



# E-LETTER

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## Himalayan Club News

### Arun Samant Memorial Lecture Series 2011

Mumbai Section of Himalayan Club organised the Arun Samant Memorial Lecture Series 2011, on 9th January at Shahu Hall, Dadar, Mumbai. We had a nice mix of young and old speakers for the occasion. Dr. Geeta Samant, wife of late Mr. Samant was kind enough to be with us for the event.

Sameer Kelkar, the young IIT technocrat started the proceedings. He recounted his Trans – Himalayan journey from Solu Khumbu in Nepal to Nubra valley in Ladakh. He was traveling alone on this trip, and was joined in various regions by different locals and friends. The visuals that he presented were breathtaking. In all he covered 2600 km, and crossed 22 passes over 15000 ft. It was heartening to see a young mountaineer spending some good time in the Himalaya, feeling at home and deeply in love with the mountains.

After an invigorating start to the event by a youngster, the reins were handed over to one of the most seasoned campaigners in Indian mountaineering and exploration – Mr Harish Kapadia. In his inimitable witty way, he took us through his exploratory trip in Arunachal Pradesh, trying to find Kangto peaks in the East Kameng and Pachuk valley. A region virtually untouched and thickly forested, it was tough navigating to the destination. The endeavour gave a helpful insight into the lives of the people



Deepak Bhimani demonstrating equipment.

of that area, such as the Meiji tribe. The group also tried to decipher possible approaches to Kangto, Gori Chen, Chomo and Nyegi Kansang peaks. The lecture helped us learn about the people and place that are our own, but not much is known about them because of the remote location and difficult terrain.

After lunch, we had two senior young men of Himalayan Club recounting their tryst with Himalaya. Deepak Bhimani and Jaysinh Mariwala, two septuagenarians, had been to Har ki Doon valley last year, and they shared their experiences with us. Having bloomed late in their love for the mountains, these guys showed us that it's never too late to venture out. Their indefatigable spirit carried them on their journey, along with their friend, Tanil Kilachand. Deepakbhai also showed us how to use some of his astronomical instruments, a hobby which he has



Jaysinh Mariwala felicitated by Dr. Geeta Samant.

pursued for quite some time, and now shares with others. The pictures of stars and the beautiful valley had all of us starry eyed.

Following them was Rajesh Gadgil, narrating his attempt to recover the bodies of two of his climbing friends from Mount Tingchenkhang in West Sikkim. Mangesh Deshpande and Sekar Sadasivan had died on the mountain in 2009 in an accident, and last year a party of climbers from Maharashtra decided to make a serious effort to find the remains of their friends. But while climbing the mountain they realised that its topography had changed considerably from previous year. Based on visual memory, they located a crevasse as the most probable location of the bodies. However, when they realised that the risk was too high in searching for the bodies, the logical decision of calling off the effort was taken.

The last talk of the day was by Ashutosh Mishra, who illustrated his trek, retracing the footsteps of Frank Smythe in Garhwal, through nicely compiled pictures and movie. The team was formed over the internet, but over the course of the trip they proved steadfast companions. The trek started from the Valley of Flowers, and went across Amrit Ganga watershed, Bank Kund glacier and the Nakthani glacier. They crossed two high passes Bhuinder Khal and Gupt Khal, and finally ended at Badrinath. An un-trodden route for years, the group had to navigate across glaciers, snowfields, crevasses and moraine using Google Earth images, old maps and GPS. The experience was as diverse as it could be - sunny days, avalanches, rock falls, vertical ascents, animal sightings, glacier crossings, near vertical rappelling, crevasse traverses and blinding blizzards!

Thus the event concluded, with our thirst for the mountains not satiated, but increased manifold.

**Mallikarjun Singh**

### **Annual Seminar 2011**

The 83rd Anniversary of the Himalayan Club was celebrated with the annual program conducted on 19th and 20th February 2011, at Y B Chavan Rangeswar Auditorium Mumbai. Krzysztoff Wielicki, the famous Polish climber and the fifth person to climb all eight thousanders, was the main speaker, and the chief attraction of the event. Our Hon Sports Minister Dr M S Gill was the chief guest for the event.

Brigadier Ashok Abbey kick started the activities with an introductory speech, where he talked about the heritage of Himalayan Club, and also the need for the club to redefine itself in this age of information. He stressed that it is the young generation that would take the club forward. He paid respects to Harish Kapadia, who had stepped down from the post of Editor of the Himalayan Journal, after over 30 years of unrelenting service. The Himalayan Club website was officially launched with a presentation by Mr. Divyesh Muni. Dr. Gill took us through his experiences as a senior member of the Club. He reminisced his times in the Himalaya – in Spiti and Lahaul, and his tenure as the President of the club.



Krzysztoff Wielicki.

Krzysztoff Wielicki delivered the Kaivan Mistry Memorial Lecture, describing his climbs on all fourteen eight thousand metre peaks. His Polish accent, along with his reminiscences about the golden years of Polish climbing left everyone spellbound. His first visit to Himalaya was a tragedy as they attempted the South Annapurna in 1979, when one of their fellow climbers died. They went ahead with the expedition and reached the Summit. The next year in 1980, he climbed his first eight thousand metre peak, and it was Mount Everest. This he did in winter, the first man to do so. Over the years, the Polish climbers have made a name for themselves by climbing many difficult and high peaks in winter in the Himalaya, including nine of the fourteen eight thousanders. Wielicki is the first one to summit three of them himself, and also the first one to do a single day ascent of an 8000 m peak (Broad Peak). He also did the south face of Lhotse solo. He is fit as a fiddle, and is still part of the active climbing fraternity in Poland.

He talked about his adventures, travelling from Poland to India in trucks as they were short of cash for their expeditions. He reminisced about his fellow climbers – Jerzy Kukuczka, the Polish national hero (described by many in the international community as ‘the best Himalayan climber of all times’), Wanda Rutkiewicz, Ryszard Pawłowski, Andrzej Zawada and others. He talked solemnly about his losses while attempting impossible routes Kukuczka and Wanda – his best mates, both lost to the unforgiving Himalaya. The teamwork and camaraderie of their team, in the age of individualistic and ambitious mindsets in most climbers, was heartwarming to hear.

Most of all, the magnitude of his achievements, and his underlying simplicity and humility had the audience captivated.

Divyesh Muni talked about his recent trip to Ladakh, in the Markha region. He narrated the hardships they had to face including the tedious paperwork at IMF and the inclement weather throughout, very uncharacteristic of Ladakh at that time of the year. He talked of the nerve wracking night they spent on the mountain with lightning flashes and tremors all around like a tropical thunderstorm. It was during the latter part of the trip came the rudest shock of all. They learnt that heavy rains and a huge cloud burst had caused immense damage to Leh and other parts of Ladakh. Rajesh Gadgil met them on their way back and they returned to Leh where there were scenes of horrific disaster everywhere. They immediately began relief work and made a pledge to initiate the ‘Rebuild Ladakh’ effort of the club.

Ms. Lakshmi Ranganathan illustrated her tryst with Bhutan covering four treks in the country. Travelling alone she had tried to capture the essence of the country’s beauty and culture, still mostly unsullied by foreign encroachment.

Harish Kapadia had the audience rolling with laughter presenting 'Mountaineers are like that only'. He talked about what mountaineers actually do in the mountains apart from climbing. These candid moments, captured with great pictures had everyone in splits. He described his life in the mountains which he had enjoyed with his companions, eating, drinking, living silly, tiny happy moments even in the remotest of areas. For all of us, young and old, it is a lifestyle worth aspiring for.

Group Captain V K Sashindran, an avid philatelist and trekker, presented a history of mountaineering through postage stamps. Through his incredible collection on display, and his slides, he told us about various mountains and the climbing feats that have found their way to stamps. Most prominent among them were Mount Fuji and Mount Everest.

Mr Donald Goodman willingly agreed to give a talk, in place of Peter Habeler, who could not make it because of an injury. He talked about his mountaineering experiences in America, and all across the globe.



Weilicki with Brig. Ashok Abbey and Tanil Kilachand.

The concluding lecture was a video presentation by Mr. Wielicki on Polish winter expeditions. The Poles have made a name for themselves in high mountain winter explorations. Half of the fourteen 8000-metre peaks were climbed by Poles, within just eight years (1980-1988). Englishmen gave them the nickname "Ice Warriors". Five peaks remain unclimbed, four of them in Pakistan. This year too, there was a Polish winter attempt on Broad Peak.

Mr Wielicki talked about his own winter climbs on Everest, Kangchenjunga and Lhotse. He talked about unsuccessful trysts and their unwavering attitude, returning to the site of their failures to conquer them all. This indomitable spirit was awe inspiring.

The event was attended by more than 300 people over two days, and provided an insight into the climbing cultures of different countries, as well as in different regions of the Himalaya. It embodied the multi – faceted world of mountaineering in the true sense.

**Mallikarjun Singh**

### **Banff Mountain Film Festival 2011**

The Club organised the Banff Mountain Film Festival on March 26, 2011 in association with the Banff Centre and the Canadian High Commission. The event was a great success largely because of the co-operation and support of the Maharashtra Seva Sangh. The enthusiastic audience of 610 people cheered and clapped all through the three hours of nail biting films. The festival that has been held for the past

several years has gained popularity and become a much awaited annual event for trekkers and climbers of Mumbai and nearby towns.

The films covered a wide spectrum of award winning films in the genre of mountain sport including mountaineering, rock climbing, base jumping, white water rafting, wild life filming, caving and mountain biking.



Audience at the Maharashtra Seva Sangh.

Mr. Daniel Bood, Canadian Consul (Political and Economic Affairs) inaugurated the festival.

**Divyesh Muni**

### Himalayan Mystique

#### Photo exhibition by Vineeta and Divyesh Muni



President Emeritus, Jagdish Nanavati inaugurating the Exhibition.

This enthusiastic couple exhibited a collection of their photographs spanning three decades of climbing and trekking in the Himalaya. The exhibition at the Piramal Art Gallery, National Centre for Performing Arts, Mumbai was inaugurated by President Emeritus, Jagdish Nanavati on March 10, 2011. On display were 53 stunning prints and 92 digital images from their collection. The Club sponsored the exhibition and all collections were donated to the Rebuild Ladakh Project. 1300 people enjoyed the

photographs over eleven days from March 10 to 20, 2011. Several visitors were happy to contribute to the Ladakh Project. Better Photography, a leading photography magazine has published several photographs and profiles of Vineeta and Divyesh in the May 2011 issue of the magazine.

**Divyesh Muni**

### Celebrating the Spirit of Exploration

The pioneering explorers to the Sikkim Himalaya were intensely fascinated by the Zemu Gap, straddled between the east ridge of Kangchenjunga and the Simvo Peak. Several of them made futile attempts at ascending the crevasse ridden Tongshyong glacier in a bid to access the tantalizing Zemu Gap. A handful of these intrepid adventurers on their return leg, instead of retracing their way back down

the beaten routes of the Goecha La and the Prek Chu valley, sought to bridge the apparently impregnable mountain gorges of the stream of the Talung and Tongshyong glacier and the complex labyrinth of the deep forests of unexplored river valleys, towards Mangan.

Anindya Mukherjee, a mountaineer from Kolkata was deeply fascinated by John Claude White's writings after his first successful traverse in 1890.



A rare view of Kangchenjunga's South Summit.  
(Anindya Mukherjee)

Thus, in March 2011, armed with a vintage compass and an U.S 500 feet contour map, Anindya Mukherjee along with his mountaineering partner Thondup Sherpa and eight fresh faced Lepcha youths, embarked on this journey (that had lain fallow for 75 years since the third and last traverse by Tilman in 1936), but in the reverse direction, from Mangan towards the Talung Glacier, and after innumerable moments of trials and tribulations, emerged onto the Talung glacier, after eleven days of extreme adventure. This is the first successful traverse from Mangan to Talung glacier.

The Himalayan Club, Kolkata section, in celebration of the spirit of Exploration, arranged the first lecture session by Anindya Mukherjee of this exceptional feat. On 30th April, 2010, at the Nizam Palace Meeting Room, he held the audience spell bound as he presented his wonderful slides of images that had been photographed probably for the first time, in such painstaking detail.

**Priyadarshi Gupta**

### **Rebuild Ladakh Project**

The Club concentrated on raising funds for the project since no rebuilding work was possible during the winter months. The villagers of Skui and Kaya villages were provided with temporary but adequate housing and food during these months. The rebuilding will commence as soon as the snow levels have receded. The Club is in consultation with experts in designing stable and economic housing in disaster hit areas to plan the rebuilding of the villages. Initiative is also being taken to consider alternative livelihood to the villagers who have lost their farms to the floods. Hon. Local Secretary for Ladakh, Mr. Motup Chewang is taking initiative in implementing the project with the assistance of his staff and locals of Ladakh. Volunteers are welcome to assist the Project on site. Those interested are requested to contact the Club.

**Divyesh Muni**

## Ageless Adventure: Kangchenjunga and Rhododendrons

All those who have seen the Himalaya once, develop an intense desire to internalise the Himalaya in its varied moods -- in moonlight, in summer, in winter and finally in spring. In spring, the entire Himalayan valley is blooming with Rhododendrons and Magnolia, which enhances the raw magnetism of the Himalaya to a magical optical medley. This mix of vast Himalaya playing duet with the carpet of pinks and violets and whites is nothing short of Utopia.

Mix the beauty of the Himalaya with adventurous spirit of a band of trekking enthusiasts from diverse professional backgrounds, with ages ranging from 56 to 78 (!! years, and one experiences an intoxicating cocktail of thrill, bonhomie and learning.

Tanil Kilachand, an experienced trekker and VP of Himalayan Club was trek leader to Sandakphu in the Singalila National Park bordering India and Nepal. The team consisted of Jaysinh Mariwala, Deepak Bhimani, Rajan Dalal and Chetan Desai.

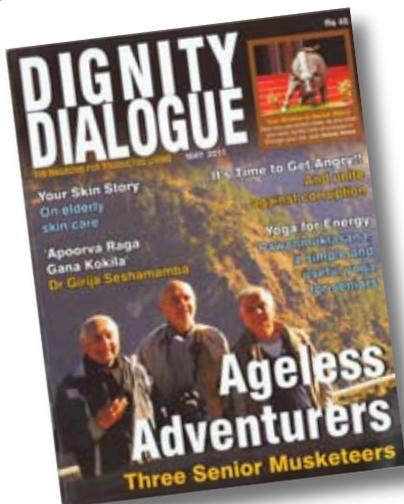


Kangchenjunga and Rhododendrons.

A 3-hour drive from Darjeeling to Maneybhanjung and further to Dhotrey (2500 m) was the start of the trek. The trek route was Tumlin (2990 m), Kalapokhri (3100 m), Bhikebanjan (3346 m), and finally to Sandakphu (3636 m)

All through the trek one could admire the beauty of Himalayan range consisting of peaks such as Kangchenjunga, Makalu, Kumbhkarna, Pandim, Three Sisters, Tamlang and Baruntse. Mount Everest decided to play truant and hid behind dense clouds. These majestic peaks and the vast sea of colorful rhododendrons and magnolia was *raison d'être* for this trek.

**Chetan Desai**



### **Editors Note:**

Previous to the above mentioned trek, our three senior youngsters also succeeded in completing the trek to the well known Har-ki-Dun. A talk on their maiden venture as a trio was organised in Mumbai as well as in Delhi.

Well known magazine Dignity Dialogue, was so impressed with their efforts that they made a cover story out of it. All kudos to our three Musketeers!

## Lampak I (6326 m)

After leaving Mumbai in the evening on May 14th, we reached Joshimath on 16th evening. Our initial plan was to attempt Deoban (6855 m) in the Bankund glacier. On 18th May, we stayed at Bampa village for the night, between Malari and Ghamsali. Next morning when we were ready to leave for our approach to base camp, the ITBP unit based in Ghamsali, informed us that due to inner line restrictions, we would also have to get proper ID and photo proof for each support staff including all porters accompanying us up to base camp from the local authorities at Joshimath. As this would require us to go back to Joshimath and spend another 4 days to get all clearances, I took a decision to climb in another valley, where inner line restrictions were not applicable.



Lampak I from C1 of P. 6504 m.

We changed our objective and went on to attempt a peak in the Kalla Bank glacier. Over there, we made an attempt on Peak 6504 m and reached a height of 5600 m on the southwest ridge. But due to bad rock and hanging glacier, we discontinued the climb. We shifted our focus to Lampak I (6326m).

On May 27th we shifted to our new C1 (5100m) below Lampak I. We had some good views of the icewall and had charted out the possible route to the upper snow fields for a summit camp and the tentative route to the summit. On May 28th, two Sherpas and I left C1 for establishing a route to the upper snowfields. The initial climb was gradual with some hidden crevasse crossings which were safely crossed through, till we reached the ice towers and the broken crevasse. Here we had to be extra careful and belay each person through the crossings. There was a slightly steep section where we fixed one rope length and from there another small traverse and a climb through a hidden crevasse brought us to the start of the upper snowfield. Here also for safety we fixed one more rope length. From here we continued our climb roped up, the gradient had become gentle and we reached an area where we felt safe to put up our summit camp. After reaching C1 and during our evening discussion, Jay suggested that why don't we try attempting the summit from



Summit ridge of Lampak I.

camp 1 itself, instead of shifting to summit camp. We made a decision that we would leave very early on May 29th and give it a try.

On 29th we were up very early and after some tea and liquid food, the three of us Tenduf Sherpa, Pemba Sherpa and myself left our C1 at 1.00 am. We reached the ice fall where we roped up and put on our crampons and followed the same route through the ice fall which was taken yesterday. Since we were climbing in the night, the visibility was only what our head torch could light up and hence we were more careful. We took a very small break at the spot where we were to put up our summit camp. From here it was a continuous gradual climb on ice and hard snow on the west face, till we hit the ridge midway between the col and summit of Lampak I. It was 4.00 am when we could just start seeing without our head torches as the early dawn was lighting up the mountains and we were able to glimpse the surrounding mountains towards the west and south and also our route. We continued our climb on the south ridge. The ridge was heavily corniced and some places we had to cross some crevasses. We continued our climb and were on the summit of Lampak I (6326 m) at 6.15 am, took photos all around and could see the mountains on the west starting from Dunagiri, Purbi Dunagiri, Changabang, Kalanka, Nanda Devi, P. 6504 m, Trisuli and in the distance towards the northwest, we could also see Kamet -- it was a fantastic view. The cloud banks coming in from below hurried our decision to move down. We started on our way down by 6.30 am, cleared the ridge part with caution and continued the climb down the face. At the ice fall, we left behind one rope and were down to our C1 spot by 10.30 am. We spent the rest of the day relaxing and making plans for the way out.

**Cyrus Shroff**

### Other News

Nawang Gombu, one of the most senior honorary members of the club passed away at Darjeeling due to old age. Apart from becoming the first person to reach the summit of Everest twice, he was instrumental in developing many generations of the Indian Mountaineers. Joss Lynam and Bob Lawford, from Ireland and England respectively passed away. Both had a strong India connection. Lynam did pioneering exploration in Kullu and Spiti in 1950s while Lawford lived in India during his childhood years and later for work. We also lost Ajit Shelat who was active in the Garhwal and Kumaun Himalaya in the past.



Nilgiri. (Dr. Raghunath Godbole)

In October 2010, Pune section of the Himalayan Club, organised a trek in the Nepal Himalaya. The route is well known as Annapurna Circuit and it is one of the most popular treks in the Himalaya. 14 members participated in the venture under



Annapurna IV. (Dr Raghunath Godbole)

the leadership of Dr. Raghunath Godbole, a well-known surgeon and local secretary of the club's Pune section. They crossed Thorung la and were fortunate to see many great mountains like Annapurna, Dhaulagiri, Gangapurna, Nilgiri and many more. They also visited Muktinath temple.



Tamotsu (Tom) Nakamura.

Our Honorary Member, Tamotsu (Tom) Nakamura, was elected as honorary member of the New Zealand Alpine Club. He is only the fifth person to receive this great honour. The announcement was made in a function organised at Christchurch on 20 May 2011. On the same occasion, he delivered a lecture on his various exploratory climbs in Tibet which was well received by the audience.

The Himalayan Journal, probably one of the oldest mountaineering journals in the world faced a major reshuffle - after over 30 years of editorship, the indomitable Mr. Harish Kapadia announced his retirement. Mr Rajesh Gadgil agreed to carry forward the legacy, with promised guidance from Mr. Kapadia. There was also a change of guard among other office bearers – Nandini Purandare was elected Hon. Secretary as well as Hon. Associate Editor. Mr. Deepak Bhimani, a leading industrialist and an avid trekker took charge of the financial affairs as Hon. Treasurer.

**Editors**

## Major Expeditions to the Indian Himalaya 2010

If you pardon the cliché, whenever God closes a door he opens a window. This adage truly applied to experiences in the Indian Himalaya in the year 2010. There were not many expeditions and few high peaks were climbed. May be this is a reflection of higher peak fees and above all hindrances caused by the bureaucracy. However there was much activity around small peaks, new regions and smaller teams. This may be an indicator for the future, as these expeditions are cost effective. Many did not mind meeting serious challenges below the height of 5500 m, as above this height, peak fees are payable and there are minimal bureaucratic hurdles.

There were 40 foreign expeditions to India – a steep drop from the normal figure of 65. Indian expeditions were 63, but unfortunately many were either to normal peaks or washed out due to bad weather.

### Uttarakhand

#### Arwa Tower (6352 m)

**Expedition:** Dutch

**Leader and (Members):** Sebastiaan Van der Smeede (4)

**Period:** May- June 2010

**Brief Details:** The Dutch team approached the mountain from Ghastoli and entered Arwa valley. They established base camp at around 4700 m. Two more high camps (camp 1 – 5350 m, Camp 2 – 5775 m) were placed. They attempted the northwest buttress. Ice and snow on rock and increased difficulty repulsed both the attempts made during the end of May and first week of June. They could reach around 6000 m which was the high point of the expedition.

#### Vasuki Parvat (6792 m)

**Expedition:** British-New Zealand

**Leader and (Members):** Malcolm Bass (3)

**Period:** September-October 2010



Vasuki Parvat.

**Brief Details:** The peak located in the Chaturangi glacier, is so named due to its shape as a serpent hood of a mythological figure, Vasuki. The alpine style ascent of the four-member British-New Zealand team from the unclimbed west face, traverse of the main summit and descent from the northwest ridge was a notable achievement in the Indian Himalaya this year. After establishing their base camp near the junction

of Chaturangi and Vasuki Bamak at 4820 m, the attempt started on 03 October. During a continuous push, successive bivouacs were placed at 5400 m, 5700 m, 5900 m, 6000 m, 6200 m, 6500 m and 6700 m on the west face. Malcolm Bass with Paul Figg reached the summit on 12 October. After traversing the summit ridge, they descended the northwest ridge after a bivouac at 6250 m and reached base camp on 13 October 2010.

### Kamet (7756 m)

**Expedition:** German, Austrian, Swiss, French

**Leader and (Members):** Herbert Wolf (5)

**Period:** September-October 2010

**Brief Details:** This international team established their base camp at Vasudhara Tal and followed the traditional route to the summit via the Purbi Kamet glacier and the Meade's col. Four high camps were established and the attempt took place from the summit camp at an altitude of 7080 m. On 28 September 2010, the leader with Oliver Amann, Nicolas Touboul, Bernd Mayer and Roland Brand reached the summit. Erich Eisele could not go above 5620 m due to health reasons.

### Ekdant (6100 m)

**Expedition:** Portuguese

**Leader and (Members):** Daniela E.N. Teixeira (1)

**Period:** May June 2010

**Brief Details:** This two-member team from Portugal did not attempt Chaukhamba III as originally planned. Instead, they made two ascents in the area of Satopanth Tal. The leader with Paulo Roxo made the first ascent of the north spur of Ekdant (6100 m) on 21 May and an Unnamed Peak (5115 m) on 02 June 2010. They have proposed to name this peak as Kartik. They also attempted Parvati Parvat but bad snow conditions foiled their plan.

### Nithal Thaur (6236 m)

**Expedition:** Slovenian

**Leader and (Members):** Urban Golob (3)

**Period:** September-October 2010

**Brief Details:** The following route was followed to approach the mountain: Munsiyari-Lilam- Bugdiyar-Rilkot-Milam-Nithal Thaur (base camp) at 4200 m. Then the Slovenian team followed Milam glacier and established two high camps. Loose rocks and seracs on the south ridge of Hardeol stopped their attempt at an altitude of 5800 m. They changed their objective and on 10 October 2010, in an alpine style ascent, Boris Lorencic, Karel Završnik and Matija Jost reached the summit of Nithal Thaur (6236 m) by the southwest and west ridge.

### Trisuli (7074 m)

**Expedition:** Swiss German

**Leader and (Members):** Walter Josef Pfeifhofer (9)

**Period:** September-October 2010

**Brief Details:** Because of heavy rainfall and broken route, the team reached the base camp at Nithal Thaur very late in the season. While on the glacier at 4700 m, mountain guide Michael Nellen stepped into a crevasse and dislocated his knee. Two high camps were established and the team could reach a maximum height of 5700 m. The team retreated due to lack of time.

### Bhagirathi III (6454 m)

**Expedition:** French

**Leader and (Members):** Christophe Moulin (7)

**Period:** September-October 2010

**Brief Details:** Two routes were simultaneously climbed on Bhagirathi III by this French team. On 23 September, Bletton Antoine, Gentet Frederic and Messina Dimitri reached the summit via east ridge, which is the normal route of this peak. On 26 September all team members reached the summit by a new route on the west face. They established one high camp at 5500 m on each route before reaching the summit.

### Shivling (6543 m)

**(1) Expedition:** Indian

**Organisers:** Indian Mountaineering Foundation

**Leader and (Members):** Sorab Gandhi (12)

**Period:** May-June 2010

**Brief Details:** This large thirteen-member team followed the traditional route in traditional style. On 18 June 2010, Ram Singh, Rakesh Joshi, Amit Ranghar, Roopa Sahi, Stanzin Youthog, Kavita Burathoki with Chandra Bahadur and Raj Bahadur Shahi reached the summit.

**(2) Expedition:** Spanish

**Leader and (Members):** Santiago Pardros Calvache (2)

**Period:** September-October 2010

**Brief Details:** The leader with Elies Coll climbed the normal route in alpine style in two days from base camp to reach the summit on 27 September.

### Trisul (7120 m)

**Expedition:** British

**Leader and (Members):** Simon Hall (5)

**Period:** September-October 2010

**Brief Details:** This high peak was attempted from its western approaches. The team established three high camps on the mountain and the top camp was placed at 6400 m. Unfortunately, it remained the high point of the expedition as the team retreated due to adverse weather and snow conditions.

### Nanda Ghunti (6390 m)

**Expedition:** Indian

**Organisers:** Parvat Abhiyatri Sangha, Kolkata

**Leader and (Members):** Shyamal Sarkar (11)

**Period:** June 2010

**Brief Details:** A large team from Kolkata, India, attempted Nanda Ghunti - a peak named after the 'Veil of Nanda Devi'. On 13 August, Sukumar Roy and Dilip Banerjee reached the summit following the traditional route.

### Gangotri I (6672 m)

**Expedition:** Indian

**Organisers:** Mountain Quest of Calcutta

**Leader and (Members):** Ramesh Chandra Roy (8)

**Period:** June 2010

**Brief Details:** Situated near the temple of the same name, Gangotri is group of three peaks, each climbed many times. This team from Kolkata, reached the summit by the traditional route. On 17 June, the leader with Lakhp Sherpa reached the summit.

### Nanda Khat (6611 m)

**Expedition:** Indian

**Organisers:** Indian Mountaineering Foundation

**Leader and (Members):** Dr Anil Gurtoo (11)

**Period:** May-June 2010

**Brief Details:** Nanda Khat is an often attempted mountain in Kumaun. The Indian team followed the traditional route passing through Song, Dwali and Phurkia. The base camp was established at 4482 m. The team climbed via a new route on the northeast spur to the north summit to reach the main summit after establishing two high camps (5352 m and 5325 m). Dhruv Joshi, Tapka Norbu, Chetan Pandey and Bharat Bhushan reached the main summit on 22 June 2010. No high altitude supporters were employed.

## Ranglana and other peaks in the Obra valley

Boris Korzh, Philip Leadbeater, Kunal Masania, Andrew McLellan and Jonathan Phillips, all from Imperial College London, have recently made three first ascents in the little visited Obra valley, west of the Bandarpunch-Swargarohini Group in India's far Western Garhwal.

The five mountaineers, who were supported by the Imperial College Exploration Board, Mount Everest Foundation, British Mountaineering Council, Welsh Sports Association and the Lyon Equipment Award, formed only the third group to climb in this area. Fortunately, a fine spell of weather, not long after their arrival, meant that their expedition was certainly the most successful.



Ranglana, route of ascent. (Maninder Kohli)

The middle reaches of the Obra are dominated by the splendid icy peak of Ranglana (5554 m). This peak has been the main objective of several climbing teams to visit this valley. The British pair Gerry and Louise Wilson, with Harish Kapadia and seven friends were here in 2006. As the conditions were poor only a lower summit, Dhodu Ka Gunchha (5130 m), was climbed. Ranglana was not attempted, and neither were the highest peaks, Pts 5877 m, 5849 m and 5760 m, which lie at the head of the valley. Vinay

Hegde, a leading Mumbai mountaineer was particularly attracted to this valley and to peak Ranglana. With a young team he made three visits here but poor conditions and lack of time beat them back.

These high peaks formed the target for Derek Buckle, Toto Gronlund, Martin Scott and Bill Thurston in 2008. On a BMC approved expedition these four were unsuccessful on the northwest ridge of Pt 5760 m and had to settle for a consolation prize of Pt 5165 m north of base camp, which they christened Lammergeyer Peak.

The Imperial College team battled receding snow and slush in the upper valley to establish a high camp at 4900 m, from where they made the first ascent of Pt 5480 m via the southwest ridge (500 m, AD-). Moving their camp a little higher to 5100 m, five members then climbed the valley's highest peak, Pt 5877 m, thought to be known locally as 'Dauru'. Ascent was made via the northwest ridge (700 m, AD) and the summit snow cap gave a truly excellent panorama.

Finally, the team climbed the shapely Ranglana (5554 m). A reconnaissance had shown the south ridge, rising above the Maninda valley to the east, to offer a feasible route. The five placed a high camp just below a col on the southwest ridge and then next day crossed the pass. They now descended a short distance towards the Maninda valley, before traversing to Ranglana's south ridge and following it to the summit (900 m, D-).

*(Lindsay Griffin)*

## Himachal Pradesh

### Ascents in Jiwa Nala (Kullu)

Five members of the Alpine Club have recently returned from a successful exploratory expedition to the Indian Himalaya, where they climbed four previously virgin peaks.

The Alpine Club organises a number of 'meets' throughout the year, from weekends in the Peak District to expeditions in the Greater Ranges. The most recent saw Derek Buckle, Michael Cocker, Drew Cook, John Hudson and Laura Millichamp visit the Jiwa nala in the protected region of the Great Himalayan National Park. Located in Himachal Pradesh, the Jiwa drains west towards the Beas river, south of the famous tourist resort of Manali. It lies in the Banjar region, approximately 70 kms east-southeast of the large regional town of Kullu. The Great Himalayan National Park is well-known for its biodiversity and the team frequently came across bear scat and saw snow leopard tracks on the glacier. The area had, as far as is known, had not previously been visited by mountaineers.



On the first ascent of Snow Leopard Peak.  
(Derek Buckle)

While shepherds had occasionally grazed flocks in the past, the valley can only be accessed via two difficult passes and no permanent settlement has ever been established. Peaks at the valley head rise to 5445 m. From a high camp just below the glacial snout, Buckle, Cocker and Cook accessed an upper glacier via a steep snow couloir and then made the first ascent of Snow Leopard Peak (5365 m), climbing a mixed route

on the south face at AD.

The expedition also made first ascents of Tribulation Point (5125 m) and Sentinel Peak (5140 m), which lie in the crenulated cirque south of Snow Leopard. After establishing a different high camp, they also climbed Snowcock Point (4890 m), south of the main valley.

*(Derek Buckle and Mike Cocker with Lindsay Griffin)*

### Singekang (6000 m)

**Expedition:** Irish-British

**Leader and (Members):** Alan Tees (5)

**Period:** October-November 2010

**Brief Details:** This peak is located in the Singekang valley of Himachal Pradesh.



Singekang, the ridge at the centre was attempted.

This valley in Spiti was approached via Poh and Pomrang villages in southern Spiti. The team suffered poor snow conditions on Singekang and thus shifted their focus to a nearby Unnamed Peak (5500 m). They followed the west ridge and reached the summit on 12 November 2010. The leader with Sandra Kennedy, Andrew Tees, George Carleton, Jeremy Windsor and Niall Boner reached the top.

### Manirang (6593 m)

**Expedition:** Indian

**Organisers:** Howrah District Mountaineers and Trekkers Association, West Bengal.

**Leader and (Members):** Anal Das (11)

**Period:** July-August 2010

**Brief Details:** Manirang is a high peak located on the borders of Spiti and Kinnaur. It was first climbed by South African couple Dr and Mrs J. de V. Graaf in 1952 with the legendary Sherpa Pasang Dawa Lama and Tashi Sherpa. The present team was also accompanied by 9 trekkers. After reaching the base camp location at Spoana (4580 m), they further established two high camps; Camp 1 at Sojana (5150 m) and the summit camp at 5740 m. They climbed south face of the peak. Molay Mukherjee, Kuntal Karar, Abhrajit Chatterjee with Norbu, Lakpa and Lopsang reached the summit on 03 August.

### Menthosa (6443 m)

**Expedition:** Indian

**Organisers:** Bharat Scouts and Guides, Kolkata

**Leader and (Members):**

Somenath Mondal (12)

**Period:** August 2010

**Brief Details:** This popular peak in Lahaul was climbed by its traditional route. In the final stage, the team climbed through the southeast ridge instead of the east ridge. On 19 August 2010, Samir Sarkar with Pyarelal and Fatehchand reached the summit.



Menthosa above Urgus Tal.

## Ramjak (6318 m)

**Expedition:** Indian

**Organisers:** Punjab Police Adventure Sports Club

**Leader and (Members):** HC Mohan Lal (3)

**Period:** July 2010

**Brief Details:** Ramjak lies on the popular trek route from Manali, passing through Shingo la to Zanskar. The four member Punjab police team made a quick ascent of this peak and all of them reached the summit. They followed the route taken by the earlier teams and ascended the eastern slopes to reach a col situated on the north ridge and then turned south to climb the north ridge of the mountain. On 14 July 2010, the leader with Jagdev Raj Kodpha, Dina Nath and Aryan Singh reached the summit.

## Wall on Raldang (5499 m)

**Expedition:** Catalan

**Leader and (Members):** Silvia Vidal (solo)

**Period:** July 2010

**Brief Details:** Catalan female Sílvia Vidal, one of the most accomplished big wall aid climbers in the world, attempted an El Capitan-sized granite wall in the Kinnaur region of the Indian Himalaya.

Before arriving in India, the only information on the wall that Vidal possessed was a single photograph and Google Earth coordinates. The picture of the face had originally been posted on the big wall website of American John Middendorf. To spark a lengthy on-line competition, Middendorf offered a hammer to anyone who could identify the location of this impressive formation.



Raldang seen from Kalpa

It was eventually discovered on the southern flanks of Raldang (5499 m) in the Kinnaur Kailash Range, approximately northeast of Sangla village in the Baspa valley. Most impressive view of this peak and face is obtained from Kalpa, directly to its west. As per the records this pinnacle was climbed by Lt P. R. Oliver in 1931. This pinnacle is clearly visible from many angles, especially from Kalpa and it was waiting to be climbed after almost 80 years!

She established base camp at 3800 m with porters. During the seven days spent there, she was never able to see the whole face due to cloud and heavy rain, and it took two days to find the foot of the wall. Access was via a complex and slippery ravine, in which she needed to fix a few ropes. After fixing

the first three pitches of the face, Vidal set off for her 25-day stint alone. Her focus was not to ascend the mountain - she climbed a big wall up from the valley that was situated on the flanks of Raldang.

Two weeks into the route and above pitch 10 she reluctantly had to resort to drilling bat hooks through completely featureless sections. However, she tried not to use bat hooking to increase the grade and emphasises that the crux A4 and A4+ sections were all natural.

*(Lindsay Griffin)*

### [Dome Peak \(5650 m\), Point JAMES \(4965 m\), Miyar valley \(Lahaul\)](#)

**Expedition:** Spanish

**Leader and (Members):** Anna Pfaff and Camilo Lopez

**Period:** August-Sept. 2010

**Brief Details:** At the end of August, after a three-day trek, Anna Pfaff and Camilo Lopez established base camp in the Miyar nala, Lahaul, on the grassy meadow below Castle Peak. Taking advantage of an eight-day weather window we had been enjoying during the approach, we set off on 1 September for the southeast face of unnamed Peak 5650 m on the north side of the Chhudong valley. After three-quarters height, instead of a traverse right to a gully, we opted for the headwall. Lopez led a steep face of 5.10 then Anna led two pitches of 5.10+, overcoming a loose section before I continued up moderate 5.8 terrain to the summit, arriving in twilight.

We slung the most prominent section of the summit with our rope, and then began the first of 14 rappels through the night. Along the way we lost one of our ropes, ran out of slings for rappel anchors, and almost lost our bivouac gear, but eventually made it down in one piece. We named the route Lopez-Pfaff Direct (IV 5.10+, 800m), and the previously virgin summit Dome Peak.



Lopez-Pfaff Direct on southeast face of Dome Peak.  
(Camilo Lopez)

After this, the weather turned bad for 10 days, forcing us to play the waiting game. Having decided to retreat, the weather began to improve!! The fine pyramid of 'Point James' was close at hand, and we thought the southeast ridge was unclimbed. After climbing moderate terrain on an exciting ridge, we reached a point where it ended below a headwall. On a good ledge we changed into rock shoes and contemplated the weather. As we were close to the top, we decided to go for it. Lopez led a full 70 m pitch up a 5.10 finger crack through exposed, solid rock, and then Anna took over the lead and reached a roof, which she bypassed by a rightward traverse that proved to be the crux of the entire route. Lopez followed, to find her on a hanging belay just a

couple of metres below the summit. Reaching the top involved crossing an exposed overhang with no protection. Lopez led only a few minutes but it felt like hours. Soon we were hugging each other on the very top, having completed the 600 m southeast ridge at 11 5.10c.

*(Camilo Lopez)*

### Shiva Shankar West (5510 m)

**Expedition:** Italian

**Leader and (Members):** Bruno Moretti (3)

**Period:** Aug-Sept 2010

**Brief Details:** From mid August to mid September Lynn Lacobini De Fazio, Massimo Marcheggiani, and Bruno Moretti, all mountaineering instructors with the Italian Alpine Club, explored the Saichu valley, the first of the Pangi's sub-valleys right of the Chenab.

After braving floods and washed out roads, they eventually reached the lush Saichu valley. Two days of trekking took them to the narrow entrance to the Tarundi valley, leading to the east side of Shiva. As horses were unable to go beyond this point, base camp (3535m), was established much lower than desirable.

Taking advantage of a good weather window, they continued north up valley, camping at 4165 m, 4600 m and 5080 m, the last 20 m above a col overlooking Sural valley, and dominated to the west by Peak 5860m. Visible to the southwest was the huge northeast face and magic east pillar of Shiva. On 1 September they started up the face immediately east of the col, first climbing a 200 m wall of very loose rock (crumbly shale in huge unstable blocks) with difficulties up to UIAA V. Some of this was verglassed and they had to climb in crampons. Then they climbed a steep ice slope, followed by a snow shoulder that led to the 5510 m rounded dome of Shiva Shankar West. This summit was first climbed in 2005 by Italian Diego Stefani, who named it "Zero Point". Continuing east would lead to the summit of Shiva Shankar (6011m) - the Horn of Shiva. All information suggests that the two Italian expeditions are the only ones to have climbed from the Tarundi valley.

### Shiva (6142 m)

**Expedition:** Russian

**Leader and (Members):** Andrey Muryshev (3)

**Period:** Aug-Sept 2010

**Brief Details:** Shiva was first climbed in 1988 by Junko Tabei. This team went in September 2010 with fellow climbers Evgeny Korol and Alexander Kornilov, and snowboarder Natalia Lapina, to see and climb it. Only the first part of the plan was successful.

Climbing the north side of Shiva is problematic. It is divided into two parts by a central spur. In the lower section of the east-northeast face, huge hanging glaciers constantly discharge ice avalanches. There are two fine ice couloirs that rise almost to the summit but accessing them is difficult, and due to poor weather during the stay, they were avalanching. The north face is only 50° and shorter, because it starts from a large and easily accessible ice terrace at c. 5000 m.

They tried the central line starting at 5000 m. Although it looked simple at first, the 45-50° snow was wet, deep and unstable. The weather was bad for the next four days, and when they returned, they found that their equipment had been buried by a huge ice avalanche and thus the climbing was over.

### **Pangi Valley; mountaineering history; unclimbed objectives from the Saichu valley.**

Early history in the Pangi was made by Japanese Junko Tabei, the first woman to summit Everest, who in 1988 made the first ascent of Shiva by the southwest face from the Parmar valley. In 2001 a Japanese team climbed Baihali Jot (6290 m) by the north ridge. In 2002 an Indian expedition made the second ascent of Shiva, following the 1988 route. In 2004, Chris Bonington, Harish Kapadia, and friends trekked north up the Saichu as far as the confluence between Tarundi and Paphita valleys, then continued east up the latter to climb Jot Mund (5130), Jambu Peak (5105) and Pimu Peak (5480) on the watershed with the Miyar valley. The following year Diego Stefani's expedition climbed Shiva Shankar West.

In 2007 Bonington returned, this time going up the Sural valley from the administrative capital, Killar. While he and Raj Kumar climbed Peak 5027 m, the other three members of his British team, Rob Ferguson, Graham Little and Jim Lowther, attempted the northwest face of unclimbed Shiva Shankar (6011m), failing due to rotten rock. It was left to Japanese Kazuo Kozu, Hidetaka Lizuka, and Reiko Maruyama, with three Indian porters, to make the first ascent of Shiva Shankar (a.k.a Sersank Peak, because it dominates the Sersank Pass to the north) the following year, via the same route attempted by the British trio.

Many challenges remain for future parties, the most notable being the eastern and northern aspects of Shiva (attempted by the Russians). Equally interesting are the unclimbed icy northwestern faces of Menthosa (6443 m), Baihali Jot (6290 m) and its satellites, the latter with elegant ice faces above the Saichu valley. No less intriguing is the south face of Shiva Shankar, though it has a disturbing array of seracs that get the sun's rays most of the day. East of our base camp lay the confusingly named Baheli Jot (5600m) - a miniature Everest. The southwest ridge would provide good acclimatisation and an interesting exploratory climb. Most of the history of climbing in the Pangi region is yet to be written.

***(Bruno Moretti)***

## Ladakh And Eastern Karakoram

### Barma Kangri (6515 m)

**Expedition:** Japanese

**Leader and (Members):** Masato Oki (1)

**Period:** July-August 2010

**Brief Details:** Mari is located southwest of Pangong Tso in the Pangong range of the Ladakh Himalaya. The base camp was established at a place called Kongma (4800 m), which is also a roadhead 23 kms away from Chushul on Tangtse road. The team established three high camps at 5400 m, 6000 m and 6100 m. They did not climb Mari (6587 m) their original objective, but climbed Barma Kangri (6515 m). They ascended the southeast ridge and on 12 July 2010, Rentaro Nishijima with Konchok Thinles and Pemba Sherpa reached the summit. On 17 July they were followed by Masato Oki with the same high altitude supporters to the summit.

### Peak (5850 m), and Peak (5995 m), Peaks in Thanglasgo valley

**Expedition:** British- American- Finland

**Leader and (Members):** Christopher John Horobin (6)

**Period:** July-August 2010

**Brief Details:** Lying north of Leh in the rain shadow of the Himalaya, this region has seen few parties operate outside the main trekking routes, and because of its proximity to the Pakistan border, it is regarded by the Indian military as being particularly sensitive.

The group had originally planned to attempt Telthop (6120 m) which was not possible due difficulties of terrain where mules could not go. Hence they changed their plans for peaks above Thanglasgo.

Reaching Hundar, in the western Nubra valley, they made plans to access the mountain via the main Thanglasgo valley. A three-day trek took them to Thanglasgo hamlet (c. 4600 m) and the start of an unexplored valley to the east that they hoped would lead to their peak.

A reconnaissance next day showed this approach to be long and difficult, with much moraine and a steep glacier. Later they caught sight of a peak at the head of the initial valley. It is marked on the map as 5850 m and was confirmed by the Sherpas to be unclimbed.

From a base camp at Thanglasgo hamlet they established a high camp in the valley leading to 5850 m, and the day after crossed incredibly unstable moraine and a long glacier to reach the northwest face. This gave 300 m of climbing up to 60° and led to the snowy, sometimes knife- edge, northeast ridge. Andrea Bainbridge, Sarah Reynolds, Bob Shiels, and Chris Horobin climbed rapidly in deteriorating weather to reach the rocky summit.

In the few days remaining we attempted the peak north of Shabib Chasser. Given the warm weather and poor snow conditions they decided to reconnoitre the southeast ridge, which was mainly rocky. They placed another high camp, and after a few hours sleep the mandatory alpine start saw them scrambling in the dark up a loose scree/boulder slope to gain the ridge. The crest gave climbing up to British Severe in standard, and after nine hours Reynolds, Shiels, and Chris Horobin reached the summit, on which recorded a GPS altitude of 5995 m.

Other members of the expedition were Colin Bainbridge, Henry Latti (Finland), David Moseley and Matt Powell (USA).

### Lingsarmo (Pinnacle peak) (6995 m)

**Expedition:** American-Canadian

**Leader and (Members):** Ms. Alison Sara Criscitiello (2)

**Period:** August-September 2010

**Brief Details:** This historic peak was first climbed in 1906 by Mrs. Fanny Bullock-Workman. Following the footsteps of Bullock-Workman, this three-woman team reached Nun base camp from Shafat village. After entering the Shafat glacier, they placed three high camps respectively at 5490 m, 6130 m, and 6270 m ascending the Swiss face. They climbed to the col between Kun and Pinnacle Peak and on 16 August 2010, the leader with Rebecca Haspel reached the summit. Kate Harris was the third climber of the party.



Lingsarmo (Pinnacle) peak from Gulmothungos.  
(Bernadette McDonald)

**Note by editors:** The historic first ascent of Pinnacle Peak was made in 1906 via the southeast ridge by American Fanny Bullock Workman with Savoye (her guide), and a porter. At the time it was the highest summit reached by a woman, and close to the human altitude record. The ascent is well recorded in the Workmans' 1909 book, *Peaks and Glaciers of Nun Kun*. The first editor of the *Himalayan Journal*, Kenneth Mason, created doubts about this ascent through his writings, although he never wrote explicitly that he doubted the ascent; "Mrs. Bullock Workman claimed to have ascended to 23,300', to the summit of a peak which she named Pinnacle Peak, and which she persistently referred to as the second highest peak of the group. Her heights and this statement were at variance with previously triangulated values". This was published in A note on the topography of the Nun Kun Massif in Ladakh, and later repeated in Mason's scholarly work, *Abode of Snow*. The use of the word "claimed" fuelled a certain controversy, though it is not clear whether Mason doubted Workman's ascent, or whether he, as a surveyor, was only discussing the height she gave to the peak.

Over the years, other teams have also climbed this summit, particularly in the 1980s, and referred to it as Pinnacle Peak. These ascents have been well-recorded in various journals, and photos taken of the summit show it to be the same as that which appears on the front cover of the Workmans' book, confirming Fanny Bullock Workman's claim. Modern maps have renamed it Lingsarmo, and quote both Nun and Kun as 7135m, making Workman's peak the third highest in the group. It appears on the official list of new peaks opened for climbing in 2009.

### Gulmothungos Rocks

The valleys from Ringdom monastery to Padam contain several rock pinnacles, peaks and passes. Photographs of these were published in the Himalayan Journal, vol. 66. These small valleys offer good climbs without need for much arrangement or planning.



Gulmothungos Rocks, Ringdom valley.

One such group of high walls is near the check post at Gulmothungos. After crossing the river the small valley of same name is approached and it offers a wide variety of rock climbs. A team of young American rock climbers, led by Rushad Nanavatty spent an enjoyable three weeks in the summer of 2010 climbing challenging routes.

### Hagshu (6515 m)

**Expedition:** French

**Leader and (Members):** Mikael Dubois Bedin (2)

**Period:** September-October 2010

**Brief Details:** The team found very bad conditions for climbing on the mountain, particularly falling rocks. They attempted northeast ridge but could not reach very high.

### Mamostong Kangri (7516 m)

**Expedition:** Indian

**Organisers:** The Himalayan Club, Kolkata section

**Leader and (Members):** Pradeep Chandra Sahoo (7)

**Period:** July-August 2010

**Brief Details:** Base camp was set up at about 4500 m near Skyangpoche. The team occupied advanced base camp at an altitude of about 4800 m on the 22 July. Camp 1 was set up at 5300 m on the Mamostong glacier, below the Hope col (5885 m). Camp 2 was established on the Thangman glacier (Kichik Kumdan glacier) at 5600

m after crossing the Hope col. The route down the Hope col onto the Thangman glacier was tricky because of its steep gradient and numerous crevasses near the bottom of the wall. The descent route had to be fixed with 200 m of rope to safeguard the regular ferrying across the col. After three days of bad weather, Camp 2 was finally occupied on 1 August and the final camp was established at 6500 m on the upper snowfield below the east ridge on the following day. 600 m of rope was fixed on the rock and ice gully leading to the upper snowfield.

Two attempts failed due to bad weather conditions. On the night of 6 August the snowfall stopped and the summit team left the summit camp under overcast skies. Poor visibility and soft snow made their progress extremely slow and exhausting. They fixed 800 m of rope on the steep incline of the summit ridge. After toiling for more than ten hours, at 11.30 am of the morning of the 7 August, Debraj Dutta, accompanied by three Sherpas, Phurba Sherpa, Pemba Sherpa and Dawa Sherpa, reached the summit.

Continuous snowfall and avalanches had swept away the fixed rope between the Hope col and Camp 2, which were fixed again for a safe return.

*(P.C. Sahoo)*

### Ibsti Kangri (6340 m)

**Expedition:** Indian-American

**Organisers:** The Himalayan Club

**Leader and (Members):** Divyesh Muni and Don Goodman (4)

**Period:** July-August 2010

**Brief Details:** Peak 6340 m which the team named as Ibsti Kangri is located in the Nimaling Topko area of Ladakh. The team drove along the Leh-Manali road to reach Lato to approach the mountain crossing Puja Ia (4930 m). After crossing another pass (5354 m) they camped on the Nimaling Topko. The base camp was established at 5200 m and advanced base camp was placed at 5620 m.

On 14 August, Divyesh, Don, Dave and Dawa began their ascent from Camp 1 established at the base of southeast face of the peak. The initial slope of soft snow took them to the rock strip. An easy scramble brought them to the start of the gully. They stuck to the edge of the gully and weaved their way between rock outcrops on the snow and ice slope of the face. It was a fairly steady climb of about 45 to 50 degrees. The snow was firm, allowing them fairly quick un-rope progress. The weather stayed cloudy, keeping the snow firm. They fixed one rope on the final slope before they got



Ibsti Kangri climbing route.

to the east ridge of the summit, as they had to negotiate a few patches of steep ice. About a 100 odd metres of careful climbing on the ridge brought them to the summit in low visibility at 9.30 a.m. They were surprised to find a small cairn on the summit towards the north ridge of the peak as there was no previous record of any ascent of the mountain.

In the second phase, the team decided to attempt P 6200 m and P. 6265 m. These twin peaks are marked as Dzo Jongo on some maps. Vineeta and Divyesh established a high camp at 5800 m whereas Don, Natala, Dave and the two Sherpas ascended directly from ABC up the east ridge. They all met up at about 6000 m to complete the climb together and by 9.30 am the entire team was on the summit.

The west summit of the peak (6265 m) stretched a kilometre away, and Don, Dave and Divyesh decided to attempt the traverse. The rocks were surprisingly solid allowing them to move un-roped. They reached the west summit at 12.30 p.m. after an hour and half of traverse. There are no previous records of any attempts of the west peak.

The team also visited Lalung la (5630 m), which is an alternative route down to the junction of Shiyul nala and Lalung nala. As the road between Lato and Upshi was washed away during the Ladakh floods, the team had to cross Kongmaru la (5250 m) and trekked down to Shyam Sumdo to reach Leh.

*(Divyesh Muni)*

## Sikkim

### Tingchenkhang (6010 m)

**Expedition:** Indian

**Organisers:** Chakram Hikers, Mumbai

**Leader and (Members):** Rajesh Gadgil (5)

**Period:** September-October 2010

**Brief Details:** In October 2009, Chakram Hikers, Mumbai had organised an expedition to Tingchenkhang (6010 m) in west Sikkim. Two members, Mangesh Deshpande and Sekar Sadashivan reached the summit but were killed in an accident while descending (see The Himalayan Club E LETTER, Vol. 17). The two Sherpas who accompanied them were rescued. Since winter was imminent, it was not possible at that time to retrieve the bodies of the two unfortunate climbers. Thus another expedition was organised in September-October 2010 to retrieve the bodies.



Tingchenkhang.

A team consisting of 6 members, a liaison officer and 7 climbing Sherpas left Yuksam and reached base camp (4150 m) at Devtaghar on the true left bank of the Prek Chu river on 27 September.

Advanced base camp was set up at 4835 m and after negotiating the steep icy slopes towards the east and the icefield, Camp 1 was established at 5463 m.

On 5 October, 5 Sherpas, Rahul and the leader reached the high point by 10.00 a.m. According to the information they had from the 2009 expedition, they should have come across a steep but continuous slope that led towards the summit. Instead, there was a gaping bergschrund and a complex crevasse field between the team, and the final summit slopes. They fixed more ropes to reach an altitude of 5915 m, where, according to the Sherpas who accompanied the 2009 expedition, the bodies of Mangesh and Sekar had been buried after the accident. The whole place was covered by a huge bergschrund. Both the walls of the bergschrund were full of hanging glaciers and seracs and it was dangerous to venture below them.

The team searched likely locations inside the bergschrund on 5 October as well as on 6 October. They were unable to find any signs of the bodies. They decided to call off the search.

*(Rajesh Gadgil)*

## Jopuno

**Expedition:** Swiss

**Leader and (Members):** Roger Payne (2)

**Period:** Oct-Nov 2009

**Brief Details:** In the autumn of 2009 Julie-Ann Clyma and Roger Payne were back in Western Sikkim, and together with Hugh Sheehan, made an attempt on Jopuno. On November 7 they climbed the left side of the southwest face to gain the crest of the west ridge at the base of the black rock section. They climbed this until just below the snowy fore-summit, but by this time it was windy and cloudy, and they did not have time or equipment to go further. More than half the descent was made in the dark.

WW Graham described climbing 'Jobonu' in 1883. In the 1884 Alpine Journal he writes that it was, 'incomparably the hardest ascent we had in the Himalaya owing to the great steepness of the glacier work'. It is hard to imagine that Jopuno was climbed in 1883, but I would have thought that the west ridge would have been the line of choice in the pioneering days of alpinism. Nothing in his account fits the topography of Jopuno, and my current view is that he might have climbed the northwest glacier on Tinchengkang and mistaken this for Jopuno.

*(Roger Payne)*

## Lama Lamani, Pk 5500 m and Jopuno

Expedition: British-American

Leader and (Members): P. Swienton (5)

Period: May 2010

Brief Details: Inspired by British mountaineer Roger Payne and his accounts of the mountains of Sikkim, from May 8-22 Geoff Cohen, Bob Hamilton, Dick Isherwood, Steve Kennedy, Dave Ritchie (all UK), and I (USA) visited the Thangsing Valley.



Geoff Cohen and Paul Swienton on Lama Lamani North. (Steve Kennedy)

First the team attempted an obvious line on the west face of Lama Lamani, going up to a col south of the final elegant snow arête of the north top. They left some gear in the boulders below the face and on the 11th began climbing the face in excellent weather.

Overall, the route was c. 600 m and AD+ and by following various degrees of difficulties by noon all reached the summit. By this time, afternoon cloud had already built so no clear view was possible except the impressive Pt. 5833 m (sometimes mistaken for Narsing), and a tiny glimpse of the top of the steep east face of Jopuno.

On the 14th Bob and Dave climbed an unnamed peak of 5500 m between Jopuno and Lama Lamani. The pair traversed steep snow and ice for a couple of rope lengths to reach a snow arête on the south face, followed this for a pitch, and then climbed two short pitches up mixed grooves to the summit block, which was gained by exposed moves.

On the 18th Steve, Bob, Geoff, and I left camp to repeat the west ridge of Jopuno. Above c. 5450 m the ridge became icy, and the section above was well covered in snow. They reached the foot of the looser black rock that forms the summit of the mountain. It appeared unlikely that the summit could be reached so they turned around.

Together with Tingchenkang (6010 m), Lama Lamani and Jopuno have been designated "Alpine Peaks" by Sikkim authorities, and it is easy to arrange permits. All three offer good medium-grade alpine ascents and could become classics of the Eastern Himalaya.

*(P. Swienton)*

(I am grateful to the Indian Mountaineering Foundation, Lindsay Griffin, Rajesh Gadgil and several individual contributors, as mentioned, for the information)

**Harish Kapadia**

## The Strange Case of Greg Mortensen

In September 1993, an exhausted young mountaineer stumbled off K2 after more than 70 days on the mountain. He had hoped to leave a memorial necklace for his recently deceased younger sister on the summit - but now ill, dejected and worn out, he was leaving the mountain with another climbing companion and their two Balti guides. Somehow he got separated from them and, taking a wrong turn, arrived alone at a small village called Korphe. Its chieftain and residents showered their meagre hospitality on him, taking care of him till he recovered. While there, he was shocked to note how Korphe's 82 children (78 boys and 4 brave girls) sat outdoors copying their multiplication tables in the dirt with sticks - the village was too poor to afford either a building or a teacher. Deeply moved, he pledged to the chieftain that he would return and build them a school.

The man's name was Greg Mortensen, and history of a kind was set in motion.

Back in the US, he supplemented his efforts to support himself by attempting fruitlessly to raise money for the school. This went on until the summer of 1994 when the American Himalayan Foundation agreed to include his appeal in its newsletter.

A man called Jean Hoerni, who had done high altitude climbing around the world including the Himalaya, read the appeal - out to his wife that seemed to understand far rather than Baltistan! Hoerni having pioneered integrated circuits, take a chance on



Mortensen with Sir Edmund Hillary and Jean Hoerni, his greatest benefactor, in 1996.

the writer did not give to Nepalese Muslim girls in was a wealthy man, the process that today's modern and decided to Mortensen as a

blind act of faith. He wrote Mortensen a US\$12000 check, with which he built his first school. Hoerni donated another US \$250,000 later and, before dying of leukemia in January 1997, established a stand-alone tax exemption charity for Mortensen, endowing it with an additional million dollars. Mortensen's Central Asia Institute (CAI) was born.

The CAI managed to crawl along until in April 2003 Parade Magazine featured Mortensen on its cover. He never looked back after that. The paperback edition of his first book Three Cups of Tea in 2007 then really turned Mortensen and the CAI into a relentless marketing machine, further propelled by his second book Stones into Schools in 2009.

He became a hero, adults and school children across the US donating millions to his cause, US\$20 million in 2010 alone. Nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in

2009 and 2010, President Obama giving him US\$100,000 from his own Peace Prize award, his speaking schedule is booked solid till end 2011. He was consulted by the US military with regard to his Afghanistan experiences, his books being apparently required reading for troops going to Afghanistan. He was a beacon of inspiration across the globe.

I include myself among these, marvelling at how this simple mountaineer had managed to walk into so many hearts, earning friendship, respect and trust from communities and villages with the schools he built for girls in the remotest and most inaccessible parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Truly, a man in a million.

Then, barely few weeks ago, it all imploded!

On 17th April, CBS News in the US blasted Mortensen on '60 Minutes' for inaccuracies in his books and cavalier treatment of CAI's finances. Climber and author Jon Krakauer, an earlier financial supporter of Mortensen was featured. The next day Krakauer released a lengthy online article on his investigations titled 'Three Cups of Deceit'. The investigation revealed that he did not actually go into Korphe at all in 1993 and that an alleged 8-day 1996 kidnapping by the Taliban in Waziristan was actually a trip with a group he had been a guest of! It also talked of the way he appeared to treat the CAI as his 'personal ATM', hiring corporate jets to take him to his speaking appearances and having CAI buy his books from stores to hand out at these appearances. More damningly, there appears to be a lack of hard evidence as to how many schools had actually been built, how many were actually operating and that few teachers had actually been engaged to deliver the education Mortensen said was being given. Since then a veritable fire-storm has erupted in the media, both for and against Mortensen. A lengthy article in the online version of Outside Magazine has just carried an interview with Scott Darsney, the respected mountaineer who came off K2 with Mortensen in 1993, whom Krakauer had quoted in his article. Darsney confusingly maintains that Krakauer may have either misquoted or misunderstood what he, Darsney, had told him!

Regardless of where this all ends up, already non-profit organisations working in the developing world like Africa are reporting fallout from the Mortensen issue. Their finances are now coming under the strictest scrutiny. But surely one of the saddest fallouts would be if Mortensen's original vision for educating poor Muslim girls in the remote inaccessible areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan were to get hit. I am sure most of us will feel the same way.

**Vijay Crishna**

## Book Review

**Kullu – Beyond Horizons by Rahul Sud** : A self published coffee table book, 192 pages, 150 photographs, Rs. 2500 (incl courier charges within India), rahulsudphotography@gmail.com +919218550501

Most photographers tend to travel to areas of their interest and then let the passion for capturing the moment take over. Those who are highly dedicated return again and again always on the look out for the magical shot. In the case of Rahul Sud the situation is a bit different as he is a resident of Kullu and has the opportunity to photograph his favorite locations at different times of the day as well as in different seasons.

Over the years I have done several treks in and around the Kullu region and going through the photographs in *Beyond Horizons* was like going back in time. In the trekking community, you often come across names like Beas Kund, Brigu Lake, Hamta Pass, Great Himalayan National Park, Malana, Naggar, Jagadsukh, Deo Tibba base. Rahul had over the years been on several treks to these places at different times of the year and has selected some of his best pictures for the book. In addition due to a fair level of familiarity with the location Rahul has also been able to find spots which give interesting perspectives of the region's prominent valleys. Some landscape shots panning the full Kullu valley are indeed quite stunning.

Another aspect of *Beyond Horizons* is that various elements are covered. These elements include peaks, forest, meadows, mountain streams, wildlife, villages, people, festivals as well as views of the stars visible on clear nights. Each of these elements requires a different level of skill and light conditions to get the photograph just right. From the quality of the photographs it is evident that Rahul Sud not only has the skill but also the ability to virtually amble up to some amazing locations fairly frequently.

Being a photography buff myself I did find interest in a particular type of photography, which I never knew existed. Rahul has tried on a windy and cloudy day to take landscape photographs with a long exposure and using filters to ensure that the photograph does not over expose. The results are interesting as clouds, which are moving, appear blurred and the detail in the photograph too is enhanced.



*Beyond Horizons*, which contains a collection of 150 pictures taken over a period of five year shines as an example of genuine passion for both photography and the mountains.

**Maninder Kohli**

## Remembrance

### Nawang Gombu, the Last Tiger of the Snow

Nawang Gombu, one of the last Tigers of the Snow, passed away on 24th April 2011 at Darjeeling. He was part of a small group of pioneering Sherpa mountaineers who scaled the Himalaya to bring fame and prestige to their community.

Born in southern Tibet near the famed Rongbuk monastery in Tibet, Gombu was the son of a former Tibetan monk Nawang Gyaltzen and former nun Lhamu Kipa. He remembered the place where he was born simply as Donak, which means 'black rock' in Tibetan. It was a place his mother who tended yaks had been visiting.



Nawang Gombu.

He briefly attended the Rongbuk monastery as a student but then moved to the village of Khumjung in Solu Khumbu near Everest in Nepal with his parents and sister Doma, where he spent his childhood.

Gombu then followed his uncle Tenzing Norgay to Darjeeling where most of the mountaineering expeditions to the Himalaya were mounted from. He became a high altitude porter before going on to become a climbing member of many subsequent expeditions.

Gombu was the youngest climbing Sherpa on the team that put his uncle Tenzing Norgay and Sir Edmund Hillary on the summit of Everest in 1953. At age of 21 he reached the South Col, carrying heavy load. For this he was awarded the 'The Tiger Badge' by the Himalayan Club in 1953.

He went on to climb Everest a decade later with American mountaineer Jim Whittaker in 1963. Whittaker was the tallest member of the team and Gombu, the shortest. This climb made history and Gombu was invited to meet President John F. Kennedy at the White House. He then climbed Everest again with the Indian team in 1965, with Captain A.S. Cheema to become the first man to climb the world's highest mountain twice.

Other mountains that Gombu climbed and pioneered routes on in the 1950s and 1960s included Makalu, Sakang Peak, Saser Kangri, Nanda Devi, Cho Oyu, Kokthang and Rathong.

Gombu was part of the first group of Sherpa mountaineers who along with Tenzing Norgay completed a guide course in Switzerland in 1954. They



Buddhist Ceremony at Nawang Gombu's residence.

became the backbone of the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI), an idea promoted by the late Indian Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. He retired from the HMI as its Director of Field Training after more than 40 years of service during which he taught thousands of Indians basic and advanced climbing skills.

For his climbing and teaching accomplishments, Gombu was awarded India's highest honours including the Padma Bhushan (1965), Padma Shri (1964), the Arjuna Award (1967), the Indian Mountaineering Foundation Gold Medal (1966) and the Tenzing Norgay Lifetime Achievement Award (1986). He also received international acclaim and was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Coronation medal (1953) from Her Majesty, the Hubbard Medal of the National Geographic Society, USA, (1963) and the Olympic Gold Medal, Rome (1967). He also had the honour of putting a Katha, a traditional scarf around the neck of President John F. Kennedy in the White House. He was made the Honorary Member of the Alpine Club, London and the Himalayan Club.

In 1971, at the invitation of his old climbing friend Jim Whittaker, Gombu visited the United States of America to learn the then latest techniques in mountaineering, skills he later taught to his fellow instructors and trainees at the HMI. He spent many a happy summer with Whittaker and his twin brother Lou Whittaker who ran the Rainier Mountaineering Institute in Paradise, Washington.

Gombu's passions included gardening, collecting orchids, driftwood, religious icons and mementos from his travels around the world. His greatest passion was his work as the President of the Sherpa Buddhist Association situated in Toong Soong Busty, a Darjeeling neighbourhood where he spent his early years and met his wife Sita Lhamu. This association works for the welfare of the Sherpas, especially those who cannot afford medical treatment. He asked that any contributions made in his name be given to this Buddhist association that is renovating a temple and helps the needy financially.

Gombu died peacefully at his home on April 24, 2011 in Darjeeling surrounded by his family after a brief illness. Born in the year of the monkey, he was aged 79. Gombu is survived by his wife Sita, his sister Doma, daughters Rita Marwah, Yangdu Goba, Ongmu Gombu, Ang Doma, son Kursung Phinjo Gombu and nine grandchildren.

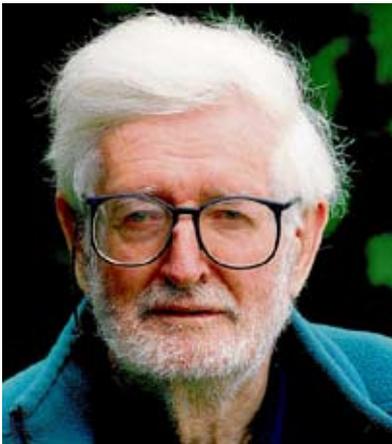
**Phinjo Gombu**

### Joss Lynam (1924 – 2011)

Joss Lynam died on January 9, 2011 at the age of 86. I first had significant contact with Joss when we were members of an Irish team which attempted the N.W. ridge of Rakaposhi in 1964, and for perhaps thirty five years afterwards we corroborated on so many schemes connected with mountaineering and the outdoors that I think I have forgotten some.

James Perry O'Flaherty Lynam was born in London of Irish parents and grew up proud of the O'Flaherty clan connections with Connemara. His father, Edward, was

curator of maps at the British Museum. In 1942, at age 18, Joss was sent by the army on an engineering officers' course at Manchester University and climbed with the college club in the Peak District and Wales. Having read his first book on the Himalaya at age 7 and been inspired later by an expedition film on Kanchenjunga, he was delighted to be posted to India but found himself in Mussoorie training recruits in, of all things, jungle warfare. Before being demobilised in 1947 he and another Irishman, Bill Perrot, joined an engineers' team to climb Kolahoi in Kashmir. It was during this trip that Bill proposed to Joss that they set up the Irish Mountaineering Club which they did in 1948 when Joss came to study engineering at Trinity College Dublin.



Joss Lynam.

His first trip to the Alps followed soon after and then, in 1958 and 1961, he took part in two expeditions to Lahul-Spiti, on the second of which he made the first ascent of Shigri Parbat and, in the best tradition of the time, lugged plane table and accoutrements to several summits to complete a survey which resulted in what was for some time the definitive map of the Bara Shigri basin. Many years later we were to compare his experience of walking from Manali to Spiti with my visits there by bus or four-wheel drive.

When he returned to live in Ireland not long after the Rakaposhi trip he immersed himself in the affairs of his club and then, as an increasingly prosperous Ireland became more leisure-oriented, a number of organisations sprang up to cater for a new enthusiasm for the outdoors. During that heady time when the tiny number of enthusiasts involved in incipient adventure sports organisations came together to form the Association for Adventure Sports and then, in many cases to adopt similar training methods and a joint approach to government, Joss quickly came to prominence. In the 1970s he became a member of the newly established National Sports Council.

In the meantime he led two expeditions to Greenland in 1968 and 1971, extended his alpine experience, helped to initiate contacts with mountaineering and mountain training bodies in other countries. He was back in the Himalaya in 1977 on a trip to Kishtwar as a member of a strong team led by Calvin Torrans which failed in its objectives and again in 1984 to Zanskar where Joss's team completed the first official ascent of Z8. (They found evidence of a previous unauthorised ascent). He took part in an Irish expedition to the Peruvian Andes in 1980.

On a personal level, the 1980s were a difficult time for Joss. He lost his job with a major Dublin civil engineering firm in 1983; in 1986 he had a coronary bypass operation and his son Nick died in the following year. His resilience was remarkable. Within a year of his by-pass operation he was guest leader of an expedition to Zhangzi in Tibet. That trip, on which the team reached over 7,000 metres in poor conditions, was a very valuable learning experience and part of the methodical build-up to the successful Irish ascent on the north side of Everest five years later in 1992.

Joss felt that with advancing age (he was then 63) his Zhangzi experience was to be his last Himalayan venture but two years later in 1989 he was persuaded by the irrepressible Mike Banks who had led the first successful team to Rakaposhi in 1958 to take part as joint leader in an attempt on the Khatling side of Jaonli 6632m in Garhwal. That began a series of such outings, all sponsored by a magazine which catered for retired folk, on several of which I took part as the 'baby' of successive teams which included some of Britain's most experienced mountaineers and explorers as well as us two 'Paddys'.

Joss met his wife Nora Gorevan in the early years of the IMC and they married following his graduation. They had three children Ruth, Nick and Clodagh, all three of whom were involved in outdoor activities. The Lynam home was a busy and welcoming centre for business meetings of various organisations and for crowded mountaineers' parties at which the contortions of Joss's lanky frame trying to cope with an Irish dance were wonderful to behold.

In 2001 Joss received an honorary doctorate from Trinity College Dublin in recognition of his voluntary work and adventurous achievements. His funeral was attended by a large crowd of mountaineers and other sports people of all ages and the Ireland's President sent her condolences. His ashes were scattered from the summit of Knocknarea in Co. Sligo, the first hill he had climbed as a child.

**Joss Lynam, b. 29th June 1924; d. 9th January 2011.**

**Paddy O'Leary**

### Ajit Shelat

We are saddened to report the passing away of Ajit Shelat - many of us knew him as an ardent mountain lover and climber, ever since the mountain bug bit him in his college days. After doing his Basic and Advance Courses, Ajit was part of several expeditions including to Jogin, Lampak, and Kalla Bank. In a mountain career spanning over 3 decades, he has been part of over a dozen high altitude treks in the Himalaya, and scores of treks in the Sahyadris. The Jogin expedition of which Ajit was a part, goes down in history as one of the survival stories in Himalayan climbing.

A brilliant Engineer and serial entrepreneur, he graduated from the Indian Institute of Technology, Powai. After a career with Godrej Elec, he set up his own company – Rimo Technologies, which was one of the great success stories in the Indian IT industry.



Ajit Shelat.

He was very well read about expeditionary and exploratory mountaineering and has contributed significantly to spreading ecological awareness, especially in relation to mountains.

Ajit is survived by his wife Radha and his daughter Arundhati, both of whom are ardent mountain lovers.

**Ranjit Jakkli**

## A Forgotten Pass



Leo Pargial (left) and Reo Purgiyil from Hango.

Once upon a time, the powerful Rampur Bushahr kingdom extended till the Shalkar Fort at the edge of Spiti. One branch of the British built Hindustan Tibet road continued further north from Pooch to Spiti and eventually to Ladakh and Central Asia. As the Satluj Gorge blocked the way along the river, the trail crossed over the Hangrang pass (4425 m) from Sannum in the Ropa valley to Hango valley. In recent times as a road was blasted through the Satluj gorge,

the pass fell in disuse and hardly anyone crossed it in past five decades.

We reached the pass from the north, Hango village, in a leisurely three day trek. The pass offered most magnificent view of Leo Pargial (6791 m) and the Reo Purgiyil (6816 m). To the south Jorkanden, Kinnaur Kailash and Phawararang stood tall, making it as one of the finest pass to reach for views.

Later we trekked to the Urgen Cave (or Tirasang Cave) where Guru Padmasambhava had meditated before he started for Tibet along the Satluj. Finally we reached the Bushahri fort at Shalkar, where now a monastery is built.

**Harish Kapadia**

## Forthcoming Event

The tenth edition of the Giritmitra Sammelan, an annual congregation of mountain lovers, will be held at Mumbai on July 16 and 17, 2011. An interesting array of events and talks have been lined up for the one and half day meet which will have experienced mountaineers and other experts speaking on diverse topics ranging from high altitude climbs to historical aspects of forts in Maharashtra. New Zealander Mark Inglis, the only double amputee to have scaled Mount Everest, Apa Sherpa, who has scaled Mt Everest a record 22 times, noted historian Babasaheb Purandare and the well known explorer Harish Kapadia are some of the key speakers. The Himalayan Club members can register themselves with the club office or directly with the organisers of the event. For more information visit: [www.giritmitra.org](http://www.giritmitra.org).

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