

EDITORIAL

Another year has passed and it is time for another volume of the *Himalayan Journal*, the last of the 1990s. When one reads accounts of explorations of the 1890s they sound so wonderful, exciting and leave one with a sense of awe. Would readers in the 2090s feel the same about what is written today?

Many exciting climbs and explorations are covered in this volume. Sir Chris continued his association with the Sepu Kangri massif, being rewarded this year substantially, if not completely. Mukut Parvat East, one of the last virgin peaks in the Garhwal was ascended. Smaller but rewarding newer peaks like Gorur Parvat continued to be discovered by mountaineers. A special mention must be made of Martin Moran's crossing of the watershed between Badrinath and Kedarnath temples. This route, first undertaken by Shipton and Tilman in 1934, had not been attempted since. Martin Moran, with four others, was successful in crossing this watershed.

In the *Himalayan Journal*, Volume 52 (1996), and in some other leading mountaineering journals, articles on the Nyegi Kangsang expedition were published, written by its leader Col. M. P. Yadav. They claimed the first ascent of this 6983 m high peak situated on the border of Arunachal Pradesh (India) and Tibet (China). It is now proven that the above ascent was wrongly claimed. The main peak was not climbed. This was an infamous episode in Indian mountaineering history which now stands corrected thanks to the study by the Club's President J. C. Nanavati and the openness and firmness shown by Dr M. S. Gill, President of the IMF, in upholding the truth about IMF's own expedition.

During the year Lord Hunt passed away. Though he will be remembered as leader of the 1953 successful Everest expedition there were many other facets of his life which are covered here. The Club also lost Navnit Parekh, well-known to many in India for looking at the range with a sage's eye.

To begin with, this year's Journal covers two interesting articles. One about the study of the Demoiselle cranes and how the flight of these birds can help to predict the Himalayan weather. But no one can predict the moods of a lady as exemplified during the traverse of the entire Himalayan range by a ladies' team. They had differences

half way through the traverse, formed two teams which went their separate ways. Finally both achieved their goals, one ending at Indira Col and the other at Karakoram Pass.

The Siachen Glacier, that magnificent long glacier surrounded by high peaks was visited by a mountaineering team. Its peaks, subsidiary glaciers and history are recorded here. But the glacier is the scene of a stand-off between two armies and no mention of this glacier can escape mentioning the artillery shells flying across it or the sacrifice of the soldiers on snow there. This glacier war has changed many concepts of living at high altitudes. It has also caused severe environmental damage to this pristine area.

Questions remain : how and when will this war end? As one well-meaning army officer put it, 'we don't want our children and grand children sitting on the Salto Ridge defending the glacier.' And I dare add, we want even our generation to enjoy and climb on this glacier peacefully.

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