

## Correspondence

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To Hon Editor  
*The Himalayan Journal*  
Mumbai  
20<sup>th</sup> June 2018

In 1994, when I was the editor of the Journal, Bruno Meola wrote a letter seeking the meaning of 'Meola' which is a glacier located at the base of the five peaks of Panch Chuli in the Darma valley.

Our letter exchanges were published in *The Himalayan Journal*, Vol. 51.

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, Meola 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 Meola 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

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 what 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 someday we will be able to trace it further. The entire exercise is most interesting!

Regards,  
Harish Kapadia

[#glaciersofthehimalaya](#)

[Meola Glacier below Panch Chuli peaks, Darma Valley, Sep'16](#)

**Now, after almost 24 years we have some answers to this interesting subject. I had the following communications:**

**Shailendra Pangtey** - As Kapadia has written that Meola in Kumauni means "I will come (back), Me (मी) ola (औला)". Yes, one can explain it this way, but it is important to note this glacier falls in the Dhauliganga valley also called the Darma valley and the residents of the villages of Darma do not speak Kumauni. They have a different language and the word Meola should be a word from their language. Meola is the name for Panch Chuli peak in their language. The village near to Sona glacier

is named as Son (सोन). Son village and its residents carry the surname as 'Sonal'. I am from Munsyari, so I do not know the language spoken in Darma but I do know people of that valley and I will certainly ask them and inform you. It's pronunciation too should be म्यौला and not मी औला (मी - me औला - will come ).

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Yesterday I contacted three people - one from Dugtu and two from Dantu (the nearest two villages from Panch Chuli base camp). They said that the word is not Meola, it is 'Naula'. Secondly, two of them said that there is a temple of Naula (or Neola or Nyola whatever the pronunciation may be, it was not very clear on the phone) at Dugtu. The glacier and the river are called Naula and Naula Yangti. Now, having a temple for Naula suggests that they worship Naula deity. In these parts of the world, mountains and rivers are worshiped as deities. All three were not sure whether Naula and Panch Chuli are synonyms but they said it may be so and have to consult elders. Mr. Phal Singh Dattal from Dantu said that he has books on local culture and history written by Mr Dhakriyal a prominent writer of the area beyond Dharchula (Darma, Byans, and Chaudans) and shall refer them on the subject. I will further contact Shri Phal Singh ji in a week or so and ask him again regarding Meola and also try to inquire further to others from that valley

I got a call from Mr. Dugtal of Dugtu village whom I had phoned a few days ago and he had promised me that he will consult on this matter with others from Darma valley. He clarified that Nyola (written and believed to be Meola) indeed is the name for Panch Chuli. He told that there is a guy in Jauljibi who has detailed knowledge about this subject.

Thanks to Mr. Shailendra Pangtey we have now clarity on this fascinating subject.

Harish Kapadia  
 Editor Emeritus,  
 The Himalayan Club