. Women wore nose-rings, ornaments of silver and necklaces of coins and coloured beads. (Pl. XLVIIla). We had our lunch at one of the Rai houses where dried pork and tongba (millet beer) was the main fare. In November 1950, H. W. Tilman who spent a night at Bung on his way to Everest base found no liquor in the village but acquired a goat for Rs. 12 only. The dry night at Bung inspired Tilman to concoct the following verse:

Hope thirstily rested on Bung
So richly redolent of rum;
But when we got there
The cupboard was bare,
Sapristi. No raksi. No chang.

We were more lucky and the beer was offered in a large bamboo flask and our host pulled out shafts of mountain bamboo from the mat-roof and fashioned the drinking pipe with few deft strokes of his khukri.

We had still a long distance to cover that day as my Sherpa guide Ang Norbu preferred to stay in a Sherpa hamlet further on than in the Rai villages on the way. We started from Bung about 11 a. m. following a trail amidst young millet plants. When I saw Gudel village across the Hongu river I was reminded of Tilman's another doggerel quoted at the beginning of this chapter. It took us nearly an hour to reach down to the river level (1310 m). The Hongu river was in full spate with snow-melt water and we crossed it by a bridge made of bamboo poles strapped together with creepers (Pl. XLVIIb). The foaming grey water surged through a deep rocky gorge that provided no space for cultivation and the
villages were perched on slopes high above the river level. The path beyond the bridge climbed steeply for 700 meters to the village of Gudel. We reached Gucel after two hours' climb and looked back towards the large village of Bung across the river with some relief. Gudel village was smaller than Bung but the houses with mat-roofs were similar and the fields were green with young millet. Hoe cultivation was much in evidence and the houses looked sparse compared to the solid stone and timber structure of the nearby Sherpas houses. I found that only one person from the village had been to the army and the basic source of livelihood of the people was dry crop farming and raising pigs. Some who had sheep joined the larger herds from Aisaluharka which they took to the pastures of Mera Kharka in upper Hongu. The people weaved clothes from the fibre of nettle and also collected wild herbs.

Their ubiquitous use of bamboo, cultivation by hoe, pig-rearing and liking for tongba reminded me of some population groups in Sikkim and Bhutan. We were now indeed in the realm of Kirant culture of the Rais which pervades the hills east of the Dudh Kosi. From Gudel, we could see the high fields of Pelmang and Chheskam clinging on steep slopes to the north and parts of Sotang down the Hongu valley to the south-east. All these villages including Bung and Gudel are inhabited by Rais of Kulung tribe one of whose ancestors, Chhemsi, son of Khap, according to local tradition first settled at Chheskam. Charles W. McDougal had made an intensive study of Kulung-Rai in this very area some years ago but Chuck has since become more of an expert on tigers of Chitwan rather than Rai anthropology. In course of his research, he found a high degree of local separatism and divergence of interest among Kulung-Rais along with increasing decentralisation of authority structure both due to the progressive fission of descent groups and introduction of local panchayats. Occupying a narrow eco-cultural belt between lamaiistic Sherpas to the north and west and Hinduistic Brahmins and Chhetris to the south, the tribal Kulung-Rais still subscribe to their traditional ritual practitioners which McDougal distinguishes as Nokcha (part-time priest) and Dhami shaman who is a diviner and spirit medium.
We had another bout of cool *tongba* at Gudel after the hard climb from the Hongu river and we heard the sounds of a *Dhami* drum echoing from the next village. The weather remained dull and we left Gudel by climbing to the new *chautara* above the village built recently at a cost of Rs. 115. We were soon overtaken by a brief shower as we walked along the north slope of the Lidung Khola that joins the Hongu below Gudel. We kept high above the stream and passed another Kulung village of Chuchulung (1737 m) and entered a pine forest. We had been travelling across phyllitic rock outcrops around Bung and Gudel but now an abrupt geological fault set us on gneissic rocks with a distinct banded structure. Six kilometres beyond Gudel we passed the hamlet of Konkhu (2682 m) in the middle of the forest inhabited by Sherpas. Although all the land in Hongu valley originally belonged to the Rai as a *kipat* or communal land those in the temperate belt above, 2,300 meters had been leased to the Sherpas. The Sherpas had built solid two-storey houses and grew wheat and potato and the prominent southern ridge above Nurkum (2743 m) was called Ghyang Kharka (3613 m) for its *gomba*. We reached Sorung (2468 m) about dusk and warmed ourselves beside the hearth of a Sherpa house where fire-logs were plentiful.

It was still a cloudy morning when we left Sorung the next day on May 8th. We left early because we had to cover that day about 20 kilometers to Phedi and that also across the high pass of Salpa Bhanjyang. The steep valley sides were covered with dense forest of pine and rhododendron while the sound of waterfalls filled the air. Migrant Sherpas had made new clearings for potato on narrow ledges along the south-facing slopes at Tiyu (2621 m) and Sanam (2834 m). We then passed three old rest-houses on the main trail beyond Sanam and came to the grassy banks of the Lidung Khola. We walked along the Lidung Khola under a pleasant forest for two kilometers and then turned south into a tributary steam. The crimson red flowers of *Rhododendron arboreum* was now replaced by the light pink of *Rhododendron ciliaturn* and the stream gurgled among moss-covered boulders. When we met a *Dhami* in the forest path attired in full regalia he seemed perfectly in place. He was dressed in white with a head-
dress adorned with kalij pheasant feathers, black bead stings around his neck and beat his drum while walking. He was accompanied by two novices and three girls who carried his paraphernalia on the way back from Salpa Pokhari. The sound of the drum echoed in the forest wilderness and I had a feeling that whatever the influence of higher religions, these rugged hills and people around would continue to throb with the pre-mordial sound of the dhyangro (one-faced) drum.

We left the stream at an altitude of 3,170 meters under birch trees and climbed on to a grassy slope to reach Salpa Bhanjyang (2358 m). There was a large chorten on the pass and a small trail forked-off to the north towards Salpa Pokhari (3444 m). The small pond of Salpa where fairs are held during the full moon of Baisakh and Janai Purne in Bhado was about two kilometers north-east of the pass. Pilgrims came from far to bathe here and dhamis congregated to propitiate their occult patrons. The Rai Dhami we had met on the forest path had returned early from Salpa Pokhari but we were to meet many more on the way.

At Salpa Bhanjyang I was standing at the watershed of the Dudh Kosi and the Arun River. The deep valley of Arun to the east was under a heavy cloud (Pl. XLIZa). Strong winds lapped against our faces and we descended south without making a detour to the sacred lake. There was another chorten and a mani wall east of the pass erected by the Sherpas from the nearby hamlets and we soon entered birch and rhododendron forest. We then traversed down the side of a forested ridge and had tea at a Sherpa house in a forest clearing above Chyaksila. It was a long down-hill path through a dense mixed forest and we met some goths of Chhetris from the lower villages. There were also some wooden benches for resting on the roadside carved with the name of the donors. After descending down for more than 760-meters from the pass, we followed the ridge further down passing successively through rhododendron, oak and Castanopsis forests. The forest became less dense and the soil had a reddish tinge indicating that we were now entering the tropical zone. We continued down the slippery red soil and reached Phedi village
(1676 m) at the confluence of the Irkhuwa Khola and the Sanu Khola about dusk. Phedi in Nepali means 'bottom' and it was indeed a long knee-jerking descent of 1,680 meters from the Salpa pass.

The houses of Phedi glowed with innumerable lamps and crowded with pilgrims on their way to Salpa Pokhari. It was with great difficulty that we found place in a Rai house. The houses here were thatched, bamboo was much in use for household utensils and water was carried in bamboo jars. The verandah of the houses were full of people who sang and danced in groups and there was brisk business in rakshi, beer and cigarettes. The pilgrim crowd was multi-ethnic made up of Rais, Chhetris and Brahmins and it was here that I first saw women Dhamis. The two elderly Dhami women were dressed in flowing robes and wore bead-strings and a head-dress of bird feathers. They chanted to the rhythm of their drums while attendants served them liquor in-between the break in the stanza or as they mopped the sweat off their adamantine faces. There were other groups too that kept alive the night with duet songs between young boys and girls and the songs they sang were not of Salpa or Mahadeva but of love and romance.
I had arrived at Phedi, 15 kilometers west of the Arun River after a week’s trek from the Everest base camp. My route lay mostly through the Sherpa country and later across the rugged hills inhabited by the Rais. At Phedi where I happened to reach about the time of Baisakh full moon, there was a large crowd of tribal Rais and as well as Brahmins and Chhetris preparing for their long climb to the sacred lake of Salpa. What I witnessed on that night of May 8th at Phedi in the form of Dhami and Phedang-ma rituals and secular songs, was a meeting of Hinduistic Khasa and tribal Kirant cultures in the context of a common hill ecology, Just as the Rais exhibited a veneer of Hinduism, the Dhamis were drawn from different castes. The incantations of the Dhami were beyond my comprehension but the secular songs seemed what Kaufmann has described as: “Nepalese folksongs, just like the people who sing them, represent a fusion of styles of the two bordering cultures; India contributes its complex sca-
les, its melodic and rhythmic pattern, and Tibet, its pentatonic scales, the sustained notes, and the strict duple (or common) meter of its folk music.”*

A long line of pilgrims was climbing towards Salpa Pokhari when I started down the Irkhuwa Khola the next morning, May 9th. I first crossed the Sanu Khola, then followed the north bank of the Irkhuwa Khola and crossed it where it takes a sharp southward turn. I passed through the villages of Bingma (1432 m) and Tyande (1341 m) downstream of the river and the houses were typical of the middle hills with thatch roof and mud-plastered walls. The vegetation was of sub-tropical variety with large shade trees along the roadside. Nearly 60 miles away from Namche Bazar, we had arrived at the warmer valleys inhabited by a mixed population of Rai, Brahmin, Chhetri and other occupational castes (Pl. XLIXb). We were now in Majh Kirant or the old hearland of Rai Kirant where are preserved the archaic Kiranti words khuwa or kosi for streams now in the form of suffix for river names.

In the past, East Nepal was the domain of Kiranti people composed of Mongoloid tribes and the so-called Kirant land was subdivided into western Khombuwan of Rais and eastern Limbuwan of Limbus with the Arun river as the boundary. According to the old Kirant legend the whole area was ruled by a confederation of ten Yakthumba chiefs with their center at Ambepojoma (Pheden fort) in Panchathar and the land between the Dudh Kosi and the Arun known as Majh Kirant or central Kirant was under Taklung Khewa Hang who built the Chamling-Chimling fort at Khotang. In the beginning of the 7th century A. D. the Kirant confederation defeated a certain chieftain Mao Rong Hang who had migrated from Assam and had occupied the Morang plains (said to have been named after him) and built his first fort at Rongli (King’s palace), a place east of Biratnagar now called Rangeli. Mao Rong Hang fled to Tibet and in due course established himself as the head of Kampa Dzong under the vassalage of the powerful Tibetan king Srong-Tsen-Gampo. He later in-

vaded the Kirant land under a large Tibetan force through Hatia, Topke Gola and Walungchung and after defeating the combined forces of Kirant chiefs, established himself as their overlord.

Mao Rong Hang ruled over a vast territory extending from Kampa Dzong to Morang with his summer capital at Radok in Tibet and winter capital at Sanguri above Dharan. His successors were later subdued by another chief from Tibet, Uba Hang (849–865 A.D.) and who left the legacy of Tong-sum-Tongnang or Trisala puja in Nepali, a triennial ceremony to commemorate his conquests that lasted for three years. Uba Hang was succeeded by his son Mabo Hang (865–880 A.D.). He shifted the capital from Chhempo Dzong in Ilam to Yashok Dzong in upper Tamur and was greatly respected as an incarnation of the Kiranti god Yuma Sam and recited the sacred Mundhum oracles about the creation of Universe and the existence of God. Soon after the death of Mabo Hang, local chieftains declared their independence and there ensued a period of struggle for power. Shrijunga Hang (880–915 A.D.), a feudal chief of Yangrup succeeded in subduing the various tribal chiefs and established himself as their overlord. He built forts at Phedap and Chainpur and is credited with the introduction of Kirant script which he is said to have acquired from a cave below Phoktang Lungma, one of the Kangchenjunga peaks, under the inspiration of Nisam Mang the goddess of learning.

By the close of the 16th century, the center of power had shifted to Bijaypur near Dharan in the Morang plain and to whose rulers the numerous Kirant chiefs held allegiance while retaining their local autonomy. In 1770, the rising Gorkhali power of central Nepal invaded the Tamba Kosi and in 1773 captured Bhojpur in collusion with a Brahmin priest of Majh Kirat chief Karna Sen. Struggles between the Gorkhali and Limbu forces were hard fought around Dingla and Chainpur on the banks of the Arun. A Kirant manuscript records a duel between a Gorkhali commander Raghu Rana and Limbu commander Kangso Rey near Chainpur with the understanding that the army of the vanquished would have to follow the victor. With their unarmed soldiers watching, the two commanders fought from morning till
the afternoon of 25 Baisakh 1931 (1774 A. D.) and finally Raghu Rana was killed in the duel. The Gorkhali soldiers who had hidden their arms nearby then fell upon the Limbu commander and killed him but the Limbu force later annihilated the Gorkhalis. However the final outcome of war was not decided in such local encounters of individual bravery but in the wider diplomacy of winning over the Kirant chiefs by the Gorkhali king's promise of retaining their autonomy of kipat (tribal) land after the capture of Bijaypur. In August 1774, the Gorkhali commanders and Kirant ministers of Bijaypur entered into an agreement by which the latter recognized the Gorkhali king as their overlord while retaining their right of self-government for their districts. Since the Gorkhali occupation in the last quarter of the 18th century, the Kirant land has been receiving immigrants from many quarters, These were mainly Bhotias and Sherpas from the north, Lepchas from the east and a large number of Chhetris and Brahmins along with Magars and Gurungs from the west and south. The low Irkuwa valley I was travelling through now had more villages of Hindu immigrants than native Rais.

The Irkuwa Khola flowed east through a low valley between Sawane Danda (3089 m) to the north and Chhange Danda (2498 m) to the south. Most of the villages were located on spur slopes about 300 meters above the river and we travelled through a warm tropical valley. We walked 12 kilometers east from Phedi along the south bank of the Irkuwa and came to a bridge over Lungkuwa stream below Dangmaya village. The bridge site known as Lamsangu (792 m) had a shop and we had our lunch there. The track beyond Lamsangu climbed through sub-tropical forest and fields to a height of 1,188 meters and then descended steeply into a north flowing stream (640 m). The path then rose steeply for 300 meters to a ridge between the Irkuwa and Chirkhuwa streams. We settled for the night at Khencha (1190 m) in a Brahmin house where both the mother and daughter were widows. Khencha, one of the hamlets of Danda Gaon, provided a good view towards the Arun valley and Dingla ridge (1517 m) to the east.

Next morning, May 10th, we left early from Khenach
and the path led down a dry slope of red soils under *sal* forest. We reached in two hours a wooden bridge over the Chirkhuwa Khola where we stopped for a good bath and meal at a roadside inn. While I was washing my clothes on the river bank, a procession crossed the bridge. It was led by a young man in heaps of garlands, his forehead smeared red with vermilion. He was on horse-back with a police escort leading a spare horse and followed by a group of men. Impressed with his retinue, I waved my hand and the young man responded and entered the inn where he had already ordered the meal for his party. I came back from the river to another inn where my porter Ang Norbu had cooked our food with the delicious fish of the Chirkhuwa. When I made enquiries about the important person, the innkeeper replied proudly that the young man by the name Dambar Bahadur Basnet was from his village Agrakhe in lower Irkhuwa and was proceeding to Kathmandu as he had been appointed Assistant Minister recently. I had seen him in Kathmandu at the Rastriya Panchayat but I had not bothered about radio news since I had been with the Everest expedition. After the meal I went over to congratulate him. He was surprised at my introduction since he had taken me, with my stubby beard, snow-scorched face and expedition gear as a Japanese climber. We shook hands and he offered me the spare horse for my journey to Khandbari. I declined saying that I was well-conditioned for walking on foot since leaving Khumbu and liked it better that way. We parted at Chirkhuwa, he climbing south to Bhojpur with a large following and I with Ang Norbu turning east towards the Arun.

We went down the right bank of the Chirkhuwa in sweltering heat under the *sal* trees. After descending a defile of rounded boulders on the cliff face of a river terrace, we at last reached the bank of the Arun River at Kartike Ghat, just 305 meters above the sea level (Pl. La). The river was nearly 50 meters wide and the current was swift. The Arun or the 'Orient' is a great river that combines the waters of Bhong Chu and Yaru Chu in Tibet and has a total catchment area of 36,533 square kilometers. It drains the plains of Dingri and Khamba in Tibet and enters Nepal at Kimathangka through a narrow gorge that continues to its
confluence with the Irhuwa. Its upper gorge section in Tibet between Teng and Kimathanka was first explored by C. J. Morris after the Everest expedition in June 1922. Although the area he visited was north of Popti La on the main Himalayan range, he found luxuriant vegetation supported by heavy rainfall that penetrated far to the north through the gorge.* The river dropped 1,200 meters between Teng and Kimathanka in a distance of 32 kilometers and he also met some Rai shepherds from Nepal grazing their animals in Tibet. Later, L. R. Wager, who accompanied the 1933 Mount Everest expedition developed his major thesis on the genesis of the Himalayan rivers after observing the physical features in the upper Arun.* Geologists till then believed that the major rivers had cut back headwards through the Himalaya and captured the Tibetan rivers. Wager presented the hypothesis of antecedent drainage which meant that the course of the Arun river pre-dated the rise of the Himalaya and had maintained its course by cutting deeper against the gradual uplift of the mountain. He also opined that the removal of vast quantities of rock material by the rivers to form deep valleys such as that of the Arun and Tista had produced local uplift due to reduction of the load on the crust and caused upwarping during the period of intense erosion to maintain approximate isostatic balance.

My ruminations on the upper reaches of Arun and its journey across a gigantic mountain massif was cut short by the call of Ang Norbu for the unpleasant task of crossing the river by a canoe. It was a long dug-out carved out of a tree trunk and two boatmen sat with short wooden oars on either end. We crouched in the middle with our baggage. I carassed the water and found it pleasantly cold and the boat was swept downstream by its strong current. The boatmen worked their oars frantically and we were delivered on the other bank, 200 meters below where


we had entered the river. I paid the boatmen and started walking towards Khandbari. We followed the Arun downstream along its left bank across sharp edges of granitic gneisses eroded by the high waters of the Arun. On the way, we met many porters returning from Dharan with heavy loads of salt. We then crossed the Chyawa Khola through a dense sal forest and rested beside the hamlet of Chyawa Bensi. We continued south along the left bank of the Arun now against phyllitic outcrops and tropical greenery and on the road was a long line of men with heavy loads. They were of all castes, Chhetri, Brahmin, Kami, Rai and Gurung, who had gone down to Dharan with ghiu and medicinal herbs in exchange for salt. We then left the main trail, climbed eastwards up the fields of Piple and reached Khandbari, a small town on a north-south ride between the Arun and the Sabhaya Khola. Khandbari (1068 m), the headquarters of Sankhuwa-Sabha district had only a few government offices as some offices including the wireless station were still claimed by the more prosperous nearby town of Chainpur. There were about a hundred houses at Khandbari and a few shops and although the name of the place is said to have been derived from a pond where the Gorkhalis washed their khando (sword) after a decisive battle with the Sikkimese in the 18th century, the town faced an acute problem of drinking water. Prior to the designation of the place as a district headquarters, its importance lay as a staging-point on the main north-south trade route. Kimathangka on the Tibetan border is about six days' march through a country of steep slopes.

I left Khandbari the following day on May 11th, taking the main road south to Dhankuta. It was a gentle descent through maize and millet fields along a ridge that straddled south between the Arun and the Sabhaya Khola. The slope ended abruptly near Sati Ghat (487 m) where a seven kilometers long river terrace extended southwards. The more extensive upper terrace of Kumal Gaon lies 180 meters above the Arun and is nearly two kilometers in width. The lower terrace with the village of Tumlingtar is 390 meters above sea level and is a narrow strip extending to the bench of Bohra Gaon overlooking the confluence of the Arun
and the Sabhaya Khola (268 m). The extensive river terrace complex of Kumal Gaon, Tumlingtar and Bohra Goan is an impressive geomorphological feature amidst the maze of hills and sweeping ridges. The climate of Tumlingtar plain is distinctly hot with highly leached red soils owing to its low elevation. Similar to the people residing in other river terraces in the hills (Sallyantar, Batar and Chaur Jahari) the inhabitants of Tumlingtar are mainly Kumals (potters) who grow dry crops like black lentil and sesamum, make earthen pots from clay and work as ferry-men. At the time of my visit, an airfield was under construction near Kumal Gaon that was sure to change the economic activity of this desolate and bare plain.

We travelled south along the hot plain seeking shelter under occasional shade of simal trees and then descended east below Tumlingtar and forded the Sabhaya Khola. The track continued south along a narrow ledge and again reached the eastern bank of the Arun. Below Patighar (330 m) where there was a ferry across the Arun, the havoc of recent heavy thunderstorm was clearly evident in the sand-covered path strewn with torn tree trunks and carcasses of dead cattle over which vultures fought each other. On our right, the Arun river flowed south roaring across short rapids only to sink silent into dark ominous whirl pools. The road sometime came close to the river bank and at other times climbed high along narrow ledges carved across rocky cliffs of phyllite above the river.

We were on the main road to Dhankuta and Dharan bazar and we met many travellers on the way. They carried heavy loads of salt, kerosene, cotton clothes and other manufactured goods in bamboo baskets that unlike the oval ones common in western hills, were rectangular with a narrow base and flared upper part. Another interesting feature was the wooden stick (tekan) they carried with a small T that fitted in a wooden groove at the bottom of the basket. The heavily laden traveller would place the stick under the basket as one of the load balancing tripods along with the two feet set apart and rest anywhere on the road. This ingenious method of resting on the path perhaps explained for the
low frequency of shaded chautaras on the main trails of the eastern hills.

In the afternoon, dark clouds overwhelmed us and it began to drizzle. We were walking along the sandy banks of the Arun river close to a forested section of a hill face. We heard a hissing sound and as it came closer we saw a dry gully above our left suddenly fill with the dark brown front of a flash flood that had come plunging from high above. We just managed to run clear of the sandy beach when the flash flood rushed to join the Arun like a furious brown serpent sweeping with great force, logs, boulders and anything that lay on its way. Our own foot-prints on the sand of a few minutes before were now in the thick of a swirling flood. We had a narrow escape and we now moved in haste, watchful of such sudden flash floods. We reached the banks of the Piliuwa Khola near its confluence with the Arun and found that the stream was a roaring mass of brown flood water. There was no bridge across it and numerous travellers were stranded on its either bank. We too waited in a thatched hut on its right bank. As the rain ceased, the water level of the Piliuwa also declined slowly and after an hour's waiting, some enterprising travellers forded in waist-high water. Then more took to the water, groups joining hands and supporting each other against the strong current. We also began the crossing and because of the muddy water one could just shuffle ones feet against shifting sands and rough boulders while pebbles and twigs carried by the swift under-current hit out legs. I and Ang Norbu held on strong and managed to pull ourselves safely on the other bank. We were wet, tired and shaken but since there were no villages nearby we had to continue walking. The weather had now cleared and it was nearly dark. We slogged on along the eastern cliff bank of the Arun and were relieved to find that the Khenwa Khola, another stream across the path, was not in flood and we forded it easily. We reached the small hamlet of Kyaun (405 m) around 7 p. m. just after the confluence of the Khenwa Khola with the Arun and found shelter in a Newar farm house. The place was hot but later the cool breeze from the Arun wafted on the balcony from where I watched the full moon rise above Mude Danda (2260 m) to the south.
Next morning, May 12th, we started early from Kyaun as it was a long climb to Pakhrribas on way to Dhankuta. Three kilometers below Kyaun, we walked under the cables of an abortive cable-car project with its car stuck suspended high up above the Arun at Leguwa Ghat (274 m). We then crossed the sandy flats of the Leguwa Khola, an eastern tributary of the Arun. There was a pleasant chautara with a temple and huge shade trees near the river confluence. We rested briefly and continued south along the east bank of the Arun. Another tributary stream, the Mangma, joined the Arun six kilometers below Leguwa, where we left the Arun to begin the long climb south of the Mangma Khola. The lower slopes were hot and bare and at Archang (853m) was a large pine forest. The track continued south through the pine forest devoid of undergrowth or spirng on to Ghorle Pokhari (1310 m). The noon air was hot and we passed heavily laden men breathing hard. Some of them would plant their stick support under the basket, pull the head strap down to the breast, blow a short whistle and mop beads of sweat off their faces with a ragged cap. It became cooler as we ascended higher towards Pakhrribas (1710 m), a village on a grassy saddle. The track from Pakhrribas led south-east skirting the upper amphitheatre of the Muga Khola. The path had been roughly levelled as the Dhankuta district panchayat had a few years ago introduced a jeep on the easy stretch between Pakhrribas and Dhankuta bazar,. On the left of the track above was Phangduwa ridge (2041 m) on whose south slopes, a British team had recently selected the site for an agricultural extension farm. Below the road on our right were some substantial country houses with balcony and corrugated sheet roofs belonging to the rich who owned land in the Morang plain.

After walking six kilometers through Alnus forest and bushes of ghengaru (Cretaegus crenulata), we reached the eastern lip of the Muga watershed. The name Muga is probably derived from coral beads that are said to be found in the ancient graves around Dhankuta and are much sought after by certain Assam hill people as an ancestral relic. On a narrow ridge between the Muga Khola and the Nibuwa Khola straddled the new settlement of Hile (1920 m) with a dozen new houses and a gomba at its sou-
thern end. The houses belonged to recent Bhotia migrants from Walungchung and they seemed to be doing prosperous business at the place that lay at the junction of routes from Dhankuta, Khandbari, Terhathum and Taplejung. Hile has a lively weekly hat (market) on Thursdays and the eating-houses had the best selections I had seen so far on the trip. The meat variety ranged from that of pork, mutton, chicken to buffalo and the wine list included arak, chang, tongba (millet beer), distillery-branded bottles of spirit and even Tiger beer in cans from Malaysia that had found its way up from the British cantonment at Dharan. After the long march, we rested quite a while at an inn, tempted both by the wide choice of food and drink as well as the relief of knowing that the last lap to Dhankuta was an easy downhill walk. We left Hile after 6 p.m. and ambled down the wide road in the dusk. It was nearly dark when we reached the northern part of the town and settled in the first available house.

The following morning, May 13th, I made a late start both because Dharan was not far and being a Thursday I wanted to visit the market at Dhankuta. We first came down past the old governor’s house, a large white stucco building at the edge of a lovely grove of pine trees. The pine forest and the governor’s house were a legacy of the nineteenth century when Dhankuta was the main center of administration for east Nepal with successive Rana generals as the governor. Between the pine grove and main bazar was a series of massive chautaras under the shade of giant Ficus religiosa trees where groups of travellers cooked their morning meal. We descended to the site of the Thursday market near Kopche Bazar east of the town. The market was not crowded as peddlers and shoppers from long distances had not yet arrived. But the few things on display on the open ground provided a fair sample of wares that were sold at the market. These included ginger, tobacco, khukuri, metal ware of fine workmanship, pigs, varieties of local vegetables, grains and cheap manufactured articles such as bangles, combs, thread and coloured glass beads and bangles. Weekly fairs are a characteristic feature of the eastern hills and Tarai and their vitality has not been affected by the growth of new commercial towns. The weekly market is not
only a place of exchange for local and imported products but also a meeting place of different people. At Bihibare Hat (Thursday market) of Dhankuta, the crowd ranged from peddlers from Tarai to Nepali officials from Dhankuta and Rai, Limbu, Chhetri, Brahmin, Magar, Newar, Kami, Damai and Sarki from the neighbouring villages. The impress of the Kirantis at the market was however much in evidence with the screeching noise of piglets in bamboo baskets displayed conspicuously for sale.

From the hat, we turned to Kopche bazar, the present commercial center and then came to the main town past the old parade ground. Dhankuta town straddles a narrow ridge with two rows of houses on either side of the stone-paved street (Pl. XXIIa). The white-washed houses with black doors and window frames and balconies with flower-pots provided a picturesque setting against the 100-year old pine grove above the town. However, most of the ground-floor rooms with cupboards were bare of merchandise which indicated that the town had seen better commercial days in the past. The town houses on the main street were now being used mostly for residential purposes and another new source of income was the rent for the proliferating government offices. If the rapid growth of nearby Dharan as a trade and industrial center had sapped the commercial vitality of Dhankuta (1128 m), the expansion of administrative and development services and a projected road-link with Dharan held a certain hope of revival for the old town.

We walked down the main street past the jail house and the hospital. The town was out of sight as we passed the Ghumaune Chautara. The track descended down a dry slope with wild growth of Anona squamosa (sharipha) and cactus and once past the hamlets of Pelepang (823 m) and Tekunala (670 m), the descent to the Dhankuta Khola was down a steep slope of crystalline schists. We met porters carrying enormous coils of plastic pipes and long steel trusses for the Pakhribas agricultural farm and the ingenious way they maneuvered the unwieldy loads across the steep winding path was a sight to marvel. On the road-side squated women selling cigarettes they made on the spot by wra-
pping some tobacco in small paper cones. These were bought by the hard-sweating porters for whom even the biri was an expensive luxury. It was nearly noon when we reached Mulghat (305 m) on the north bank of the Tamur river. The air was oppressively hot and we crossed the steel suspension bridge over the Tamur and turned west along the south bank of the river as far as Leuti (274 m). The path passed across Shorea robusta and Acacia catechu stands and we were off-season both for the famous Dhankutu oranges and the delicious sugar-cane of Leuti.

We left the Tamur river at Leuti and turned south into the valley of Leuti Khola. The stream was small but turbulent and we had to keep high on its right bank under a dense forest. We forded the Leuti Khola to the south side near its confluence with the Sisneri Khola and rested in a tea-shop (425 m). It was a long and tiring climb from the Sisneri Khola to Sanguri Danda, the last ridge on our journey. The first 150 meters was a steep ascent through a sal forest and then the track continued to rise another 450 meters across the dry fields of Dharapani village. The last 300 meters was through a rhododendron forest and on the way we met some Bhotia traders with salt and grain returning north to their home in Walungchung. The final lap to the Sanguri pass was along a pleasant glade of grass and the few tea-houses on the pass were crowded with tired travellers. If the approach to the pass from the Leuti Khola involved a climb of over 900 meters, there was yet another steeper descent of about the same extent to Dharan bazar.

It was past 4 p.m. and our sweating body after the sweltering heat of Mulghat and the long ascent across the Dharapani ridge was now pleasantly exposed to the cold breeze on the Sanguri Bhanjyang (1295 m). We hastened down the pass balancing our tired legs over piles of sharp quartzite pebbles. After a descent of a 300 meters, coloured quartzites gave way to a steep section of phyllites below Chyuribas (1066 m). The path continued down a sharp descent to a boulder-strewn stream and then across an old gravel fan to the banks of the Sardu Khola. Dharan town was another four kilometers south and we passed a long row of shops aligning the main road. At Dharan, we were amidst
electricity, buses, lorries, basket-laden hillmen and peddlers from the plain and the blare of the movie theatre.

Dharan Bazar (427 m) on a sloping alluvial fan has grown as a break-of-bulk commercial center where basket-laden men from the hills converge at the northern end of a vehicular road. The town has expanded greatly since the last two decades. In 1952, it had a total population of 4,401 and by 1971 the population had increased five-fold to 20,503. However, the locality is not an entirely new town grown out of wilderness. It had its heyday in the past when the Kirants held sway over the eastern hills and the Morang plain. Morang was ruled by Sangla Ing in the beginning of the 15th century and one of his descendants Bijay Narayan Rai (1584–1609) established on the hillock (487 m) overlooking Dharan, his capital in 1584 A. D. and named it Bijaypur (city of victory). According to the Kirant Vamsavali, he was instigated to select the site by his friend Murey Hang, the Limbu chief of Phedap who later became his chief minister. The capital was conquered by Lohang Sen, ruler of Makwanpur, in 1609 and the same king is said to have built the Varah temple at Chatra on the banks of the Kosi. Kamadatta Sen (1761–1769), a descendant of Lohang Sen was murdered and succeeded by Buddhi Karna Rai in 1769 who in turn was defeated by the Gorkhalis on 17th July 1774 and the town was occupied. Buddhi Karna Rai was tortured to death in 1777 and his burial place at Bijaypur, a simple shrine known as Burha Subba (god king), is now a place of worship.

Late on the evening of May 13th, I left Dharan by bus for Biratnagar. The stupendous mountains and the steep hill trails were behind us and shafts of light from the bus window flitted past a vast expanse of level fields of paddy and jute.
CHAPTER TWENTY

EAST OF KATHMANDU

I brought you from Upajong to Champajong in Tibet: on your journey I became your leader. I conquered all the forts for you and fixed up the boundary on the plain country. Through my power, I did whatever I thought and I can do things what I think.

–Oracle of Mabo Hang*

In January 1967, I made a 480 kilometers aerial flight west of Kathmandu to the banks of the Mahakali river (Chap. I). I wished to turn east for a complimentary trip to the Mechi river and the opportunity came my way in May 1967 when I was deputed on an inspection tour of colleges at Bhadrapur and Ilam. I and Batuk Rajbhandary of College of Education left Kathmandu on 3rd May 1967 by air. We were deprived of the Himalayan views during the entire 500 kilometers flight by a thick haze typical during the pre-monsoon hot season. We had to content ourselves by peering down over the hills of lesser prominence and the dry Tarai plain.

We first crossed over the steep Mahabharat Lekh south-east of Phulchoki (2765 m) and as we charted our way eastwards

* I. S. Chemjong, History and Culture of the Kirat People. Phidim, 1967.
after the ridge of Hariharpur, we lost sight of the gorge of the Bagmati river. We passed in succession the inner valleys of Marin Dun, Kamla Khonch, Trijuga Khonch on our left and the Tarai plain of Sarlahi, Mahotari, Dhanusa, Sirha and Saptari to the right. The plain devoid of crops was a vast brown expanse interspersed by numerous sandy river-beds and the monotony was broken only by the clumps of trees and some ponds near the villages. When we crossed the broad sand-banks of the Kosi river under low clouds, the landscape became greener with clumps of bamboo and mango groves. Biratnagar appeared as a sprawling complex of concrete buildings with its two tentacles; one extended south to Jogbani and another reaching out for Dubahi in the north. We halted briefly at Biratnagar and the heat was intense.

The journey from Biratnagar to Chandragarhi took less than half-an hour and the aerial view of the Tarai plain of Morang and Jhapa was revealing. The Tarai strip of 32 x 96 kilometers offered an over-all impression of three belts: a stretch of continuous farm land in the south, patches of farm among forests in the central belt, and a green belt of sal forest to the northern foothills. This zoning of land use was indicative of the progressive settlement from the south and if one realises that the official settlement scheme commenced 50 years ago in Morang and much later in Jhapa, the depletion of forests for farms has been indeed fast. We touched down at Chandragarhi (117 m), the headquarters of Jhapa district. It lies about seven kilometers west of the Mechi river that forms the Nepal-India boundary. The air smelled fresh with the first taste of the pre-monsoon showers.

While at Chandragarhi in the south-east corner of Nepal, my thoughts returned to Kathmandu in the heart of the country and Mahendranagar at the other extreme. The dichotomy between the metropolitan capital and far-flung places was obvious enough. But the contrasts between distal places such as Jhapa and Kanchanpur seemed no less significant. Jhapa and Kanchanpur are both Tarai districts over 800 kilometers apart and exhibit how geographic distance create regional differences. Topographically, the level plain of Jhapa is 150 meters lower than that of Kanchanpur and
18. ILAM & JHAPA
Ridge over 3000 meters

Author's route

Foot hills
climatically, the former receives twice as much rain (2133 mm) as the later district. The differences are significantly sharp in terms of population. According to the Census of Population of 1961, the density of population in Jhapa was 80 persons per square kilometers while in Kanchanpur it was only 12 persons per square kilometers. Even more striking was the percentile increase in population over the last decade (1952/54-1961): 33 per cent in Jhapa and a mere 6.3 per cent in Kanchapur.

In 1961, Jhapa district with a total population of 119,700 represented speakers of more than 27 languages and dialects, derived from Indo-Aryan, Tibeto-Burman and Munda families. The important languages according to the number of speakers then were Rajbanshi or Koch, Nepali, Satar, Dhimal, Mech and Danuwar. The immense variety of languages indicates that Jhapa has been a much sought-after place for refugees in search of land from diverse sources. The single largest group in the district are Rajbanshi or Koch people subdivided into Tajpuria from Tejpur (Assam) and Bonga from Bengal. According to Kirat Janakriti by S. K. Chatterjee, the Koch people once ruled over a large territory in north-eastern India. In the beginning of the 15th century, Haria Koch rose into eminence by conquering other petty chiefs and created a Koch kingdom made up of Assam and north Bengal with his capital at Gowelpara. His son Bishu Koch (1496-1540) later adopted Hinduism and expelled Muslim invaders from Assam. Of the three sons of Bishu Koch, the eldest son Nara Narayan succeeded his father as the ruler of the extended Assam, the second son Chilla Rai founded Koch Bihar and the youngest, Narsing migrated to Bhutan duars and converted to Buddhism. It was during the reign of Nara Narayan that a large number of Koch people converted themselves to Hinduism and forsook their tribal name and adopted Rajbanshi as a group name. Some came under the influence of Mohammedan proselytisation and there ensued a phase of conflict among the Koch people on religious basis in which the Muslim Rajbanshis prevailed and destroyed the kingdom of the Hindu Rajbanshis. The Rajbanshis of Jhapa are said to be the descendents of those who fled to Assam and north Bengal during the early 17th century. They live in compact villages and represent both Hindu and Mus-
lim religions and those still following their traditional tribal cult are called Koch. Another large population group of Jhapa is Satar who have migrated from Santhal Pargana in India and practice shifting cultivation in the forest land. Both Satar and Mech, another small tribe of shifting cultivators, have experienced a great shrinkage in their economic space due to the large-scale settlement of Limbu, Brahmin and other people from the hills.

We stayed at Chandragarhi (114 m) the headquarters of Jhapa district since 1951. A number of government offices were still housed in the initial timber houses while there was brisk building activity in the new town. We later visited Bhadrapur, about five kilometers from Chandragarhi on the right bank of the Mechi river. Bhadrapur was a commercial town where most of the large business houses and rice mills were owned by Marwaris. The workers in the rice and oil mills were also mainly Indians who commuted daily across the border by fording or ferrying across the Mechi river. The town was the main outlet of the area's two chief crops, rice and jute. Over 45,000 metric tons of rice are exported annually from Bhadrapur. The college run during the evening in a local high school building was on the west bank of the Mechi and from its verandah, we could see the trijunction boundary pillar (Nepal-Bengal-Bihar) across the river and the trains puffing past the Galgalia station.

On 4th May, we made a round of the countryside. The rural population around and south of Chandragarhi was mainly of Rajbanshi, Satar, Dhimal and Mech, each with their own stockaded villages. The hill migrants were settled mainly along the foot hills. Budhabare (Wednesday) and Sanischare (Saturday) named after the day of weekly fair and two important entry-points to the hills north of Chandragarhi, have greatly expanded since the large-scale settlement by hill people. On our way to Budhabare 18 kilometers from Chandragarhi, we passed through a whole sequence of change in landscape: extensive paddy fields, fields interspersed with dense sal forest and new clearings with timber huts under open forest. Budhbar, made up of entirely Pahari population, was the first village panchayat where the local unit was authorised to collect land taxes to be apportioned at the
We then drove to Naksalband about five kilometers southeast of Budhbare. We entered a dense sal forest and visited a two-year old clearing made by 36 families of Nepalese-origin from Machina in Burma. They explained that nationalism had impelled them to leave Burma and return to Nepal. They had been given two to four bighas of land according to the size of the family. It was however interesting to learn that they were divided in two contending groups, one favouring individual and the other communal farming of the land. The settlers from Burma at least had simple huts and fields to call their own (Pl. XXIIb). Nearby, the plight of a larger group of refugees from Assam was pathetic. They had arrived here only recently after having been ejected forcibly from their new homes in Damak (Morang) by a private party who had turned the land cleared by them into a private tea estate. The Assam refugees had small shelters of branches and leaves and they encroached on the forest to plant their first maize crop. Diverse were the sources of new settlers in Jhapa including separate colonies for the army ex-servicemen. Apart from the influx of migrants from the nearby hills due to over-population, there were also land investors from Darjeeling, Sikkim, Bhutan and Assam. The heavy encroachment and depletion of forests was a stark reality and if the present tempo of forest clearing for farms and logging for export continues, and the signs are one of acceleration, the fine forests have a bleak future indeed.

On 5th May, we drove from Chandragarhi 18 kilometers north to Sanischare (149 m) a small bazar of timber houses near the foothills. There was a 45-kilometers jeepable road to Ilam Bazar usable during the dry season. We followed a tributary of the Tantin Khola towards the north and one the way, saw many Limbus from Panchthar and Taplejung laden with potatoes and chicken on way to the Saturday market at Sanischare. We crossed the Chure range at Mainachuli pass (551 m) and descended into the small valleys of Garuwa and Lodiya in succession. The
hills were under dense forest cover and the moist climate was clearly evident from the profusion of bamboos and thick undergrowth. Immediately after fording the Lodiya Khola, we reached Soktim where there was a 72-hectare tea plantation of tropical variety. There were plans for extending the tea estate down to the Lodiya river bank and the factory was being newly-equipped. We continued uphill through tropical forests and reached Malbase (914 m) from where we had the first glimpse of Ilam Bazar on the south slopes of a ridge. On the nearby ridge of Rungapani, we saw long prayer flags fluttering in the air and I guessed the inhabitants were Buddhist Tamangs or Lepchas.

We left the tea-shop at Malbase and drove down a winding path. The jeep track was not only narrow but had steep gradients and sharp turns that involved reversing twice at places. We descended down the treacherous path to the Mai Khola and crossed it by a bridge of short span. The river crossing was at an elevation of 400 meters and Ilam was another seven kilometers uphill climb. The track climbed up by long turns and twists and forests gave way to fields of maize and millet. Half-way up at Gola Kharka, a group of boys gave chase to our jeep and I thought they were returning home from school. When we stopped at a tea-shop and talked to the youngsters I realised that they belonged to a juvenile gang of road labourers who could not afford to go to school. Although Ilam district, much influenced by neighbouring Darjeeling, boasted of 50 primary schools and a comparatively high literacy rate, it was sad to realise that large sections of society were still deprived of education due to poverty. We drove on uphill and reached Ilam Bazar about dusk.

The area corresponding to the present Ilam district on the south slopes of the Mahabharat Lekh is said to be the home of Lepchas, a forest tribe that still inhabit parts of far eastern Nepal and Sikkim. During the ninth century, the territory was conquered by Uba Hang (849–865), a powerful king who ruled the Kirant land including parts of southern Tibet. He built a large fort called Chhempo Dzong in Ilam and it is said that his missionary zeal for revival of Kirant religion and culture forced Buddhist Lepchas to migrate to Sikkim and Bhutan while another tribe
of Monpas went further east and settled in Towang (N.E.F.A.). Ilam remained long under the suzerainty of Limbu chiefs even after Uba Hang’s son Mabo Hang (865-880) shifted the capital from Chhempo Dzong north to Yashok Dzong. Later in the 18th century, Ilam came under the rule of Sikkim which also held sway on the Limbuwan territory east of the Tamur river. When Bijayapur fell to the Gorkhali forces in 1774, many hill Kirant chiefs also surrendered to the overlordship of the Gorkhali king by retaining some local autonomy and their tribal kipat land. One exception was Yong-ya Hang of Yangrup who defected to Sikkim and was instrumental in bringing a large combined force of Lepcha, Limbu and Bhotia soldiers that invaded Chainpur and the Morang plain the following year. Although the Sikkimese general Debchang Rinzin was routed by the Gorkhalis in Chainpur, the Lepcha general Chyothup Barphonga, called Satrajit (seven times victorious)) by the Gorkhali for his bravery, held his ground along with Limbu commanders Sunu Hang and Yong-ya Hang in the plains. A treaty was signed in 1775 by which the boundary between Sikkim and Nepal was established along the Kankai river.

However, a year later the Gorkhali forces led by Purna Ale-Magar captured Taplejung and Ilam and invaded Sikkim. They were repulsed by the Sikkimese and a decisive battle was fought on the banks of the Arun river in which the Sikkimese were defeated and Chainpur finally fell to the Gorkhalis in 1776. In July 1782, Rana Bahadur Shah invited to Kathmandu four Limbu chiefs of upper Tamur and supplied them 107 guns, 935 swords and 825 bows to form the vanguard of a new eastern offensive against Sikkim. The following year, a large Gorkhali force under Damodar Pande made a three-pronged attack and occupied western Sikkim as far as the Tista river. At the conclusion of Anglo-Nepal war in 1816, the eastern boundary of Nepal was demarcated along the Singalila ridge in the hills and the Mechi river in the plains. The chief of Ilam, Hangsu Phuba who surrendered to the Gorkha Raja was allowed local autonomy and the Limbus retained their kipat or tribal land. The establishment of a military garrison in Ilam was followed by migration of Brahmin, Chhetri, Magar, Gurung and Tamang settlers. And Ilam the land of
winding paths in Limbu language or the land of bee-wax (*Ilang*) in Lepcha language became the land of 'Four Mais' for Hindus after the rivers Jogmai Khola, Mai Khola, Puwamai Khola and Deomai Khola.

Ilam Bazar (598 m) lies on a south-trending ridge between the Mai Khola and the Puwamai Khola. It has been an important military and administrative center since 1816 and the governor's house built in 1938 is a large stucco building dominating the town. The town has piped water supply and there are more than 100 shops well-stocked with merchandise from neighbouring Darjeeling. There is also a small college established in 1962. Just west of the town on a gentle slope sprawled a 40-hectare tea garden said to have been first planted in 1870 with seeds brought from China. Formerly, the tea estate used to be leased to private parties for Rs. 11,000 per annum. It had recently been taken over by the Nepal Tea Development Corporation under British aid and there were plans for extending the plantation area and modernising the factory. The first consignment of Ilam tea reached the London market in February 1967. I met here the manager of the tea estate, Michael Cheney whom I had known from my London days. He had once invited me to his native Tewkesbury and we agreed that there was quite a contrast between the gentle vale of Evesham and the rugged hills of Ilam.

The hills of Ilam are fascinating in one aspect. They are dotted with market (*hat*) sites that become alive on certain days of the week. Thus Aitbare (Sunday), Sombare (Monday), Mangalbare (Tuesday), Buddhbare (Wednesday), Bihibare (Thursday) and Sukrabare (Friday) are common place-names in the area after the day of the weekly market. Some better-known places for weekly market are Pashupati on Monday, Gorkhe, Namsaling and Sukrabare on Friday. Ilam bazar has markets on Sunday and Thursday when a large crowd gather in the town square beside the temple of Mai Bhagwati where also flutter hundreds of pigeons dedicated to the goddess Mai. Each *hat* covers a hinterland area of about 15 kilometers, a day's easy walking distance and the open markets have a hectic business in various products. These include salt, tobacco, cotton goods, fancy merchandise
like beads, shoes, and seasonal products such as potato, ginger, rice, maize, orange and sugar-cane. *Hats* are a common feature of local economy in east Nepal but nowhere are they so numerous as in Ilam. Ilam is also a natural catchment area for grains, potato, ginger, orange, livestock and even labour bound for Darjeeling and Silguri.

On the eastern frontier of the country, Ilam is a progressive multi-ethnic district. The original Lepcha inhabitants have been outnumbered and the *kipat* land of the Limbus have shrunk due to the later influx of other immigrants. The cultural diversity is preserved in simple Hindu shrines with red banners, tall white *tarchho* flags, Buddhist *gombas* and Limbu grave-yards on hill prominences (Pl. L b). The jeep journey downhill from Illam to Chandragarhi took us four hours. The same distance is covered in two days by the natives who walk down to sell their local products or now come down in larger numbers to settle in Jhapa.

During the westward flight from Chandragarhi via Biratnagar, dust and haze continued to deprive us of the view of the Himalayan range. At the last lap of our journey, we could make out the Russian aided power-house at Panauti with pylons pointing towards Kathmandu, the Chinese-built road gleaming across the fields of Banepa and the American-aided Educational Materials Center sprawled near Sano Thimi. The imposing pagodas of Bhaktapur might give consolation to some proud Nepalese but those are things of the past. I turned to the intricate terrace fields that represent the honest toil of the farmers. Mechi to Mahakali they are the stuff and substance of the country.
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY


Harrer, Heinrich. Seven Years in Tibet, London, 1953.
Kawaguchi, Ekai. Three Years in Tibet, Madras, 1909.
Noyce, Wilfrid. South Col. One man’s adventure of the ascent of
Suyin, Han. The Mountain is Young, London. 1958.
The glossary includes local terms with special emphasis on place-name derivatives. The linguistic source of the terms are indicated by  \( N = \) Nepali,  \( WN = \) Western Nepali,  \( G = \) Gurung,  \( H = \) Hindi,  \( K = \) Koch,  \( Ki = \) Kirat  \( L = \) Limbu,  \( M = \) Magar,  \( Ne = \) Newari,  \( P = \) Punjabi,  \( S = \) Sanskrit,  \( T = \) Tibetan,  \( Ta = \) Tamang and  \( Th = \) Thakali.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terms</th>
<th>Derivation</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aisalu</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>red currant (Ribes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aitbare</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>place of Sunday market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alo</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>irrigated land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am or Anp</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>mango (Mangifera indica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amla</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A fruit bearing tree (Phyllanthus emblica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amitabh</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Buddhist divinity (Boundless Light)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anchal</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Administrative zone above the district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anchaladhis</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>chief of administrative zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aani</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>nun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arak</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>alcohol, spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asar</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>third Nepalese month (mid-June to mid-July)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asoj</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>sixth Nepalese month (mid-September to mid-October)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avalokitesvara</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Buddhist divinity (Glancing Eye)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awaliya</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>hot or malarial area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Derivation</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayera</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>hunting ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ba</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>inhabitant, people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bada, Badi</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>big, large, prominent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bada Hakim</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>chief administrator of a district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagar</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>sand bank, waste land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahun</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Brahmin caste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baisakh</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>first Nepalese month (mid-April to mid-May)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baisi</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Twenty-two principalities of the Karnali region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakkhu</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>woollen overcoat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bang</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>level ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ban</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>forest, woodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ban Jhankri</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>wild shaman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bange</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>angular, bent, leaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bans</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>bamboo (Dendrocalamus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A shade tree (Ficus bengalensis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bara</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>award or locality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bas</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>halting-place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bato</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>road, track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batulo, Batule</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>circular, round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bazar</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>market, commercial centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bel</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Aegle marmelos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belayet</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beni</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>river confluence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besi or Bensi</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>lower valley land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhadau</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>fifth Nepali month (mid-August to mid-September)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhagwati</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>an aspect of Hindu goddess Durga or Kali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhairav or Bhairavnath</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Hindu god of wrath and terror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhanjyang</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>pass, saddle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhansar</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>custom-house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhatti</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>roadside inn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhavani</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>an aspect of Hindu goddess Parvati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Derivation</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhavar</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>foothills of Chure range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhimsen</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>The second son of Pandu and reknowned for his Herculean feats in Mahabharat epic. Newars consider Bhimsen, the god of wealth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhir</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>precipice, cliff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhitri</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>inner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———Madhes</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>inner Tarai or enclosed valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhot, Bhotang</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Tibet, trans-Himalayan region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhotia</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>people of trans-Himalayan region or Tibetan origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bigha</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>A land measurement unit of 0.67 hectares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihibare</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>place of Thursday market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonpo or P’oen</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>ancient religion of Western Tibet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bot</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>tree, plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahmi</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>an aspect of Hindu goddess Saraswati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byansi</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>inhabitants of Tinkar valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chait</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>twelfth Nepalese month (mid-March to mid-April)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaite Dasain</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>a Hindu festival celebrated in the month of Chait by sacrificing animals at the old forts to goddess Durga.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaitya</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>a Buddhist cenotaph or stupa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamunda</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>an aspect of Hindu goddess Durga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chang</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>north</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chang</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>beer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changbo, Changbu</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chhap</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>a category of life-time land grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaubisi</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Twenty-four principalities of Gandaki region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaur</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>level ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chautara or Chautaro</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>a rest-platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Derivation</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chenreji</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>a Buddhist divinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chhegyon</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>a Buddhist divinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chikyab</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>headman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilam</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>smoking pipe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinu</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>grain Panicum miliaceum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chisapani</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>cold spring or stream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiuri</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>fruit tree (Madhuca butyracea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chok</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>courtyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorbato</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>short-cut, bypath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorten</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>a Buddhist monument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chu</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>river, stream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuajum</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>chilly-grinder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chultho Rakam</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>taxation on population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chutra</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>a species of barberis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chyakhura</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Chukor Partridge (Alectoris graeca)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chyorphu</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>grain-pounder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dah</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dahar</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>entrenched lane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakini</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>female characters of tantric Buddhism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damai</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>tailor-musician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danda</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>hill, ridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangali, Dangaura</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>inhabitants of Dang, particularly Tharu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dara</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>an administrative sub-division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Das Gaja</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>ten yards no man’s land along the Indo-Nepal boundary in the Tarai.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dasain</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A festival in honour of Goddess Durga during Oct-Nov.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deuki</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>temple girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deurali</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>pass, saddle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devithan</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>temple of goddess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devkanya</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>temple girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhab, Dhap</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Swamp, marsh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhair, Dhairo</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>a tropical tree (Pyrakantha cre-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Derivation</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhakre</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>load-carrier, porter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhami</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>shaman, sorcerer,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhayman</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Tibetan guitar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhapa</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>local council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhar</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>crest, ridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhara</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhik</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>low hill, hillock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhom</td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>tribal religion of Thakali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhunga, Dhunge</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>rocky, stony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Di</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>water, stream, river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diyar</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Cedrus deodar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dobhan</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>river confluence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dok</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>black tent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doko</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>bamboo basket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dokpa</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>a nomad or literally a dweller of black tent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dom</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>occupational castes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dongmo</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>tea-churner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorje Chang</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>a Buddhist divinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dotial</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>inhabitant of Doti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draupadi</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>common wife of Pandava brothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duluwa Khamba</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>nomadic Bhotia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumje</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Tibetan festival of the village temple in early July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dun</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>inner valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durga</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>name of a Hindu goddess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwaja</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>cloth ribbon offerings, streamers, flag, banner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dzam-gling-rgyas-bsad</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Tibetan book of geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dzo</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>cross-breed between yak and hill cattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dzong</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>fort or residence of a governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dzongpen</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>district governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ekle</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>isolated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gad</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>stream, river,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Derivation</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaine</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>minstrel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallawala</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Gurkha recruiting agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gairi</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>depression or re-entrant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>mountain range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganga</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>large river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gandaki</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>large river (Central Nepal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaon</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gara</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>blacksmith, butcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garhi</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>fortress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garkha</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>district sub-division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garuda</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>mythical bird, vehicle of Hindu god Vishnu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauchar</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>grazing ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaunda</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>narrow defile, check-point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gemi</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghaiya</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>a variety of unirrigated paddy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghar</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghari</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>thicket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghat</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>river-crossing, low pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghato, Ghatu</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Gurung dance-drama performed during Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghatt, Ghatte</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>water-mill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gheva</td>
<td>Ta</td>
<td>commemorative funeral rite of Tamangs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghiu, Ghee</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>refined butter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghoral</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>goat-antelope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghunsa</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>warm soil, warm place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghyang</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Buddhist monastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giri</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>mountain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gna</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>one-faced drum used by Gurung tribal priests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goba, Gowa</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>village headman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gobare Salla</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>pine (Abies spectabilis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gokpor</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>wooden container with lid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gola</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>store-house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gomba, Gompa</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Buddhist monastery or temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Derivation</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goreto</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>trail, narrow path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorkhali</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>it originally referred to inhabitants of Gorkha and was later expanded to the hill people of Nepal united by the house of Gorkha.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goth</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>corral, animal shed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guheswari</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>a female Hindu goddess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guri</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guru Rimpoche</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Padma Sambhava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurudwara</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Sikh temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyalungba</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>a Buddhist religious text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyalchen</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>copula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanuman</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>monkey-god of Ramayana epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hataru</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>marketeer, porter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hat, Hatia</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatisar</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>elephant stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Himal</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>snow mountain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinwali</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>snowy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hukka</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Water-pipe for smoking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hulaki</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>post, mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jad</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>Bhotia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janai Purne</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>a Hindu festival of changing the sacred chord during the August full moon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatra</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeth</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>second Nepalese month (Mid-May to mid-June).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jhankri</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>shaman or diviner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jiulo</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>irrigated land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumli</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>inhabitant of Jumla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaike</td>
<td>Kaike</td>
<td>local dialect of Tarakot area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kali</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>black or dark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalij</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>black pheasant (Lophura leukomelana)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalika</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>a name of Hindu goddess Durga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kachhar</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Sub-montane, lower hills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Derivation</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kami</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>blacksmith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanakasundari</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>an aspect of Goddess Bhavani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanda</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>fortress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kang</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>mountain range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kangyur</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>A Tibetan text of Buddhist canon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kani chorten</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>entrance gate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kargyupa</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>A Lamaistic sect of older order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kart ik</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>seventh Nepalese month (mid-October to mid-November)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katus</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Castanopsis indica tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaumari</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>an aspect of Hindu goddess Durga Bhavani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khada</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>ceremonial scarf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khālka</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>large sword</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khalanga</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>cantonment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khamba</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Bhotia migrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khampa</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>inhabitants of Kham, followers of Dalai Lama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khando</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>curving sword</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khani</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>quarry, mine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kharga or Kharka</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>alpine pasture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kharpan</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>baskets balanced on pole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kharsu</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>oa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khasa</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>West Himalayan people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khasan, Khasant</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>land of Khasa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khas-Bahun</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>group name for Brahmins and Chhetris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khel</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>meadow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khet</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>irrigated land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khola</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>river, stream, valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khonch</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>enclosed valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khor</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>enclosure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khorīyo</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>shifting cultivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khudo</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>sugar-cane juice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khukri</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>curved knife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khusi</td>
<td>Ki</td>
<td>stream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Derivation</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khuwa</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>stream, river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kichak</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>A villain character of the Maha-bharat and who being enamoured of Draupadi was killed by Bhimsen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kipat</td>
<td>Ki</td>
<td>communal tribal land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klipre, Ghyabring</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Gurung shaman or tribal priest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koigen</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>festival of youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kos</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>a measure of distance about 3 kilometers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosi</td>
<td>Ki</td>
<td>large river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kot</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>fortress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krohmai</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>chief or head man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ku-gi</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>nine clans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kulo</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>irrigation channel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumal</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>potter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumbum</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>A Tibetan religious text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuna</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>corner, nook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kund</td>
<td></td>
<td>lake or pond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuriya or Kuriyo</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyu</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>water, stream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>mountain pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladakhi</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>inhabitant of Ladakh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laiba</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>functionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahure</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>derived from Lahore where the first mercenaries served, it means army men serving outside the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakhang</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Buddhist temple or shrine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lama</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Tibetan Buddhist priest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamo</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>extended, long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langna</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>mountain pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lankuri</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Fraxinus floribunda tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptse</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>cairn on mountain pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lekh</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>highland, area with snow in winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lekhali</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>highlander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Derivation</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lha Phewa</td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>A 12-year Thakali festival when clan gods are displayed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lho</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>south</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lhosar</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Tibetan new year festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ling</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>village, settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lokeswara</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>a Buddhist divinity whose favourite abode is in the Himalaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lulu</td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>a small-sized cattle of some Himalayan areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lung</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lungpa</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-ad or Mat</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madal</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>a barrel-shaped two faced drum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madesh</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>tropical plain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madi or Maadhi</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>low valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madu</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>temple, shrine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magh</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>tenth Nepalese month (mid-January to mid-February)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maghe Sankranti</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A festival to mark the beginning of summer solstice on the first day of Magh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahadev</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>a name of Hindu god Shiva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahakaal</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>The Great Black divinity revealed both by Hindus and Buddhists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahaluxmi</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Hindu goddess of wealth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maheswari</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>a name of goddess Parvati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mai or Mai Bhagvati</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>an aspect of Hindu goddess Durga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maitreya</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>the future Buddha, one of the important Buddhist divinities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majh</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malika</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>a popular mountain goddess of far western Nepal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malashri</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>a folk tune, song to Goddess Durga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malingo</td>
<td>Ta</td>
<td>a variety of mountain bamboo (Arundinaria racemosa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mana</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>a volumetric measure of about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Derivation</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manangba or Nyesangba</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>inhabitants of Manang Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandala</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>mystic circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangsir</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>eighth Nepalese month (mid-November to mid-December)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangalbare</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>place of Tuesday market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mane</td>
<td>Ta</td>
<td>long wall for sacred formula ‘Om Mani Padme Hum’ (Oh jewel in the lotus).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marphali</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>inhabitant of Marpha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marwari</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>a business community from western India.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masta or Masto</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>A native region of the Karnali religion worshipped with dhami as spirit mediums.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mate or mato</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>soil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matwali</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>drinker of alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maula, Maulo</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>The post for tying the sacrificial animal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melo</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>forest, woodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mendok</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>flower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mendong</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>wall of stones inscribed with sacred Buddhist formula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mit</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>ritual friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongba</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Khasa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monpa</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>people of lower valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mugal</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>inhabitants of Mugu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mukhiya</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>village headman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muluki Ain</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>legal code of Nepal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mundhum</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>sacred tradition of Kirant people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadi</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagari</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>the Devangagari script in which Sanskrit and Nepali are written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nambar Nabje</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>a Buddhist divinity, Vairochana (The Brilliant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naarayan</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>an aspect of Hindu god Vishnu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Derivation</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nath</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>lord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nau</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>nine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naur</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>blue sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naya or Nuwa</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>new, recent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naya Muluk</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>new territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepali</td>
<td>N</td>
<td><em>lingua franca</em> of Nepal. Derived from Sanskrit, it used to be earlier known as Khasa-kura (language of Khasa), Gorkhali (language of Gorkha) and Parbate (language of hill people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neta or Neto</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>pass, saddle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newari</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>language of Newars; formerly known as Nepal Bhasa (language of Kathmandu valley)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigalo</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A particular kind of mountain bamboo (Arundinaria intermedia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikas</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>outlet, exit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nil or Nilo</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nisam Mang</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Limbu goddess of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nokchaa</td>
<td>Ki</td>
<td>part-time Rai priest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nup</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>west</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyeshang</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>upper Marsyangdi valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyingmapa</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>The old sect of Tibetan Buddhism whose worship centers around Padmasambhava (Louts-born Buddha)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odar</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>cave, rock overhang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okhar</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>walnut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Padmasambhava</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>The lotus-born Buddha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pahar</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pahara</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>sunny aspect, warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pahari</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>inhabitants of hill region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pai or Arghun</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>commemorative funeral rite of Gurungs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakho</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>dry field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Derivation</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pali</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>early Indian language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pallo</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>thither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panch</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panchakhat</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>crimes punishable by death, life imprisonment, shaving of the head, branding for degradation to lower castes and loss of caste.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panchayat</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>local elected council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paanda</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>attic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pandavas</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>The five sons of Pandu who won the epic Mahabharat battle with the aid of Krishna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pani</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panthi</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>one who belongs to a travelling group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parbat</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>hill or mountain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parbatiya, Parbate</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>inhabitants of hill region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pari</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>far side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parti</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>fallow land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parvati</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>a Hindu goddess, consort of Shiva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patal</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>dense forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patan</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>alpine pasture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pathi</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>a volumetric measure of about 14 liters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pati</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>rest-house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phaagun</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>eleventh Nepalese month (mid-February to mid-March)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phedangma</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Kiranti ritual priest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phedi</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>bottom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phhuru</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>wooden bowl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipal</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>a shade tree (Ficus religiosa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plih-gi</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>four lineages among Gurungs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pochyu</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Gurung tribal priest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pokhari</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>pond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pouwa</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>rest-house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Derivation</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pradhan Panch</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>village assembly chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prajnaparamita</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>A Goddess of Wisdom of Buddhist pantheon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proh</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>upland pasture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punnel</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>inhabitants of Marpha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pur</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>large settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purano</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pus</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>ninth Nepalese month (mid-December of mid-January)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raja</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>chief, king</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajmaarg</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>highway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raksi</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>distilled spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranashree</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>A Kargyupa lama from Deprung who preached in Limi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rani</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>queen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rastriya Panchayat</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>national legislative council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rato</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>red, ochre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhab</td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>clan history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ri</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>mountain range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritha</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>a tree yielding soap nut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodi</td>
<td></td>
<td>youth association among Gurung tribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rong</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>lower valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rongba or Rongma</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>inhabitants of lower valleys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rote Ping</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>rotating swing, merry-go-round</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rudrakshi</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Melia azedarach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rupa</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>lovely, beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sa</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>earth, soil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakya or Sakyamuni</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Gautam Buddha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sal</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Tropical tree Shorea robusta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salla or Sallo</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Sub-tropical pine (Pinus roxburghii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samantbhadra</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>An important Buddhist divinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sangu</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>bridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sani, Sano, Sanu</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanischare</td>
<td>EN</td>
<td>place a of Saturday market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Derivation</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sansari Devi</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>a Hindu goddess much revered in Dehra Dun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarkang</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>house of gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarki</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>cobbler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saraswati</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Hindu goddess of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savan</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>fourth Nepalese month (mid-July to mid-August)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sel roti</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>doughnut of rice flour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sera</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>crown land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seshant</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>frontier, distant land, with particular reference to northern borderlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seto, Seti</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shahar</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>town, city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaligram</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>a black ammonite stone and worshipped as the symbol of Vishnu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shar</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>east</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shikhara</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>an architectural style from Kumaon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiva</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>An important god of Hindu pantheon particularly associated with the Himalayas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silu me</td>
<td>Ne</td>
<td>a Newari song about the pilgrimage to Gosainkund during Janai Purne.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sim</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>humid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simal</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Bombax malabariaum tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sime Krong</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>guardian of the dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinwali or Sinyala</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>shady, damp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sirdaar</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>fore-men, a leader of Sherpa climbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sombare</td>
<td>EN</td>
<td>place of Saturday weekly market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>water jug of wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sradha</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>A Hindu ceremony performed in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Derivation</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subba</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>honour of ancestors during 16 days in Asoj.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shen-raap</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>The supreme teacher of Bon-po religion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shikar</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>hunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Panchami</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>A Hindu festival of Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swa</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>wooden water pail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swami</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>A shade tree (Ficus benjamina)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swanra</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>unirrigated terraced slope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swasthani Vratkatha</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>The story of Hindu goddess Swasthani read during the month of Magh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajpuria</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>Koch people who have migrated from Tejpur in Assam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tak sar</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>mint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takura</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>summit or pinnacle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tal</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>lake or pond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tali, Tallo</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talo</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>dry field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamang</td>
<td>Th</td>
<td>group name used by people of Thak Satsaya for themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamun</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>group name used by Gurungs for themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tandi</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>dry land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tapa</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>district sub-division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tar</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>river terrace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tara</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Saviouress, important female divinity of Tibetan Buddhism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarali</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>inhabitants of Tarakot area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarchho</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>religious banners or flags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatopani</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>hot spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teh Lab</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Gurung ceremony of good furune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tengyur</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>text of commentary on Kangyur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Derivation</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Than</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>religious canon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thala</td>
<td>WN</td>
<td>shrine, sacred place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thalu</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>place, particularly for snaring falcon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thang</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>big man, personage of importance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thangka</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>plain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanti</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>painted scroll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanti</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>rest-place with a roofed structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thar</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>clan or caste group; neighbourhood locality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tharmai</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>commoners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thawa</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>novice in a monastery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thingure Salla</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>pine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thobo Chomjom Kya</td>
<td></td>
<td>A Bon-po religious text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyong</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>big, large, prominent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thuli, Thulo</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>sub-division of a district.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thum</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Hindu festival to commemorate Laxmi (the goddess of wealth) when sisters worship their brothers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tihar</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Three yearly festival to commemorate the conquests of Kirant king Uba Hang.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timur</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Zanthoxylum armatum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toba</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>grain-measuring vessel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongba</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>a bomboo container for beer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tong-sum-Tongnam</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>Three yearly festival to commemorate the conquests of Kirant king Uba Hang.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tol</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>residential neighbourhood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torma</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>sacrificial cake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trisala Puja</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>same as Tong-sum-Tongnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trisul</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>trident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsampa</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>barley flour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsang-po</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>large river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tso</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulku</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>reincarnate Lama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms</td>
<td>Derivation</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tundikhel</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>parade-ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upallo</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>upper, higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uwa</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>a dry crop (Hordeum vulgare)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaishnavi</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>one of the aspects of Hindu goddess Swasthani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vamsawali</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>geneology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varahi</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>One of the aspects of Hindu goddess Swasthani.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallo</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>hither, nearer side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wari</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>near side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarsa</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>cold earth, cold soil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yatra</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>travel, pilgrimage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogi</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>an ascetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zamindar</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>landlord.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GENERAL INDEX

Abhayamalla, 50
Abhisamayalankara 124
Achham, 9, 13, 15, 34, 103, 129
Administrative growth 134, 140-41, 144-45
Advance Base, Everest 319, 321, 324, 325, 326, 327
Agar (2130 m), Pl. Ia, 36
Agrakhe (701 nm) 347
Ahale (1097 m) 155-56, 157
Airi 68
Aisalukharka (2042 m) 334, 339
Aisidhara (1730 m) 56
Aitbare (1769 m) 364
Ajayapal 12
Ajmerkot 12, 13
Ale-Magar, Purna see Magar
Almora, India 26
Ama Dablam (6856 m), Pl. XXLa, XLVb, 311, 312, 314, 315, 316
Ama Pal 220
Amadi (730 m) 193
Amaltari (134 m) 258
Amare Khola 263
Ambas (1400 m) 30
Ambavati Rani 164
American, see U. S.
Ampepojoma 344
Amitabh 220, 225
Amji, Kali, 78
Andheri Khola, Dolakha, 297
—Kaski, 162
—Sindhuli 300
Andhi Khola 156, 157, 190, 191-62
Anglo-American 310
Anglo-Nepal War 26, 189, 363
—sacrifice 42, 48, 57, 157, 171, 232, 248, 302
Annapurna Himal, Pl. XLa, XLb, XXXIXb XL1b, 17, 148, 149, 155, 158, 159, 162, 168, 169, 174, 178, 188, 216, 223, 224, 226
—I (8078 m) Pl. XXXIVa, 151, 159, 171 190, 202, 229, 230
—II (7937 m) Pl. XXXIVa, XXXVIIa, 151, 159, 163, 171, 173, 178, 224, 229, 232, 233, 235, 236, 305
—III (7577 m) Pl. XVIIIa, XXXIVa, 151, 158, 169, 178, 229
—IV (7524 m) 151, 159, 162, 163 171, 229, 232, 233
—Sanctuary 169
—South (7273 m) Pl. XXXVb, 151, 159, 168, 169, 170, 171, Anpu Bhanjyang (790 m) 160 Antighar (1751 m) 161 Archaeology 46, 47, 48, 49, 50 123, 124, 130-31, 140 Archang (853 m) 352 Architecture 26, 41, 48, 54, 79, 132, 133, 140, 156, 184, 219, 220-21, 286, 301 Argama 88 Argha-Khanchi 124 Arghoun Danda (1418 m) 174, 175 —Pouwa (760 m), 175 Arjal (1936 m) 88 Armala (1430 ) 165, 166 Army service 163, 167, 169 184, 192, 195 Arniko Rajmarg 292, Arun River 335, 341, 343, 344 , 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350-52, 363 Arun valley, 247-52 Arya Avalokiteswara 270 Aryan 226, 242 Asha Sahu 123, Assam 227, 344, 352, 359, 361 Ath Hazar Parbat 69 Athara Jat 245 Athghare (1120 m) 192 Atharsaya Khola, 69 Aufschnaiter, Peter 282, Austria 318 Avalokiteswara 220, 225 Axt, Wolfgang 322, 326 Ayerpani (1371 m) 155 B. B. C. 306, 326, 334 Ba see Shahar Tara Babai Khola 28, 29, 122 Babila Khola 40, 41, 42 Babiro Masta, Pl. XXVI b, 43, 84 Badagaon (910 m) 188 Badde 225 Badi, Pl. XXXIII a 129-30, 142 Badichaur (548 m) 127, 128 Baduk (1670 m) 197 Baduwal 58 Bagahghat, Bihar, 252 Bagale Chautara 196 Bagar 154 Bagarchhap (2072 m) 116, 236, 237 Bagargaon, 29 Baglung 91, 156, 197, 199, 208 —Bazar (1120 m), Pl. XVa, 190, 191, 193, 194, 205, 211, 216 Baglungpani (1645 m) 182, 183, 184, 188, 246
Bagmara 258
Bagmati River 358
Bahuguna, Harsha 318, 322, 326, 328, 330
Bahun Danda (1310 m) 232, 242-43
Baidam 146, 152, 159
Baidam Tal see Phewa Tal
Baijnath, Kumaon, 26
Baijubara (3500 m) 85
Bailkanda (1520 m) 125, 131, 133
Baisi 31
Baitadi 16, 18-27, 25
Baitadi Khalanga (1524 m) 19-20, 21
Bajera Sera (670 m) 27
Bajhang 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 20, 103, 104
Bajura 13, 15, 18, 103
Bakewell, A. 310
Bal Kumari 34
Balaju (1341 m) 80, 262, 291
Balangra Langna (3877 m) 71
Balephi (691 m) 293
—Khola, 293
Baleswar, Kumaon 50
Balewa (1000 m) 193
Bali Raj, 34, 48, 50, 53
Balking Chu 63
Baluwa 187
Bam 46
Bam Bahadur, see Rana
Ban Jhankri 4-5
Banbasa 15
Bandarjong 200
Bandipur 247, 252
Banepa (1478 m) 304, 365
Banerjee, Dr. 310
Bangaoa 29
Bange Simal (670 m) 126
Bangsalla (1430 m) 22
Banh (3048 m) 48
Bankatta (182 m) 259
Banke 11, 112, 254
Banphi 33
Banspani 132
Bantar (2830 m) 85
Baraban (1370 m) 136, 137, 142
Baradob Danda (4173 m) 70
Barah Gaon 206, 211, 212, 215, 216, 225, 226
Barah Jat 245
Baraha Pokhari Lekh, (4312 m), Pl. XIV b, 4, 183, 244
Barah Thar 245
Barahthar 169
Barayel (1250 m) 22
—Gad 22
Barbise (853 m) 293, 295, 300, 304
Barbung Khola 85, 86
Bardiya 11
Bare Gad 47,
Bareilly, India 113
Barekot (1640 m) 36, 37, 48, 69
Barekot Khola 36
Bari Gad 26, 91, 252
Bari Malika, 48
Barkotebara (2346 m) 43, 45, 54
Barmandi (1005 m) 263,
Barmouth, Wales, 225
Barsami (1106 m) 158, 159-160
Barunse (3169 m) 95
Basa Khola 307
Basali (1520 m) 27
Base Camp, Everest (5500 m) 306, 318–222, 324, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 332, 343, 350
Basnet, Abhiman Singh 253
—Dambar Bahadur 347
—Kahar Singh 157
Bateule (224 m) 252
Battar (597 m) 263, 285, 291, 350
Batulechaur (975 m) 165, 171
Baudha (6672 m) 151, 188
Bayele (1580 m) 30
Beaconsfield, U. K., 177
Becker-Larsen, K., 336
Bega Khola 197
Begnas Tal 160, 174, 175
Belaud 255,
Belauri 16
Belayet 186
Beltar 334
Bemdang Khola 278
Benaras, India, 18, 34
Bengal 227, 359, 360
Beni 87, 91, 146, 190, 195–96,
—Khola 307
Benkar (2800 m) 307
Bensi Shahar (760 m) 188, 246
Berkhamsted, England, 225
Betrawati (320 m) 262, 264, 291
Betyani Khola 263
Bhachok Khola 188
Bhadgaon 80, 296, 365
Bhadra, Ram Prasad, 299
Bhadrapur 357, 360
Bhagalpur, India, 273
Bhagawati 21, 35, 57
Bhagwati Tar (670 m) 176
Bhainse (1645 m) 294–95
—Dobhan (701 m) 250
Bhairav 13, 131
Bhairav Kund (4267 m) 269
Bhairavanath 42
Bhairawa (105 m) 10, 17, 91,
92, 122, 172 205,
Bhairi Lekh (2863 m) 137
Bhaktapur, see Bhadgaon
Bhalam Khola, Kaski 161
—, Lamjung 184
Bhalu Lekh (5403 m) Pl. Ia,
30, 31, 32, 33, 36, 37
Bhanadhik (701 m) 159
Bhandari 68
Bhansar Tar (487 m) 247
Bharatpur (205 m) 251, 255,
260
Bharda 122
Bhargaoon (2890 m) 65
Bharkhu (1920 m) 267, 288
Bharuni Khola 133
Bhasme (2773 m) 336
Bhatna (1950 m) Pl. XXIVb,
23, 24
Bhatta 23
Bhattachan 203
Bhattechar (1758 m) 54, 56–
58, 64
Bhavani 71, 132
Bhenya (2042 m) 135
Bheri river, Pl. VIIa, 32, 33, 34,
36, 83–84, 85, 94, 121, 122,
123, 124, 126, 127, 129,
130, 131, 133, 134, 135, 138,
144, 145, 290
Bhichok 168
Bhikna Thori (275 m) 254,
Bhimali (137 m) 257, 259
Bhimchuli (2313 m) 144
Bhimeswar 296
Bhimdhunga 160
Bhimpatan (913 m) 160
Bhimsen 48, 160, 295, 296
Bhirkot 157
Bhirpustun (1828 m) 242, 244, 246
Bhitri Madhesh 10–11, 127
Bhojo Gomba (3536 m) 230, 231, 232
—Kang, see Annapurna IV
Bhojpur 334, 335, 345, 346
Bhong Chu, Tibet 347
Bhorleni (880 m) 130
Bhorletar (380 m) 107, 176, 179, 180
Bhotang, 36
Bhotegaon (2980 m) 69
Bhote Kosi, Khumbu 308, 309, 311
—Kodari 293, 295
—Rasuwa 267, 278, 286, 287, 288, 289
Bhote Odar (579 m) 189
Bhotia, Pl, Va, IXa, XXVIIa, 12, 25, 35, 40, 43, 46, 50–51, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 68, 70, 71, 72, 76, 79, 82, 85, 86, 88, 89, 90, 95, 97, 98, 99, 120, 121, 205, 206, 215, 231, 237, 281, 346, 353, 355, 363
Bhulbule (853 m) 185, 187, 232, 246
Bhurki, see Bhattachan
Bhurti 121
Bhurundi Khola 170
Bhutan 207, 289, 321, 339, 359, 361, 362
Bhuti, see Hirachan
Bhyale 108
Bichitra Khan 157
Bidur (579 m) 263
Bighi Nadi 303
Bihar, India, 252, 303, 360
Bijaypur, Sunsari 345, 346, 356, 363
—Kaski, 152, 166,
—canal, 153
—Khola 161, 175, 176
Bijku see Bijaypur
Bije Neta (910 m) 123, 125
Bilas Kumari 31
Bilaspur (1840 m) 140
Bimalnagar (396 m) 247
Bimre 187
Bimthang (3718 m) 239
Bindubasini (912 m) 172
Bingma (1432 o) 344
Birat, 28
Biratnagar 344, 356, 357, 365
Bird 2, 3, 9, 37, 38, 39, 44, 55, 96, 116 121, 195, 198, 213, 257, 258, 273, 283, 294, 303, 314, 326, 329, 330
Birendranagar, see Surkhet
Birethanti (1188 m) 170
Bisaul 161
Bismarck, Prince, 176
Burhi Gandaki 252
Burhi Rapti, 260
Burma, 1, 170, 227, 361
Butwal (187 m) 91, 154, 159, 167, 208
Byans (3500 m) 85,
—Gad 84
Byansi 12, 14, 71, 97, 114, 116
Byas Rikhi Himal, 21,
—Lekh (5608 m) 85

California, U. S. A., 208, 280
Camp I, Everest (6200m) XLVIII b, 323-27, 330
Caplan, Lionel 141
“Castle” Test 324
Central Asia 213, 222,
Cha Lungpa 213
Chain 57, 64
Chainpur (1310 m), Bajhang 12
—(1292 m) Sankhuwa Sabha, 309, 345, 346 349, 363
*Chaite Dasain* 42, 157, 300
Chak Khola 292
Chakhaura (579 m) 29
Chakli Gad, 32
Chako (1127 m) 293
Chala (3810 m) 99, 103
Chalikhe Pahar (5086 m) 89, 90
Chalana Dhar (4535 m) 35, 136, 137
Chalong Pati (3669 m) 268, 286
Chalthi (1061 m) 19
Chame (2651 m) 224, 235-36
Chamki (3261 m) 284,
Chamlang (7319m) Pl. XLIXa,
—Chamling-Chimling 344
Champa Lakhang 221
Champajong 357
Champawat, Kumaon, 26
Chamunda 156
Chanauli (173 m) 256
Chand 13
—Dasrath 20
—Ram Bahadur 23
Chandananath 42, 45, 57
Chandi Himal 96, 117
Chandra Shumsher, see Rana
Chandragarhi (117 m) 358, 360, 361, 365
Chandravati 156
Changthang 282
Changbu Chu see Langtang Khola
Changri Glacier 317, 329
Changu Narayan 80
Chankheli Langna (3591 m) 57
—Peak (4201 m), Pl. III b, 55, 56, 95
Changtse (7550m), Pl. XLVI b, XLVIIa, 329
Char Jat 245
Charang (c. 3600m)215, 217-19
—Chu 218, 219
Charange Khola (Charnavati) 295, 296, 297
Charikot (1950 m), 296, 304
Charko Dhingla 85
Charung-Khasyor 80
Chatra (114 m) 273, 356
Chatterji, S. K. 359
Chaud Khola 243
Chaudbise 57, 67-70
Chyangma Pass (2194 m) 306
Chyaptug, Tibet, 61
Chyaubas (2286 m) 276
Chyawa Bensi (304 m) 349
—Khola 349
Chyoba, 103
Chyodo, 163
Chyoki, see Gauchan
Chyokthup Barphonga 363
Chyoro Ri (6036 m), Pl. XXXII b, 116
Chyuribas (1066 m) 355
Climate 11, 34, 43, 62, 83, 102
149, 193, 206, 212, 253,
358, 359, 362
Cowles, E. S., 310
College of Education 357
Crops 35, 45, 51, 56, 59, 62
63, 68–69, 70, 79, 86, 88, 89,
95, 102, 112, 122, 163, 188,
216, 221, 227, 229, 236, 242,
266, 267, 311, 331, 338
Cromwell, Oliver 322
Culture contact 26, 50–51, 57
71, 85, 153, 237–38, 242–43,
246, 262
Dadeldhura 12, 16, 20
Daduwa 246
Dah Gad 36
Dahre 246
Dahre Danda (2265) 191
Dailekh 46, 94, 121, 123, 124,
127, 129, 130, 132, 137, 139,
130–143,
—Bazar (1280 m) 121, 133,
140–141
Dakini 115, 221,
Dalchu 54, 58, 60, 62, 63
Damai 25, 48, 177, 354
Damak (133 m) 361
Daman (2322 m) 250
Damagao (760 m) 30
Damdala (1820 m) 35
Dana (1980 m), Mugu 58
—(1490 m), Myagdi 199, 200,
202, 205, 227
Damodar Himel 216
Dance 77, 129, 164, 186, 211,
225, 342
Dandagaon (1190 m), Bhojpur 346
—(1700 m), Dhampus Pl. XIIIb,
84, 167
—(2316 m) Maikot 88
—(1371 m) Nawakot 265, 290
—(1371 m) Sallyan 31, 32
Dandakuti (790 m) 30
Dandaphoya (2530 m) 96, 97,
120
Dang 15 28, 29, 30, 31, 123,
124, 125, 127, 134
Dangarjong (3200 m) 215
Dang aura, 15
Dange 245
Dangmaya (134 m) 346
Danphe Langna (3688 m) 66
Dansangu (2347 m) 42, 67
Dansing (1730 m) 168, 170
Danuwar 254, 255, 298–299,
302, 359
Dar Khola 35
Darai 251, 254, 255
Darbang (1097 m) 195, 196
Darchula 25, 27, 113
Dare Masta 88
Darjeeling 207, 268, 309, 310, 334, 336, 361, 362, 364, 365
Darma 13
Darme Khola 263
Darondi Khola 247
Das Thar 245
Das, Sarat Chandra 109
Dasain 2, 49, 57, 68, 71, 86, 157, 171, 174, 177, 178, 185, 186, 282
Dashera (1760 m) 137, 138, 139
Dauniya Danda (760 m), 10
Daura (2800 m) 60
Dawa Lama, 71–74, 78, 82, 83
Debchang Rinzin 363
Debichaur (243 m) 251
Debuche (3760 m) 314
Dedpura (1580 m) 25
Deforestation 14, 15, 120, 171, 187, 361
Dehimadu (1860 m) 21
Dehere (1610 m) 137
Dehra Dun, India, 155, 161, 170, 175, 282, 328
Densa 85
Deomai Khola 364
Deorali Dobate (1240 m) 297
Depalgaon (2430 m) 41, 46
Derkulo (1980 m) 137, 138
Desideri, Ippolito 294
Deukhuri Valley, 10, 11, 28
Deuki 13, 21
Devaghat (182 m) 249, 250–53, 273
Devithan 88
Devkotabara (2377 m) 67
Dhablung 85
Dhading 255
Dhaibung (1524 m) 264, Dhaialaina Lekh (4885 m) 95
Dhakar 220
Dhakar Tharje-Ling 220
Dhalkebar (182 m) 302
Dhami 40, 43, 57, 170, 339, 340–41, 342, 343
Dhampu (2580 m) 202
Dhampus Danda (2155 m) 166, 171, 289
Dhanasi (2130 m) 36
Dhangarhi (190 m) 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17
Dhanigad (1220 m) 130
Dhankuta (1128 m), Pl. XXIIa, 13, 336, 349, 350, 352–55
—Khola 354
Dhanpa (2347 m) 48
Dhanras Danda (1750 m) 12, 121, 127, 128
Dhanusa 358
Dhapa 228
Dhaprang 163
Dharan (427 m) 333, 334, 336, 345, 348 350, 353, 354, 355–56
Dharapani, Dhankuta 355
—(1889 m). Manang 238, 239
—(145 m), Kaski 160
—Nawakot, 263
Dharm Raja, Bhutan, 289
Dhaulagiri, Himal Pl. XLIa, 10, 17, 82, 83 84, 85, 89, 90, 147, 192, 195, 273,
Dhaulagiri I (8167 m) Pl. XVa, XVIa, XLIa, 89, 151, 159, 190, 194, 201, 202, 210, 250,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Elevation</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dhaulagiri Zone</td>
<td>90, 127, 194</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhaulakot (2050 m)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhaun (1520 m)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhik Gad</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhimal</td>
<td>359, 360</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhimchan</td>
<td>see Sherchan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhimchan, Balbir</td>
<td>205</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhime (2130 m)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhimichaur (3078 m)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhin Kyu</td>
<td>213</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhinga (3400 m)</td>
<td>96, 98, 119, 120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——Laga (Upper Dhinga)</td>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——Shyo (Lower Dhinga)</td>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhokpa Chhung</td>
<td>219, 220</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——Lho</td>
<td>220</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhom</td>
<td>203</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhorpatan (2760 m), P. VIII b</td>
<td>90-91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhuli (2590 m)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhulikhel (1554 m)</td>
<td>292, 300, 301</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhumpa, P. XVI a</td>
<td>206, 210</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——Kyu</td>
<td>210</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhunche (1950 m)</td>
<td>262, 266-67, 285, 287, 288-90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhungedhara (2160 m)</td>
<td>58, 59, 64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhungel (853 m)</td>
<td>136</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhungesangu (777 m)</td>
<td>152, 158, 159</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhungrebas (579 m)</td>
<td>300, 301</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhunyal</td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhunibensi (1063 m)</td>
<td>250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhupineta (3500 m)</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dig Kharka</td>
<td>335</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dikung</td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilauri Khola</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dillichaur (2525 m)</td>
<td>67, 68, 69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dillikot (2770 m)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimsa (2743 m)</td>
<td>268</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dingboche (4412 m)</td>
<td>309, 315, 319</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dingla (1188 m)</td>
<td>309, 334, 345, 346</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dingri or Tingri</td>
<td>347</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dipail (600 m), P. XXIII b</td>
<td>13, 14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diyabala Danda (3522 m)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doba (1889 m)</td>
<td>198</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dobabhir</td>
<td>198</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dobhan (2880 m)</td>
<td>308</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dokpa</td>
<td>80, 155, 166, 217</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolakha</td>
<td>295-98,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>——Bazar (1722 m)</td>
<td>295, 296, 300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolalghat (626 m)</td>
<td>292, 293</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dolpo</td>
<td>31, 36, 40, 60, 68, 70, 72, 76, 78, 84, 85, 86, 178, 211, 212, 218, 290, 311</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dom</td>
<td>88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Domino’</td>
<td>320</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dordi Khola</td>
<td>174, 189, 246</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorje Chang</td>
<td>115, 218</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorje Lakpa</td>
<td>(6908 m) 283</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doti</td>
<td>9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 20, 26, 34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dotial</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draupadi</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drepung, Tibet</td>
<td>115, 116</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress</td>
<td>15, 26, 37, 59, 236, 237, 251, 338</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dubahi</td>
<td>358</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dudh Khola</td>
<td>237, 239, 341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dudh Kosi</td>
<td>307-308, 312, 331, 334, 335, 339, 341, 344</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dudh Pokhari</td>
<td>282</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dudheli Kholo, 41
Dudhiya Thumka 264
Duduwa Danda (888 m) 10
Duglha (4620 m) 316, 319
Dugungarhi (2130 m) 293
Dule 88
Dullu (1425 m) 50, 121, 124, 126, 141, 142
Duluwa Khamba, 68
Dumja (1066 m) 300, 303
Dumje 77, 103
Dumre (426 m) 239, 247
Dunaihi Lower (2100 m) 83-84, 85, 86
-Upper (2130 m) 84, 290
Dungeswar (662 m) 142, 143
Dura 180, 188
Durga 21, 186
Durga Kumari, 34
Dutch 312
Dwari Lekh (4159 m) 65, 94
Dyrenfurth, Norman 280, 306, 322,
—G. O., 321
Dzam-gling-rgyas-bsad 270
Dzo 309, 333
Dzong, 85
Earthquake 18, 20, 23-24, 49
East India Company 253
East Pakistan 326
East-West Highway, 302
Edinburgh, Scotland, 166, 177
Edinburgh Festival 177
Edinburgh University, 319
Education 6, 84, 138, 176, 186, 194, 256, 289-90, 360, 362
Edward VII, 53
Education Materials Center 365
English 176
European, 254
Everest expedition, 305-31, 347, 348
Evesham, England 364
F. A. O., 202, 262, 278
‘Fang’ (7647 m) Pl. XV b, 169
Fair, 32, 48, 49, 135, 142, 152, 184, 196, 251-52, 300, 303
Festival 2, 32, 69, 103, 203, 249-50, 251-52, 296, 341
Field limit, 53, 56, 65, 89, 283, 315
Fillipo de Filippi, 295n
Fisher, James 85,
Folk tradition 80, 129-130, 133, 164, 196, 234, 240, 281, 352
Fort 13, 35, 131, 141, 156-57
171, 188, 210-11 213, 218-19, 220, 232, 293, 301, 344, 345, 362
Fort, Monique, 193n
France, 1, 207, 208, 318, 330
French 230, 280, 285, 291, 312
Fraser, G. J., 314
Friendship Bridge (1676 m), 294
Fu-K‘ang-an, 264
Furer, Hardy 278
Furer-Haimendorf, Christoph von, 43, 54, 55, 84, 307, 313, 322
—Elizabeth von 84, 307
Gaborieau, Marc, 18n,
Gadlang (2225 m) 278
Gai Banya (1860 m) 143
—Kharka (2133 m) 337
Gaida Jungle Camp, 259
Gaine 129, 130, 172
Gainekanda (1060 m) 128
Gairi, Kaski, 163
—Rukum, 32
Galeswar (880 m) 196
Galgalia, India, 360
Gallawala 184, 193
Galpa or Galwa 56, 62
Galphu (1981 m) 263
Galphu Bhanjyang 274, 275
Galphu Khola 274, 275
Gandaki 195, 245
Gandaki River 273
Gandaki Zone 127
Gandhi, Mahatma 26
Ganesh Himal (7406 m), 10, 17, 159, 174, 262, 279
Gangapurna (7545 m) 169, 229, 312
Gang Chhenpo (6397 m) 281, 283
Gangchen Lebrub, see Lang-tang Lirung
Gangetic plain 10
Ganges River 273
Gango Dhar (5312 m) 229, 233
Gangtok, Sikkim 310
Ganja La (5122 m) 281
Gaon Shahar (1371 m) 188, 226
Gara 103
Garab Dzong 210–11
Garhun 157

Garhwal, India, 13, 25, 50
Garjyangkot (2490 m) 41
Garhkhar (560 m) 263
Garpar (1524 ,) 199,
Garpung Gad, 72
Garsa Langna (3992 m) 100, 101
Gartok, Tibet 113, 282
Garuda, 80
Garuwa Khola, Ilam, 361
Garuwa (Karnali) 11
Gauchan 194, 203, 205
—Dirgha Prasad 202
—Onkar Prasad 190, 194, 197, 211
—Surendra 204n
Gauri Phanta 11
Gauri Shankar (7146 m) 296, 297, 299, 300 306
Geddes, Claire. 166, 169, 172
Gee, E. P. 256
Geling (3597m). Pl. XLa, 206, 215, 216,
Gemi 114,
Gemi (3500 m), 217, 221
Gemu Dzong 117

Geographical Journal 79
Geomorphology 24, 28, 39, 54–55, 58, 80-82, 85, 91,
Gerkhu 266
Germany 280, 312
Geruwa Khola 133
Ghaliang 245
Ghale 182, 188, 214, 225-26, 232, 236-38, 242, 244-45
—Raja 182, 188, 232, 240
—Kalu 232
—Phaichan 232
—Tharjin 215
Ghalegaon (1615 m) 179
Ghamrang 246
Ghandruk (1920 m) 165, 166, 168-69
Ghanpokhara (2165 m) 179, 184, 184, 200 224, 238, 246
Ghantu 164
Ghar Gad 70
—Khola 198
Gharamdi (2190 m) 197
Ghasa (2010 m) 199-201, 202, 206
Ghat 334
Ghat Khola, Humla 95
—Sallyan 31
Ghatta Khola, Jumla, 53
Ghatte Gad, Baitadi 25
Ghatte Khola, Lamjung 7, 185, 187
—Mustang 203
Ghenge Liru (6581 m), Pl. XLIII a, 268 284, 288
Gheva 265
Ghimire, Madhav Prasad 242
Ghiu 15, 16, 20, 25, 31, 91, 124, 138, 193, 349
Ghopche (3840 m) 268
Ghopte Odar (3261 m) 273
Ghora Tabela (3048 m) 284, 285
Ghorahi (701 m) 28
Ghorepani (2834 m) 170
Ghorle Pokhari (1310 m) 352
Ghumaune Chautara 254
Ghunthang (1889 m) 293
Ghurchi Langna (3457 m) 65, 67
—Lekh (4067 m), Pl. IIIa, 49, 54, 55, 65, 94
Ghurseni Khola 67
—Langna (3457 m) 67
Ghustung Khola 89
Gyagar (3261 m) 215
—Chu 215
Ghyang Khola 297
—Kharka (3613 m) 340
Ghyaru (3688 m) 226, 228, 231, 232-33
Gilung (1400 m) 177-78, 246
Girighat Khola 122, 126, 131
Glacier Dome (7193 m) 169
Glaciology 73-74, 217, 229, 284-85, 317, 319-20, 324
Glen Lyon, Scotland, 44
Gobre Gad 37
Gola Kharka (792 m) 362
Goljang (1920 m) 278
Gomba Kang 214
Gomba Tara (2650 m) 85
Gomila (2743 m) 307
Goparma, Pasang 262, 290
Gorak Shep (5150 m), Pl. XLVI a, 74, 310, 316, 317, 320, 330
Gorje (1210 m) 177
Gorakhpur, India, 193
Gorkha 34, 69, 124, 157, 173, 185, 188, 189, 195, 208, 227, 232, 244, 245, 246, 255, 363
Gorkhali 13, 31, 34, 50, 53, 80, 140, 253, 263, 287, 301, 345, 346, 349, 356, 363
Gorkhali expansion 13, 26, 34, 50, 53, 124, 140, 157, 188, 211, 220, 227, 253, 263, 296, 345-46, 363
Gorkhapatra 187
Gorkhe (1310 m) 364
Gosain Kund (4380 m) 261, 262, 252, 263, 267, 268, 279
—Lekh (4903 m) Pl. XLIII a, 271, 272, 277, 279
Gosainthan see Shisha Pangma
Gotam 31, 33, 122
Gothalapani (1430 m) 19-20, 21,
Gothichaur (2750 m) 40-41, 46
Gothikanda (1430 m) 124, 125, 131-132, 133, 143, 144
Gottar (915 m) 27
Gowalpara, Assam 359
Grande Barrier, Pl. XXXVIII a, 230, 233
Grang (1899 m) 265, 290
Gre (2042 m), 288
Grenoble, France 280
Gudel (2010 m) 332, 336, 338-40
Guge, Tibet, 50, 220
Guhesewari 80
Gulmi 94, 127
Gum Gad 57, 62, 64
Gumgarhi (1880 m) 57
Guma-Yok 117
Gumli Chhangba, see Panna-chan
Gumli Thowa, see Juharchan
Gundang (6419 m) 229
Gunthang, Tibet 211, 220
Gurja (2590 m) 195
—Himal (7192 m) 90
Gurkha, 1, 152, 161, 177, 195
—Brigade 177
Gurkha recruitment 181, 184, 193-94
—Rifles 26
—Signals 306
Guru Ranashree see Ranashree
Guru Rimpoche, see Padma Sambhava
Gurung, Pl. XXXV a, XXXVIIb, 6, 127, 140, 149. 155, 156, 160, 161-166, 167, 169, 170, 174, 177, 178, 179, 191, 183, 184, 185, 189, 201, 205, 207, 214, 215, 223, 224, 225-26, 234, 236-38, 239, 240, 242, 244-45, 246, 245, 251, 265, 346, 349, 363
—Amar Sing 155
—Birta Sing 170
—Dhan Bahadur 164
—Harka, 36, 73, 328
—Hark Lal 239
—Lil Bahadur 321
—Manbir 161
—Man Lal 200
—Narayan 176
—Ratan 163
—Surendra 306, 318, 321
—Tej Bahadur 170
Gwalekhor (2890 m) 97, 120
Gwang Khola 302
Gya La (5334 m) 238
Gyadunba 114
Gyal-dong-mig-jen, 211
Gyal-tang-po-chen, 211
Gyaltsen, Sonam 71
Gyandichaur (850 m) 192
Gyasumdo 237–28
Gyaunje Khola 161
Gyolgup 103
Hadsaini Khola 140
Hagen, Toni 148, 321
Halji (c. 3500 m) 110, 112–115, 118
Hamal, Dhanlal 49
Han Suyin, 146
Handicrafts 25, 37, 86, 88, 114, 128, 141, 151, 163, 273, 293
Hang, Mabo 345, 357, 363
—Mao Rong 344–45
—Murey 356
—Shrijunga 345
—Sunu 363
—Taklung Khewa 344
—Uba 345, 362, 363
—Yong-ya 363
Hanesalla (2740 m) 36
Hangsu Phuba 363
Hanku (1981 m) 278, 289
Hanriphora (1709 m) 265, 290
Hansa Raja 206
Hanuman 303
Hanuman Dhoka 42, 65, 93, 300,
Haribodhini Ekvdashi 184
Hariharpur 358
Harkumardutt Sen, see Sen
Harle 32
Harpu 163
Harrer, Heinrich 282
Harris, M. J., 314
Haston, Dougal 319, 322, 330,
Hat Pursaud (1370 m) 23–25,
—Sinja (2430 m) 49, 52
Hatia 345
Hatisar (182 m), Banke 94
—(195 m) Chitawan 259
Hawdi Langna (2890 m) 94, 141,
Hebrew 249
Hekuli (579 m) 29
Helmu 268, 274, 275
Hendersons of Aberdeen 184
Herang-Kyarsa, 80
Hercules 160
Herzog, Maurice 321
Hetauda (466 m) 250, 254, 255,
Hevajra 218, 221
Hile (1920 m) 352–53
Hillary, Edmund, 310, 311, 312, 335, 336,
Himachal Pradesh, India, 26
Himalaya 33, 52, 99, 147, 199, 207, 247, 269, 348
Himalayan 45, 142, 147, 174, 195, 205, 224, 227, 237, 238, 242, 294, 334, 357, 365
Himalayan Trust 311
Himalchuli (7893 m) Pl. XVIII b, 1, 10, 151, 159, 173, 174, 183, 185, 188, 226, 244, 246, 279
Himlung, (7125 m), 188, 236, 237
Hindu 6, 40, 45, 48, 51, 60, 71, 79, 97, 133, 150, 156, 171, 188, 202, 206, 208, 211, 212, 240, 245, 246, 251, 261, 269, 303, 339, 343, 346, 359, 364, 365
Hinduisation 25, 71, 156, 164, 203, 206, 211, 225, 238, 243
Hinduism 85, 156, 203
Hirachan, 208, 268
—Om Chyalba, 208-209
Histan (2180 m) 195
Hiunchuli (6336 m), Pl. XXXV b, 159, 169, 169, 171
Hiunchuli Patan (5922 m) 31, 32, 87, 90 134,
Hodgson, Brian, 147, 162
Hongde (3200 m) 232
Hong Kong 228
Hongu Glacier 336
—Khola, Pl. XLVIII b, 257, 332, 334, 335, 336, 337-40
Hot spring 43, 98-99, 235, 293
Hotel Elephant Camp 259, 260
—Oscar 310, 336
Hukam 88
Humla 48, 55, 57, 65, 93, 94, 97, 101-120, 123, 134,
—Karnali, Pl. XXXI a, 95-103, 105-110, 120
Humla Patan (5840 m), Pl. IV a
Humli 93, 113, 116
Hunt, John 321
Hunting, 2-3, 15, 44, 127-128, 228, 254-55
Hurigaon (2890 m) 69
Huri Gad, 69
Hurikot (2590 m) 71-72, 79
Hyangja, Lower (1041 m) 166, 171
—Upper (1066 m) 166-167
Hydro-electricity 54, 129, 149, 153, 248, 263
Hyul-sum 113
Ibar Gad, 33, 134
Ice Fall 305, 316, 318, 319, 321, 322-328, 329
Ide, Helen 224, 229, 243
—William Carter 224, 229, 241, 243
Iijima, Shigeru 203
Ilam 309, 345, 357, 362-65
—Bazar (1207 m) 361, 362, 364, 365
Illing La (3500 m) 100-101
Imja Khola Pl. XLV b, 309, 312-15, 330
India 6, 18, 19, 27, 69, 163, 166, 191, 227, 282, 303, 318, 343, 359
Indian, 13, 134, 150, 154, 208, 254, 303, 309, 312, 360
—Army, 3, 194
—Border 10, 11, 149
—Meteorological Survey 310
—Sepoy Mutiny 10
Indo-Aryan 359
Indrani 156
Indrapuri 186
Indrawati river 273, 292
International Everest Expedition 305, 332
Inukhu Khola 332, 334, 335, 336-37
Irkuwuwa Khola Pl. XLIXb, 334, 342, 344 346-47 348.
Isles, David 323, 324, 327, Iswari Gad 21
Italy 318, 330
Italian, 78
Ittrim Khola 123, 132, 144
Jachyaraj 131
Jackson, David P., 191n, 211n
Jad 40, 51, 97
Jagargaon (1370 m) 25
Jagati Singh 33, 34
Jagatipur (1432 m), 33, 34
Jagdula Peak (5815 m) 39
—Khola 70-72
Jahari 33
Jain Khan 157
Jaisi Brahmin 48, 59
Jajarkot 31, 32, 33-35, 36, 39, 40, 46, 69, 83, 121, 123, 127, 134-135, 137
—Khalanga (1220 m) 29, 33-35 133, 134-135, 136, 137, 139
Jaleswar (60 m) 303
Jaljala Gad 49
Jaljale (2133 m) 295
Jaluke (480 m) 29
Jamari Gad 23
Jamna, Kanchanpur, 17
Jamna (2520 m), Jumla, 67.
Jamu (244 m) 122, 127
Janai Purne 69, 261-62, 270, 341
Janak, King, 303
Janaki Mandir, Pl. XLIV b, 303
Janakpur (73 m) 292, 295, 303
—zone 296
Jancha (2377 m) 48
Jang (c. 3900 m), Pl. XXXII a, 115-16
—La (4523 m), Pl. VII b, 87
Jang Bahadur see Rana
Japan, 318
Japanese, 147, 162, 181, 188, 218, 228, 244, 312, 316, 320, 330, 347
Jarbuta 133
Jargeng Khola 229, 230, 233
Jarjan Chu 81,
Jarmi 43
Jarsa Danda (3190 m) 286, 287, 288
Jathang (3877 m) 279, 280
Jatibhir (2590 m) 47
Jathola (1520 m) 22,
Jawalakhel 116, 237
Jaya Yakshyamalla 262
Jayanagar, India 303
Jetha 3
Jewa (1700 m) 137
Jhankri 31, 172, 196, 251, 262
Jhapa 357–59, 360, 361,
Jhapa (76 m) 358
Jhapra 136, 142
Japrebagar 193
Jhari 65
—Khola 134
Jhawani (191 m) 250, 255
Jhhampan 93, 97
Jhite (1341 m) 241
Jhong Khola 212
Jhulaghat (700 m) 19, 20, 27
Jhupra Khola 122
Jhyakthang Chu 102, 104
Jhyangoi 102
Jimali (1380 m), 32
—Khola, 32
Jiri 268
Jitarimalla see Malla
Jiulo 44
Jogbani 358
Jogin Danda (2468 m) 275
Jogmai Khola 364
Johar 13
Jomosom (2710 m) 190, 199,
200, 204, 206, 209–211, 230
Joseph 249
Ju Gad 42, 66
Jubing (1828 m) 334
Juddha Shumsher, see Rana
Juharchan 208
Juliottar Khola 40
Jullunder, Punjab 160
Julung Chu, 74–75
Jumla, Pl. IIa, XXVa, 12, 26,
28, 29, 30, 31 33, 34, 35, 36,
37, 39–51, 54, 62, 65, 69, 85,
124, 129, 130, 132, 135, 136,
137, 141, 142, 143, 178, 211,
213, 216, 220, 307, 311
—Khalanga (2340 m), Pl. XXV b,
40, 42–43, 44, 46, 47, 49,
54, 57, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69,
70, 94, 119
Jumli 37, 38, 39, 46, 61, 80,
94, 142, 143
Junam (6932 m) 236
Jung Khola, 293,
Juplang Kharsa 80
Jyamnechaur (1463 m) 35
Kabargaon (1645 m) 183
Kabre (1830 m) 199, 200
Kachhare 245
Kachpachiya (191 m) 256
Kagate 265
Kabgeni (2810 m) 200, 212–213,
222
Kagmara Pass (5144 m) 72,
74, 76
—Peak 5961 m), Pl. XXIX b,
39, 67, 71, 72–74, 86
Kahule, see Luchhe Danda
Kahun (1443 m) 155, 159, 160,
161
—Khola 161
Kaigaon (2620 m) 71, 79
Kaike 85, 86
Kaikyu 201
Kailali 11, 24, 29
Kailas, Tibet, 93
Kairali, 126
Kakani (2063 m) 262, 278, 279, 281
Kakre Vihara, Pl. XXXIII b, 132–133
Kala Pathar (5545 m), Pl. XLVI a, 310, 317, 329
Kalabang (1310 m) 155
Kalabanjar 255
Kalagao (1430 m) 26
Kalapani (2530 m) 202
Kalchhe (1070 m) 123, 125
Kali 57
Kali Amji, 78
Kali Gandaki, Pl. XV b, XVI b, XLI a, 26, 50, 86, 91, 94, 159, 190, 191, 192, 193–222, 224, 227, 249, 252
Kali Khola, 161, 165
Kalika 188, 194
Kalimati (730 m) 123, 126, 131, 132, 144
Kalimpong, India, 113, 306
Kalyal Thakuri 50, 53
Kamala Khonch 302, 309, 358
Kamla Mai, see Maithan —River, 300, 302
Kambara, Naoko 181–183
—Tatsu 181–183
Kamero or Kamara Gauda 240
Kami 25, 46, 48, 90, 177, 178, 349, 354
Kammegoth (1005 m) 126
Kampa Dzong, Tibet 344, 345
Kanaksundari 49
Kanchanpur, 9, 15–17, 24, 29, 358–59
Kanchauni Lekh (6443 m) 75
Kandani Danda (940 m) 175
Kande (1700 m) 170, 171
Kandrang Garhi (1520 m) 10, Kang La, Taplejung 109 —(5321 m), Manang, 226, 231, Kangchenjunga (8598 m) 250, 314, 345
Kangra, India, 189
Kangso Rey 345–46
Kangtega (6685 m) 311, 312, 313, 335
Kangyur 62, 115, 221
Kanjerawla (6660 m) Pl. XXX b, 75, 81
Kanjiroba (6882 m) 39, 47, 71, 86, 312
Kankai river 363
Kansana Gad 27
Kansu, China 294
Kantipur see Kathmandu
Karambot (560 m) 298–99
Karan 57, 58, 60, 61, 80, 94, 201
Kargyupa 115, 116, 231
Kari Khola 89
Karkineta (1580 m) 192
Karma 80
Karmidanda (1249 m) 155
Karnali 38, 40, 43, 50, 51, 54, 57
Karnali river 11, 12, 13, 16, 25, 26, 121, 122, 127, 128, 129, 130, 133 —Zone 43, 50, 58, 122
Karputar (442 m) 181
Kartike Ghat (305 m), Pl. La,
Kartipura, Kumaon, 50
Karyolung (6181 m) 300, 307
Kasara (158 m) 254, 259
Kashmir, 42, 45, 133
Kaski 146, 157, 165, 171, 173, 174, 176, 178, 185, 188, 195, 226, 245, 255
Kaski Danda (1788 m), 161, 167, 171
Kaskikot 167, 171
Kasri 138
Katari (1911 m), 334
Kathayet 46
Kathe Khola 194
Kathepate (1791 m) 21
Kathkuwa (1400 m) 124, 125, 132, 144
—Valley 80, 146, 262, 276, 292, 304
Katihar, India 113
Katik (2990 m) 64
Katti Khola 138, 139
—Peak (2791 m) 138
—village (1280 m) 138, 139
Katyur 26
Kau Lekh (1890 m) 22, 24
Kaufmann, W., 343
Kaumari 156
Kauriala, Karnali, 11
Kawaguchi, Ekai 147, 218
Kawakita, Jiro 209, 223 n
Kedarnath 48
Keladihghat (307 m) 159
Kellas, A. M., 310
Kermi (2530 m) 98–99, 119
Kesang (3444 m) 212, 235
Kesar Dzong (4764 m) 219
Ketrak (4663 m) 309
Khadarjun (2590 m) 165, 174
Khadka 194, 245
—Chhetri 139
Khagal (3400 m) 98
Khalachaur 47
Khalanga, 42, 47
Khal Langna (3545 m) 66
Khaling Rai 343
Khallalbara (2480 m) 41
Khalte Tal 175
Kham, 309
Khampa 40, 68, 334
Khampa Tibet 347
Khamba Posha 80
Khampa 60, 61, 72, 101, 200, 201, 209, 210, 212, 213, 216, 219, 235, 284, 285, 286, 287
Khan 157
Khandbari (1068 m) 347, 249, 353
Khangjung (2209 m) 286, 287, 288
Khangsar (3733 m) 226, 228, 229, 230, 233
Khaniyoghat (760 m) 194
Khanti 203, 204
Khap 339
Khapre pass (4937 m) 70
Khar Pakhye 198
Khari Khola 335
Kharidhunga (2500 m) 295
Kharpu 95
Kharte (2529 m) 306, 334
Khasa (1737 m), 294, 295
Khasa 12, 26, 31, 33, 49, 50, 51, 61, 114, 246, 343
—Malla 49–50, 124, 133, 140
Khasan 36
Khasant 31
Khasya 80
Khasu, see Khasur
Khatyar Khola 54, 57
Khawa Lungba 99
Khe (2022 m), 60, 61, 62, Khe 225
Khencha (1190 m) 346
Khenwa Khola 351
Khilakpur (640 m) 29
Khilang (1740 m) 163, 164, 166, 169
Khilung see Khilang
Kimche (1606 m) 168, 169
Kimathangka 347–48, 349
Kimri (2880 m) 64
King George V, 250
Kipat 340, 346, 363
Kipat Vamswali 344, 345, 346
Khotang (1280 m) 334, 225, 344
Khudi (640 m) Kaski 175, 176
—(790 m) Lamjung Pl. XXXVII a 175, 184–85, 188, 236, 246
—Khol Pl. XXXVII a, 173, 184, 246
Khumbilha (5761 m) Pl. XLVa, 311, 313, 331
Khumbu 74, 301, 307–311, 347
Khumbu Glacier Pl. XLVI b, 315, 316–22, 326–30
—Tse (6640 m), Pl. XLVI b, XLVII b 318, 220, 329
Khumjung (3790 m) 307, 311–12, 331,
Khurkot (487 m) 300, 302
Khorpa (2132 m) 35
Khyu-Rangjan 80
Kichak 48
Kimche (1606 m) 168, 169
Kimathangka 347–48, 349
Kimri (2880 m) 64
King George V, 250
Kinloch, Capt., 301
Kipat 340, 346, 363
Kirant or Kiranti 245, 339, 343, 344–46, 354, 356, 362, 63,
Kirant Vamswali 344, 345, 346
Khotan, Sinkiang, 133
Khotang (1280 m) 334, 225, 344
Khokum-Kyarsa 80
Khokum-Kyarsa 80
Kholchhi 96, 97
Khombuwan 344
Khor Ke Mohan (136 m) 258
Khorke Khola 123, 125, 133
Khotan, Sinkiang, 133
Khudi (640 m) Kaski 175, 176
Kirantichhap (1320 m), 297
Kirkpatrick, William, 146
Klinu see Gilung
Klipre Pl. XXXVa, 164, 170, 238, 242
Klu-Chiuma 80
Klu-Ranjon 80
Kobang 203, 205
Koch 359–60
— Bishu 359
— Haria 359
— Nara Narayan 359
— Narsing, 359
Koch Bihar (Cooch Bihar) 359
Kodari (1828 m) 292, 293–95, 304,
Kohalpur (167 m) 94
Kohalpur-Surkhet Road, 94, 145
Koigen 62
Koilabas (152 m) 10, 29
Komron, see Ghamrang
Kon (Ghotane) 245
Kollenikanr (1000 m) 130
Kond, see Ghandruk
Konkhu (2682 m) 340
Kopche 353, 354
Kopchepani 200
Kore La (c. 4, 400) 219, 222
Kosi River 273, 356
Kot Khola 135
Kotagaon, Ghandruk 169
— Jumla 28, 49
Kotila, Baitadi 24
Kotila (2560 m), Jumla 47
— Gad 23
Krachalla 50
Kromai 245
Kubhinde Bhanjyang (1158 m) 191
Kudu (762 m) 32
Ku- gi, 244
Kuine (234 m) Surkhet, 121, 122, 127
Kuine, Kaski, 163
Kuki Langna (4900 m) 119
Kulang-Anjo 80
Kulung Rai, Pl. XLVIIIa, 257, 338–39, 340, 343
Kumak Lekh (2349 m) 30, 32
Kumal 175, 251, 255, 298–99, 350
Kumal Gaon (448 m) 349–50
Kumaon, India, 13, 25, 26, 50, 113, 147, 189
Kumbheswar 262
Kumbum 103
Kunchha 178
Kundahar (853 m) 161, 174, 175
Kunde (3840 m), Pl. XLVa, 307, 311
Kun-dga-grol-mchog, 190
Kushemushe (3906 m) 135
Kusma (880 m) 193
Kuta Ghat (305 m) 122, 126, 128, 129
Kuti, Tibet, 294, 295
Kutumsang (2471 m) 274
Kuwakot 24
Kuyepani (762 m) 32
Kwangde (6187 m) 307, 311, 313, 331
Kyangjin Gomba (3750 m), Pl. XIXa, 279, 280–81, 283, 285,
Kyanglaphak, 72
Kyaun 305 m 351, 352
Kyirong, Tibet, 263, 264, 281, 282, 287, 294
Kyoh Theb 233
Kyu-La 202
Ladakh, India, 220
Lade (1700 m) 144
Laure 177
Laijading Lekh 105
Lakharpata 1220 m 127, 128-129
Lakshmipur 620 m 133
Lalchan 208
Lama 6, 50, 61, 77, 95, 100, 103, 115, 173, 196, 223, 232, 237, 245, 265, 289, 312
Lama, Chchichhim 49
—Chhogya Tsering 103
—Gulu (Khumbu) 313
—Gulu (Limi) 117
—Gyabu 103
—Gyalpo 232
—Rinzin Dorje 268, 289
—Sanga Dorje 312, 313
—Shang 233
—Shyamjor 115, 116
—Tonjan 100
—Tsawi 312, 314
—Tsering 6
Lamagaon 184
Lamaism 48, 58, 201, 202, 203, 225, 245, 339
Lamathada 28, 48, 49
Lamathar 163
Lambar Gad, 83
Lamichhane Subba 184, 205, 238
Lami Danda 250, 306
—Durbar 182, 188, 226
—Himal (6985 m) 159, 163, 173, 178, 235
Lamjura Pass 3529 m 307
Lamka Langna (c. 4,300 m) 110, 111
Lamobagar, 295, 296, 297
Lampata 1036 m 243
Lampatan 762 m 160
Lamphera 48
Lamra (2310 m) 43
Lamri 2520 m 67, 68, 69, 132
Lamsangu 792 m Bhojpur 346
—Sindhu-Palchok, 293
Lamuni 1830 m 23
—Gad 25
Land reform 187, 360-61
Land use 15-16, 44-45, 137, 150, 152, 154, 251, 358
Landon, Perceval, 147, 149, 150
Landruk 1610 m 168, 169
Lang, Ann, 311
Lang, S. D. R., 311
Langa Lekh (3507 m) 44
Langoi 102
Langshisa (4080 m) 280, 281, 282
Langtang, Pl. XIX b, 17, 267, 268, 278, 279–86, 288, 291, 295
Langtang Glacier 282–83, 284–85
—Kholo, Pl. XLIII b, 268, 277, 278, 279, 280–87
—Lirung (7246 m) Pl. XIX a, XLIII a, 174, 265, 268, 277, 278, 279, 281, 282, 288
—National Park 284–86
—village (3350 m) 279, 283–84
Langu Khola 59, 63, 79
Language 6, 26, 30, 36, 50, 59, 80, 85–86, 114, 123, 142, 165–66, 201, 206, 207, 213, 236, 238, 245, 246, 265, 344, 345, 359, 364
Lapche Pass (c. 5668 m) 117
Laptse 296
Larjung (2560 m) 203, 204, 217
—Kholo 203
Larke Khola 297
—La (5214 m) 184, 227, 238
Lati Koili (640 m) 132
Lauribina East (4608 m) 272
—West (3932 m) 269, 272
Lawam Khola 30
Lawamjula (880 m) 30
Laxman, 303
Laz Gomba 117
Leguwa Ghat (274 m) 352
—Kholo 352
Leh, Ladakh 113
Lekh Rangchi (2070 m) 35
Lekhgaon (1520 m) 126, 131
Lepcha 346, 362, 363, 364, 365
Lete, Lower (2430 m) 201, 202
—Upper (2530 m) 202
—Gad, 65
Leti Langna (3383 m) 70
Leuti (274 m) 355
—Khola 355
Lha Phewa 203–204
Lha Shamma (6411 m) 73
Lhasa, Tibet 113, 115, 207, 221, 282, 293
Lho La, (6006 m), Pl. XLVI b, 320–21, 329,
—Tse (8501 m) 313, 315, 324, 329
Lhotse Shar (8383 m) 311, Lhosar 103
Lichhavi 49
Lidung Khola 340
Likhu Khola, Nawakot 262, 263, 275, 277, 278, 279
—Solu 307
Limbuwan 344, 363
Limi 96, 103, 106, 110–118
Limsa (1670 m) 36
Ling Chu 117
Lingyap 85
Lingtren (6697 m), Pl. XLVI b, XLVII b, 317, 320
—East (6640 m) 320
Lin Gad 47
Linlithgow, Lord 254
Lirung Glacier 281, 283
Valley 281, 283
Lish Gad 47
Litakot (2286 m) 43
Litigation, 5, 42, 68
Lo Monthang 206, 219-22
Lobuje Chubung, 315, 330
—hut (4930 m) 316, 230
—glacier 316
—peak (6145 m) 315
Lodiya Khola 361, 362
Lohore Khola 139-40, 141-42, 143
Lokeswara 123
Loli Gad 23,
Longstaff, T. G., 148
Lorpa (2441 m) 67
Lotharkot (1121 m) 129
Lothar Khola 251
Lubra (2981 m) 206, 211, 212, 238,
Lubra Tashi Namgyal, 211,
Lubuchela (5626 m) 118
Luchhe Danda (2145 m) 262
Lucknow, U. P., 19, 27, 113, 172
Ludi 244
Ludwig, Emil 176
Lukla (2834 m) 306, 307, 310, 330 331, 332, 333
Luma (2920 m) 68, 69
Lumbini (96 m) 221
Lumbu Lekh, 70
Lumle (1520 m) 170
Lumsa, Sinja Pl. II b, 53
Lumsa, (1950 m) Mugu, 58
Lung, (1828 m) 275
Lungkhuwa Khola 346
Lungu, see Betravati
Lurku (2460 m) 48, 49, 57
Lyang-Lyang (1371 m) 299-300
M. C. (Military Cross), 170
McDougal, Charles 14, 257, 339
Mabo Hang see Hang
Mabu Langna (3040 m) 94, 122, 141, 142
MacFarlane, Alan, 161
MacGregor of Roro 44
Maclean, Calum I., 44,
Machhapuchhre (6697 m), Pl. XIa, XXXIV a, XXXV b, 148, 155, 159, 165, 167, 171, 178
Machina, Burma 361
Madhi 255
Madi Khola 107, 162-65, 173, 176, 179, 252, 294
Madkhu (1530 m) 262
Maiduwa (330 m) 78, 79, 82
Magar, Purna Ale 363
—Raghu Rana 345-46
Maghe Sankranti 196, 249-52, 261, 300, 302,
Mah (2530 m). Pl. XXVII a, 58, 59
Mahabharat 48, 160
Mahabharat Lekh Pl. XX b,
10, 28, 30, 253, 254, 266, 298, 299, 300–301, 303, 354, 362
Mahabhir 197–98
Mahadev 156, 261, 270, 271, 342
Mahadev Khola 298
Mahakal 100, 115, 221, 231
Mahakali river 15, 18, 19, 25, 26, 27, 357, 365
Mahakali Zone, 16, 17, 25
Mahaluxmi 156
Maharigaon (3124 m) 62, 70
Mahat or Mahatara 68, 71
Mahatara, Phurba 71
Mahendranagar (270 m) 9, 15–17, 358
Mahesh Khola 10, 250
Maheswari 156
Mahila 3, 6
Mahotari 358
Mai Bhagawati 364
Mai Khola 362, 364.
Maikot (2329 m) Pl. VIIIa 85, 87, 88, 89
Maina (2060 m) 36, 40
Mainachuli (551 m) 361
Maini Mela 309
Maini (2680 m) 62
Maini (457 m) 300, 302
Maitreya 123, 218, 220, 221
Majeri (1670 m) 138
Majhgaon 169
Majhli 176, 249, 251, 253, 254, 255, 258, 299
Majh Kirant 344, 345
Majhthan (1060 m) 176
Majhuwa Khaireri (304 m) 247
Majrikanta, Kumaon, 19
Majulepatan (4200 m), Pl. XXXII b, 116
Makalu (8461 m), Pl. XLIX a, 312,
Makwanpur 356
Maladeh 24
Mala Kang see Annapurna III
Malaka Danda 128
Malakot (518 m) 263
Malaria 124, 125, 127, 153, 253, 255
Malashri 186
Malaya or Malayasis 164, 177, 186, 228, 353
Malbase (914 m) 362
Malde (1671 m) 23
Malebum 195
Malebum, Parbat, 146
Malemchi (2529 m) 268, 274
Malika 13, 21, 23, 48, 51, 135
Malika Lekh (2547 m) 135, 136, 137
Maling (1430 m) 179, 181, 183, 246
Mallaj 195
Mallory, George Leigh 320
Malla 35, 43, 49, 53, 57, 140, 195, 220, 271
—Aditya 263
—Jitari 50, 263
—Prabhu 157
—Pratap Narayan 194
Malta 32
Maluka Khola 138
Malung (871 m) 265
Malyangdi Khola 192
Manakamana (1314 m) 247
Manang (3505 m) Pl. XVIII a, 224–31, 241
Manang district, 223–40
Manang Valley, Pl. XXXVIII a, XXXVIII b, 116, 163, 185, 188, 212, 214, 215, 223–34, 243, 244
Manangba 225–228, 232, 234, 236, 239
Manasarovar Lake, Tibet 93, 96, 106, 113, 120
Manaslu I (8125 m), 1, 151, 159, 173, 174, 183, 224, 226, 236, 237, 244
Mandhara (3200 m) 68, 69
Mandhara Khamba, Pl.Va, 68, 132
Mandu Lungpa 82
Mane Danda, 298
Mane Peme 109
Mangalgarhi (670 m) 132
Mangalpur (185 m) 256
Mangma Khola 352
Mangri (2220 m), Pl.XXVII b, 54, 58, 59, 60, 64
Manigaon (1196 m) 264
Manilekh (1700 m) 26
Manpur (640 m) 133
Mapping 96, 105, 110, 231, 279
Ma-pa 85
Mao Tse-tung, 294
Maori, Carlo, 330
Mardi Khola 167
Margor Langna (4029 m) 95
Marin Dun 303, 358
Market 296, 297, 303, 308, 310, 334, 353–54, 360, 364–65
Marma 20
Marma Khola 32
Marpha (2670 m) 155, 208–209, 210, 217, 219, 268
Marphali 208
Marsyangdi river Pl. XXIII b XXXVIII a, XXXVIII b, 1, 5, 173, 174, 183, 189, 223, 224, 229–98, 251
Marsyangdi valley, Pl. XLI b, 182, 184, 225, 227, 229–47
Marwari 360
Masta 26, 40, 43, 48, 51, 57, 68, 71, 83, 84, 88, 95, 96
Matela (790 m) 68, 142
Matepani (853 m) 160
Matha Garhi 140
Matterhorn (4468 m) 148
Mattikhan (1533 m), Pl. XXII b, 155, 157
Matwali 40
Matwali Chhetri, Pl. X b, XXIX a, 40, 43, 47, 48, 51, 52, 57, 68, 65, 68, 70, 71, 79, 83, 85
Maubheri Gad 26
Mauja (1371 m) 161, 166
Maukedhunga (1980 m) 22, 23
Mauni (1280 m) 19
Maure Langna (3916 m) 70
Mayam Danda (3336 m) 235
Mayandi Khola 195, 196, 273
Mazeaud, Pierre 330,
Mech 359, 360
Mechi river 357, 358, 360, 363, 365
Medini Varma 50
Meghauli (137 m) 256–57,
Melpani (1524 m) 125, 130
Melung (1585 m) 297
Mendok Ti 81
Mera Kharka 339
Mera Peak (6437 m) 335, 336
Mere Danda (3353 m) 274
Mesokanto La (5089 m) 230
Metha Langna (3773 m) 95
Mhili, see Maling
Mhuja, see Mauja
Micha (2431 m) 44, 46, 47
Midim Khola 179–182, 183
Migration, 29, 62, 86, 124–125, 127, 226, 237, 255
Milestone, 42, 65, 92, 300
Milichaur 55
Milingo (3820 m) 314
Milkang (Chhayanath) 63
Miller, Maynard M., 324
Mitti Khola 298
Mindrabali Gad 48
Mining 36, 54, 63, 195, 299
Mirhancha 157
Miristi Khola 199, 230
Miteri Sangu, see Friendship Bridge
Mithila 303
Miyahara, Takashi 331
Miyaki, Yasuzawa 181–183
Modi Khola, Pl. XXXV b, 165, 167–71, 191, 192, 193
Modibeni (830 m) 191
Mohammedan 359
Molla of Tsarang (Charang) 220
Mongoloid 12, 265, 344
Mohariya (1820 m) 168, 169, 170
Mongba 114
Monpa 363
Monthang, see Lo Monthang
Montpellier, France, 207
Morang 344, 345, 252, 356, 358, 363
Morris, C. J., 347
Mount Everest (8848 m) Pl. XLVII a, XLIX a, 250, 279, 305, 309, 310, 312, 313, 314, 315, 317, 320, 321, 322, 324, 326, 327, 328, 329, 336
Mountaineering 72–75, 305–311, 334, 336
Muchhal Patan (4730 m) 37, Muchu (3100 m) 100, 101, 103
Mue Danda (2260 m) 351
Muga (1250 m) 352—Khola, 352
Mugal 61–62, 80, 143
Mughal 303
Mugling (218 m) 247
Mugu, Pl. XXVIII b, 49, 52, 56, 57, 58, 61, 67 69, 72, 93, 94, 11, 131, 310, 311
Mugu Karnali, Pl. III b, 56–65, 93
—Khola, Pl. IV a, 60–63
—village, Pl. IV b, 60–62
Muguma 80
Muktinath (3749 m) 212, 216
Mukut (Mu-Kot) 86
Mulghat (305 m) 355
Mulkharka 276
Mumi 265
Muller, Fritz 319, 320n
Munda 359
Mundhum 345
Mungba (1859 m), 288
Mungji (3414 m) 230, 231
Mungri (1060 m) 177
Munigaon (2860 m) 40, 41
Murma 54
Murray, W. H., 313
Music 129, 194, 186, 211, 225, 251, 342, 343-44
Musical instrument 72, 77, 129-30, 219
Musikot 33
Muslim 359
 Mussorie, India, 129
Mustang 40, 68, 101, 113, 190, 199, 200, 206, 207, 210, 211, 213, 216-222,
Mustang Raja, Pl. XL b, 191, 218, 219-22
Mustang town, Pl. XVII b, 203, 212, 214, 216 217, 219-22, 224, 225
Myagdi 69, 90, 196
Myardi Khola 240
N. E. F. A. (North-East Frontier Agency) 363
Nabruong (2740 m) 203
Nagoraja 50
Nagari, 123
Nagarjun (2096 m) 174
Nagdanda (1443 m) 171
Naiche (1402 m) 239, 246
Naini Tal, India, 69
Naje (2164 m) 237, 239, 240, 241
Najing (2651 m) 336
Najre (1463 m) 183
Nakhira (754 m) 32, 33
Naksalband Pl. XXIII b, 361
Nakum 203
Nalakankar (c. 6635 m) 105, 111
Nalamukh (914 m) 154, 155
Nalma (1212 m) 179, 181-83, 246
—Danda (1699 m) 181-183
—Phedi (570 m) 179, 180, 181
Namasung 221
Nambar Nabje 114
Namche (3440 m) 306, 308-11, 312, 331, 333, 334, 336, 344,
Namdo 82, 83
Namgyal, Dorje 220
Namgyal Gomba 219
—Lakhang, 77
Namja La (c. 4335 m) 60
Namjia 113
Namobaudha 80
Nampa (6754 m) 12,
Namsaling (1219 m) 364
Namun Bhanjyang (5100 m), 159, 163, 237, 240
—glacier, 240
Nandeswanra (860 m) 185, 246
Nangpa La (5776 m) 309, 310, 336
Napani (2890 m) 39-40
—Khola 39, 40
Naphukuna (3020 m) 70, 72
Napoleon Buonaparte, 176
Nar 226, 232, 236
—Khola 231, 232, 236
—La (c. 5700 m), 226
Nar Narayan (Koch) 359
Narakot (2250 m) 47, 48
Nara Langna (4570 m), Pl. IX b, 101, 102, 104-108, 109, 110
Narayan 155
Narayani river 10, 252-53, 256, 258,
Narayanghat (182 m) 253, 254, 256
Narcheng (1990 m) 199
Narsang 203
Narsing Khola 214
Natila (1000 m) 298
National Planning Commission, 294
Nau Kund 271
Nau Lekh (6357 m) 335
Naubise (914 m) 250
Naudanda (1060 m) 171, 191
Naughar 22
Nauki (3041 m) 120
Naulapur (670 m) 133
Nauthar (2760 m) 90
Nawakot (944 m) 157, 166, 263, 275
Nawalpur, 10, 258
Nayagaon (1463 m) 242
Naya Muluk 10
Nayo-Kongla 85
Nepal 10, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 25,
26, 39, 40, 52, 61, 90, 93, 96,
101, 108, 141, 146, 147, 149,
153, 165, 170, 173, 188, 206,
221, 227, 264, 268, 280, 282,
294, 305, 309, 319, 321, 333,
345, 347, 348, 353, 361, 362,
363, 365,
—Red Cross Society 9, 19, 20,
250
—Tea Development Corporation 364
Nepal-China border, 108, 117,
282, 293, 294
XLI a, 197, 201 222,
—North (7061 m), Pl. XXXIX
b, 230
Nilkantha 269
Nisam Mang 345
Nisi 90
Nishioka, Keiji, 208
Nokcha 339
Norway 319
Noyce, Wilfrid 148, 305n, 315, 321
Nuchni Rong 245
Numbur (6959 m) 299, 300, 307, 312
Nunkhani (1036 m) 242
Nupri 227, 232, 237,
Nuptse (7879 m) 313, 315, 316, 317, 321, 324, 326, 329
Nurkum (2743 m) 340
Nuwakot (1535 m), Pl. XXXVI a, 154, 156–67, 165, 191
Nwat, see Arma~a
Nyalu Langna (4900 m) 118, 119
Nyeshang see Manang valley
Nyi La (3952 m) 216
Nyima Rani 206
Nyingmapa 60
Nyor Gad 65
O. B. I. (Order of British India), 170
The Observer 321
Okharpatai (3100 m) 52–53
Oldfield, Henry Ambrose, 147, 149
Oppitz, Michael 309
P. L. A. (Peoples’ Liberation Army), 294,
Pachbhaiya Danda (853 m) 174–76
Padampur (657 m) Dang 29
Padampur (664 m), Surkhet 133
Paddy cultivation 45, 56, 58, 67, 69, 71, 83, 97, 197, 199, 241, 288, 297,
Padma Sambhava 80, 103, 201 220
Pahara Garhi (2860 m) 40, 70
Pahari, Dharm Bahadur 31
Pahiro Thaplo 200
Pai 167, 265
Paigon, see Pasgaon
Paje, see Parje
Pakdwar (1981 m) 198
Pakhribas 352, 354
Pali 22
Pali Langna (4400 m) 119
Paldor (5959 m) 268, 278
Palpa 13, 146, 195, 252, 253
Palung (1758 m) 250
Palungtar (152 m) 189, 247
Panauti (1420 m)
Panch Gaon 206 207 210 211 212
Panchkhal (871 m)
Panch Pokhari (4665 m) 337
Panchase Lekh (2508 m) 191
Panchkate pass (3170 m) 35
Panchkhal (871 m) 292
Panchmane (1676 m) 8
Panchthar 344 361
Panda Khola 212
Pandavas 48
Pande, Bansraj 157
—Damodar 363....
—Kalu 124
Pandoli Gad 27
Pandusera (2370 m) 38
Panga Khola 212
Pangboche (3900 m) 312, 314, 330
Pangu Peak (3436 m) 335, 336
Pangboche (2245 m) 274
Pangum (2895 m) 335, 336, 337
Panidhalo Khola 87
Pankhure (2490 m) 41
Pannachan 208
Panpu 57
Pantnagar, India 84
Parajul Khola 142
Parasi 10
Parbat 157, 192, 193, 194, 195, 200
Parbat 80
Pardi (818 m) 152, 153, 154, 155, 157
—Khola 155
Parila 83, 85
—Lower (2370 m) 83
—Upper (3100 m) 83
Paris, 207
Parje (1920 m) 192, 163, 166
Parle 85
Paro (Bhutan) 208
Pasa Gad, 33, 135, 135
Pasang Kambache, Pl. XLa, XL b, 190 194, 207–208, 211, 243, 244,
Pasang, Lama, 78
Pasaon (1645 m) 178, 224, 246
Pashi 209
Pashupati, 364
Pashupatinath, 80
Pasramu 164
Pass
Patal Gad 69, 70
Patan, Baitadi 22
—Kathmandu 80, 262
Pati Bhanjyang (1737 m) 263, 275
Patighar (330 m) 350
Patna, Bihar, 18, 305
Patrasi (6254 m), Pl. I b, 39
Patu Khola 28, 29
Paundi Khola 246
—Dhik (518 m) 246, 247
Paungda Danda (4669 m), Pl. XXXXIII b, 234
Peak 29 (7835 m) 159, 183, 243, 244
—38 (7589 m) 329
—41 (6654 m) 335
—43 (6769 m) 335
Pelepang (823 m) 354
Pelma 89
Pelma Khola 89
Pelmang (1828 m)
Pension 6, 151, 162, 163, 169
Pere (2710 m) 69, 70
Pet Khola 31
Peterson, David 323, 324, 327
Phadke Khola 297
Phaguna Dhuri (4572 m) 90
—Langna (3900 m) 90
Phakding (2611 m) 307
Phalabang (1370 m) 30
Phalam (1980 m) 137, 138
Phalangu Khola 264, 291.
Phalebas (762 m) 193
Phalek (1767 m) 290
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phalesangu (632 m)</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phalong Karpo (4343 m)</td>
<td>315, 330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phangduwa (2041 m)</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phangmu</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phangmu-Ngalju</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phedap</td>
<td>345, 356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phedangma</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phedi</td>
<td>336, 340, 341-43, 346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phedigaon, Dhampus</td>
<td>167, 171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pheriche (4243 m)</td>
<td>306, 315, 319, 330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phewa Tal, Pl. XI b</td>
<td>148, 149, 155, 171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phinikanda (1310 m)</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phokpa Singun</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoksi Gad</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoksing Danda (1134 m)</td>
<td>XXXIV a, 158, 159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoksumdo Tso, Pl. VIa</td>
<td>43, 76 78-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoktang Lungma</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phorche (3840 m)</td>
<td>313, 319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phu</td>
<td>232, 236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phu Chu</td>
<td>112, 113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phulas (1600 m)</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phulbang (1676 m)</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phulbari (883 m)</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phulchoki (2762 m)</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phulung Danda (2449 m)</td>
<td>287, 288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phunglung Chu</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phunki (3250 m)</td>
<td>312, 330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--Glacier</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phuphal Dah (4100 m)</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phunphun Chu</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
161, 174-76, 179, 184
Polam (3200 m) 78, 79, 82
Polyang Khola 334
Pong Kyu, 209
Ponju, see Ghanpokhara
Ponpo 80
Popti La 348
Population 24, 57, 79, 85, 93, 103, 115, 116, 157, 161, 173, 225, 267, 284, 359
—increase 16, 153, 187, 255, 356, 359
Poudyal, Lekh Nath 175
Pradhan, Prachand 94, 106, 108, 120
Pragjnaparamita 218
Prince of Wales,
—Edward VII 15
—Edward VIII 254
Prithvi Rajmarg 154, 247, 264, 294
Prithvimalla 28, 48, 50
Puchhagraon (2400 m) 89
Puidi, see Bhirpustun
Puiya (3400 m) 100
Puiyan (2773 m) 333, 334, 335
Pujargaon (1680 m) 25
Pukunthali 245
Pun, 88. 198
—,Tal Bahadur 197
Pundi, 208
Punga Lekh 47
Pungmo (3200 m) 75, 76-77, 79, 83
—Khola 74, 77, 82
Pungmo Lama, Pl. V b, 77
Punnel 208
Purang, Tibet, 50, 105. 220
Purangba 114
Purano Mugu 61
Purbar g 87
Purchaudi 20, 21, 23-25
—Gad 23, 25
Putilikhet (700 m) 156, 191
Putha Hinuchuli (7246 m) 84, 86, 87, 89
Puwa (2680 m) 59,
Puwamai Khola, 364
Pyuthan 29, 127
Ra, 129
Radok, Tibet 345
Rahal Khola 87, 88
Raj, Pl. XLIX b, 334, 237;39, 341, 342 343, 344-46, 348, 349, 354
—Bijjay Narayan 356
—Buddhi Karna 356
Raghu Rana, see Magar
Raikhaliyan 29
Rainastar (590m) 189,
Rajapur 113, 122, 143
Rajbanshi 259-60
Rajbhandary, Batuk 357
—Narayan Prasad 209-10
Raji 128
Rajigao (760 m) 142
Rajpur Road, Dehra Dun, 329
Rakhu (1610 m) 196
Rama 303
Ramadi (1150 m) 155
Ramakrishna Tol 154
Ramanagar 303
Ramatagn 303
Rambroug (4045 m) 179
Ramche (1780 m) 265, 275, 290
Ramche Khola, Lamjung 181
—Surkhet 131
Ramechhap (1432 m) 298, 299, 300, 304
Ramghat 154, 160
Rampur (182 m) 137, 256
Ramrikanda (1460 m) 125, 131, 143
Rana 13, 15, 34, 35, 42, 275, 304, 353
—Bam Bahadur 264
—Chandra Shumsher 21, 34, 254
—Gopal Shumber 94
—Jang Bahadur 15, 17, 61, 150, 254
—Juddha Shumsher 29, 227, 259
—Lekh Bikram 56
—Pudma Janga Bahadur, 15n
—Prabal 50
—Ratna 94, 98, 100, 106, 108, 109, 120, 279
—Tej Bikram 69
—Tharu 15
Ranajor Khola 299
Ramashree 114, 115
Rang Ghat 122, 127
Rangachaur 37
Ranga Gad 36, 37
Rangeli, 344
Rangethanti (910 m) 191
Rani Gomba see Tashi Chholing
Ranighat (361 m) 122, 126
Ranimata (2258 m) 132, 143, 144
Ranipouwa, Humla 106
—Myagdi 196
—Nawakot 262, 263–291
—Pokhara 154
Ranjitkar, Govind 106
Ranma 88
Ranukunabara (2320 m) 47, 48
Rapti Dun 10, 250–60
—Khola, Chitawan 10, 250–51, 253, 254, 346, 257, 259–60
—Dang Dekohuri 10, 11
—Road 250–51
—Zone 29
Rara 43, 52–56, 57, 95
Rara Dah (2980 m), Pl. III a, 54–55, 65
—village (3040 m) 54, 55, 56
Rastriya Panchayat 190, 266, 288, 347
Rasuwa 214, 245, 266, 333
—Garhi 267, 268, 287
Ratain (609 m) 177, 178
Ratmata Pouwa (3600 m) 39
Rato Khola 320
Raulakedar Dhar (2540 m) 22
Raute 127–128, 129, 130, 139
Rautbensii, 270
Rawal 46, 48, 68, 71
Rawat 68
Rayamajhi, Shyam 21–27
Rayelchaur (1097 m) 161
Red Indian, 155
Rekcha (1220 m) 121
Religion 51, 68, 71, 76–77, 85,
Remote Areas Development Board 197, 200
Resettlement 16-17, 29, 82-83, 90, 122, 124-125, 127, 172, 155, 302, 358, 360-361
Reu Khola 254, 256-57, 259
Revenue 57-58, 69, 125, 134, 141, 255, 267
Rhoten, see Lalchan
Rianchi (3000 m) 82, 83
Rigda Gad, 58
Rildi 245
Rimi (2900 m) 71, 86
Rimjia 113
Rindang (1645 m) 242
Ringmo (3627 m), Pl. XXXa, XXX b, 71, 73 78-82, 83
Rinimoksha Tal, 69
Rinzin Ling 113, 114-115
Ripley, Dillon 121
Ripumalla 124
Riri (478 m) 26, 91
Rithepani (823 m) 159
Riusa (3041 m) 59
Rinzin Dorje see Lama
River name 26, 142, 165, 166, 201, 212, 267, 292, 286, 298, 344
—terrace 64, 160, 193, 199, 201, 242, 243, 246-247, 263, 287, 291, 293, 350
—training 262, 278
Road 94, 125, 145, 154, 247,
Sabe, see Sabet
Sabet 166
Sabha 163
Sabhaya Khola 349, 350
Sabje Kang, see Annapurna II
Sagar Kyarsa 80
Sagarmatha see Mount Everest
Sahasradhara 193
Sahila 6
Sailung Lekh (3159 m) 297, 299
Saimal Shahi, see Shahi
Sainju, Mohan Man 279
Saipal (7035 m) 11, 12, 99, 101, 104, 105
Sajghat (320 m) 122
Saka 46, 48, 131, 132, 209
Sakyamuni 114, 115, 218, 221, 314
Salaura (601 m) 29
Saldang 72
Sali Nadi 156
Salki, see Tulachan
Salleri (2438 m) 31, 334
Sallyan 10, 29, 30, 34
Sallyan Bazar (1530 m) 30-31, 32, 138
Sallyantar 350
Salma (1820 m) 137, 138
—Khola 137
Salpa Bhanjyang (3358 m) 334, 340-41
—Pokhari (3444 m) 341, 342, 343, 344
Salt trade, 62, 86, 99, 100, 103, 113, 123-124, 163, 195, 227, 236, 238, 287, 309, 334
Samal 31, 33
Samantbhadra 2131
Samar (3292 m) 215
Samari 244-45
Samba Gomba 206,
Samela (2190 m) 36
San 209
Sanam (2834 m) 340
Sanga Dorje, see Lama
Sangda La (5110 m) 212
Sangla Ing 356
Sangram Karki 18, 26
Sanguri (1295 m) 345, 355
Sanischare (149 m) 360, 361
Sanjaba (1524 m) 244, 246
Sankha Langna (4693 m) 99, 100
Sankhu, 295
Sankhuwa Sabha, 349
Sano Bheri 91
Sano Thimi 365
Sanphe (609 m) 9
Sansari Devi 161
Sansari Bhamya 140
Sanskrit 196, 249, 252, 328
Santhal Pargana, India, 350
Sanu Khola 342, 344
Sapt Gandaki 250, 252
Saptari 358
Sarab Lama, 220
Sarankot (1591 m) 155, 158, 171, 172
Sardal River, Mahakali 18
—,Salyan 30, 31, 32, 123
Sardu Khola 255
Sarkang 62
Sarki 31, 35, 46, 48, 354
Sarlahi 358
Saraswati 84, 164
Saraswati Kund (4054 m) 269
Saru Gad 35, 36, 136,
Sat Thaple 103
Satar 259, 360
Sataun 157, 195
Satbanj (2070 m) 21
Sate Gad 58,
Sati Ghat (487 m) 349
Satmuhane (640 m) 152
Satrajit see Chokthup Barphong-ga
Sattale (1402 m) 240, 241
Satu La (3170 m) 335, 337
Satyarupa 131
Sauka 25
Saurah (195 m) 259
Saure Khola 87
Saurung (2560 m) 194, 203
Sawane Danda (3089 m) 346
Sayle, Murray 321, 322, 323, 324, 325,
Scarr, Josephine 74, 78
Schneider, Erwin, 322
School, 6, 84, 95, 100, 102, 170, 184, 186, 188, 191, 192, 193, 194, 206, 211, 239, 267, 290, 293, 360
Schulthess, Emil 268
Sechi Langna (4480 m) 119
Sekelj, Tibor 148
Seleghat (457 m) 300
Selima Chu 118
—Tso (4600 m) 118, 119
Sen, Bihang, 253
—Harkumardatta 253
—Kamadatta 356
—Karna 345
—Lohang 356
—Mukund 194, 253
Seng Khola 87, 89
Sera (880 m) 184
Sera (3,500 m) Tibet, 105, 106, 108
Se-rib 207, 211
Serok (2620 m) 59
Seti Dobhan (762 m) 191
—Khola 191
—River, Pokhara 146, 149, 159, 159, 160, 161, 165, 166, 252
—Doti, Pl. XXIIIa, XXIII b, 12
—Valley 12, 149, 171
Seti Zone 11, 14
Shadu (1060 m), 141
Shah 157
Shah, Dip Narayan 34
—Drabya 188
—Gajendra, 34
—Harihar 34
—Jang Bahadur 34
—Mahendra B.B., 21, 52, 55, 84
—Prithvi Narayan 31, 34, 715, 263, 289, 296
—Rajendra Bikram 34
—Ranbhim 31
—Ran Bahadur 34, 227, 363
Shahar Tara (2630 m) 85
Shahi 157
Shahi, Dip 13
—Kalu, 182, 188
—Pratap 132
—Saimal 97
—Sobhan 50
—Vikram 97
—Lekh (1611 m) 20
Shaligram 212
Shama Chhuling Gomba, XX-VIII a, 60–61
Shardanagar (171 m) 168, Sharma, Bishnu Prasad 321
—Gopal 47
—Ramesh, 9, 19, 21
Shen-rab 76, 77
Sherchan, 203, 205
Sheopuri Lekh (2731 m) 275–76, 277
Sherpa, Ang Kaji 331
—Ang Mingma 330
—Ang Tsering 318
—Danu 318
—Dawa Tenzing 314, 331
—Ila Tashi 325
—Kanchha 307, 311, 316, 318
—Konje Chumbi 311
—Nyima Sundar 333
—Lhakpa 182
—Pasang 327, 328
—Phu Dorje 311–12
—Sange 334
—Sonam Girme 322, 323, 324–25, 331
Shigatse, Tibet 207, 268
Shikhar 41
Shikariba 254
Shipton, Eric 314, 320, 336
Shisha Pangma (8213 m) 277, 279, 282–83
Shiva 60, 80, 132, 142, 184, 195, 196, 261, 269–70, 271
Shivaratri 300
Shrestha, Tirtha Bahadur 90
Shyabru (2194 m) 268, 280, 285, 286, 287, 288
—Bensi (1249 m) 278, 287, 288
Shyakpu Langna (4236 m) 99
Shyangboche (3833 m) 311, 313, 331
Sialkhol (790 m) 32, 33, 134
Sibuje (2560 m) 336
Siddhartha Rajmarga 154, 157, 190, 191
Sikh 228
Sikha 198
Sikkim 339, 349, 361, 362, 363
Siklis (1981 m) 160, 162–63, 166, 168, 169, 170
Silgarhi, 9, 12, 13, 14
Silguri, West Bengal, 113, 365
Silu me 262
Sim Bhanjyang (2487 m) 250
Simalchaur (792 m), Kaski 154, 159
—(780 m) Lamjung 184
Sime Kronh 234
Simikot (2940 m), Pl. IX a, 93, 94, 95–96, 102, 106, 116, 118, 120
Simla, India, 31
Sindhu-Palchok 275, 295
Sindhu Khola 275
Sindhuli 297, 300–02
—Garhi (1463 m) 300–301
—Madi (518 m) 300, 301, 304
Sing Gomba 268, 289
Singalila ridge 353
Singapore 167, 186, 228
Singh, 36
Singh Thakuri, 36, 71
Singu, see Usta
Sining, China 294
Sinja 28, 46, 47–50, 55, 57, 71, 124, 206,
—Khola 47–49, 51, 65
—Valley 47–49, 144
Sipki La (3109 m) 337
Siranchok 189
Sirchaur (880 m) 130
Sirha 358
Sirmoor, India 26
Sirubari 185
Sisco, Joseph 278
Sisne Himal, Pl. I b
Sisneri Khola, Lamjung 243, 355
Sisneri Khola, Dhankuta 355
Sisuwa (670 m) 175, 181
Sita 303
Sita Paila (2040 m) 144
Sitalpati (1060 m) 30
Siuribar (609 m) 189
Siurung (1888 m) 242
Siwalik 253, 302
Siya (2011 m), 288
Siyalgarhi (2620 m), Pl. XXIX a, 70
Smithsonian Nepal Tiger Project 258–60
Snellgrove, D. L., 76n 78, 79, 225
Sobhak Khola 48
Soktim 362
Sorah Jat 245
Solu 31 207 309 333 334
Solu-Khumbu 297
Somewar Danda (878 m) 10
256
Sonam Gyaltzen 71
Sonbu see Sanjaba
Sopyang 250
Sorath 22 23
Soru 62
Sorung (2468 m) 340
Sotang (1676 m) 334, 336
Sotang Rai 243
South Col (7986 m) 330
South East Asia 228
South Korean 311
South West Face, Everest, 305,
319, 322, 330,
Soviet see U. S. S. R.
Sridhuska (2286 m) 43
Srinagar (1880 m) 57, 64
Sri Panchami 164
Srong-Tsen-Gampo 344
Stainton, J. D. A. 90, 333
Steele, Peter, 318, 321
Subh Gad 136
Subhaghat (426 m) 122, 123, 126
Subho Kuna 126
Sui Khola 30
Suikhet (1127 m) 167, 171
Sukhibar (151 m) 254, 259
Sukchor (2130 m) 23
Sukhajor Khola 299
Sukrabare (1524 m) 364
Suli Gad Pl VI b 77-78 82 83
Suljing (1981 m) 274
Sumli (1760 m) 56, 93
Sun Kosi, Pl. XX b, 292-293, 295, 299, 300, 303
Suna Chu 101, 102, 103
Sunakesara 97
Sunauli 154
Sundar Himal (4355 m) 159, 224, 241
Sundarijal (1585 m) 276
Sunday Times 321
Sunpaneli (823 m) 152
Sunuwar 245
Sunuwar, Dil Bahadur 268
Suraudi Khola 155, 158
Surke (2438 m) 333
Surke Khola 333
Surkhet 94, 122, 123, 125, 132
Surkhet town (700 m) 50, 122, 123-125, 132, 133, 136, 142, 143, 144-45
Surkhet Valley 46, 86, 120, 122, 126, 131
Surnaya Gad 22
Surtibang Bhanjyang (2910 m) 91
Sutlej River 188
Swadesh 207
Swali 22
Swasthani 155-156
Swat Khola 126, 130-131, 143
Swayambhunath 80, 289
Switzerland 90, 268, 317, 318, 320, 324, 330,
—Everest Expedition 320
—Technical Assistance Programme 240, 268, 283
Syalpe, 90
Syang (2743 m), Pl. XVI b, 209
Shyangboche (3833 m) 313, 331
Syangda (2712 m) 97
Syange (1066 m) 241
Syangja, 156, 157, 171, 191, 192, 195
Syarpagaon (2590 m), 286
Syaru see Baglungpani
Syokung (2956 m) 203
Taboche (6542 m) 313, 315 316
Tadi Khola 252, 263, 272, 273, 274, 277, 278, 279
Tadwa, see Daduwa
Taghwari, 50
Taglung (2560 m) 202
Tagring (1480 m) 241-42, 244
Tajho., see Tarachok
Taje (2347 m) 236, 237
Tajpuria 359
Taka (2971 m) 59
Takche Chu 110, 112, 115-117
Takchi Chu 119
Taklakhar or Taklakot 34, 50, 104, 105, 106, 113, 114, 120, 309
Taksar (1240 m) 179, 246
Taksindu (3200 m) 307
Tal (1645 m) 239-40
—Bagar 200
Tal Chu, 60
—Khola 175
—Pokhari (1580 m) 143
Talichaur (2347 m) 67
Talkot (1581 m) 12
Tallogaon, 169
Talphi (2710 m) 69-70
Talung Chu 116-118
—Tso (4300 m) 117
Tama Lochen 80
Tamang, Pl. XX a, 61, 207, 244, 245, 250, 251, 252, 262, 263, 264, 265-68, 273, 274, 278, 280, 281, 286, 288, 289, 296, 297, 301, 362, 363
Tamang, Dawa Phinzo 267-68, 288, 289
—Kirtiman 259-60
—Layul 266, 289
—Sonam Chewang 288
—Yakar 270
Tamaang, 203, 207
Tamba Kosi, 296-99, 345
Tamihn, 207
Tamun 207
Tamra (2316 m) 237
Tamrakar, Mani 21-27
Tamnai or Tamun 207
Tamur river 345, 355, 363
Tanahu 10, 157, 185, 246-48, 253, 255
Tanakpur, India, 13, 16, 18, 28, 133, 309
Tandi (198 m) 255, 260
Tandul, Jigme Parbal, Pl. XL b, 219-22,
Tangbe (3017 m), Pl. XXXIX b, 213-14,
Tangmar 216
Tangmar Chu 217
Tangting (1676 m) 163, 246
—Khola 361
—Danda (3992 m) 63
Tanki (3566 m) 226, 228, 229, 230,
Tanklichok (1005 m) 185-87, 243, 244, 245-46
Tansen (1371 m) 194
Tanye 80
Tap (1370 m) 189
Tappejung 109, 353, 361, 363
Taprung (1670 m) 162
Tara 123, 231
Tarachok (1310 m) 244, 246
Tarai 10, 11, 33, 50, 68, 92, 94, 142, 195, 263, 303, 334, 353, 357-58,
Tarancha (1914 m) 1, 5, 6, 174, 183, 185-87, 188, 189, 244, 246
Tarakot (2530 m) 76, 79, 82, 84-86, 87, 88, 216
Tarali 85, 86, 89
Tarapu (890 m) 244
Tarchila (5200 m) 118
Tarke Gyang 279
Tarkol Lekh (3200 m) 82
Tarku (540 m) 189, 246-47
—Ghat (488 m) 188, 189, 246-47, 248
Tasa, see Taksar
Tashi Angjo, 111
Tashi Chholing 205
Tashi Choling 205
Tashilungpo, Tibet 109
Tashi Ling 155
Tashinga (3400 m) 312, 319, 331
Tatagaon (700 m) 32, 134
Tatopani (1180 m) Myagdi 190,
198-199, 202, 222, Tatopani, Listi, 293-94, 295
Taulihawa 10, Tauthali 295
Tax 61, 187, 227
Tayan or Sunkhani 115
Teh Lab 164
Teigland, Jon 328
Tejpur, Assam 359
Tekuna (670 m) 354
Tele Lekh (2787 m) 12
Temke Danda 335
Tenari Khola, 59
Teng, Tibet 348
Tenggar, Tibet 225
Tengboche (3867 m), Pl. XXI a, 306, 309, 312-14, 330, 334
Tengyur 62, 115, 221
Tenzing Namgyal 220
Tented Camp 258
Terhathum 353
Tetang (3170 m) 214
Teutonic 249
Tewa 103
Thada 45
Tewkesbury, England 364
Thadikkoraya (580 m) 176
Thailand 228
Thak 1554 m) 161-62, 166
—Khola 155, 156, 166, 167, 170, 185, 191, 194 195, 197, 202-212, 218, 220,
—Satsaya 203, 206, 207
Thakali 71, 156, 166, 169, 170, 190, 191, 198-207, 206, 214, 237, 289
—Subba 201, 205
Thakuri 12, 25, 21, 33, 35, 36,
Thini (2830 m) 207, 210-11, 212, 217, 230

Thobo Chomjom Kya-Gyong 77

Thodang Danda (2676 m) 274

Tholung Chu 218, 219

Thomas, Antony, 326

Thonje (1920 m) 237, 238-39, 243

Thonsu see Thak

Thori 227, 254, 255, 259

Thorung La (5416 m) 212, 224, 227, 230

Those 299, 309

Thukchen Gomba 221

Thul Nagi (3980 m), Pl. XVIII b, 241, 242 244

Thula (Harka) 1-8

Thuli Bensi (1097 m), Pl. xiv a, 244

Thuli Gad 12,

Thulung, Rai 243

Thuman (2316 m) 278

Thundar (733 m), 32

Thunpani (1550 m) 30

Thuwa (1520 m) 138

Tibang (2621 m) 236-37

Tibet 6, 11, 34, 46, 50, 60, 61, 62, 67, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 113, 185, 199, 205, 206, 218, 219, 225, x26, 264, 267, 277, 287, 292, 295, 309, 210, 312, 229, 343, 344-45, 347, 357, 362

Tibetan, 1, 6, 34, 40, 49, 50, 57, 59, 61, 68, 71, 74, 79, 80, 82, 83, 85, 80, 100, 103, 105, 113, 114, 115, 123, 147, 154, 163, 166, 190, 200, 201, 203, 204, 207, 208, 210, 211, 213, 215, 219, 220, 221, 222, 226, 235, 236, 237, 238 245, 264, 270, 277, 287, 293, 296, 309, 210, 320, 345

Tibeto-Burman 85, 207, 359

Tibrikot 68, 71, 76, 83

Tichu Rong 84

Tidworth, U. K., 177

Tiger Tops Jungle Lodge (140 m), 257-59

Tihar, 47, 59, 63-64

Tihar, 2, 68, 239, 243

Tikamgarh, India, 303

Tikapur 11

Tikoli (198 m) 251

Til (c. 3500 m), Pl. XXXI b, 110-112, 113, 118

Til Chu 110-112

Tila Nadi 42, 43, 44, 46, 57, 61

Tilakkhudi Chautara (2220 m) 36

Tilicho Lake (4918 m) 230

Tilje (2182 m) 237

Tilman, H. W. 225, 241, 282, 310, 314 320, 329, 332n, 338

Tingri, Tibet, 309

Tinkar 16, 25

Tinkar Lipu Langna 101, 103

Tiplyang (1005 m) 197

Tirkhu (2520 m) 69

Tirpa (2130 m) 57, 58

Tista River 188, 348, 363

Tistung Deoralu (1981 m) 250

Tiyu (2621 m) 340

Tohre, see Ludi

Tojo, see Naiche

Tokchen, Tibet 282
Tonde, see Tangting
*Tong-Sum-Tongnam* 345
Topke Gola 345
Topla (2740 m) 65
Topla (2740 m) 65
Tourism 151, 169, 235, 256, 283, 289, 309, 310, 334
Towang, N. E. F. A. 363
Towang Khola, 29
Tradom, Tibet, 282, 309
Tribeni 194
Tribhuvan Rajpath 250, 263, 306
Tribhuvan University 292
Trijuga Khonch 357
Trimal Chand 18, 26
*Trisala Puja* 245
Trisuli Bazar (548 m) 263–64, 290, 291
—River 50, 247 248, 249, 251–52 263, 264, 265, 267, 269, 272, 289, 291,
—Valley 10, 94, 206, 68, 278, 279, 288, 289–91
Tropic of Capricorn 250
Tsangbu Ri (6745 m) 281
Tsawi Lawa 313
Tsche-dbang, 213
Tsergo Ri (4850 m) 283
Tso-wa 78
Tsuntrim Dorje, 213
Tsudo Og (4135 m) 315
Tucci, Giuseppe 41, 50
Tukche (2586 m) 200, 204–207, 310
—Pk. (6920 m), Pl. XVI a, 210, 222
Tulachan 203
Tulsipur (660 m) 28–29, 35, 40, 122, 133
Tumlingtar (390 m) 349–50
Tumo or Tumkot (3209 m), 101, 102, 103, 110
—Chu, 101
Tumtu Paowa (3100 m) 38
Tup 85
Tuppa Tara (2650 m) 85
Tupte Lakhang 79, 81
Turlungkot (1521 m) 188
Turtle (426 m) 247
Twin Otter, 94
Tyande (1341 m) 344
U. K. 318
U. N. D. P. 262
U. N. I. C. E. F. 119
U. S. A. 189, 255, 278, 298, 312, 318, 324, 365
U. S. A. I. D. 224
U. S. R., 324, 365
Uba Hang, see Hang
Udda 27
Uda Dei 123
Uemura, Naomi, 318
Ukhari 2520 m) 41
Um Khola 47
Upa Jong 257
Upadhaya Brahmin 48, 57
Jaya 124
Upallo Chiplag (1737 m) 241
Upardang Garhi (1289 m) 253
Urthu 2520 m) 67
Usta (1402 m) 242 243, 244–45, 246
Uttar Ganga 90–91
Vaishnavi 156
Varah 456
Varahi 156
Vaucher, Michel 330
Yvette 330
Veda 57
Victoria Cross, 197
Vietnam War, 326
Vikram Shahi, see Shahi Yangar (3040 m) 100, 103
Vinding, Michael 204 n, 211n
Virat 48
Vishnu 212
Wager, L. R., 348
Waiba (Tamang), 273
Walungchung Gola 310, 345, 353, 355
Wangdi 101, 235
Wangri (3100 m) 62, 63, 69–70
Wapsa 335
Ward, Michael 215
Water mill 42, 69–140, 168
Water supply 31, 34, 95, 119, 161, 192, 193, 267, 349, 364
Waziristan, Pakistan, 1
Weissnorn (4504 m) 148
West Germany, 318
Western Cwm 305, 319, 320, 321, 322–27, 332
Western Pahari, 26
West Ridge, Everest, 319, 322, 326, 327, 329
Whillans, Don 322, 330
Wick, Emil 279
Wigram, E. H. L., 321
Wild life, 3, 56, 60, 76, 105, 106, 109, 110, 121, 127, 139, 144, 256–60, 284,
Wild West, U. S. A., 155
World War I, 1
World War II, 1, 170, 193
Yakba (3041 m) 120
Yakthumba 344
Yalbang (3016 m) 100, 103, 114, 119
Yamakhar (2500 m) 88, 89
Yamkim Khola 204
Yangar (3040 m) 100, 103
Yangdi Khola, 166, 167, 171
Yanjangok (1520 m) 163, 224, 246
Yangrup 345, 363
Yangser Gomba 102–103
Yari (c. 3500 m) 101, 102–104, 109, 110, 114 310,
Yarsa, 268, 279
Yaru Chu, Tibet 347
Yashok Dzong 345, 363
Yasobrahm 157, 188
Yeti, 311
Yogi Narharinath 50
Yojgain, se Yangjakot
Yong-ya Hang, see Hang
Younghusband, Francis 310

Yulsa 108
Yuma Sam 245
Yumre Gang (6091 m) 229
Yusuf 249
Zonal Commissioner, 29, 178
MAP OF NEPAL
VIGNETTES OF NEPAL

Nepal is a land of geographic contrast, cultural diversity and scenic grandeur. There is no better way of knowing a country than travelling through it and, in Nepal, this means traversing a maze of ridges and valleys that span between tropical plains and the stupendous snow heights.

The present book is a travel account by a native rambler who has made numerous treks across the country. The areas described include various parts of Nepal and more space is devoted to lesser known places. There are glimpses of northern borderlands such as Manang, Mustang, Dolpo, Mugu and Humla along with descriptions of mountaineering ventures of varying scale—Kagmara and Everest—and about religious gatherings at places of contrasting locale—Devghat and Gosainkund.

The book is not a mere travelogue but also provides a perceptive view of Nepal through an enquiring mind. While geographical approach binds the thread of narrative, there are relevant observations on local geology and flora, folk culture and history. The author also has an eye for the changing scene and processes of development affecting interior Nepal. This book is an authentic attempt at portraying the personality of various places and peoples of Nepal.

HARKA GURUNG was born in Lamjung, Central Nepal, in 1939. He went to school in Dehra Dun, Jullunder and Nowgong in India and topped I. A. at Tribhuvan College, Kathmandu (1957). He graduated from Patna University (1959) with First Class Honours in Geography and subsequently studied at University of Edinburgh where he did Dip. Geography (1961) and Ph. D. (1965). He has held teaching assignments in the University of Edinburgh, School of Oriental & African Studies, London, and Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu. He was Member, National Planning Commission (1968-73), Vice-Chairman, National Planning Commission (1973-75) and Minister of State for Education, Industry & Commerce, Tourism, Transport & Public Works (1975-78). Publications include numerous articles and three booklets: ANNAPURNA TO DHAULAGIRI (1968), REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING FOR NEPAL (1969) and GRADUATES IN NEPAL (1972).

A keen sportsman, painter and photographer, he is presently finalising his books on history of mountaineering in Nepal, changing landscape of Pokhara Valley, and dimensions of development in Nepal.