

# EDITORIAL

## NAGADHIRAJ HIMALAYA

In the northern direction, there is a noble souled mountain, called the Himalaya. He is Nagadhiraj, the Lord of all mountains, with his two extending arms fathoming the eastern and western oceans. He stands unsurpassed as the measuring rod of the earth.

Kalidas in *Kumarasambhava*

India's great romantic poet Kalidas, centuries ago, personified the great mountain range of the Himalaya in the above writing. Many mountaineers the world over have proved him right. Wherever in the world one climbs, the lingering desire to measure one's abilities and capacities against the highest of these mountain ranges always remains. The adventure oriented of the world have always looked up to the Himalaya — the Lord of the mountains.

It is appropriate to recall the bard Kalidas now, in celebration of the 50th issue of the *Himalayan Journal*, recording adventures in the Himalaya. The H.J. over the years has devoted its pages to this range in all its glory and beauty. In this issue we are happy to present contributions from our peer editors. H. Adams Carter of the *American Alpine Journal* (first published in 1929, same year as the H.J!) and Johanna Merz of the *Alpine Journal* (now 98 years old). Our only surviving past editor, T.H. Braham, writes a nostalgic piece and our Honorary members, W.H. Murray and Peter Lloyd, remind us of the pristine glory of the range in all its honesty. We the present editors have tried to recall the history and pay tributes where they are due. Bill Aitken reads between the lines of the H.J., both written and unwritten meanings. There is more to the Himalaya than just climbing.

It would be too formal to call a roll of honour for help rendered over the years, but the H.J. owes its existence to those who wrote, edited, criticised and opined, drew maps, sent photographs and of course those who read and referred. And not forgetting those innumerable climbers, trekkers and scholars of the Himalaya, without whose adventures the pages would have never been filled in the first place. To all of them our grateful thanks.

Along with this issue a booklet, *Environmental Protection of the Himalaya* is being sent to the members to fulfil the 'other aims' as envisaged by the founding fathers of the Club, fulfilling a need, if not substantially but making a beginning. For this we are grateful to Aamir Ali from Geneva whose support we now count heavily on. The *Consolidated Index to Volumes 1 to 50*, published with this issue, in a way encapsulates the entire Himalayan history as available in the H.J. (1928 to 1994). This laborious work was undertaken by Dhiren Toolsidas in New York, signifying the real international character of the Club.

Aamir Ali in his article suggests the establishment of an 'International Park of the Rose' on the Siachen glacier (Eastern Karakoram), and the withdrawal of the armies. This is a dream as remote and wild as the Sia (Rose) that grows on this long war-torn glacier. But perhaps it is not that wild an idea as he talks about several such Transnational Parks or Transboundary Protected Areas under the U.N. 'Men must harbour dreams sometimes, even foolish, foolish dreams'. Just like Martin Luther King who dared to say 'I have a dream'. It would be truly a great expression of respect for the Himalayan range if, on the occasion of the 50th issue of the H.J., mountaineers of the world could support what Aamir Ali calls the dream of a 'Peace Park' on the Siachen glacier, where ibexes roam fearlessly, the Sia grows abundantly and mountaineers climb freely.

Kalidas in another poem *Meghdoot* asks a cloud to act as a messenger and carry the message of love across the Himalaya to the beloved separated by the range. Mountaineers, be they in the foothills or standing on a high peak, are best attuned to listen to this cloud messenger. Their passion for the Nagadhiraj Himalaya, and their interaction with it, is what the *Himalayan Journal* has recorded, not only as a measure of adventure but as their expression of love.

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