

# EDITORIAL

It was a pleasure to meet Dr Charles Houston at Trento Film Festival (Italy), last year. Though in his nineties, he was full of spirit. We discussed many Himalayan subjects, particularly K2 and Nanda Devi - both mountains where he had made pioneering expeditions, his life in India and the climbing scene in USA. He was carrying a multicoloured umbrella with two bells attached to it to display at the Festival. He had carried this umbrella until the last camp on K2 during his expedition in 1953. As they could not reach the summit, it was left at the last camp as a souvenir. The following year when the Italians made the first ascent of K2, they brought back this umbrella, not as a souvenir but to return to Houston, as he had 'forgotten' it there! Charlie added with a smile, 'I will keep this umbrella till I am alive and leave it to the Italians in my will'!

Based on this, I started exploring the possibility of an article on K2 by Charlie for the *Himalayan Journal*. He finally dictated an article on tape, which was sent to Mumbai, but our secretaries here found it impossible to transcribe it, given Charlie's American accent and old age. So finally we obtained a copy of his film (which was copied by a friend in Boston), and Charlie added several paragraphs and revised it on tape. All this material was sent from Boston to London, where a friend familiar with the American accent typed it for us. Finally it reached Mumbai, deservedly article number one in this issue. Some journey for this precious article (like Charlie's umbrella!), but it is not everyday that you meet and walk with history!

We have made major changes in the volume, keeping pace with changing times. A splash of colour, change in printing styles, a different presentation of photographs are some of these. But the contents and its strengths remain the same. We have Payne and Julie-Ann climbing Chomolahri, Lowther exploring the Miyar nala, Charlie Clark recalling pioneering days in Kishtwar and Bonington seeking enjoyment in Lahaul and reviewing a book on Don Whillans. We also have exploration of the Tsangpo gorge - the last round of exploration of this historic river, travels in Tibet, Nakamura continuing with remarkable explorations and several Japanese climbs in unknown areas. Enough for a year!

I am grateful for support from authors as always, and assistance from a new team of editors, designer and printer.

Harish Kapadia

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