

CORRESPONDENCE

Joss Lynam
7 Sorbonne, Ardilea Estate
Dublin 14, Ireland

31 October 1994

Harish Kapadia
Editor
The Himalayan Journal

Dear Editor

Many congratulations on an excellent 50th issue!

But... with reference to page 43, paragraph one, *please* ask Aamir Ali to reread Smythe's *Kangchenjunga Adventure*. Dyhrenfurth's first wife who accompanied him to Kangchenjunga was called Nettie, and Norton's (correct) reference was to J S Hannah, the third Transport Officer with the expedition!

I read with interest the article about your exploration of the Parahio and Ratang valleys.¹ It is a pity you could not get across the divide into the Gyundi, but looking again at my photographs of that ridge taken from the Gyundi in 1958, I am not surprised! You say that one way the gaddis get into the upper Gyundi *with horses* is over the pass from the Takcha valley. I don't find this name on any map I have, but it seems that it can only be the valley we called Dongrimo (H.J. XXI). I take leave to doubt that horses could get from the Dongrimo to the Gyundi. In 1958 Losar porters balked a few miles above Losar, there is about 5km of glacier (admittedly easy), and the descent to the Gyundi, as I remember, was difficult enough for laden humans! There was a cairn on the pass, and I would not put it past agile Kangra gaddis with agile mountain sheep crossing, but horses...no. I mention this not critically, but in case somebody in future thinks this route is very easy!

Joss Lynam

1. See article 'Cross-roads in Spiti', p. 116.

14 ch. de la Tourelle
1209 Geneva

4 November 1994

The Editor,
Himalayan Journal,
Bombay

Dear Sir,

'Himalayan Journal: Vol. III (1931)'

I thank Joss Lynam for pointing out an egregious error in my article in Vol. 50, 1992-1993.

I apologise to you Mr. Editor, and to all your readers. I have no excuse. The name 'Hannah', being a common German feminine name, and knowing that Mrs. Dyhrenfurth had helped with the administration and transport arrangements, I assumed without further inquiry, that Hannah must have been the wife. That whole paragraph becomes nonsensical.

I am afraid that now, Mr. Editor, you will have no option but to dismiss me from the task of writing this series of retrospective articles.²

Aamir Ali

14 November 1994

To,
Mr. Joss Lynam
Dublin 14, Ireland

Dear Joss,

Thank you for your letter of 31st October about the H.J. volume 50. I am glad you like the issue.

My information about Gyundi was based on talks with at least 4 different people who have been to the valley. They were local shepherds or shepherds from the Kangra. What I have written is based on information gathered from them. Of course, when someone actually goes there we will know the exact situation. But I have no doubt in my mind that

2. Certainly not! God save the editors! — Ed.

animal transport like horses, donkeys or yak have been going to these valleys in recent years. The use of dynamite has changed many gorges. Would anyone believe in the early days that metalled two lane highways would be running into Spiti with a regular bus service? Similarly, if you read the difficulties faced by Braham and Holmes in the Ratang gorge, one could never imagine that a motorable road now goes into that gorge for 12kms.

The modern day shepherds have access to dynamite and road building gangs. Politically, now they can pressurize the local administration to build and maintain roads for them. One of the shepherds clearly mentioned that they had blasted few patches from Hal to Gyundi from the Spiti side. Once inside, they sent out regular animal transport like horses to collect their rations from the main Spiti valley. In fact, many of these shepherds even carry kerosene stoves to make up for the lack of fuel in the Gyundi. Moreover there has been talk for many years now of building a power house in the Gyundi valley, like one in the Ratang. If this is true, we may have a motorable road into Gyundi!

I will, however, convey your query to other parties who may be visiting Gyundi and have it rechecked.

Regards,

Harish Kapadia

Yashveer Bhatnagar
P.O. Gechang
Pin valley, Spiti

23 July 1994

Dear Harish,

I received my copy of the H.J. 50, I am going through it with great interest. I enjoyed greatly your article on Spiti as I live here. There are however a few observations I have to make.³

The junction of the Khamengar and Debsa rivers have Chirrim on its left bank and Thango is about 3km downstream of

3. See article 'Cross-roads in Spiti' in H.J. Vol. 50, p. 116. — Ed.

Chirrim. Therefore, some one coming down from the Khamengar valley and going to the Debsa does not need to come to Thango (Thidim).

The picture opposite p. 134 is not of bharal but of female ibex. Bharal males have large horns shaped roughly like motorcycle handles and the females have much shorter horns but at a similar angle. Ibex females have similar short horns but almost parallel, which is very evident from this picture.

Regards,

Yashveer Bhatnagar

J. R. Sims,
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U.K.

9 November 1994

Dear Harish,

I hope you won't mind my writing to you a rather portmanteau letter, but I have two or three things I would like to say and you are the last point of personal contact I have with the Club.

I am sorry to tell you that I never managed to collect enough funds to cover my proposed trip to interview the older generation of Sherpas in Nepal. It all started when Mingma Tsering was my Sirdar in 1965; when I inspected his 'chitty book' to write his praises. I came across a piece by Ed Hillary who employed M.T. on a schoolhouse undertaking and sang his praises wholeheartedly. After many years I thought of collecting these old books and putting them into some interesting form; the idea of writing the Sherpas' tale of (largely) European climbing in the 'old' days before say 1965, came as a development a bit later as I found that there were few of the old records left.

May I express my wholehearted thanks to you and other members of the Club in India for all the help and support

you gave me while I was trying to mount a trip to Nepal and India to carry out a series of interviews with as many of the older Sherpas as I could find to obtain their views and stories of what happened on the expeditions where they were such a powerful influence. We all learnt so much from them that it has hardly been told that I wanted (and still would like to see it done) to tell the other half of those stories that have been such thrilling tales as told by the sahib. How sad it is that they and their womenfolk, paid so high a price in their lives before we learnt to go it alone; but how wonderful was their companionship while we shared experiences.

My congratulations on your superb photographs on Spiti issued by the Himalayan Club as Greeting Cards this season. I don't know if I told you that I first went to the Kulu-Lahul-Spiti region in 1955. Originally we aimed for the Deo Tibba area, but the season was too late for porter travel and we finished in the Bara Shigri basin with several first ascents, and finally an ascent of Mukarbeh.

Warwick Deacock and I, after our successful ascent of Rakaposhi with Mike Banks, went again to Lahul in 1958 to join our wives who had driven overland. The three 'girls' then, were Eve, my wife, Antonia Deacock and Annie Davis. In the capital Delhi, the wives stayed in the Y.W.C.A. Here they were overheard by a local girl bemoaning their difficulty in getting permission to cross the inner line, so restricting their scope of travel. The Indian lass encouraged them to seek an appointment with the Prime Minister Pandit Nehru, if he would consider their case. Their protestations, that they could not, surely, approach the head of State, were brushed aside and, lo and behold, came the invitation to tea at which maps and the Home Minister were called in to help the plan.

They all waited as Pandit Nehru took aside the Home Minister and almost audibly said, 'They don't look like spies to me...!' They were on their way soon!

We just managed to catch them before they crossed the inner line. They went through Zanskar across the Lingti plain and claimed their own peak, Biwi Giri (Wive's peak).

Those were wonderful days and now the tourists go there by bus. But, our family has, as you may imagine, has been

telling the story with great delight ever since!

Regards,

John Sims

Bruno Meola
5, Moss Fold
Ashton under Lyne
Lancashire
OL6 9PE
England

19 October 1994

To
Harish Kapadia
Bombay,
India.

Dear Mr. Kapadia,

In your article on Panch Chuli, interestingly I find a glacier named as 'Meola', which is same as my family name! As far as I know none of my immediate ancestors are Indian, but originate from Italy. I will explain my surname.

The surname Meola is of two distinct origins. In the first place, Meoli may be of patronymic origin. Patronymic surnames derive their origin from the personal name of the father of the initial bearer of the name. In this instance, the surname is derived from 'Meo', which is an apocopated form of the personal name Bartolomeo. Thus, the surname Meola signifies son or descendant of Bartolomeo.

Alternatively, the surname Meola may originate from a place name. In this instance Meolo near Venice (Italy).

My ancestors were originally Di Meola. I have traced back to 1836 when my great great grandfather Raffaele Di Meola was born.

I wonder whether you can find out what this name 'Meola' means to the Kumaonis. I hope you are able to find out something which may connect it with my family name.

Regards,

Bruno Meola

28 November 1994

To,
Bruno Meola,
Lancashire,
England

Dear Mr. Meola,

Thank you for your letter. I have been inquiring about Meola. After reading your explanation nothing seems to be fitting. Anyway, what is said in Kumaoni is as under:

ME: means 'myself', *AOLA*: means 'will come', basically meaning, 'I will come', phonetically. There is a local legend about a person who went to this glacier Meola and promised that he would 'come back'. But nobody knows that happened to him as he never returned.

The other explanation offered was that originally it meant *Mehal* which is a name of a fruit. The glacier near Meola is called Sona glacier, meaning the 'golden glacier'. This is simply because it faces east and lights up golden early in the morning. It is a mystery why the adjacent glacier is called Meola.

I think I will have to leave it at this, at present, but hope that some day we will be able to trace it further. The entire exercise is most interesting!

Regards,

Harish Kapadia

LEO PARGYAL OR REO PURGYIL?

In the *Himalayan Journal* 48, Pp. 78 to 91, the article and the editor's note speculates upon the name and the height of this peak in northern Kinnaur. After a year of correspondence and research the following situation emerges:

1. It was not possible to obtain any reply from the Survey of India, but it was ascertained that in Survey of India map 53 I/9, scale 1:50,000, first edition 1963, the peak rising from the Satluj basin near Shipki la is marked as 6816m. Thus this would be the highest peak in the Himachal.

2. On the map no name is given to this peak, though point 6791m and point 6770m a little to the north of this peak are distinctively marked as Leo Pargyal.

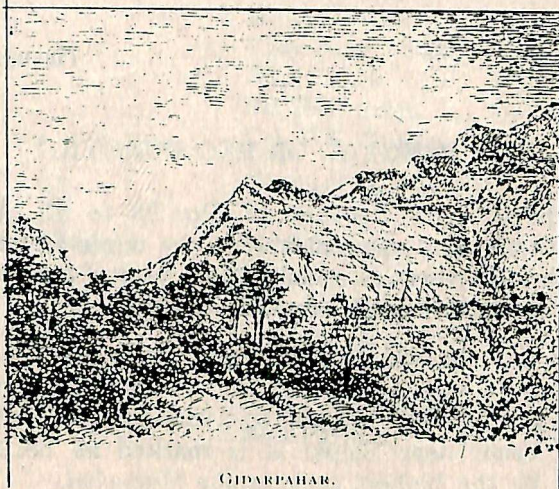
Thus it would be better to refer to this group of peaks as under:

Leo Pargyal peak I 6791m
Leo Pargyal peak II 6770m
Reo Purgyl 6816m

Incidentally one of the earliest references to this peak is by Andrew Wilson. His book *The Abode of Snow*, published in 1885, refers to the peak as *Lio Porgul*. From his description, it is certain that he is referring to peak 6816m as the true peak and has even not seen the other two.

Until the Survey of India makes up its mind by thorough enquiries (and tells us about it) this is the best we can do at present.

HARISH KAPADIA
Editor
The Himalayan Journal



GIDARPAHAR.