

To encourage and assist Himalayan travel and exploration and to extend knowledge of the Himalaya and adjoining mountain ranges through science, art, literature and sport.

Awards

Mr. Tamotsu Nakamura, Honorary Member of the Himalayan Club, has been awarded the prestigious Royal Geographical Society's Busk Medal for the year 2008 for his field exploration in the mountain ranges of west China and Tibet.



*Tamotsu Nakamura with RGS president Sir Gordon Conway
Photo: T. Nakamura*

The Busk Medal was created in 1974 and is awarded 'for conservation research or for fieldwork abroad in geography or in a geographical aspect of an allied science'. It is named after its donor, Sir Douglas Busk, who was a Vice-President of the RGS www.rgs.org, Chairman of the Mount Everest Foundation, and first Chairman of the Alpine Club Library Council. He was a diplomat and had postings in Ethiopia, Finland and Venezuela. He continued to climb wherever he went and also wrote several books (*The Delectable Mountains*, *The Fountain of the Sun*).

Tamotsu Nakamura, 73, born in Tokyo, studied commerce and accounting at Hitotsubashi University and began climbing in the Japanese Alps. He was engaged in the overseas business for constructing industrial plants such as power stations, steel mills, oil and gas development and port facilities. After living and working for many years around the world in Pakistan, Mexico, New Zealand and Hong Kong, he began to seriously devote his life to the mountains of East Tibet, Yunnan and Sichuan provinces of West China. Over the past 18 years he has made 30 expeditions to the borderland, where he continued his voyage of discovery, documenting and mapping countless unclimbed peaks.

Excerpts from his speech during the award ceremony are given below:

'However my achievements chiefly rely on the luck of the following three conditions:-

1. Not only foreigners but China Mountaineering Association has paid no attention to the unexplored areas in East Tibet. They have an interest in commercial expeditions only to famous mountains: Qomolangma, Cho Oyu-----.
2. Famous Swedish explorer, Sven Hedin, did not enter East Tibet. German geographer, Richthofen, suggested Hedin to explore the Eastern Tibet, but Hedin did not. If Hedin had done, there would have remained less unexplored areas.
3. Many places of East Tibet are still not opened to foreigners and not easy to gain access, because some areas are too close to India and north Myanmar and some areas are prohibited to visit due to political reason (i.e. place of rebirth of Panchen Lama).

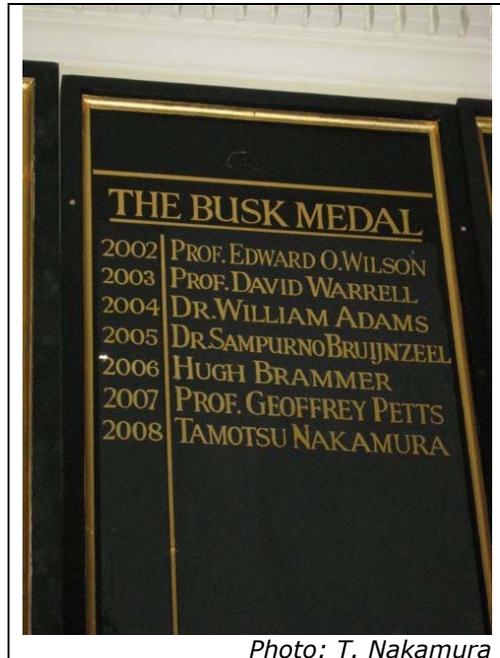


Photo: T. Nakamura

Nowadays the Tibetan marches are developing very fast and even in the remotest villages they are using solar-battery and enjoying TV and DVD. Motor bikes are substituting horses and mules. However, once off the beaten trucks in East Tibet, you will come across unclimbed stunning peaks, untrodden glaciers, awful gorges, beautiful forest, pastures, fauna and flora, and historical monasteries.'

- Jasmine Hegde

Tourists (Indians and Foreign Nationals) visiting Gangotri and Goumukh area of Gangotri National Park are hereby informed about the new procedures and restrictions being adopted to save and conserve Goumukh area.

- Only 150 tourists, trekkers (porters included) will be permitted to visit Goumukh every day.
- Permission for entry to Goumukh region will be issued by Chief Wildlife Warden, 5 Chandrabani, Mohabbewala, Dehradun.
- First come First serve basis will be adopted for issuing permits.
- Fees:
 1. Rs 50/- for Indian for 2 days. Additional fees of Rs 25/- per day.
 2. Rs 350/- for Foreign National for 2 days. Additional fees of Rs 175/- per day.
- Movement of Mules and Horses is banned inside Gangotri National Park
- 500 meter prior to Goumukh is declared as restricted area.
- Visitors not having permits will be stopped and returned back from the Gangotri check post.

Contact Numbers;

1. Chief Wildlife Warden, Dehradun --91+ 0135 2644691
2. DFO, Uttarkashi — 91+ 01374 222444
91+ 01374 222964(FAX)

Uttarakhand website: <http://uttarkashi.nic.in/Dept/tourism/goumukh.PDF>

Nissan Winter Outdoor Games

Chamonix is special. Bang underneath the Mont Blanc Massif, the small, narrow valley is recognized instantly the world over as a centre of extreme mountain sports. They prove that with things like in the February 2008, the Nissan Winter Outdoor Games - "7 teams, 5 sports, 5 days to make a (5 minute) film".



*The Chamonix Alpine Circus - Christophe Dumarest, finishing Frendo Spur, in short time for a film, 'Race the Planets' and shot by media crews
Photo: Apoorva Prasad*

Luckily, armed with a press invite and my photo and climbing gear, I managed to follow the team that won the competition – Ride The Planets. One of their members was South African Julian Boule. As a wingsuit flyer, he has performed as a stuntman and camera guy for, believe it or not, the Bollywood blockbuster Dhoom II. For the competition, Julian jumped off 3-man paragliders and helicopters, dropping like a stone towards the sharp rocky needles of the Chamonix Aiguilles. When the thin webs of fabric between his arms and legs caught the air, he began to glide like a rocket, moving forward 3 metre for every metre he dropped. Gliding just over an arête somewhere between Aiguille du Midi's north face and the spires of Aiguille de Peigne, he swooped down all the way to Chamonix, and finally pulled his chute just a hundred metres above the town.



Julian and Ueli on a wingsuit-off-paraglider flight Photo: Apoorva Prasad

Often footage was shot by paragliders and skiers, since helicopter filming wasn't allowed. That's adventure sports at its high end - a wild, creative ride. Until the danger of being so close to the edge comes down like night in the mountains. I watched Mathias Roten infinity tumbling his wing for the last few minutes of footage needed by RTP. Little did I know that he'd be dead soon, killed the next month in a speed-riding accident in Switzerland.

Check out all the films at:

<http://winter.outdoorgames.org/fr/galleiry/video.php?idIndex=181&noeud=6&a=1&b=0>

-Apoorva Prasad

Cockpit view from Jatropani



View looking north from Jatropani East with Nanda Ghunti on the left, Bethartoli Group in the middle and Trishul to the right. Bedni Bugyal is directly below Trishul and Ali Bugyal is east of Bedni.

Photo: Percy Fernandez

As Percy Fernandez and I reached the summit of Jatropani East on an absolutely clear November morning it felt like one was indeed in the cockpit of an airplane, with the feeling of expanse and peaks dotting the horizon in all directions.



Photo: Maninder Kohli

Jatropani at 4071m is the high point on a ridge running virtually parallel south of the well-known Ali and Bedni Bugyals. As you reach the summit of Jatropani and look towards the north you are directly facing Nanda Ghunti (6390m). Bethartoli Himal (6352m), Bethartoli South (6318m) as well as Trishul (7120m), which form the southern wall of the Nanda Devi Sanctuary, also appear to

be in touching distance. Towards the west at a distance, the Garhwal peaks come into view, with the massive wall of Chaukhamba (7138m) being the most prominent. Also clearly visible are Nilkantha (6597m) and Kamet (7756m), completing a grand panorama of high Himalayan peaks.

We started the trek from Loharjung (2200m), the road head, and camped at Bigun Tal (3000m) and Brahma Tal (3400m). On day 3 we approached the summit from the east and walked on a grassy ridge till all of a sudden we hit a boulder field 200m below the top, which required some level of manoeuvring. The East peak at a height of 4000m has a large dome-shaped top. Beyond the East peak, the ridge takes a turn and bends towards the south, carrying on for another couple of kilometers till the actual summit, which is 71m higher. For those looking for the 'cockpit' view, the East peak of Jatropani offers an excellent option.

-Maninder Kohli

News from Nepal

^^^ **Eco Everest Expedition** 2008, in partnership with International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), has been very successful in creating widespread awareness on global warming. The expedition was the brain-child of, Dawa Steven, the leader of the expedition. He reached the summit of Mt. Everest on 26 May. Earlier, he climbed to the summit of Mt. Lhotse (8516m) on 21 May.

More than US\$ 28,000 has already been contributed by institutions and individuals to the Eco Everest Trust Fund. This fund is to be used to support local initiatives to create greater awareness of Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) as well as for the setting up of an early warning system. Do visit www.ecoeverest.net.np for more information on the Trust Fund.

Apa Sherpa broke his own record by ascending Mt. Everest for the 18th time. Speaking as the Chief Guest during the ICIMOD workshop on Climate Change Impact in the Himalaya – 'Glacier Lake Outburst Flood Awareness' in Namche on 25th April, Apa Sherpa said, "... global warming is melting the ice in our mountains and the ice is turning into big lakes... when Dig Tsho burst in 1985 my neighbours and I lost almost all we had. I am very happy to support in spreading awareness about this problem...."

^^^ **The Nepalese Government** has announced heavy reductions on all the Mountaineering Peak Permit Fees for the permitted Himalayan peaks in Nepal, WITH EFFECT FROM 16 JULY 2008. It will benefit the people of Nepal by giving a boost to adventure tourism and climbers of the world by increasing access to some of the highest mountains in the world.

The revised fees reflect a reduction of 50% during the autumn season, and 75% for the summer and winter seasons, including for Mt. Everest. The Government of Nepal has also announced waiver of permit fees for FIVE YEARS effective from 16 July 2008 for all peaks in the mid-west and far-west Nepal. For details of the Peak Permit Fee structure please visit the website: http://nepal-expeditions.com/peak_permit_fees.htm

^^^ **On 25 May 2008**, the tenth and final Nepali member of the First Inclusive Womens Sagarmatha Expedition (FIWSE) completed her summit bid, making FIWSE the most successful female expedition to climb Sagarmatha (Mount Everest).

The team included ten Nepali women, between 17 to 27 years of age, representing a range of the country's varied castes and ethnicities. FIWSE 2008 members hope that their efforts will not only open up mountaineering to both, as a sport and as a career for women in Nepal, but also that it will empower women to pursue their goals, especially their access to education.

^^^ **Tenzing Hillary Everest** Marathon is held on 29th May each year to commemorate the first ascent of Mt Everest by Tenzing Norgay Sherpa and Sir Edmund Hillary on 29th May 1953. The start line of the marathon is at Everest Base Camp -5356m (17,149 feet) and ending at the Sherpa town of Namche Bazaar -3446m (11,300 feet) and the course is a measured in Olympic standard covering 42.195 km (26.2 miles).

This year, Dip Kumar Rai, a farmer by profession, finished the 42.195 km distance in 3 hours 53 minutes and 14 seconds, winning the title for the third consecutive year. Japanese runner Hesikowa Hiroki was the first among international participants completing the race in 5 hours and 14 seconds. Altogether 136 participants from 17 countries took part in the race.

The run goes through most spectacular mountain scenery and is considered extremely difficult due to the rugged terrain combined with high altitude.

-Jasmine Hegde

Tulips Bloom in Kashmir



View of Tulip Garden from Chashmeshahi huts

Photo: Rama Goyal

Visitors to the Kashmir Valley in the months of April-May 2008 were treated to the visual delight of 1.2 million tulips of more than 60 varieties in a riot of colours in full bloom. The tulip garden, earlier known as Siraj Bagh, and now renamed as the Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden, is situated close to the banks of the scenic Dal Lake in Srinagar and provides a welcome addition to the already abundant flora of the Kashmir Valley. Though spread over 12.5 hectares, the garden currently grows tulips in only 5 hectares. There are plans to extend the tulip-growing area, and next year there are expected to be more than 2 million tulips in bloom. The garden proved to be a big draw with both tourists and locals alike, who thronged the garden in large numbers, enchanted with the various hues and types of tulips on display.



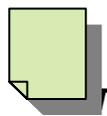
Photo: Rama Goyal



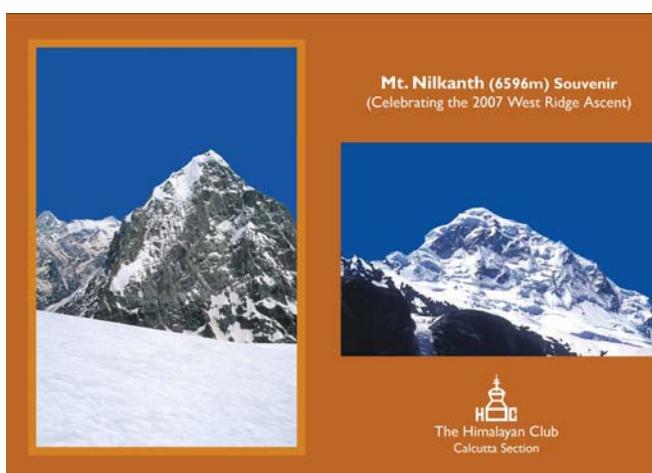
Tulip Garden and Zabarwan Hills

-Rama Goyal

Book Reviews



The Himalayan Club, Calcutta Section's "Nilkanth Souvenir" is much more than a mere booklet describing the first Indian civilian ascent of Nilkanth by the section's climbing team in June 2007. This immaculately produced and generously illustrated, in colour and black-and-white, 150 page book really is THE book on Nilkanth. In this volume the readers finds not only the account of the 2007 climb, but also the well-researched mountaineering history of this shining peak above Badrinath, together with highly readable up-to-date articles on the geology of the Himalaya and the glaciology of the Garhwal, as well as on the mountaineering and cultural history of this part of the Indian Himalaya. The environmental impact of global warming on the glaciers of the Garhwal, runs like a red thread through the scientific papers and the accounts of the recent expedition.



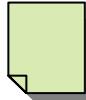
The leader's (Rtd AVM Apurba K. Bhattacharyya) first person account of last year's successful climb is reminiscent in many ways of the classic accounts of the large foreign expeditions to the 8000ers in the fifties and sixties, facing problems with porters and irritable natives along the way. Honouring The Himalayan Club's mission to climb and to explore, the expedition's medical officer, a dedicated naturalist, accompanied by some members who had stayed at base camp, explored the Panpatia Basin. Dr. Susanta Bhattacharya's essay on the geology, glaciology, flora and fauna of this alpine environment shaped by the receding Panpatia glacier reads almost like poetry.

Lovers of mountaineering literature will not only enjoy the historic black-and-white-photographs but also the historical accounts written by Frank Smythe, H.E. Riddiford, Lt.Col. H.S. Chauhan, and Martin Moran.

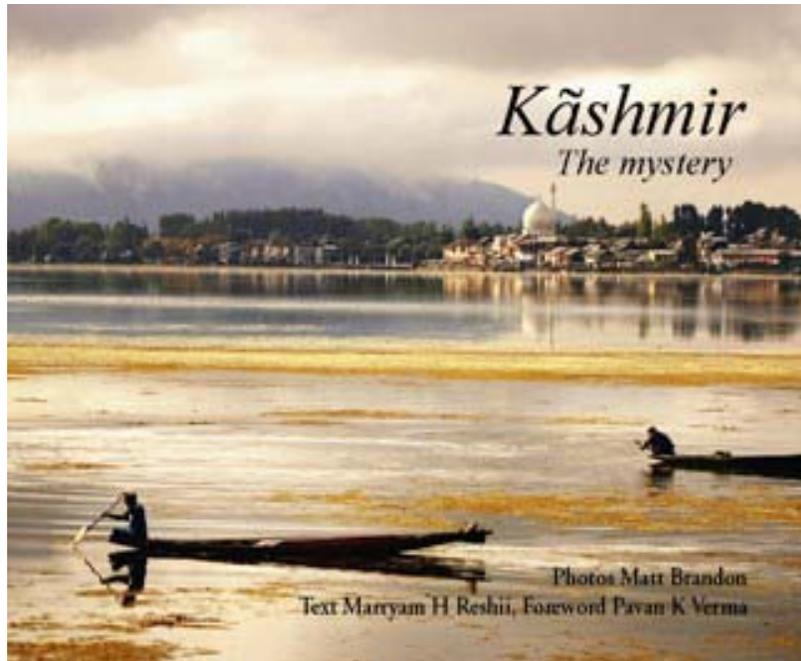
The Nilkanth souvenir is the third after the "Kanchenjunga" and "Kamet" souvenirs published by the Calcutta Section in recent years, most ably edited and partly written by Meher H. Mehta and Priyadarshi Gupta. Frank Smythe's son Tony Smythe calls the "Nilkanth" one the best of the three. Be that as it may, what all three souvenirs have in common is that they go well beyond the summit of the mountain in covering an entire area with well-researched write-ups by the editors, accompanied by historical accounts and photographs. These collector items not only make enjoyable reading but they are also excellent works of reference that every lover of Himalayan literature would want to have on his or her bookshelf.

There are a few copies of the Nilkanth souvenir left. In India the price is Rs 200/- plus postage. They can be ordered from:
Jhelum Chowdhury
Hony. Local Secretary,
Himalayan Club - Calcutta Section
Ph: (91) 9830033686 jhelum_c@hotmail.com

- Guenter Wehrmann



Kāshmir: The Mystery, published by Tara Press, New Delhi, with photographs by Matt Brandon and text by Marryam H. Reshii, is a fabulous and insightful collection of photographs that brings out the beauty and ethos of Kashmir in its entirety.



The Himalayan state of Jammu and Kashmir has been in the news for the political turmoil there in the last nearly two decades, with violence being the dominant image of the state in the media. *Kāshmir: The Mystery* reminds us once again of the beauty and splendour of Kashmir that lies beyond the violence and turmoil. The photographs and book is about Kashmir in all its magnificence and grandeur--Nature at its best, the people, and the culture. Hence, the book is not a trekking book or guide, but broader in scope. Matt Brandon has been living in Srinagar for the last 11 years, capturing the Valley in all its different moods, and has a trekking company called Frontier Treks and Tours. Marryam H. Reshii is a writer on food and travel who has been associated with Kashmir for the last twenty years, both as a writer and as a Kashmiri daughter-in-law.

The photographer's intimate connection with the land and its inhabitants, both human and animal, is very obvious from the type and quality of photographs, and Marryam Reshii's authoritative text complements the photographs and provides a window into *Kashmiriyat*---the Kashmiri culture and society. Concentrating on the Kashmir Valley only, making it unique, this splendid book fills a big lacuna in the set of existing books on Kashmir.

Publication details:

Hardcover: 124 pages

Publisher: Tara Press, New Delhi (2008)

Language: English

Price: 1895/-

Special offer for Himalayan Club members at Rs 1650/- for delivery within India and Rs 1895/- for international orders (delivery charges included). Offer valid until 30th August 2008 upon quoting order code **KASH/00806/RAMA**.

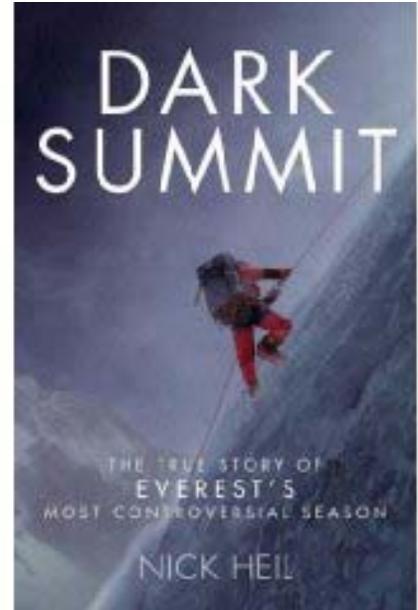
Contact: Bahri Sons, Opp. Main Gate, Khan Market, New Delhi 110003, Tel.: 24694610; Telefax: 24618637; E-mail: bahrison@vsnl.com

- Rama Goyal



Dark Summit: the True Story of Everest's Most Controversial Season, by Nick Heil, recounts the harrowing story of the deadly and controversial 2006 climbing season on Everest. In early May 2006, a team of 40 clients, guides, and Sherpas of Russell Brice, the outfitter, on their way to the summit of Mount Everest encountered David Sharp, a 34-year-old British climber, incapacitated but still alive, lying in a rock alcove at around 28,000 feet, just a few feet from the route used by climbers. Though several people interacted with him, after determining that nothing could be done to save his life, they walked past him and pushed on to the summit.

Many pointed to Russell Brice as the culprit for David Sharp's death and characterized him as a callous tycoon who had ordered his clients to ignore a dying man during their single-minded pursuit of the summit. Providing a meticulous inquiry into what went wrong, Heil shows how increasingly risky expeditions and unscrupulous outfitters threaten to turn Everest into a deadly circus. *Dark Summit* is an enthralling account of a notorious climbing season and a riveting story about death, survival, and ethical choices at 28,000 feet.



Publication details:

- Hardcover: 288 pages
- Publisher: Virgin Books (1 May 2008)
- Language: English
- Price: Rs 480/-

- Rama Goyal

Views



Trekking Without Toilet Paper

On a recent trek to the Tosh Valley in the Kullu hills, our environment-conscious trek operator, Kaushal Desai, made a strong request that we avoid using toilet paper on the trail, or else, retrieve the used paper to be burned later. He mentioned that there was enough water available along the trail and if team members were afraid of getting frostbite on their backsides as they progressed up the valley he would be willing to provide hot water whenever required. While a few in the group seemed willing to make the switch, other members were very sceptical with this suggestion.

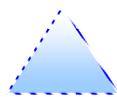
Toilet paper users attempted to hide the 'evidence' with the help of rocks but more often than not these were shoddy attempts, which were in any case prone to being discovered, with animals coming in later and disturbing the balance, making a complete mess as a result. Toilet paper, though biodegradable, still takes over six months to fully disintegrate at high altitude, and even then, it creates more carbon monoxide than when starting a car engine. As the trek progressed, toilet paper users were reduced to a complete minority and the majority became converts to the 'water only' option. The unanimous feeling within the group at the end of the trek was that this was indeed the right thing to do from an environment perspective and that, in future, all treks would be completely paperless.

On the same subject it is also interesting to note regulations which are cropping up in other areas of the world. The regulations in the Denali National Park in Alaska, USA are as follows:

Leave nothing in the mountains. Expeditions have climbed Denali and have carried out everything brought in, including their human waste. Use sledges, haul bags, temporary caches under large snow blocks at minimum depth of 3 feet (1 meter). Mark caches with large wands, 1.5 to 2.0 meters above ground. Bears destroy caches, so secure them in three layers of garbage bags so that no scent is emitted. Line toilet hole with biodegradable sack, tie up when full and throw into deep crevasse; if there are no crevasse, carry till you find one. Bring back if you can. For further details, see

<http://www.nps.gov/dena/planyourvisit/upload/trashpolicy-2.pdf>

- Maninder Kohli



Yoga and High Altitude Adaptation

An interesting article by a team of Italian researchers in the *European Journal of Applied Physiology* tests whether yoga represents a successful strategy for high-altitude adaptation. Caucasian subjects practising yoga were found to maintain a satisfactory oxygen transport at high altitude, with minimal increase in ventilation and with reduced hematological changes, resembling Himalayan natives. The authors conclude by pointing out that respiratory adaptations induced by the practice of yoga may represent an efficient strategy to cope with altitude-induced hypoxia. For details, see

<http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/klu/421/2007/00000099/00000005/00000373;jsessionid=bsfey4gdlhnb.alice?format=print>

A test conducted as early as 1985 by the Defense Institute of Physiological and Allied Sciences (DIPAS) on two groups of soldiers, one of which did regular yoga practice while the other group continued to do the regular army drills and endurance training. Those trained in yoga were observed to retain their body heat for a longer time as compared to those who did the routine exercises, with heat retention being due to metabolic activity. See article by Dipankar Das in

<http://www.lifepositive.com/body/yoga/yoga-training.asp>

While the yoga course consists of a combination of *pranayama*, *asanas*, and meditation, *pranayama* has been found to be very useful to the soldiers on the Siachen glacier. For more on yoga and the Indian army, see article by Kavita Suri in <http://ayurspot.blogspot.com/2006/10/yoga-and-indian-army.html>

-Rama Goyal

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