







# Into the Year of the Mountain

**If you thought it was the Year of the Horse, you're wrong. The time of the mountain is here. Mountains are difficult to reach; once you get there, they're difficult to live in, and if you stay, they're difficult to endure. But they cover more than a quarter of the earth, are home to a tenth of the world's five billion, and provide goods and services to over half the world's population.**

**RAMYATAMBU** When some 50 scientists gathered in Rio in June 2000 to find an agreed-upon definition for a mountain, they couldn't. But like their predecessors at the World Environment Summit in Rio in 1992, they agreed that mountains were much more than a physical mass, and integral to the world's environment. And so, ten years after Rio, the UN has decided to celebrate 2002 as the International Year of the Mountain to draw the world's attention to the mountains, their importance and their problems, and opens will gather in Johannesburg, South Africa this September to evaluate the outcome of the 1992 meeting at the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

"The most important mountain policy issue for all mountain regions, and particularly here, is about providing better environment and resources for people living downstream, and redressing the imbalance of resource flows from upstream, mountain areas," says Dr. David Campbell, director general of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), the first international centre with a mandate to promote sustainable mountain development. (See box for interview.)

Nepal with in Himalaya is centrally positioned, but around 135 countries in the world have mountains and hills. Not just the home of snow-fed rivers that are a vital source of drinking water and critical to hydropower projects, mountains also contain a quarter of the world's forests, rich hubs of biodiversity with some of the world's rarest flora and fauna, and a astounding diversity of cultures, and endless scope for recreation and renewal.

"But by their very remoteness and their fragile and dynamic nature, which make transport, development and infrastructure all cost five times more, they face increasing marginalisation, economic decline, and environmental degradation," says Campbell. ICIMOD has been engaged in providing conceptual guidance and advice for preparations across the world for the International Year of the Mountain, but will itself largely focus on observing IYM activities in the Hindu Kush Himalayas.

Millions of people in this part of the world still don't realise, understand, or have never been taught that the water they drink comes from the Himalaya. In the Ganges plains, Bihar and Bangladesh—the result of thousands of years of silt eroded by water and weather—people still suffer

from the misconception that deforestation in the hills is the cause. "They haven't understood or been explained right about the link between deforestation and the courses of rivers like the Kosi, that all Asian countries are affected by the connection between the Indian Ocean, the Himalayas and the monsoons," says botanist Dr. Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha. "Even then, the public attitude towards mountains is negligent. Access to mountains is difficult. They are difficult to live in, and if you stay, they're difficult to endure. That's why it's important for a mountainous country like Nepal not to look at mountains from a distance, but to look at their practical problems in the face." Dr. Shrestha is working with national scientists that include professionals from the non-governmental sector and tourism as well as academics and researchers, who will mark the various special mountain-related programs in Nepal this year.

What's happening, where ICIMOD, together with other donors such as the EMO, the Japanese government, the Swiss Development Cooperation, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Mountain Institute, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and the German aid agency Gerdaschuldt for Technics.

With the 2002 launch of the Destination Nepal Campaign and the 50th anniversary celebrations of the first summit of Mt. Everest on the mountain women's meet from 28-31 May. "Celebrating Mountain Women" will bring together indigenous women, donor agencies, policy makers and

entrepreneurs, and researchers to share the problems and progress of mountain women. Mountain women will have a forum to articulate their concerns and share their experiences and ideas in areas like natural resources and environment, health, entrepreneurship, legal, political and human rights, and cultural and indigenous knowledge. The idea is that such a gathering will not only enable mountain women's networks to grow and strengthen as agents of change, but that it will also make a significant contribution to policies and practices that empower mountain women and their communities.

The other major event will be the High Summit 2002 International Conference Around the World's Highest Mountains from 6-10 May, that will take place with simultaneous regional conferences in Kathmandu, Milan, Mendoza and Nairobi to identify critical mountain policies, with policymakers and planners visiting and conferencing events for an hour, and a global conference in February and March will explore the dimensions of natural resource-based conflicts and resolution mechanism in the Hindu Kush Himalayas.

During the IYM, Kathmandu is playing host to a number of regional meetings. There is one on developing a

framework for regional cooperation in Flood Forecasting and Information Exchange, and another on securing farmers' rights to water in the Hindu Kush Himalayas. There will be a regional planning meeting on improved labour-saving options for mountain communities, will assess the need for infrastructure development and maintenance in the Himalayan region, and finally, others on assessing mountain agricultural systems for sustainable agricultural planning and development.

ICIMOD will also work with the Royal Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (RONAST) to hold an international seminar on mountains in Kathmandu in March, and with other organisations to hold the GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Forum South Asia 2002 in November, and the Asia Pacific regional FAO Conference on Mountain Agriculture in mid-May.

Not only glossy brochures The celebrations have already kicked off in Nepal with the opening of the highest botanical garden in the country such as the EMO, the Japanese government, the Swiss Development Cooperation, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the Mountain Institute, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and the German aid agency Gerdaschuldt for Technics.

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## "Mountain people are isolated in plains contexts."

**Nepal Times: ICIMOD's IYM calendar is extremely busy. What, in your opinion, is the most important issue here?**

**Gabriel Campbell:** We need to develop and operationalise a long-term vision. A world in which upstream areas are reimbursed for their services to the millions downstream, for their provision of renewable energy and water for irrigation, industry and households, their safeguarding of the biological diversity and places of spiritual pilgrimage and tourism, and all the other benefits provided by mountains. This could lead to both environmental and financial sustainability where poor mountain people and governments are no longer dependent on outside donors. Mountain people are resilient and adaptive. Given the real access to opportunities and services, they can take advantage of mountain resources to overcome the steep slopes and deep valleys which seem to be miring so many of them in poverty, conflict and hopelessness now.

**How seriously do you think mountain concerns have been taken until now?**

Some have taken seriously, some haven't. For example, ICIMOD has volunteered to take on one issue at a global scale. One of the major activities is Celebrating Mountain Women (See article). In the Hindu Kush Himalayas, women are the major people involved in farming, agriculture, and livestock rearing; they are often the major caretakers of natural resources. Yet policies still tend to think of farmers in terms of men, small enterprise development in terms of men, and even mountain climbers in terms of men. Since women are so critical to mountains—and, subsequently, to the lowlands that depend on mountains—we'd like to set up regional and global networks and bring the profile of mountain women much higher, give women a space to discuss issues important to them and represent programs to better support them.

**But most such programs this year are based in Kathmandu or in urban areas where these people don't live, how will they know?**

That's a valid point. We've tried to chalk out some programs that involve more grassroots in Nepal and can communicate with them more effectively. There is one big grassroots program in Yuskim in Sikkim from 15-19 April. This Himalayan regional meeting of mountain populations has been initiated by the French, and Sikkim will host the Asia conference where concerned people will discuss economy, culture, politics and identify critical mountain policies. It's a build-up to the world encounter in Quito, Ecuador in September and will feed into the Bhishkek Global Mountain Summit at the end of October in Kyrgyzstan. We're also trying to disseminate information more in local languages and media to increase the effectiveness of our outreach with our 120 partner institutions in the region.

**Are you sure the year won't simply end up devoted to window-dressing celebrations?**

Sometimes you need such celebrations to make people feel that they are not alone. And isolated. Micro credit groups of women can take and pay back loans, that doesn't mean they're always successful in growing the economy. But they do need a greater source of empowerment through the social mobilisation and empowerment process. Mountain people are isolated within larger plains contexts. They are part of a regional, marginalised group, and the more people who understand that their issues are different from those in the plains, and that they can find solutions and strengths with other mountain peoples, the more hope increases. Many donors who are not interested in the celebrations are interested in the outcome of these events, the follow-up programs identified by mountain people themselves.

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## The war over pensions

It's happened. A retired British Gurkha, Lance Corporal Hari Thapa, has dragged the British Ministry of Defence to an employment tribunal for racial discrimination. Echoing the call of many retired Nepal members of the British armed forces, Thapa is demanding the same pension and other retirement facilities as his British counterpart. He also claims compensation of £45,000 pounds—a figure he says makes up for receiving an unfairly low salary for the 15 years he was in the service. Thapa is paid a monthly pension of £58, while a British soldier of the same rank and with the same years of service is entitled to £450. Thapa's claims are backed by the UK's Commission of Racial Equality, which claims that under the Racial Relations Act 1976, Thapa has the right to equal pension and retirement facilities as British nationals.

If the employment tribunal decides in favour of Thapa, there could be a slide of similar claims filed by over 30,000 ex-British Gurkhas and some 6,000 widows of British Gurkhas who live in Nepal, a move that could cost the British government something on the order of £2 billion. For six years now, retired British Gurkha soldiers have been campaigning for equality in pension and retirement facilities, as well as the right to live in the UK after retirement. In September 2001, the Gurkha Army Ex-Servicemen's Organisation (GAESO) filed a writ petition with the Nepal Supreme Court demanding that it issue a directive to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to initiate diplomatic efforts to settle their dispute with British government.

British Gurkha pensions vary, depending on the years of service and rank, between £50-£300 pounds—one-fifth of what their British counterparts receive—and fluctuate with changes the currency exchange rate. The British government has claimed that since the cost of living in Nepal is much lower than that in the UK, pension parity is not needed. The claims of the British Gurkha claim to international attention because a Gurkha widow was paid a death gratuity for her husband that was less than half the amount as awarded the wife of a British soldier killed in the same mine incident in Kosovo. Under intense public pressure, the UK government reviewed its policy and raised the death gratuity for Gurkhas killed in service and in December 2000, doubled the pension of retired Gurkhas.

## Friends in high places

The Nepal Tourism Board has a tough task in promoting Nepal as a safe tourist destination, and it is getting harder. But it is getting a little help from friends. The star attraction at the Nepal Stall at the recent Caravan Motor Tourism Fair in Stuttgart, Germany, was renowned Italian climber Reinhold Messner, who reassured scores of visitors that Nepal is, indeed, safe. Some 1,370 exhibitors from 88 countries took part in the fair, and more than 200,000 people visited. If German spending in international travel increases by just 2-3 percent in 2002, as experts predict it will, we can only hope that some of it will come our way. After all, what better way of restoring some degree of confidence in Nepal-wary tourists than by roping in Messner, who is also a member of the European Parliament in Strasbourg and Brussels.



## THE FULBRIGHT & THE EAST-WEST CENTER 2002 SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

The Commission for Educational Exchange between the United States and Nepal (USEF/Nepal) announces the 2002 competition for the Fulbright and the East-West Center (EWC) Scholarships. Those selected would begin their studies in the US beginning August-September, 2002. (a) The Fulbright program provides financial support (including travel) for a Master's degree program of up to two years at selected U.S. universities, in any field except medicine, engineering or computer science. (b) The EWC scholarships of the University of Hawaii (UH) are available for Masters or doctoral-level study in any field offered at UH and cover all tuition and fees, but not travel expenses. Applicants for either program may be employees in any government or semi-government agency, private business, NGO or INGO.

### General Requirements for Entering the Competition

1. All applicants must:
    1. possess Nepali citizenship;
    2. demonstrate in all post-intermediate degrees a minimum aggregate marks of: 56% for students in non-technical fields (humanities and social sciences), and 60% for students in science and technical fields. (The minimum requirements for students under the semester system are: 65% in non-technical fields; 70% in technical fields; or a Cumulative GPA of 3.5/4.0 in either field.)
    3. have a high level of competence in speaking, reading and writing English. (Applicants who pass the first screening will be required to sit for an English test during the application process. The test requirement will be waived for those who have a valid TOEFL score of 213 or higher and have submitted copies of their score reports with their applications.)
    4. be under 40 years of age as of the application filing deadline date (March 29, 2002);
    5. possess either of a four year bachelor's degree; or, if the bachelor's degree was of fewer than four years duration, then a masters degree is also required, such that the total number of years of formal education equals at least 16;
    6. have at least three years (for men) or one year (for women) of post-bachelor's degree, full-time, professional work experience in an area directly relevant to the applicant's chosen field of study as of the application filing deadline date (March 29, 2002) and document this experience by letter(s) from employer(s) that verify applicant's position(s) and years of employment;
    7. be in excellent health, as evidenced by a letter from a medical doctor; and
    8. be eligible for a U.S. Visa.
- Note: Individuals holding master's degrees equivalent to a U.S. master's degree should not apply, nor should individuals who have previously resided in the United States for six months or more during the preceding five years.

(Applicants must submit documentary evidence for items No. 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7.)

### Application Forms & Deadlines

Application forms and detailed information regarding the competition are available from the USEF/Nepal office at the American Center in Gyaneshwor; the Ministry of Education; the National Planning Commission; Tribhuvan University Sector's Office; Kathmandu University Sector's Office; and with Campus Chiefs at all of the Valley degree campuses. Applications and information may also be accessed and downloaded from the Commission's website: [www.fulbrightnepal.org.np](http://www.fulbrightnepal.org.np). Application forms must be taken out from the USEF office or downloaded from the website by 4:00 p.m. Friday, March 15, 2002. No applications will be given out after this date. Duplicate, hardcopy, completed applications must reach the Fulbright Commission (USEF) no later than 4:00 p.m. Friday, March 29, 2002. Incomplete applications or applications received after this deadline will not be considered.



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## Zen and the Art of Mountain Motorcycling

ALOK TUMBHAHANGPHEY

There's one thing from the Age of Hippies that still has a vocal fan following in Nepal. And no, it isn't a mind-altering substance, but the cult of the motorcycle, specifically, the Enfield. This weekend, the Himalayan Enfielders, a group of Enfield enthusiasts, has brought together some 30 dedicated Enfielders for a weekend of mountain motorcycling, vrooming up to Pokhara and then back to the capital.

Enfielders are inspired by all sorts of things—Robert Pennig's still-bestselling book, *Stories of Hell's Angels* and their Harley-Davidsons or the seductiveness of just freewheeling in *Easy Rider*, and come in all shapes, sizes and persuasions—backpackers on a cheap tour of the subcontinent, writers longing for isolation, musicians, Rastafaris, people who haven't discovered their calling yet, but just know they will on the open road, with the wind in their hair. And in this spirit of openness—and because they really, truly want biking to catch on as an adventure sport in Nepal, they are inviting anyone with a 350 cc bike, Enfield or otherwise, to join them for the Nepal Peace Ride love.

The South Asian love for the Enfield began back in 1954, when the Indian government ordered 800 Royal Enfields for its army, a factory in Chennai soon began producing them and since then, the region has been hooked. Enfields have been around in Nepal as long as anyone can remember, this is the first time that enthusiasts have actually organised themselves to form a group and travel out on organized rides. The Himalayan Enfielders was set up last September with 19 riders. "The idea was to bring together Enfield bikers who we could have a proper club and maybe promote motorbike rides as a form of adventure tourism in Nepal," says Binod Chettri, one of the founders.

The group today has a workshop in Lazimpat specially dedicated to Enfield and other heavy motorbikes—with affectionate and ironic names such as Thaal and Ramesh the Reliable, where their best friends will tell you that these hothouse flowers of the motorcycle world need constant care and attention. The workshop has also been serving as a clubhouse of sorts, where members try with their toys, plan the next ride, or just sit there with that glazed, ecstatic expression incomprehensible to outsiders. Over the past few months, the group has already made several day rides, including to Kakani, Sunakot, Phulchowki, Nagrain, Bhakundabesi and a memorable one to The Last Resort in Barabise, on which they accompanied 22 Australian bikers and their 16 Enfields in the spirit of biking brotherhood.

This time around, entourage will be consisting of support vehicles with trained mechanics and spares, and a bus for friends, family and well-wishers who can't bring themselves to sit on the back of one of these bonehaskers. The group will stop for lunch at the Kurintar Riverside Spring Resort along the Tribhuvan Highway, 90 km from Kathmandu, and continue after that towards Pokhara, a further 110 km away. On Day Two, 10 February, the tour heads to Bandipur Mountain Resort, 80 km from Pokhara and later back towards Kathmandu. The registration fee for a 350cc or more bike is Rs 500, which buys the intrepid biker everything from food and lodging, to maintenance for the two-day trip. The week-averked on the bus will pay Rs 1,500 for all the above.

So, if you're already a bike enthusiast, or even just wake up on Saturday, 9 February wanting to see what the big hype is all about, join the Enfielders and spread the message of peace, noise and motorcycles. And remember not to, at any point, call it a motorbike rally; the organisers were told by our guardians of peace that under the emergency "all rallies are banned." ♦



### Nepal Peace Ride 2002 9-10 February

DEEPAK THAPA

It took more than 15 years for me to consummate a love I first felt as a teenager studying in India. It took determination in the face of many nay-sayers, but ultimately it was worth the effort. I am talking about my infatuation with the Enfield motorcycle, that classic piece of beauty, the last word on lifestyle bikes.

The most common arguments against the Enfield was the maintenance it would require, and its reputation as a fuel guzzler. But then "Why ride a bike when you

can ride a legend" as the Enfield slogan went to counter the entry of the 100 cc into India (and Nepal) in the 90s. I took along a friend—an Enfield fiend, and owner, for more than 20 years—to get my 500 cc Royal Enfield Bullet from the showroom (yes, there used to be one such in Kathmandu). There was no way I was going to drive it out myself, for believe it or not, the nearest I'd ever been to handling a Bullet was when someone deigned to let me kick-start their way back when. I was also aware that it

would take some time to get used to its left and also to the awkwardness of the gear and brake levers being on the 'wrong' side.

Within half an hour, I was to get a taste of the famous Enfield temperament. Having shown off the beauty to another Enfield lover, I thought I'd take off on my own. Only, the machine simply refused to start. There were two of us kicking away (one has to have done that to appreciate the effort that goes into it), but we couldn't even coax a sputter out of the monster. As it turned out, the ignition mechanism was dead—in a bike that was showroom-fresh.

It was while figuring out what might have gone wrong with the bike that my friend passed on Canon No. 1 of Enfield Ownership. "TLC," he said cryptically. "TLC?"

"Tender, loving care." It was a rule I stuck by zealously. The bike was at the workshop every month. Since I had carted over spares from India on a series of trips, any worn part was immediately replaced. No one ever got to ride my Enfield, apart for short spins when I just couldn't stay no. And I was being generous, for it

## Why ride a bike when you can ride a Bullet?

Whenever I hear the thud-thud of a Bullet, I seek out the sound and look wistfully at the beauty that is the Enfield.

is not just done to lend your Bullet, which also explains why the first one I rode happened to be my own.

Anyway, so there is with my dream bike, complete with its steady 22 bhp engine, and nowhere to go other than the crowded Kathmandu streets. I was just rating

to burn the tyres, do the 'born to be wild' thing. But the 'breaking-in' of an Enfield takes a tedious 2,000 km (compared to the usual 500 km in most bikes), and one can only putter along at a measly 50 kmph until then.

When I did manage to venture

out, it was with a lot of caution. You certainly don't want to have a dead 165 kg Enfield on your hands on the highway, which eventually I was thankful spared on all my long-distance trips. That probably had to do with being lucky, though the monthly check-ups my bike had to undergo could have been a factor as well. I did carry along all the necessary tools for emergencies, but with only the owner's manual to guide me, it was more of a reassurance than any ability of mine to tinker with the engine.

Steering around the twists and turns of our mountain highways is not the safest thing to do on a Bullet. The narrow tyre width and the fact that the double stand is slung very low can be deceiving when taking the steep corners at high speed. But the bike comes to life in the tarsi. You can't help but squeeze the accelerator. Zipping at 115 kmph (I couldn't dare look at the speedometer after that, since the eyes had to be constantly peeled for any sign of animal or human life that might pop up on the road), watching downy vehicles diminish in the mirror as you urge the bike to go faster, and feeling smug that the bike can handle such speeds without a hint of a wobble, it was indeed an experience. Even though I was conscious all along that a crash would be, not to mince words, fatal.

The Enfield is stable. All you need to do is start the bike (a one-kick-start Bullet is much admired), roll it out of its stand, begin moving and it seems to balance all on its own. Especially useful for those quick zig-zag manoeuvres in the city, and emergency brakings.

More than its performance, however, the Enfield is better loved for two things. The classic old British bike look that has remained unchanged in style since it started being manufactured in India in 1955, and is now only one in the world with such looks. The second is its distinctive sound, although for some reason it does not sound the same when you are riding it yourself. (The roar used for motorcycles in eastern Nepal and Darjeeling, *blat-bhat*, may have been coined because of its onomatopoeic representation of the Enfield sound.)

But the Enfield does have its

drawbacks. A major one is the need for regular tune-ups. While talking about the Enfield an Australian once told me with the disdain only those from Down Under can feel for their mother country: "The Brits don't have a respect for mechanics." He was referring to the design of the bike's engine (not the grease-smeared individuals in garages), implying that had more attention been given to the science of mechanics, the Enfield wouldn't be such a headache to own.

I don't know much about that, but what I do know is that for all its power, the Enfield does not provide that extra burst of speed sometimes required in city driving. This was something I was to learn from near-death incidents in the early days of Enfield ownership when the bike simply refused to generate the power needed to avoid head-on collision as I tried to overtake, and show off to also I guess, slow pokes on the road.

Neither does the bike take so kindly to uphill climbs. It seems all that power is good only as long as the road is flat. Start up a hill, and you begin to wish your Enfield had the pull of a BMW.

The gear shift is generally quite unresponsive, and the neutral seems to appear at all places. The clutch is tough on the forearms, and in slow moving traffic where constant gear shifts become necessary, one can only be thankful that these long afternoons at the gym doing wrist curls are finally coming in handy. And, it's a veritable bone-shaker—the suspension system probably also dates back to 1955.

In the end, I just could not live up to my initial resolve to become a bike freak like most long-time Enfield owners are, i.e., do little bit of pottering around on the bike on holidays. Work pressure, and perhaps a dash of natural disinclination meet either the bike had to visit the workshop with more frequency, or I had to part with it.

It was a cold morning when day as I watched this Dutch guy roar away into the dust, and I stood staring into the void that had been my Enfield. The love is not yet dead. I still feel it stirring deep within whenever I hear the thud-thud of a Bullet, and I seek out the sound and look wistfully at the beauty that is the Enfield. ♦



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४. कसको रंगभेदको घातमा छैन केवल ६ हप्तामा मेरो जीवनमा छायो नयाँ उज्यालो ।

त्यसैले त केवल ६ हप्तामा मेरो जीवनमा छायो नयाँ उज्यालो ।

१००% सुरक्षित, राम्रो रंग दिने ।

यस जानकारीको लागि कृपया केवल ६ हप्तामा मेरो जीवनमा छायो नयाँ उज्यालो ।  
फोन नं. ०१-८३६८६० वा बिस्फ १००:०० बजे देखि साँझ ६:०० बजेसम्म सगर्भत राख्नुहोस् वा पोस्ट बक्स नं. ८९६६, ई.पी. १५६६, काठमाडौंमा पत्राचार गर्नुहोस् ।











Royal Club  
Dynasty  
Babylon  
STUDIO  
Planet 2  
Disco

Don Ruggerio





## Under My Hat

by Kunda Dixit

# Stupid cupid

It is indeed a matter of great exultation and jubilation for all peace-loving Nepalis that the government has constituted a 234-member National Organisation Main Committee chaired by none other than the prime minister himself to mark the forthcoming Valentine's Day (known in some parts of the world as the United Nations' International Day of Sustainable Human Love) and celebrate it for three whole days in a grand nationwide manner next week.

Till the moment of going to press, according to the Valentine's Day Information System (VDIS) the main committee had already constituted 15 sub-committees including the Publicity Sub-Committee headed by the Minister of Sex, Lies and Television; the Infrastructure Sub-committee headed by the Minister of Slash and Burn; and the Demographic Sub-committee headed by the Director General of the Department of Copulation and Family Planning.

According to the provisions of the VDIS Main Committee, the deadline for all Nepalis to disclose the identities of their boy and/or girl friends has been extended till midnight of 14 February, and failure to do so will result in the confiscation by the authorities of the said boy and/or girl friend and a Rs 1 million fine, or all three.

Having been dragged kicking and screaming to voluntarily disclose their secret Valentine partners and celebrate the festival in a grand manner nationwide for three days, lovers throughout Nepal are said to have either gone underground or fled to India for the duration of the

festivities. Although he recently made public his deep respect and affection for Karsana Manandhar in a newspaper interview, Comrade Awesome now risks having her confiscated by the security forces in a cordon and search operation somewhere in the mid-western sector.

Valentine's Day is a celebration of love and lust depending on whether the person in question is a woman or a man. There are some fundamental differences between gals and guys which may not be readily apparent to a casual observer with a naked eye. Us guys, for example, don't like mushy stuff, we don't like beating around the bush, we like to get straight to the point. (Gay on your place, I go to mine.)

See what I mean? Gals are programmed to play hard-to-get. And it is up to us guys to show perseverance and, yes, resolve. One sure fire way to persevere is to buy your sweetheart flowers. What you are really saying when you give her a red rose is: "I hereby bequeath to you this floral tribute, which is actually the castrated reproductive organ of a rose plant (Latin name: *Rosa castrata*) as a symbol of my deep lust for you. Am I making myself perfectly clear here?"

The gal can respond in at least three ways:  
a) take the rose and run like hell  
b) tell the male perpetrator in question to wait and call the security forces  
c) ask him if first if he has completed his VDIS forms and then go to his place.



संगीत कला सभ्यता स्थान  
कालो चम्किलो  
कपाल बनाउन  
कपालमा खुनमा  
कपालो चम्किलो

## NEPALI SOCIETY

# Sherpa Museum

Besides the world's highest bar, the Saturday market and the full-frontal view of Thamel, there is now one more must-see in Namche Bazaar: the Sherpa museum. And it's all thanks to Lhakpa Sonam Sherpa, the self-confessed mountain maniac. Lhakpa's quest for Sherpa memorabilia was triggered by a British photo-journalist who came inquiring about his father, noted climber Sonam Girmi.



Sherpa, who had taken part in 37 mountaineering expeditions, "I got really interested and started collecting oral testimonies and artefacts and reading reference books," Lhakpa told us. The Sherpa Khangba Centre in Namche was inaugurated by Sir Edmund Hillary in April 1994. It has a Sherpa Culture Museum, a Mt Everest Documentation Centre, and an expanding library with over 118 valuable research books. The 40-year-old spends hours in libraries while travelling abroad.

Lhakpa sees his father as part of the climbing generation that contributed to the growth of Khumbu, and he is proud to document the Sherpa community's role in

modern Nepal for scholars and, importantly, Khumbu's youth. "I suffer from not having a good education," says Lhakpa. "I want to invest in education. Children here have little access to such resources." As a student at Hillary's Khumjung school and later a Hillary Trust Scholar, Lhakpa did well in his studies, but plans to become an engineer were shattered when he lost his hearing to a bout of meningitis. Lhakpa turned to his true passion, and though he did go on a few small climbs, his heart remained in the library. Then came the centre, the hotel and museum, which he designed and runs with his wife Ang Kanchi. "Initially, locals thought I was mad," he recalls. Trekking companies have added the museum to their Khumbu itinerary, while groups of trekkers huddled up at Kalapathar tell everyone up and down the trail about the Sherpa Khangba Centre.

Love at the Rox

Cupid's Den at Rox Bar this Valentine's day for a cozy, two-some, an adventurous threesome, a friendly four or more...

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Couple (CASH)	Rs. 500/-
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Dress Code and Age restriction apply.	
<b>Rox Restaurant</b>	
Rs. 950 (plus tax) per person	
Date	14 February 2002
Time	6:30 p.m. onwards

For details and reservations, call HYATT REGENCY KATHMANDU # 491234

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