

A wildlife, crime and punishment and native alcohol appreciation tour of -

Nepal and Thailand

5th February to 21st March 1998

With Barry-Sean Virtue (Thailand only), Dave Sheils and Steve Anyon-Smith



Outline of Trip

Dave and I determined that we would spend a couple of weeks in Thailand and a month in Nepal to absorb the culture and alcohol on offer, walk up some big hills - and track a few animals and plants. Barry-Sean hedged his bets and decided we couldn't be trusted for six weeks so he signed on for the Thailand component only. Silly bastard.

We opted to travel to Nepal at the end of the northern winter, as this is a time of clear skies and much activity for wildlife in Nepal. Most of the migratory birds are present and many of the higher altitude mammals are more accessible as they drop towards or below the snow line. We had chosen the Langtang Valley, north of Kathmandu, as our trekking route on the advice of long time friend Bharat Regmi of Explore Alpine Adventure, a small but reliable trekking company based in Kathmandu. It should be said that our first priority was to have a great holiday rather than spend every waking moment stressing over the last resting place of some rare bird or other.

The likely impact from a trip to Nepal cannot be predicted with any degree of accuracy.
Highlights for me on this one included having various people imprisoned.....

Sites visited

Thailand:

Bangkok – 3 nights

Kaeng Krachan National Park – 6 nights

Khao Sam Roi Yot NP – 2 nights

Khao Yai NP – 4 nights



Nepal:

Kathmandu Valley including the mountains of Phulchowki and Nagarjun – 8 nights

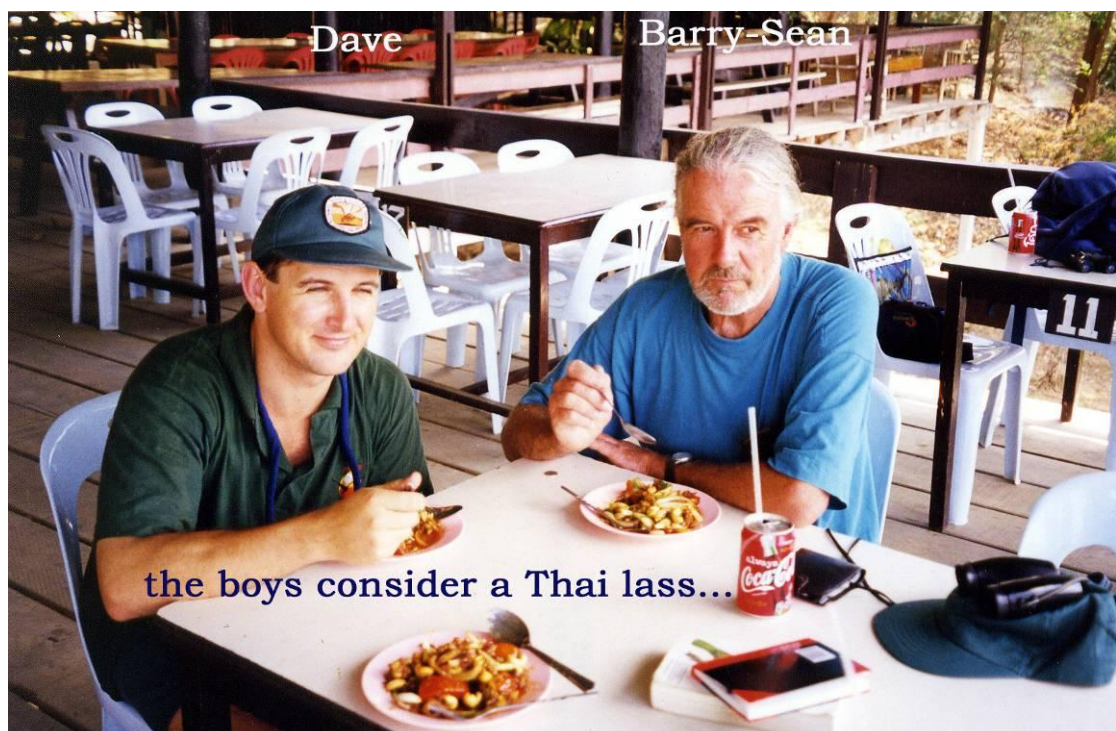
Langtang National Park – 13 nights

Bardia NP – 7 nights



People

Thai folk generally speak little English but are so friendly and helpful that it makes me feel like I am hard and horrible, which is only partly true. The Nepalese are exactly the same but several degrees poorer. It is so spiritually uplifting to travel in these countries that you get to dislike the people at home. You become intolerant of those in rich countries that cry poor when they have so many opportunities, if not actual wealth.



For multiple reasons, a trip to Nepal should be compulsory for everyone on the face of the earth. The guys at the immigration counter at the airport take delight in asking “how many

trips to Nepal?” Most visitors go more than once. It is an experience that is joyful, atmospheric and indelible.

If I had to cite a single memory of an encounter with Nepalese people it would be the day that I found some carters pushing an enormous cartload of goods along a muddy street in Kathmandu. They were struggling and unbeknown to them I added my slight weight to the cart, which immediately jolted forwards a short way. They must have thought that there had been divine intervention. Eventually they spotted me and abruptly stopped, grinned broadly and nodded. Poor buggers.



Accommodation

We camped while in Thailand; stayed in cheap clean hotels in Kathmandu; and in teahouses while trekking in the Langtang Valley in Nepal. Teahouses are located on all popular trekking routes and are basically rural hotels with attached residence and various small but important fireplaces! Days can be enjoyably spent sitting and watching Nepalese women going about their cooking and other daily chores while plonking one's self in front of a small kitchen fire. Watching Nepalese men might be less interesting. I have no experience with this.

Roads / transport

Thailand's roads are in quite good condition for the most part and the national parks are easily accessible by road. Public transport is available everywhere as most people don't own cars. Heaven help them if they did. Getting to Kaeng Krachan NP by public transport is rather interesting and inclined to test your resolve for going there.

The situation in Nepal is very much not the same as Thailand. Whilst there is much public transport, there is much more public to be transported by it. The roads, where there are roads, can be quite good, though often rather precipitous, and the array of vehicles, domestic animals and foot traffic make travel along them somewhat terrifying. It is unhelpful to discover that many of the professional drivers in Nepal believe in re-incarnation. And if you think that some soothing music might calm your jangled nerves en route, think again. There is only one type of music – the loud Indian variety that has been retaped over and over again. The guy that owns the original copy died long ago, probably in a bus accident.

Weather

Both countries had lots of it.



Food

Almost everyone knows that Thai food is the best food on earth. Many stomachs would disagree. Mine worked on the premise that every fifth meal would be utterly rejected. Even so, these events could generally be ignored and the subsequent four offerings would be assimilated. Then the cycle would start again. There is no need to be afraid.

Nepal, on the other hand, presents some seriously good reasons to be very afraid. I know one chap who visited Nepal in the 70's and still claims to have crook guts. There is one simple rule that will save you during a stay in Nepal – don't eat anything. This reduces your stay to less than a day. If this does not fit your itinerary, you should be prepared to get sick. A bit. Don't even think about eating red meat.

Beer

It is unprecedented and with some sadness that I must report that Singha Beer cannot be consumed by humans, at least in any quantity. I am not alone in this conclusion. Be warned. Everything else is just fine.

Wildlife (see full list in table at end of report)

Birds

My records tell the sad tale that we only spied 230 birds that we could identify, but I have to say we spent more time looking for mammals and other types of wildlife, many of which have gone unrecorded, including all the birds we saw in Thailand! We obeyed all laws at all times, unlike some.



Diary

Day 0 – Thursday 5th February 1998

Our Alitalia 747-200 ferried us to Bangkok via Melbourne. The plane was full, the food and drinks were good, the crew were ugly and boring, and after a very bumpy flight we arrived on time in the early morning.

THAILAND

Day 1 – Friday 6th February 1998

We were conned by a smooth-talker at the airport to hire his mini-bus for our transfer to Kaeng Krachan NP. The driver had not slept for a week or so and proved to be fascinating company. He didn't know where the park was, he had no map (he asked us for one), he spoke no English, and, most endearingly, he kept falling asleep at the wheel. He got lost several times, asked us to drive, and got a screaming dose of the shits when, upon our ultimate arrival, we didn't tip him handsomely! His English vocabulary was enriched.

The park visitor centre is nowhere even close to the park proper, but rather on a slim finger of it that extends to encircle the Kaeng Krachan Reservoir, a water supply dam for Bangkok. They speak no English at the centre but at least some of the staff were pretty, and, unlike taxi drivers, they didn't ask us to do their job for them. We stayed in accommodation next to the reservoir and the park staff organised food for us to go into the park proper the next morning.

The remnant forest and gardens around the lake were dripping with birds, and I was so excited to see my first squirrels. There were lots of neat reptiles too, including a gecko that is a foot long with orange stripes and dots all over it. I told Dave, who was desperately trying to sleep at the time, that one of these monsters was lurking on the lodge ceiling but he didn't believe me. The call of these buggers is another thing. This was the gecko that led to the whole group getting its name. It screams "geck-o" six times with each announcement fading. The locals told us that to hear it "call" seven times bestows good luck. This makes it worse because there was no way you could sleep through these bastards and now we had to count the number of "geck-os".



There are worse things in life than sitting in the restaurant at Kaeng Krachan Reservoir and watching the birds and the birds. The diversity and the beautiful plumages of both birds is a feature of Thailand.

I slept rather well despite the heat and the four-legged and six-legged hordes that invaded the buildings, particularly at night.

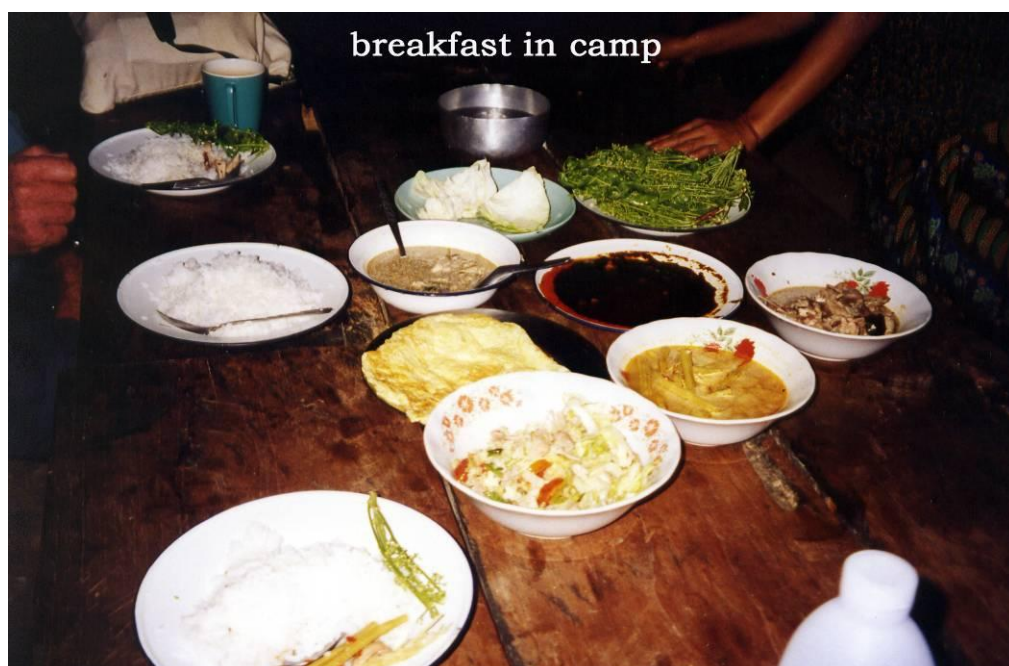
Day 2 – Saturday 7th February 1998

Oddly, we expected that we had to carry all our food and drink to the park, such was the paucity of information. We were eyeing an enormous pile of groceries and stressing over how it could possibly be carried when a charming guy turned up and dumped all of it, and us, into his utility.

The park entrance, suitably gated and manned, was a long way from the lake along a network of roads that passed through cleared and cultivated fields.

On the way through the park to our camp our eyes were hanging out of our heads as we passed leaf-monkeys, white-handed gibbons, Malayan giant squirrels and others of their ilk, and masses of birds including flocks of great hornbills. Our first experience with the latter was to hear what sounded like a freight train rushing through the trees, such is the phenomenal noise they make in flight.

Samrong, a ranger, and the other park staff prepared our lunch after enthusiastically taking all our food. This is worth a note. We did not eat the majority of the food we brought with us. This is what happened – all manner of our fresh food and some packet stuff was carted into the park. The park has no refrigeration, and on our first and second days of a week's stay all of our food was eaten. It was consumed by anyone who happened to be around at the time – mainly the park staff and any tourists. This caused some concern. The next lot of tourists, hoping there were some, turned up with whatever food they had and this was rapidly absorbed into the communal pot. It seemed to work.



It was the weekend and there were many young Bangkok Thais about. They were all welcoming, generous and curious about us. It was easy to walk from camp to camp and get fed, watered and roped into long conversations.

The area around the Panoenthong Camp is punctuated by impossible knife-sharp ridges that hold together by magic – there are no rocks to speak of. The montane forest goes on forever - this park is around 400,000 hectares in size plus contiguous forest in Burma. There is little poaching although a population of Karen people live in a remote part of the park. They are allowed to hunt for their subsistence but nothing else.



Day 3 – Sunday 8th February 1998

I found it hard to sleep with the prospect of an exciting day. We staked out a fruiting fig we had earlier seen along the road. There were dusky leaf monkeys, a Himalayan palm civet, masses of green pigeons and flocks of other birds including 10 wreathed hornbills. We returned for breakfast before spending the day going to the Torthip Waterfall. The Australian Government should issue a travel warning about Thai waterfalls. They are not dangerous in any way, in fact far from it - they are just a waste of time and effort. And so it was to be a long and fairly boring day.

The highlight was to end the day where it started – at the fruiting fig. Time spent looking for wildlife in rainforests should be split into three strategies – quietly stalking, rampaging through the forest, and sitting in one place. Choosing which strategy should be employed at any given time and place is never easy, except when there is a very large fruiting fig. Every animal in the forest will know about it and most will go there at some point in the day or night. The local gibbon troupe entertained us and displaced the leaf monkeys.



white-handed gibbon



Mekong whisky attack...



Ranger Samrong

We wondered whether we would get fed as our guide / cook had apparently done a runner. Barry reckoned we would never see him again. Such was not the case and we had a lovely dinner.

Day 4 – Monday 9th February 1998

I couldn't sleep, so I got up at 0500 and poked my way along the narrow trail adjacent to our tents. Not far along the trail, frozen in my torchlight, was a leopard cat. I ran back to get Dave and returned and it was still there, so returned with Barry, who, it must be said, never wants to get out of bed in the dark, and generally kicked himself for not doing so. So a great start to the day with photos and video of a cat.



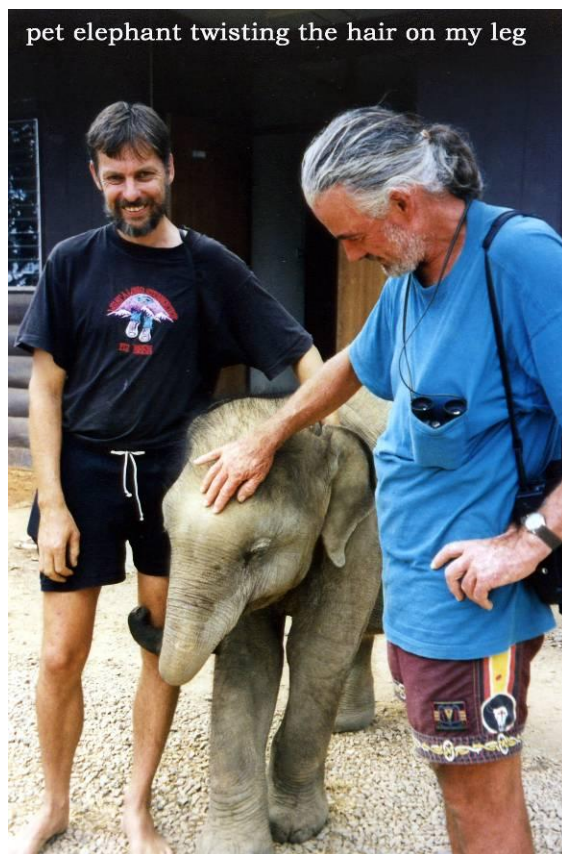
We walked several kilometres along the road downhill, seeing loads of birds and butterflies. Eventually our driver found us and we went to Bankrang Camp and made friends with the camp elephant and Nancy, the camp's great hornbill.

We left the park for the reservoir for a quiet afternoon drinking beer. The down side was that the resistance of my guts to the offerings of the restaurant had weakened. Never mind, I was excited to return to the park the next day.

Day 5 – Tuesday 10th February 1998

The lower camp produced some great sightings. A huge troupe of stump-tailed macaques rampaged through the undergrowth as a prelude to a relaxing walk along the forest-covered river. Squirrels, hornbills, tree-shrews and partridges competed for fruit and insects on and under a fruiting fig.

The camp's staff proved to be fine people. They had various eccentric pets including a neurotic great hornbill that flew about the place in between tearing corrugated roofing iron into long strips. Aside from the camp's elephant, they had a few less tame critters that were fed each night by dumping uneaten food into a small pit. We were told to arrive at 2000 sharp to see the promised large Indian civet but a large Malayan porcupine arrived in its stead. Great animal though - lots of pictures.

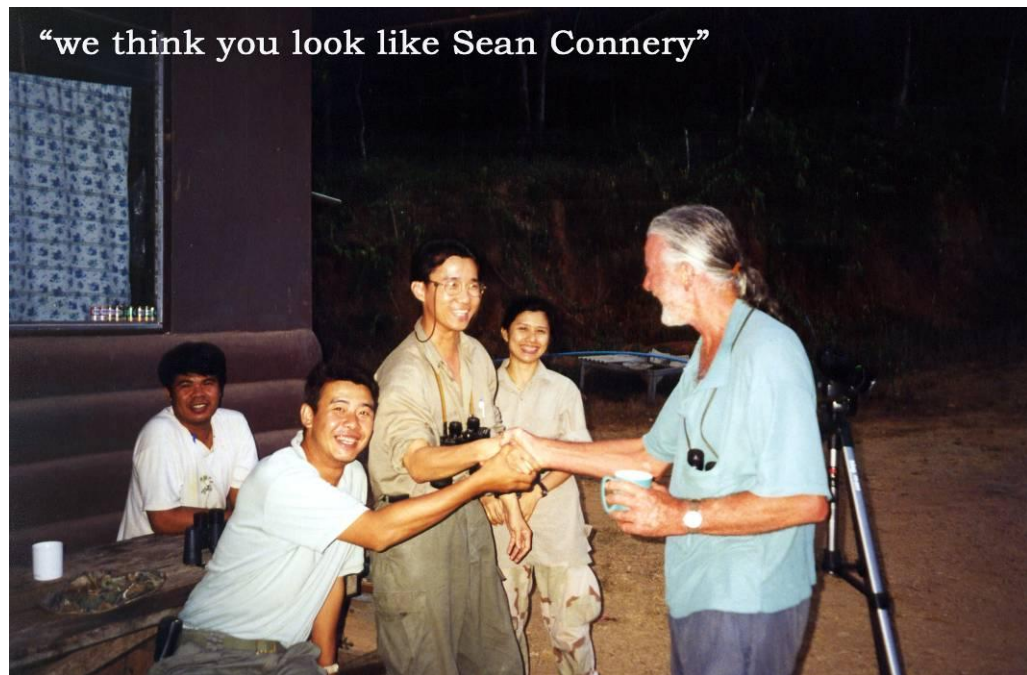


Day 6 – Wednesday 11th February 1998

Nalong, our poorly paid guide took us out in the morning. Guides were not compulsory. They seemed to be available if you wanted them at no apparent cost. He showed us a limestone cave in which we found an elephant's tooth.



We met up with some Thais – Yai, Doi and Bukh. They were professionals from Bangkok who had decided to go birding because it had become a fashionable thing to do. Young Bukh (a girl) cracked us up as she reckoned Barry-Sean looked like Sean Connery – as if!

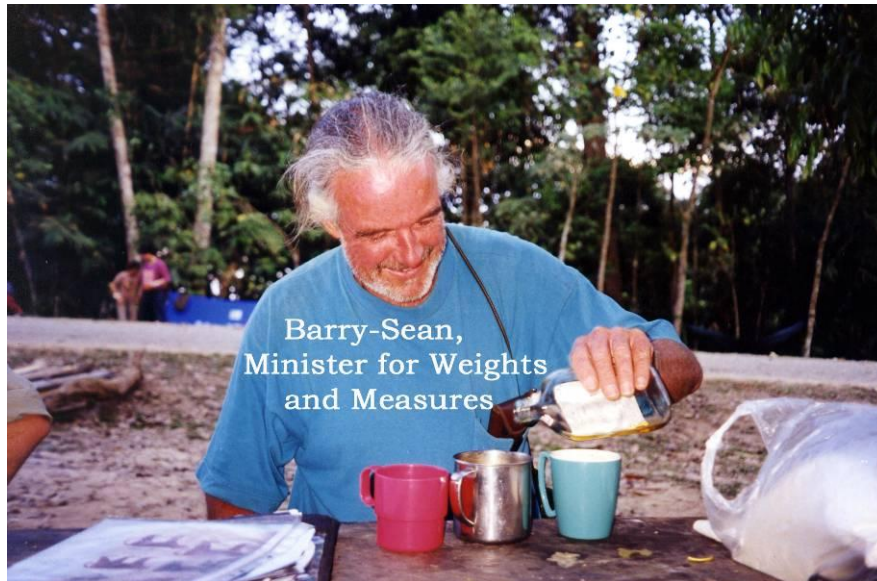


After a soothing Jack or three we joined up with our Thai friends. The camp rangers drank the rest of Jack and a bottle of Mekong whisky as well. We spoke a queer language called “pissed idiot”. The sun went bye-byes, we ate, and the crowd gathered about the discarded food pit. The camera lenses grew in size as the expectant mob hushed in anticipation as the only camera un-shy large Indian civet in Asia appeared for its daily rice and scraps intake. The rainforest experienced more blinding flashes of light than half a dozen thunderstorms and the civet staggered off wondering about the world in which it lived, but not feeling as hungry.

What followed was a bit odd. Nalong seized some scary weapons and declared that we would all go looking for elephants in the dark. Some facts:

- We were told the elephants would not be happy to see us
- We were pissed
- Dave’s guts had gone away
- The safety drill consisted of being advised to scatter in all directions if we saw an elephant

Happily we saw no elephants but as a spotlighting *experience* it was right up there.



Day 7 – Thursday 12th February 1998

A walk up the river revealed nothing we hadn't already seen and by late morning we were off to Khao Sam Roi Yot National Park. Spectacular looking place, but alas no unbooked accommodation. We ended up camping at Samphraya Beach, which was to be the site of the Great Chase. More on this later.

We organised a boatman to take us for a ride up a narrow river, being watched most of the way by long-tailed macaques and banded leaf-monkeys. This was followed by a meal of deep sea bass. The deepness of the sea in these parts is in dispute, but there you are, deep sea bass.



Day 8 – Friday 13th February 1998

An incredibly hot and humid day, even for Thailand. We hitched to the park HQ and fed the mosquitoes for an hour or so before paying a visit to the Phraya Na Khron Cave. The steep 400m melt up the hill dehydrated us nicely so that later in the day we could ascertain the poisonous qualities of Singha beer (see “Beer”, earlier). The cave consisted of a big hole inside a limestone mountain, which contained a small but immaculate Buddhist temple and a lot of trees. Given that my middle name is “Timing”, we arrived just when the sun did not shine down the hole onto the temple. The up side to this miracle of planning was that there were no other people nearby. This was good. I described the cave and its contents as “the most beautiful and spectacular sight I have ever seen.” It must have been good. And I was sober.



We travelled by boat and songtheaw* back to the beach and got seriously stuck into the adjacent food stall cum restaurant’s beer supplies. Aside from the effect of the beer, two things caught our attention. The first was Half-Dog. Half-Dog, at some point in the past, did not have a broken back, but now it had. This did not seem to bother it all that much save that it didn’t have any control over the last half of its body. Needless to say it could not walk but it dragged itself about by its front legs. You could plot its movements on Samphraya Beach by the drag marks. The second noticeable thing was the rooster hunt. The local policeman + gun, the restaurant staff and their slingshots, and all of the local dogs (or half-dogs) and all the other chickens hunted tonight’s intended dinner – the rooster. It wasn’t having any of this as it ran straight into a hole in the limestone mountain adjacent to the restaurant. Most of the four-legged pursuers and a few of the sympathetic chickens went in after it. We believe the hunt was unsuccessful, but as we had been consuming quantities of Singha beer, other outcomes may have been possible.

* a songtheaw

Day 9 – Saturday 14th February 1998

We woke up but we were not at all happy about this. We concluded that the local beer, or the excessive consumption thereof, was the root cause of our unhappiness. It was looking like Mekong whisky could be back on the menu.

We caught a variety of ancient conveyances to Bangkok. The streets there were crawling with, what looked to our untrained eyes, like paedophiles. Luckily the locals would not think the same of us wholesome boys. Couldn't wait to get out of there.

I traded dinner for a long sleep.

Day 10 – Sunday 15th February 1998

Drama started the morning. Last night we had asked two different taxi drivers to quote on a fare to take us to Khao Yai National Park. They both thought, foolishly, that they had the booking. We stood aside as they sorted each other out. Eventually a most un-chatty but competent driver got us there but thought we were a bit stupid for not having pre-booked our accommodation. We asked him to lurk just in case...

We found ourselves in a 60 cents / night dormitory. The other tenants were either wildlife enthusiasts, substance abusers, wildlife, or a combination of all three. The paedophile count appeared to be mercifully low. That didn't matter – we dispersed madly in all directions as you tend to do when at a new site. Any local wildlife didn't care about us and refused to be seen. Managed to find a red-headed trogon or two and a few LBBs.

The evening spotlight effort was more rewarding. Some of the national park had been converted into golf courses and fancy eating establishments in a previous life before all the common Thai folk got jacked off with not being able to afford to go there. Now they could afford to go there but for all the wrong reasons, beer and loud music being only two of these. But I digress, and the evening spotlight threw up, so to speak, many sambar deer, small Indian civet and toddy cat plus a few mystery bags.

Day 11 – Monday 16th February 1998

A great day was spent exploring a great park. Eared pitta and lesser mouse deer were my early favourites but the day included a couple of Malayan porcupines, a pair of silver pheasants, a vast sea of hornbills and some less than wary red junglefowl, which wandered up to me while I was sitting under yet another fruiting fig tree.

I meandered off to the HQ / beer drinking area and the day could have happily ended there when just before dusk cries of “chaang, chaang” attracted our attention. It seemed there were a number of wild Asiatic elephants just up the road at an adjacent salt lick. A mad scramble saw us hitch to the site where learned local folk were barking orders to minimise the casualties among the onlookers. There were thirteen humongously fat elephants (and I have seen un-fat ones) and three quarters of a million pounds worth of photographic equipment and us. Fantastic!!



An evening spotlight with the local folk and their utility revealed a family of binturong and many of last night's partially blind sightings.

Moral dilemma: We had booked the spotlight vehicle for ourselves, but there was plenty of spare room. Two Pommie birders squatted in our vehicle and said that since we had booked the car anyway, they should not have to pay. Now the question-de-jour is this – should we allow them to come with us without contributing, or, should we kill them? They ended up making a wise decision.

Day 12 – Tuesday 17th February 1998

We woke early and traipsed along “Trail 6”. Spied a few new birds including some brown hornbills as well as some old mates from the last couple of days. We flushed a tiger off the path without seeing it.

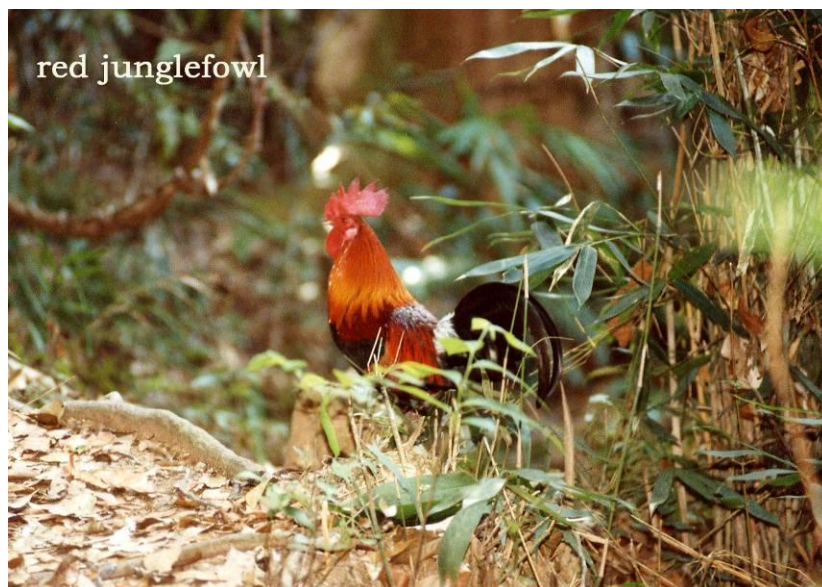
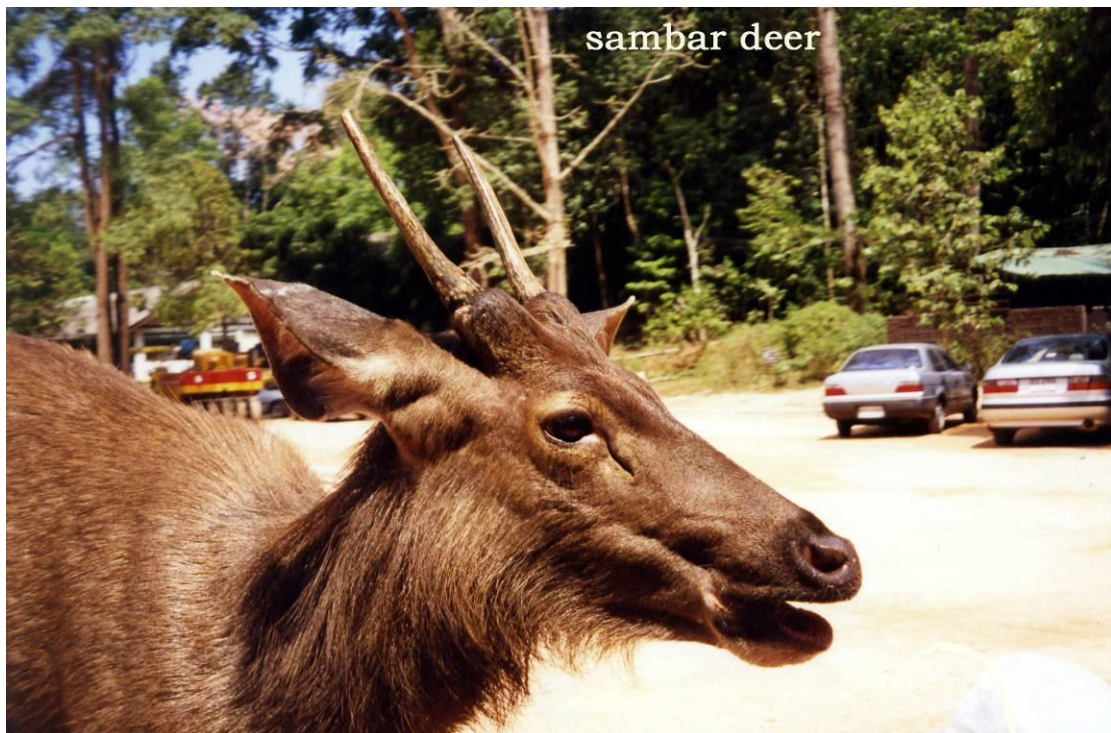
If there was any doubt about the ability of fat elephants to ruin your day this was dispelled by the sighting of an elephant-stomped-on copy of the Birds of Thailand at the clay lick from last night.

Dave watched 14 dhole from one of the viewing towers. I admit to have being disappointed not to have seen them. The evening spotlight added barking deer to the list.

Day 13 – Wednesday 18th February 1998

The least likely place to see dhole would now have to be the viewing tower where Dave saw them, so that's where I went. I didn't see any, and that was the story for the rest of the day – staying one step away from the wildlife.

We were a tad late getting back to the “restaurant” area so went without dinner. The evening spotlight added Siamese hare.



Day 14 – Thursday 19th February 1998

After breakfast “Trail 1” produced hill myna, blue pittas and wreathed hornbills.

We packed up and hitched a ride to Pak Choy, located on the main drag to Bangkok. A lovely family refused any payment save for a stuffed kangaroo for their child. We then jumped on an air-con bus to the capital. The bus showed a Rutger Hauer movie as a young Thai lass served Pepsi and ice. Very civilised.

Our taxi ride to Siam Square in Bangkok was thrilling. We lived long enough to find almost all the accommodation was fully booked. Eventually checked into the Pranee Building, which was just fine. Adjourned to the restaurant next door for a grand feed and copious fabulous cold beer in the company of a gaggle of off-duty prostitutes. Interesting place, Bangkok.

Day 15 – Friday 20th February 1998

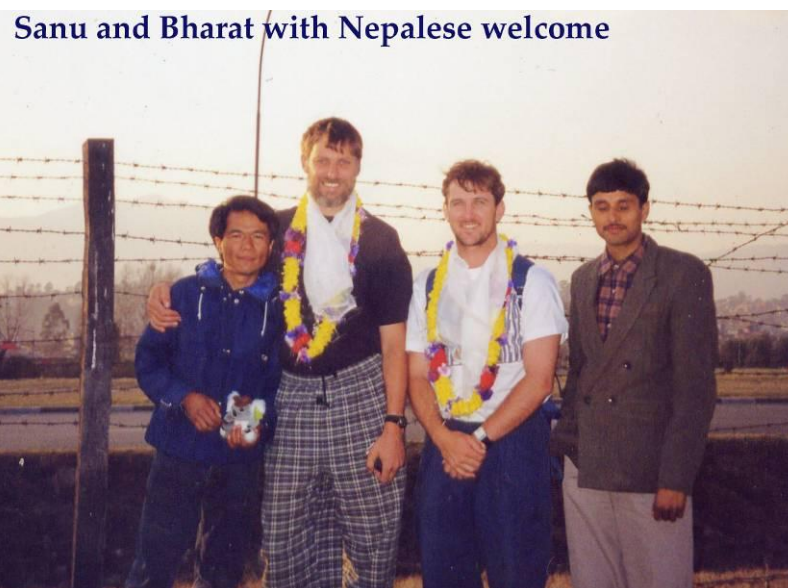
We said goodbye to Barry-Sean who had pre-planned to fall in love, or something, and extend his travel in Thailand. Dave and I set forth for the airport. There we amused ourselves with popular airport games like “spot the paedophile” and “why is that girl wearing any clothes”. Airports are the only places where advanced queuing theory can be practised. This little understood branch of pure maths guarantees to see you in the slowest queue no matter how many times you swap.

NEPAL

Our Royal Nepal 757 had no in-flight amenities or entertainment except for the dog-ugly hostesses. No matter, the food was good as were the views of the Himalaya.

Kathmandu airport is the most efficient in the world. This is because (a), there is nothing you could take there in the way of drugs or weapons that they didn't already have, (b), they don't care who comes in as long as they pay the visa fee, and (c), most of the tourists have been there before.

Sadly, my porter from a previous trip, Sanu, had not listened when I said that I would not be using his services and so he and our friend Bharat met us at the airport along with two vehicles and two drivers. Quite embarrassing and disappointing for poor Sanu. As old friends we got the full flowers and silk scarf treatment. Dave was overwhelmed and looked completely stunned, although he often uses this expression in other situations for impressing members of the opposite sex.

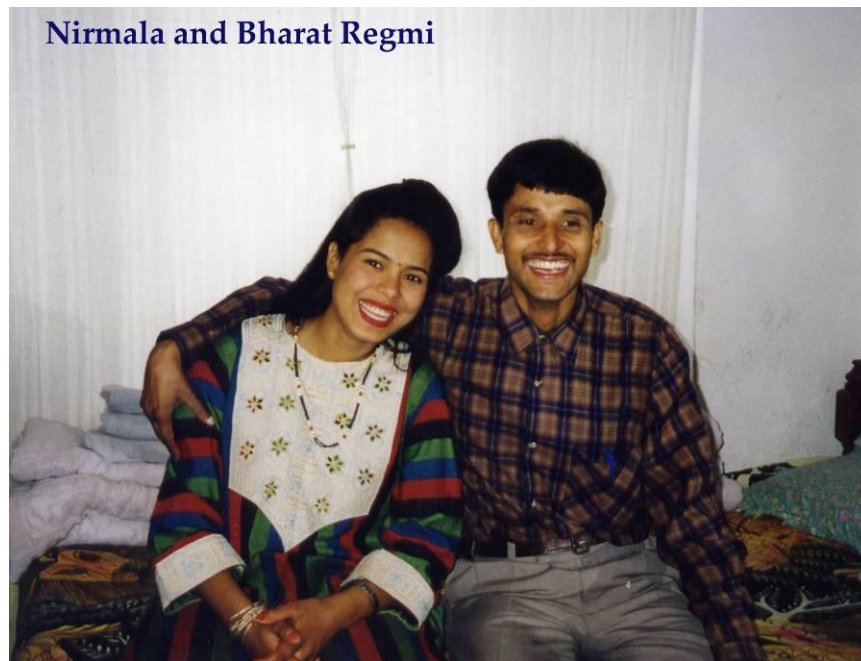


Bharat joined us at our temporary residence, the Hotel Kantipur. We had dinner with Sanu but it took forever to convince him that we preferred Bharat's trekking company due to their wildlife spotting skills.

The evening dog concerts, snoring and other extraneous noise conspired to keep me awake.

Day 16 – Saturday 21st February 1998

We perused the surprisingly good bookshops in Thamel before settling down to some trek planning. We adjourned to Bharat's house where we met his stunning wife, Nirmala. It was apparently not too early to drink beer, and so we sipped as we pored over the Regmi's proud wedding photos. Nirmala made lunch. The only interruption to these gay proceedings was the shrill screaming of all-in family brawl outside in the courtyard. Fortunately civil war was averted by the intervention of everyone else. Then we were off to the trekking office where we sorted out everything for our Langtang Valley trek.



We wandered the city and in true form I managed to get us lost. Nothing new here. We dined at Helena's Restaurant.

Since our arrival, local tourism heavies Achut Gurung and Ganesh Rimal, friends from my previous trip, have contacted me, making me feel overly important.

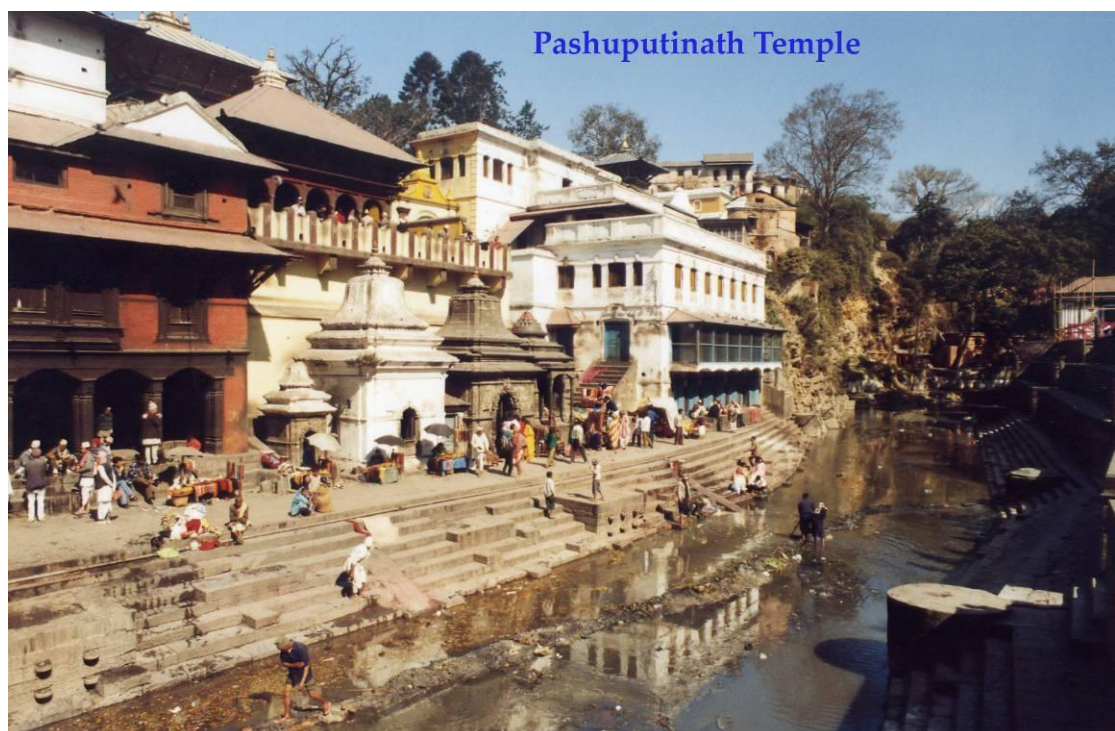
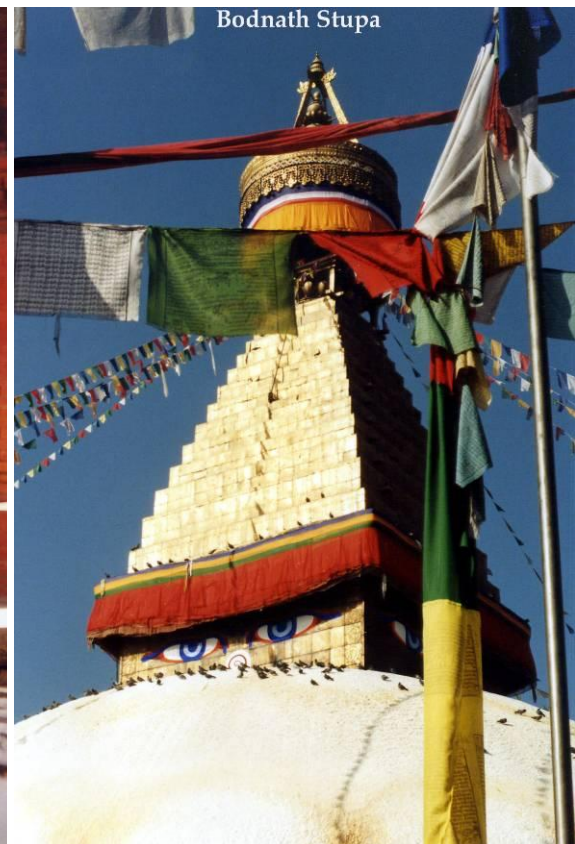
We took in a few of the sights and said "hi" to Kumari, the Living Goddess.

Day 17 – Sunday 22nd February 1998

Dave and I went on the Kathmandu temple tour to Bodnath Stupa (impressive), and Pashupatinath (confronting). At Pashupatinath many Sadhus (Hindu holy men) were gathering for the Shiva festival.

I tried to catch up with Ganesh Rimal but he was not at his hotel, so I spent some time attempting to breathe the sludge that masqueraded as the local air.

We met Naina, our porter, a tiny chap, but very strong and with a big open smile!

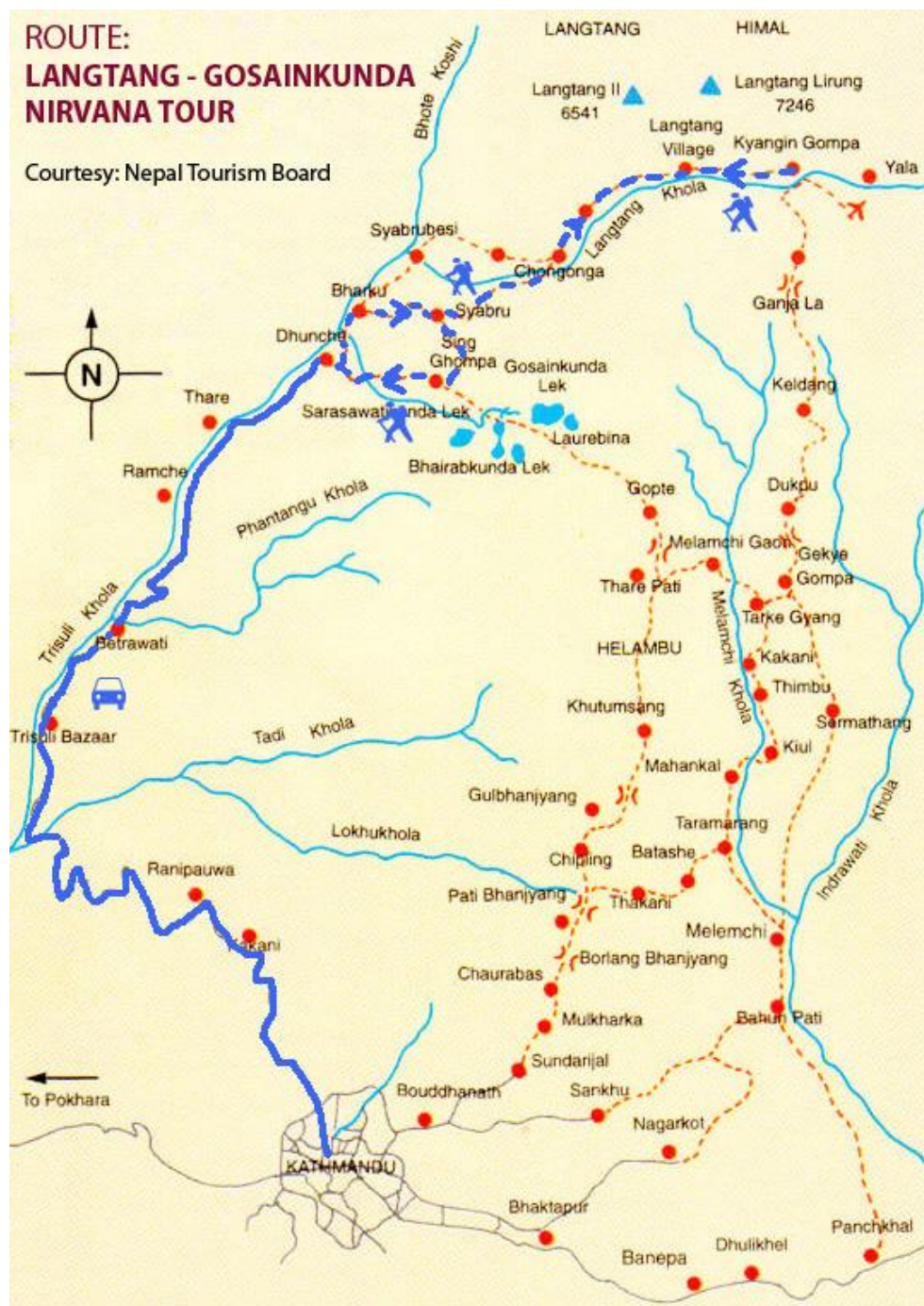


Day 18 – Monday 23rd February 1998

No wonder my ear was sore – I had imported a tick from Thailand.

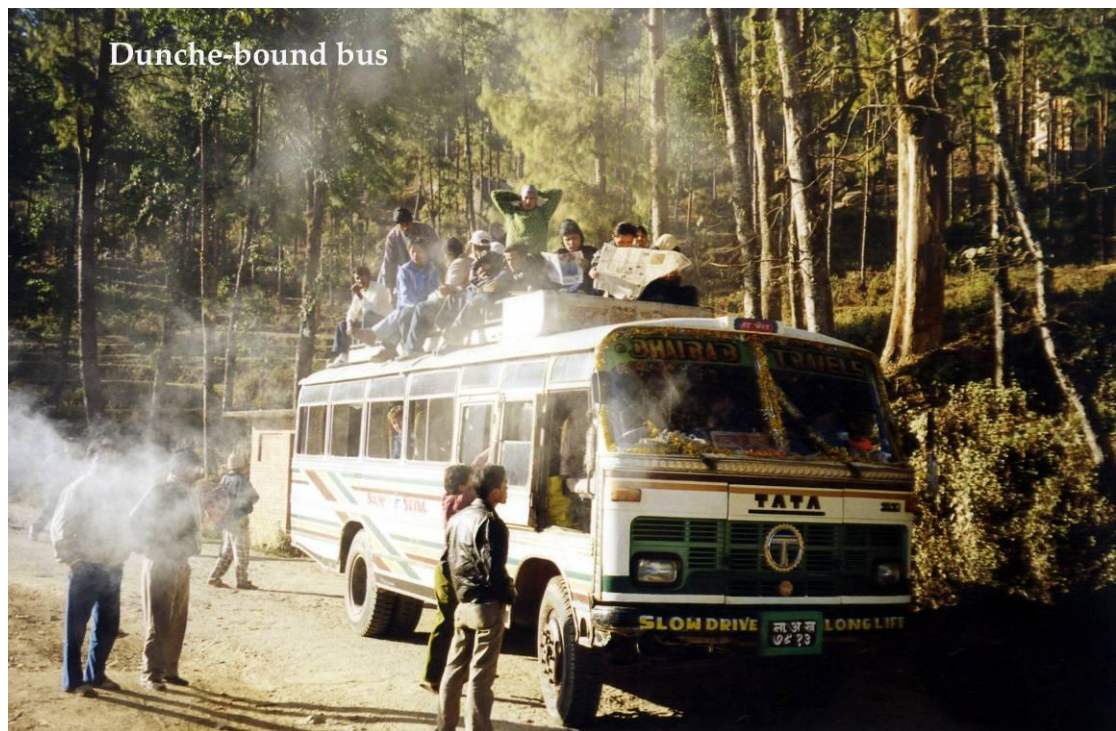
Dave, Bharat, Naina and I went to the bus station for our bus ride to Dunche – a village almost due north of Kathmandu - and the start of our trek up the Langtang Valley in Langtang National Park.

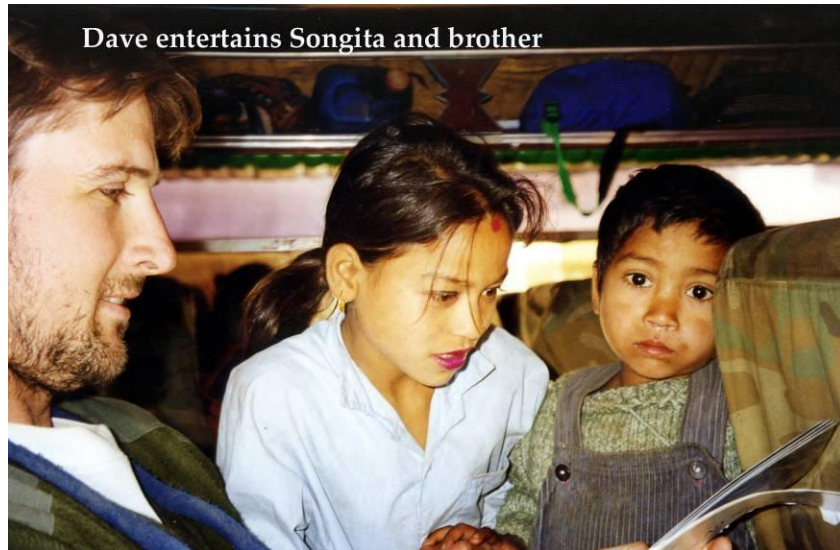
Travel Tip #76. When travelling in predominantly Hindu countries take at least one high caste Hindu with you. Bharat is a Brahmin (at the highest level on the class ladder).



The bus for Dunche was already fully loaded when we arrived. No worries, some arm waving, a few incomprehensible words from Bharat, some internal bus grumbling and suddenly there were a few seats available - see Travel Tip #76. Not that it mattered, the bus was so overcrowded it had ceased to be worrisome and had entered the realm of fascinating. The bus was a truncated “Tata” with about 140 assorted Nepalese and us in, on and hanging off it. I inherited a young lass named Songita along with her brother. This meant that they sat on my lap, or Dave’s, for nine hours. We shared them. Luckily the young boy was toilet trained. Songita wore lipstick, which is odd for a nine year old, but they were lovely kids in a grotty kind of way. They were totally natural with complete strangers and never complained about anything, just big eyes and low expectations.

The bus had to travel through a number of police checkpoints. Bus overloading is a serious local issue. Before the last corner in advance of each checkpoint the bus would stop and all those hanging off the vehicle – most of the passengers, say 60 people in all – would jump off and walk past the checkpoint. The bus would then go past the checkpoint to the next blind corner and they would all hop back on again. Naturally the police were not wise to this little deception.



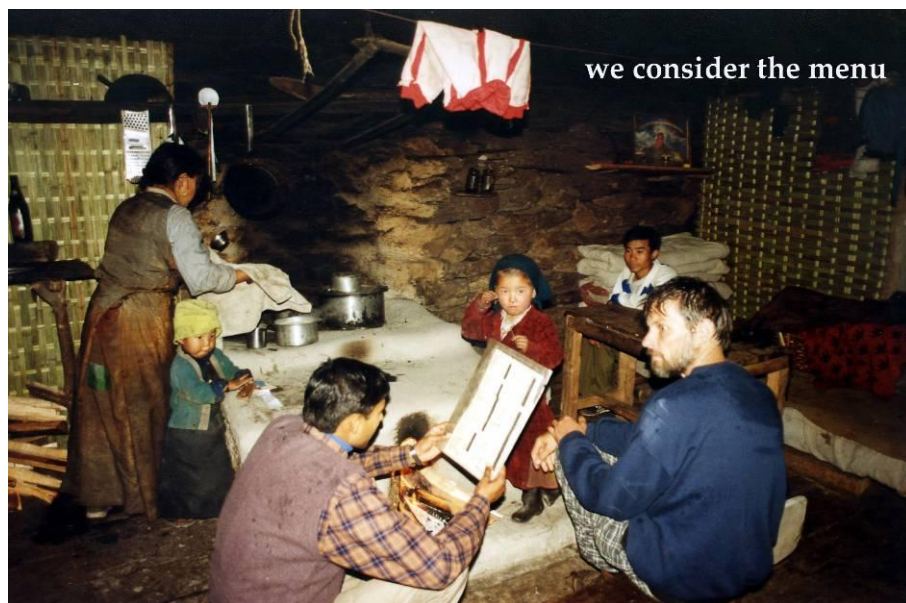


Our hotel, the Langtang View (!), afforded views to Tibet and the Langtang Range. We drank cold beer after enjoying a warm shower. It doesn't get much better than that.

Day 19 – Tuesday 24th February 1998

The rain that had fallen most of the night stopped as we left for our trek. Naina, one of nature's most gentle and obliging creations quickly spotted a yellow-throated marten dining on some rhododendron flowers and so our mammal list was off to a good start. The pine, rhododendron and bamboo forests were home to a host of birds. Many were not too concerned about us looking at them. Whilst most birds are not actively hunted in Langtang, the forest is continually interfered with, as the locals gather firewood, building materials and food. Never mind, it was still enchanting and exotic and there was much to delight in seeing.

The rain had returned and set in by lunchtime, and it became dismally cold. We stopped for the day at a teahouse and enjoyed the warmth and hospitality from the first of many Tibetan families we were to meet in the fabulous Langtang Valley.



Day 20 – Wednesday 25th February 1998

It rained hard all night and continued with drizzle for most of the day. It was a tiring trek up to Lama Hotel, which is a village, not a hotel, although the village did not lack for them. I contemplated life and the rate of childbirth in Nepal.

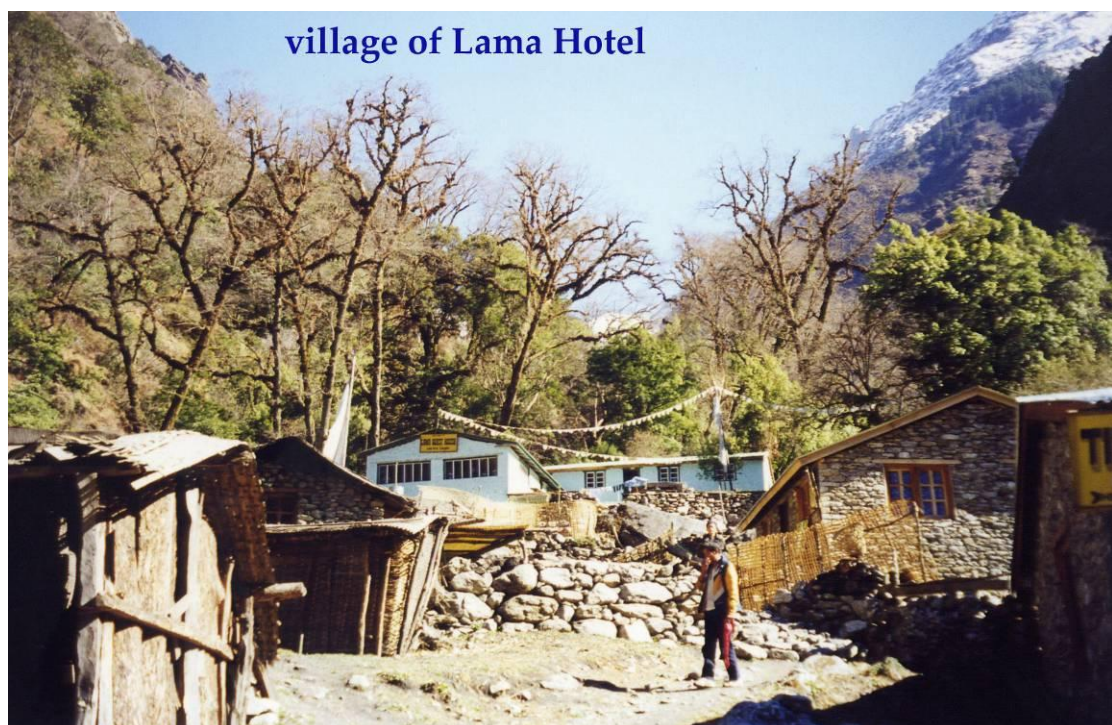
Although the weather was crap, so often these are the days that mammals are seen and so it was that several common goral, a jackal and a number of woolly-looking langur monkeys were observed.

We breakfasted* at Landslide (these guys don't go to a lot of trouble when it comes to choosing place names) and lunched at a brilliant spot with an engaging young lady who cooked in between breast-feeding her infant son.

* breakfast in Nepal is not taken at breakfast time.

One of the animals we thought we might see is the red panda. At our overnight stop the locals explained that they had stoned one out of a tree recently to see what it was. Having seen that it was a poor inoffensive bastard of a thing they took pity on it and tried feeding it back to health by giving it a good meal of rice three times a day. It died. Not too surprising really.

During the night an enterprising animal tried to drag all my belonging through a knot-hole in the wall. I mused that every rat should have ambition.



Day 21 – Thursday 26th February 1998

We woke to a magnificent and clear day. We spent it searching for wildlife around Lama Hotel. The lodge owner took us along a steep trail that overlooked the narrow valley above

Rimche. We had views of a number of common goral, one of which we tried to turn into something else. Also seen were Assamese macaques (unusual this far west) and lots of birds including flocks of grandala, Himalayan monal pheasants (common) and some awesome lammergeiers which wheeled below us with heads turned up in our direction.



Day 22 – Friday 27th February 1998

The day started with a steep climb of 1000m or so to Langtang Village. We began in heavy mountain shadow with our noses running like taps. Huge pine forests dominated part of the walk before we reached the tree line, brilliant sunshine and our first patches of snow. Here the birds were prolific. At our lunch stop we thrilled to close views of Himalayan weasel. Placed on ridiculously steep mountainsides were mobs of Himalayan tahr.

It was Tibetan New Year and our lodge celebrated with various breads and local specialities and our first offering of chhang. This is an alcoholic drink that can only be consumed when you don't know how it is made. Bharat offered to tell us but we declined. Suffice to say you will not find it in bars in Sydney. There are laws about these things. The village was cold, icy and well populated with hopelessly pissed idiots who could magically keep their balance as they staggered about on the ice.



Our lodge owner, who had the appearance of the Tibetan Godfather, was ill in bed but still capable of barking orders. He received us to advise that a snow leopard had eaten the throats from a couple of his horses. He didn't seem to mind all that much. Snow leopards, eh? (*we did not see any, but Bharat saw two near here on a subsequent trek with two Aussie friends of mine, who I had to subsequently kill. The so-called friends, not the leopards*).

Day 23 – Saturday 28th February 1998

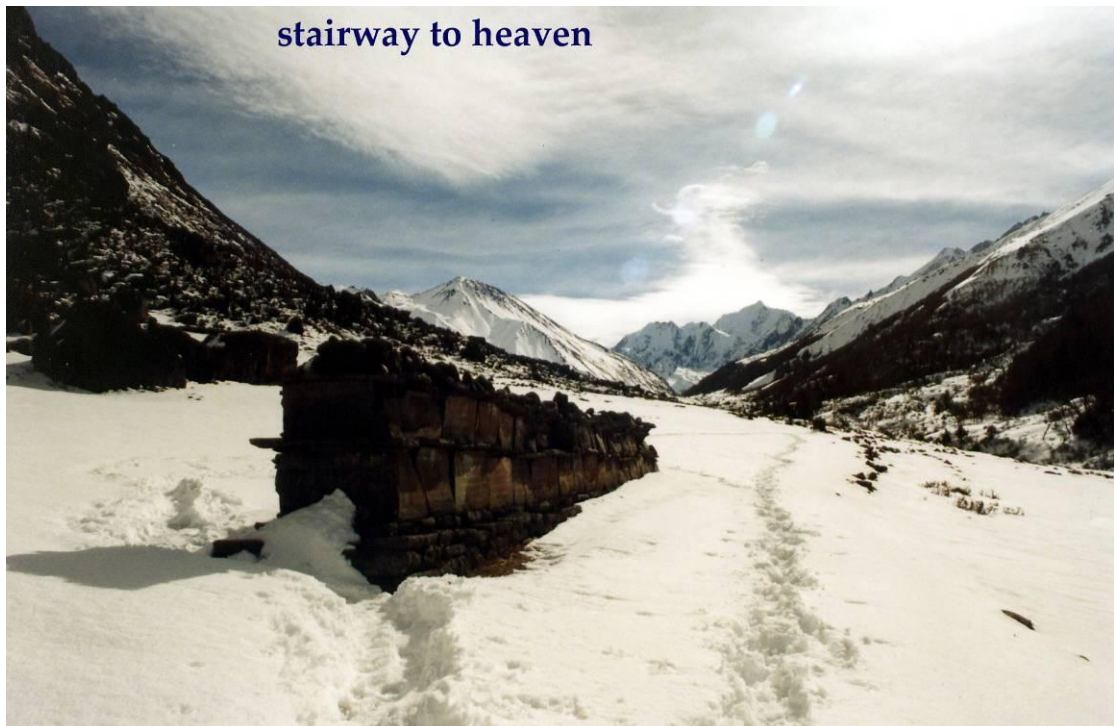
-12 degrees and a cold wind with sleet and snow greeted us as we trekked to Kyanjin Gumpa. I was almost convinced we were mad and would surely freeze to death. By this time on a trek you have either walked yourself into some fitness or you wish you were sitting at home.

It took no time at all to get to our destination, which was thoroughly snowbound. Although everything was carpeted in white stuff the wind had stopped and the sun shone brightly. Dave and I did the only thing we reasonably could have done under the circumstances – we found the beer garden and drank beer.

Meanwhile Bharat and Naina shot up the nearest mountain and managed views of a musk deer. We paid a visit to the Langtang cheese factory and procured a couple of kilos of yak's cheese, which was the perfect nibble for our drinkies.



Naina and Bharat



stairway to heaven



Out of the wilderness came a travelling minstrel. He had a convert to his ministry in tow. The name of this soon to become snow-blind apparition was not recorded and did not matter. He was a German journeyman carpenter resplendent in his traditional outfit and looked quite the dickhead. His vows precluded him wearing anything modern hence the lack of sunglasses and the soon to be lack of vision. This was not the last of the silliness exhibited around these parts. There was a guy doing backflips in the snow whilst one of his lot was harvesting

icicles from the roof and singing a peculiar song. I feared that a pagan ceremony might have been in the offing.

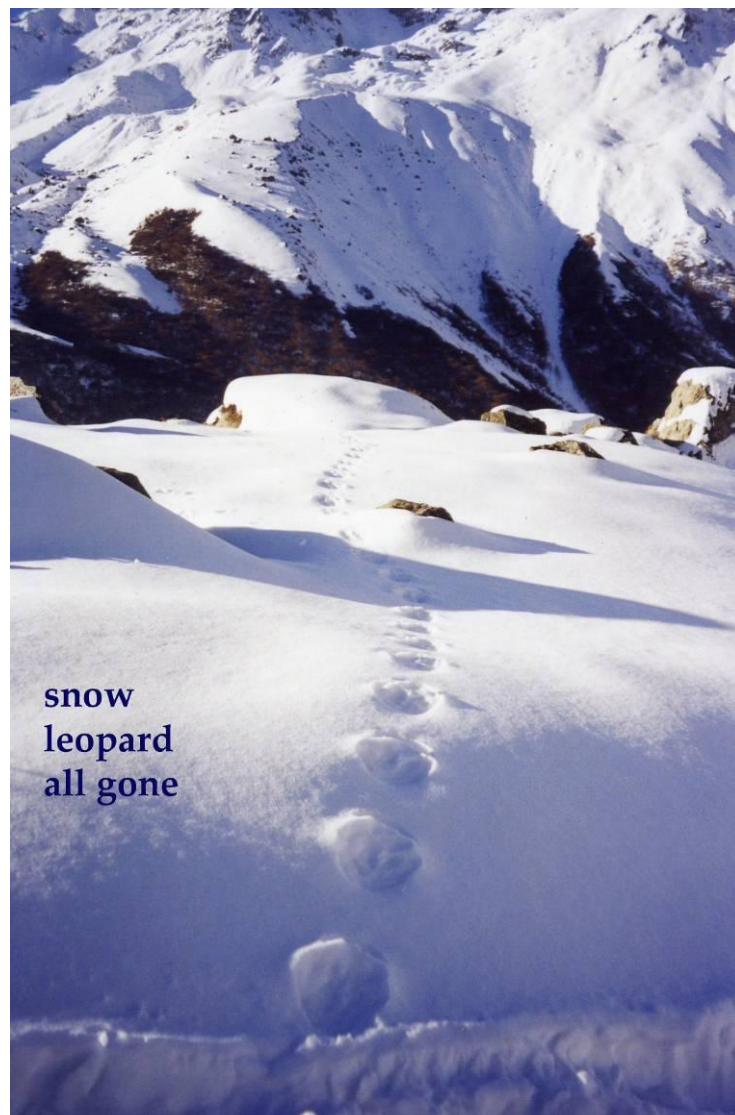
Dave had contracted diary-writing disease – each day he spent more and more of his waking hours writing. Soon we may have to carry him.

By late afternoon it was very cold and we retreated to the fire inside the lodge. Some potatoes were cooked as an appetiser as the steam rose from the sundry boots and other wet people bits.

A very peaceful place, this.

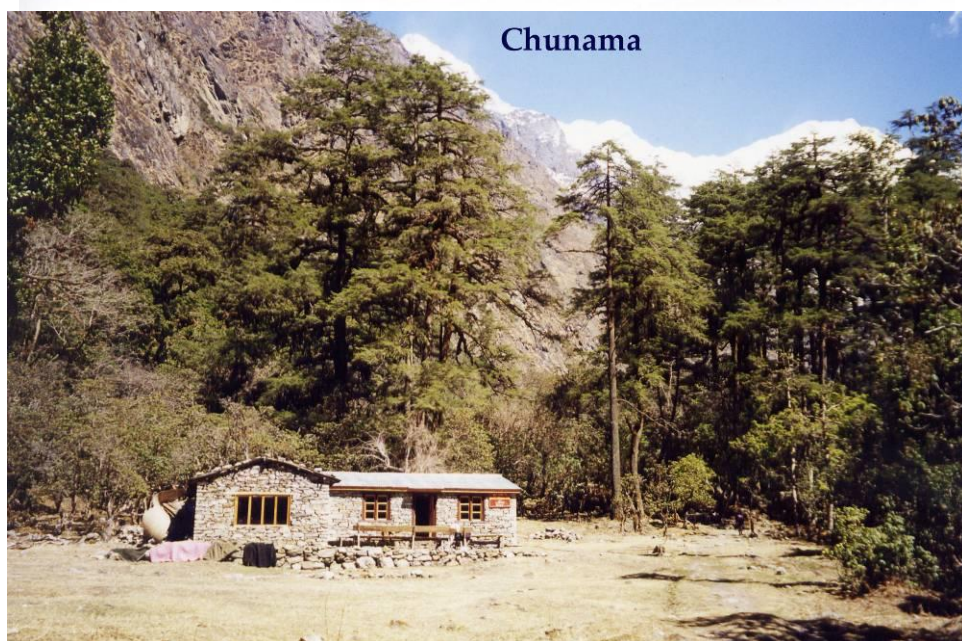
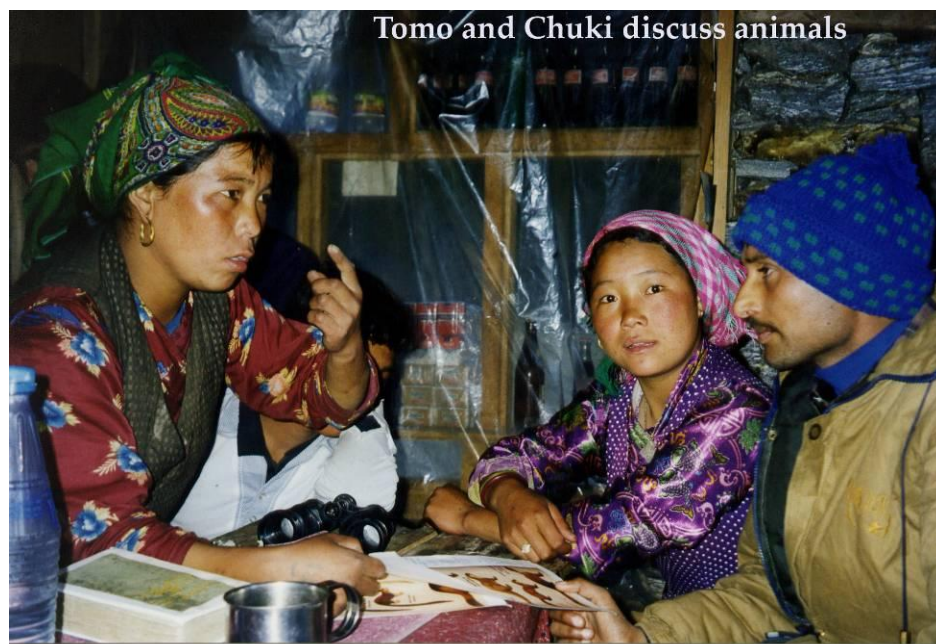
Day 24 – Sunday 1st March 1998

We turned back down the valley, first noting that a snow leopard had walked around our lodge during the night. We trekked to a place we noted on the way up – Chunama, a one-lodge settlement below Ghore Tabela. The walk in this direction offered spectacular scenery. There were few mammals on show but we caught up with Royle's pika along with orange-bellied Himalayan squirrel.



Our secret village – just the two young Tibetan girls that run the lodge and us - got disappointingly crowded when some French women arrived. Our distress was short-lived as the increase in our number was enough to prevent a large group of large Germans from booking in. Not only would they have destroyed the natural ambience but they would have also drunk all the available beer. They tried to boot our guide and porter out of their room but I prevailed by giving some timely advice. I can't recall exactly what I said, but I may have mentioned the war.

The two Tibetan sisters were really charming and entertaining but somewhat sexually frustrated. They tried to get Naina interested. Naina was a bit scared but Dave and I helped by giving him every piece of conflicting advice we could. Each time he was prepared to have a go we scared him out of it, and then we would encourage him again. He didn't.



We were all set for a few drinks and some spotlighting when a fully armed army platoon arrived. Whilst they were a tad intimidating I had the last laugh, but neither they nor I knew how this was to transpire just yet. We were advised not to go spotlighting.

Day 25 – Monday 2nd March 1998

In mock military style we set off in a pincer movement straight up the steep valley-side to try to flush some critters. We failed.

Our journeyman carpenter friend arrived, by now almost snow-blind but he wouldn't accept the cause. Something to do with wind I think he said. Yeah, that'd be right.

The afternoon saw Bharat and I, flush with our morning's lack of success, embark on a perilous and fruitless venture across the river. We found that drinking beer and doing a few chores for the girls was more in keeping with our skills than finding wildlife.

Earlier we had sent Chuki (the younger Tibetan) to the next village to procure more beer. I decided I would walk to meet her. She had found no beer (we had drank it all on the way up the valley it seemed) but I was much embarrassed when she found for me, in the space of a few hundred metres, two of the Himalayan form of yellow-throated marten, a muntjac deer, three kalij pheasant and a variety of other hiding birds. I guess it helped if you were born locally.

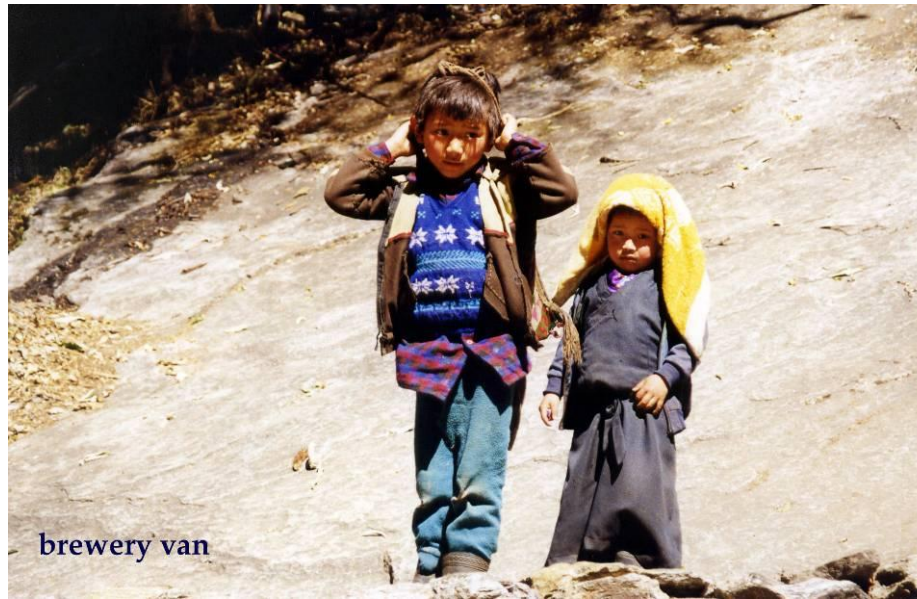
We found some Mustang coffee to drink. There is no coffee in it and it made your brain hurt after a while. The mix of company, location, sexually frustrated women and exotic drinks ensured an interesting night.

Day 26 – Tuesday 3rd March 1998

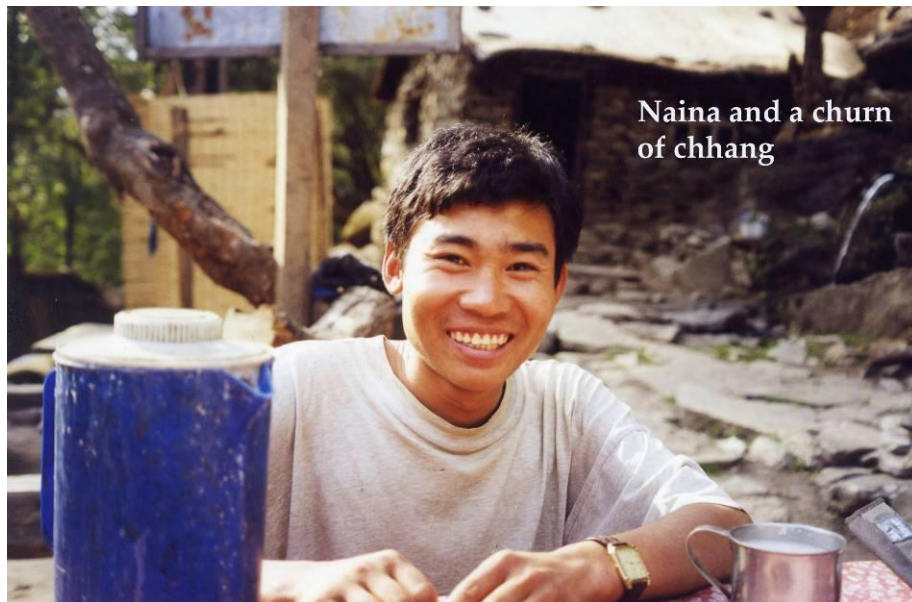
As we poked our way down the narrow trail to Rimche we were met by an explosion of birds. The altitudinal zone at around 2400 metres is very rich for birds and mammals. This is far below the tree line and the habitat that is represented is well distributed in the mountains allowing good populations to persist. The forest is diverse, which would be a surprise for many. Rhododendrons and pine are the common mid and upper storey trees.

I had another encounter with the army. One of the boys showed me how to use a slingshot as he took pot-shots at the birds I was watching. I grabbed it and hurled it away. This precipitated a heated conversation. Another mark on the growing list of complaints I have documented on the activities of the army in the national park. The army are the national park guards and they are the ones that kill most of the wildlife that dies of unnatural causes. Having said that, there are still good populations of large mammals in the Langtang Valley.

The afternoon was spent watching the mixed flocks of birds that passed by our drinking site at the forest edge adjacent to our lodge. After the beer was exhausted we drank vast quantities of chhang. Bharat, inspired by this uncertain brew developed some clever pick-up lines as the occasional trekker passed by. My favourite was "hullo, come here". It did not work.



brewery van



Naina and a churn
of chhang



a looming chhangover

Day 27 – Wednesday 4th March 1998

I woke as the proud owner of a large chhangover. A long day was then endured walking 800 metres downhill, followed by a 1000 metre rise. A number of mammals deigned to be seen – goral, serow, langur, macaque, muntjac and squirrels.

The evening grot-hole of a lodge was so dirty that Naina was invited to cook our dinner. The folk that managed the facility were the dirtiest people I have ever seen. That is pure fact. Any description of them would fail to create an image even remotely accurate. When you hear it said that someone had shit on their face, you don't imagine that they actually did. The children could not be sexed by their appearance! Welcome to our soon-to-be-closed-up lodge. It wasn't just the army I had in my sights now as the lodge owner proudly explained his methods for wildlife trapping. Get out the file.

Day 28 – Thursday 5th March 1998

We trekked to Sing Gompa, a leisurely stroll gaining 800 metres, at first through regrowth forest and then majestic pine forests covered in snow. The village was very pretty and our teahouse superb, the best yet. Another search for red panda and musk deer was met by the usual rate of success.

We plundered the local cheese shop and ensconced ourselves in front of a fire as the ice balls and sleet turned to heavy snow. This reduced our options considerably and freezing to death was one that received an early rejection. We determined to round out our growing knowledge of Himalayan drinks by trying tomba. This superb tonic is made by fermenting millet (you do not want to know the essential ingredient in the fermentation process) and then by adding boiling water to a glob of it in a wooden mug. You then suck the liquid from the bottom of the mug through a straw. More water can be added for a few repeats. Then you fall over.



Day 29 – Friday 6th March 1998

The day started with lots of falling snow, then it got heavier. It stopped briefly so that we could participate in a 15 minute snowball fight, then snowed for most of the rest of the day. The highlights of the day were - breakfast, lunch and fire.

In the mid-afternoon the snow stopped for a short period during which the beauty of snow-covered vegetation could be appreciated. It was not quite as beautiful as the warmth inside the teahouse.

We helped the lodge owner lower their dangerously high stock of vodka.

Out of the cold came some pissed idiot army guys. I was starting to get sick of them and proceeded to bait them to what I thought was a comfortably non-violent level. They just drank more and gave me cause for making a few more notes that would ultimately do them no good.

A relaxing day spent indoors.



Day 30 – Saturday 7th March 1998

It snowed heavily all night but had cleared by sunrise and the scenery for our descent to Dunche could not have been more beautiful as fresh snow covered the path, the trees and all else. It may sound trite but the whole world seemed newborn and it was a joy to follow animal tracks in the snow on a perfectly still and quiet morning. Then some noisy European power-trekkers crashed our party. They represented every bad thing previously missing from our day.

The trek to Dunche loses 1500 metres in altitude and there are no uphill bits. This sounds like fun but it starts to get to be an ordeal on the shins and the bits of your body that join to other

bits. We passed many broken and beaten trekkers that had failed to go up this hill (not surprising) and later in the hotel they filed in one after the other, their trek a failure through a lack of understanding of what was required. Don't try to walk so far uphill when there are no teahouses in between.

After lunch I prevailed upon Bharat's better judgement to visit the national park HQ and lodge my dossier on all that was rotten in Langtang. I was dismissed by the 2IC who had little interest in my observations for the simple reason that the local army guys would bash the crap out of him if he said anything bad about them. I was in bed when I heard a bang at the door.

Two white men stood outside my room. They were US Peace Corps volunteers and they had some questions for me. We exchanged notes. I was later to learn that:

- The Lodge of Grot (4th March) was closed
- The Lodge of Grot's owner was jailed for six months
- The army colonel in charge of Langtang NP was demoted, and
- All army staff in Langtang NP were rotated out of the park.

Subsequently Bharat no longer took trekking parties past the Lodge of Grot but by a *special* woodcutter's route.

Day 31 – Sunday 8th March 1998

A day we had been dreading – the bus back to Kathmandu. Early in the voyage we feared that plague had visited the lower valley, as the bus was not absurdly crowded. This did not last and just to add a bit of spice to the already hairy ride – the road was now very muddy and slippery. We survived to check into our favourite hotel, the Hotel 7 Corner.

The Tom and Jerry Bar provided much food (chicken), beer and popcorn. It was heavenly.

Day 32 – Monday 9th March 1998

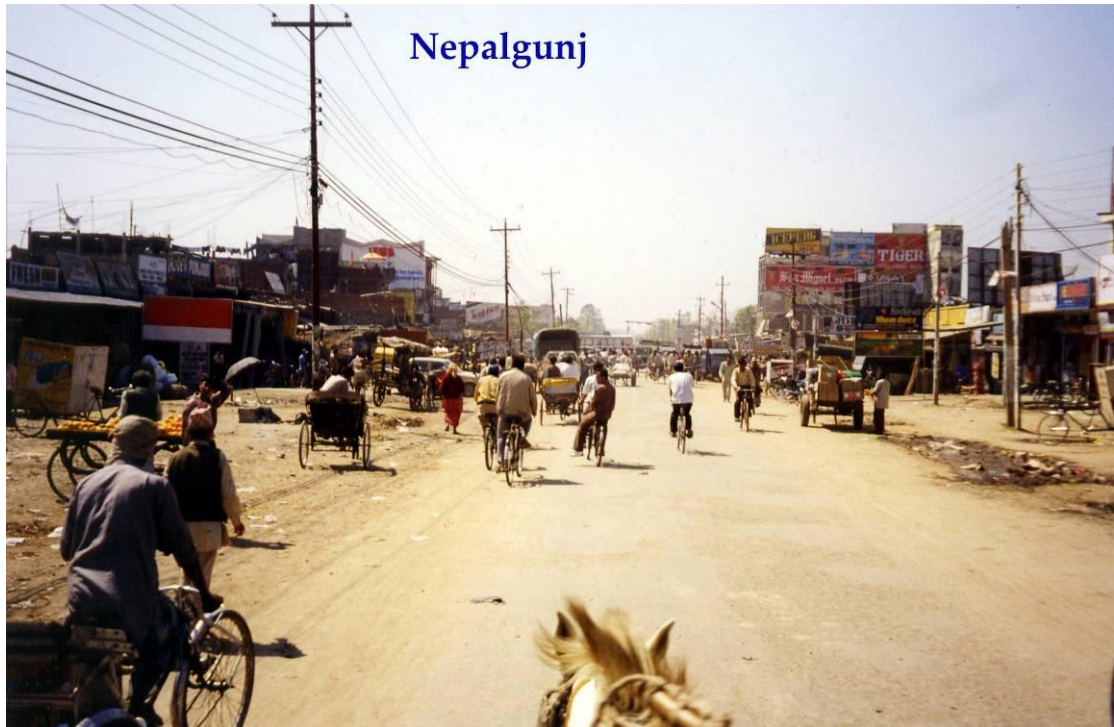
After a slothful breakfast Dave poked about town while I headed for Nagarjun Hill, a forested mountain adjacent to Kathmandu City – literally five minutes drive from the centre of town and abutting the urban sprawl. It used to be a royal forest and is surrounded by a decaying brick wall. It is patrolled by the army against illegal users, whoever they might be. The locals hunted firewood, as long as it was dead. They were so desperate for it, they even mined dead tree roots. The sounds of machete on wood resounded through the forest. Now, against all this you would expect to detect no wildlife whatsoever, but you would soon be disappointed. The forest is positively heaving with birds, including things up to pheasant size. This hill also supports a healthy population of leopards and other cats along with various deer, monkeys, squirrels and others.

My catch of the day was a brilliant and prolonged view of a hunting jungle cat. Also seen were sambar and spotted deer, rhesus macaque and hoary-bellied Himalayan squirrel.

The Tom and Jerry Bar produced a variety of wildlife, as usual, and the dinner at Helena's lived up to its usual high standard.

Day 33 – Tuesday 10th March 1998

A big day that started with an early flight in a Royal Nepal Twin Otter to Nepalgunj. This provincial town is located right on the Indian border. It is flat, dirty and well, dirty. Our travel connections upon arrival had evaporated but we eventually managed a pony and cart to get us to town. The plan was to spend as little time as possible in what is truly a horrible place and get to Bardia National Park, some distance to the west. So Bharat went walking around town asking car owners for hire of their vehicles.



We paid 1600 rupees for a 10 day old jeep. We dodged the drugged cattle (they eat sheaves of cannabis) and other pedestrians at light speed, as the driver showed off his new car and “driving” skills. It was like being in a pinball game.

Our accommodation near Bardia NP was fine but not very close to the park edge. Never mind, the food was delicious and we had high hopes for our foray into the park the next day.

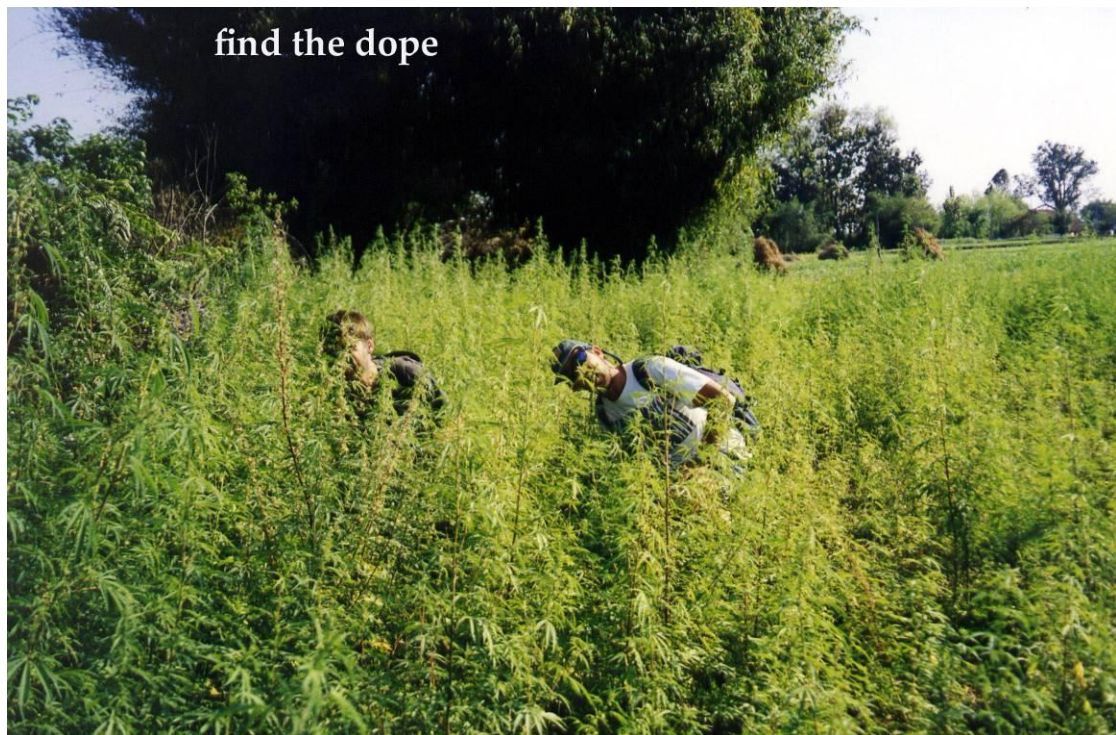
Day 34 – Wednesday 11th March 1998

A local guide was hired to take us down the Karnali River to look for Gangetic dolphins and other critters. First seen were barking deer, followed by a male nilgai – that’s more like it! We wandered a few trails rich with tiger scats and tracks, but give up now if you wish to read about a sighting. There were many birds, but except for a grey hornbill or two we paid little attention to them.

In true Nepalese fashion we waited interminably on the riverbank while our boatman took his lunch. Eventually we piled back into the canoe and drifted down the river. The dolphins had thus far avoided us, but just as we reached the Indian border one was sighted and we had good views. Poor things.

Just for fun we walked into India. A long walk back to camp followed. In the Nepalese lowlands the land is fertile and there are thousands of children. The average number of kids per family is 43. Each and every one said “hullo” and “bye-bye” as we passed. They were very respectful.

Our guide interrupted our beer drinking when he suggested we go to a known site where tigers drink. Yeah. It was an interesting walk and we spied many animals that were not interested in seeing tigers.



Day 35 – Thursday 12th March 1998

The morning started in high farce. We had been trying to book a jeep for the day. The admin guy at the park failed to turn up for work. We tracked him down at his house and finally got going far too late at 0800. A slow start for our target mammals but managed a big mob of wild boar and a pair of yellow-throated martens. We sat for hours up trees waiting for tigers that didn't arrive. There was one brief period of excitement when the lodge boss-man fell 20 feet out of his tree hitting various braches on the way down and landing in a crumpled heap on the ground. I was certain that he was dead.

I almost died watching “tree-falling-brother”, as he became known, fail to move for a long time. He survived to tell the tale with no broken bones. We launched into a bottle of the local scotch.

Day 36 – Friday 13th March 1998

Heavy rain cleared by 0830 and we set forth with a slightly-mad-in-the-head guide for a 1000 mile hike. We were not having any luck at all and a new strategy was needed. A couple of three-striped palm squirrels were nowhere near as much fun to look at as chasing an Indian one-horned rhino through the undergrowth would be. Probably not near as dangerous as well.

Shortly thereafter we found an enormous python (about 25 foot enormous) coiled up in a hole in the ground. Apparently this particular reptile ate deer. It could.

Having lucked out on big things, we questioned the sound of falling trees. What we were told was the largest elephant in Asia was nearby doing a bit of forest clearing. Against sensible advice we walked toward the sound rather than make a strategic retreat. It was big alright.

Spent the next two hours dreaming of beer, and the two hours after that renewing our association with Nepal's Iceberg Brewery's products.

Day 37 – Saturday 14th March 1998

Another farcical start to a day as we could not get new park permits because yesterday was a holiday.

Tree-falling-brother was uselessly trying to get life into his decrepit jeep. An hour was wasted taking it for walks, before we stole someone else's machine and gave the park the flick and went to an off-park site to see blackbuck antelope.

Very attractive things, your blackbuck. Not so many of these poor buggers because they like short grassland and guess what, other animals like this habitat too. And there are upwards of twenty million of the latter in Nepal. We chased the blackbuck around for a bit and returned to our camp.

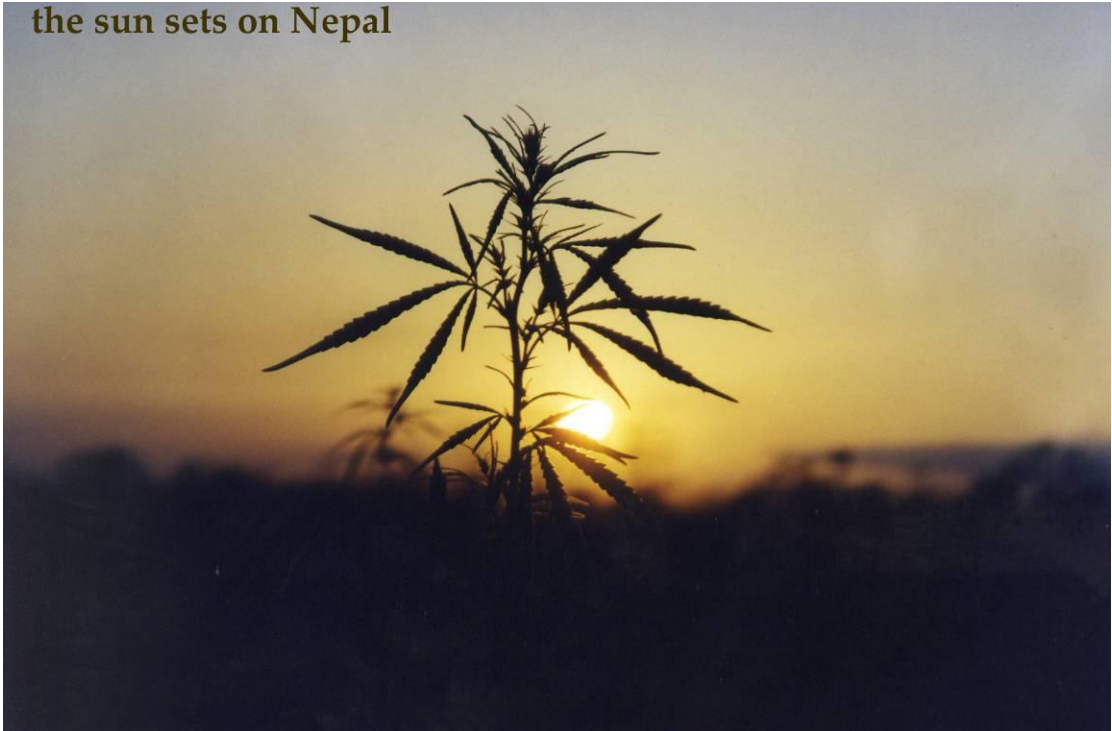
We had some fun chasing an Indian one-horned rhino through the undergrowth. This large but small-brained animal would stop every so often and look at us. We would look at each other and work out which tree we would try to hide behind. It stood its ground, snorted at us and then decided the park needed a new walking trail. Not too much stops these buggers. Aside from the odd mongoose, nothing else was seen. We fell back into camp after dark.

Day 38 – Sunday 15th March 1998

Live buffalo calves had been staked out at various places around the park to attract tigers. Thus far only one had been lucky enough to get eaten. We then thought our luck had changed when we saw 60-odd people running through the forest and screaming. Surely one had lost a child to a tiger and we would see it! Not so, our friends were merely biodiversity surveyors with an interesting way of counting the local critters. They all ran in a big noisy line through the forest while others waited along the road and counted everything, if anything, that ran, flew or slithered out. I think we saw a chook and a peacock.

Bharat and I went on a twilight search in bushland adjacent to the park. A number of fresh tiger spoor were seen but no cigar. Just beer. And vodka.

the sun sets on Nepal



Day 39 – Monday 16th March 1998

Another early morning tiger quest ended in failure.

In the afternoon we combined two strategies by taking our alcohol to the riverbank rather than waiting until we got back. This plan worked just as well as all the others but it felt better.

Incredibly, during our stay we saw all the animals we expected to see at Bardia, although one suspected that there were a few other hiding bastards out there.

We drank the lodge's last beer. Hmmm. There was a pattern emerging here.

Day 40 – Tuesday 17th March 1998

Off to sunny Nepalgunj airport, via views of a few big gharial crocodiles basking on a riverbank. The airport toilet at 'Gunj set the benchmark for dirty toilets and I am not joking, it is the most disgusting toilet in the world. I have witnesses that will attest that I held my breath for the entire time that I made a stand-up contribution to this inestimably horrid cesspit.

Contrasting the toilet was our brand new Buddha Air Beechcraft 1900D for our flight back to Kathmandu.

From the Hotel 7 Corner we sped to the Tom and Jerry Bar. A variety of silly things happened there, one of which was to ensure gold service for us in this bar forever.

Attracted by my own personal chick magnet, a.k.a. Dave, two blonde bimbos from "Great" Britain attached themselves to us. Actually, Dave's one was attached in a manner of

speaking, under-table style, but I was more amused by throwing un-popped popcorn into a female crevass where they were not easily retrieved. My marital status combined with the Groucho Marx principle that I wouldn't belong to any club that would have me as a member. My interest lay more in the line of confusing the enemy rather than trying to form a peace pact.



My stated status as an immigration official gave me access to the girls' passports. My pronouncement that the visa stamp for their onward destination, Australia, was invalid caused them some consternation. I headed for the bar while they worried about their holiday plans. Here I was accosted by an Irishman who was happy to part with cash money, then and there, for me to get him access to Australia where his wife had disappeared with his baby. My stern looks with the "Spice Girls" had convinced him I was the genuine variety of immigration official and nothing was going to persuade him otherwise.

The bar staff, who knew us by this, were killing themselves laughing. We left two of them with the girls. They had a great night and were still thanking us when next we appeared at the bar two years later.

There are three things on sale in the streets of Kathmandu – hash, "change money", and, unbelievably, Tiger Balm. All the salesmen are interchangeable in terms of looks and lifestyle. They are also ubiquitous and can become something of a nuisance. This night, given our high spirits, we decided to ask for whichever of the two products each individual did not sell. It was hilarious to see their faces as they hesitated and wondered how fast they could get the other stuff. We were crying!

Day 41 – Wednesday 18th March 1998

We spent the day shopping and trying to reconfirm our onward flights. Lunch was enjoyed at Bharat and Nirmala's place, and dinner at Helena's Restaurant.



Day 42 – Thursday 19th March 1998

An early start saw us going to Phulchowki Mountain looking for birds. We managed to get to the top where we had phenomenal views of the Himalaya and the Kathmandu Valley. Saw a few new birds during the 5000 foot descent to the bottom of the mountain. We had a few ales at the village at the foot of the mountain as we waited for our taxi to arrive.

Back in Kathmandu we shopped for silly hats and T-shirts and our last meal at Helena's. There are no prizes for guessing that the T&J Bar was next on the list. We had male and female genitalia on the hats on our noggins that allowed a world record number of puns to be explored. My hat was the female one but at least I wasn't a dickhead. In the street we were sexually assaulted by two young Japanese girls. Or at least our hats were.



Day 43 – Friday 20th March 1998

We left Nepal. The airport had the usual assortment of dickheads, wallies, Indians, upper class twits and brain dead drug addicts. The flight was fine as far as Bangkok, where we

spent 17 hours at the airport terminal. It was 36 degrees outside and we couldn't be bothered going there.

We suspected, wrongly, that the airline staff would be able to find our baggage in the morning. They promised us they would be able to, something they lived to regret.

Day 44 – Saturday 21st March 1998

You have to love the Nepalese. This was a Saturday, which is always a holiday in Nepal. So the Royal Nepal baggage people had sensibly secured our luggage in a holding room and bugged off till Sunday. We were earlier told our luggage would be on the plane so stonewalling the Alitalia transfer desk was the only option available to us. Just for a change we were the pricks that were holding up the queue.

It was amazing what you can do with a locksmith (or a blacksmith, I suspect).

Isn't time travel brilliant? By putting our watches forward by four hours, 0800 became midday! And guess what happens at midday? The sun comes up over the yardarm, that's what. Breakfast and beer for the only people awake on the plane – us. The rest of the passengers were dishevelled Italians from the flight's origin, Rome, who slept until it was time to sleep when we arrived in Sydney.

A fabulous holiday.

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24th December 2005

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Mammals seen in Thailand

(KK – Kaeng Krachan NP, KSRY – Khao Sam Roi Yot NP, KY – Khao Yai NP)

Common treeshrew KK
Pig-tailed macaque KY
Stump-tailed macaque KK
Long-tailed macaque KSRY
Banded leaf monkey KSRY
Dusky leaf monkey KK
White-handed gibbon KK, KY
Belly-banded squirrel KK
Burmese striped tree squirrel KK
Grey-bellied squirrel KK etc
Variable squirrel KY
Malaysian giant squirrel KK
Indo-Chinese ground squirrel KY (Barry)
Malaysian porcupine KK, KY
Small Indian civet KY
Large Indian civet KK
Masked palm civet KK
Common palm civet KK
Himalayan palm civet KK
Binturong KY
Lesser mouse deer KY
Sambar deer KY
Barking deer KY
Leopard cat KK
Asiatic elephant KY
Siamese hare KY
Dhole KY (Dave)

Mammals seen in Nepal, first sighting recorded only

Rhesus macaque	Kathmandu
Yellow-throated marten	Above Dunche, Langtang NP
Hoary-bellied Himalayan squirrel	Above Dunche, Langtang NP
Common goral	Below Syabru, Langtang NP
Assamese macaque	Above Rimche, Langtang NP
Himalayan tahr	Above Lama Hotel, Langtang NP
Common jackal	Landslide, Langtang NP
Common langur	Below Bamboo, Langtang NP
Himalayan weasel	Thangshyap, Langtang NP
Royle's pika	Below Kyanjin Gompa, Langtang NP
Orange-bellied Himalayan squirrel	Above Chunama, Langtang NP
White-bodied form of yellow-throated marten	Chunama, Langtang NP
Muntjac deer	Chunama, Langtang NP
Serow	Below Bamboo, Langtang NP
Sambar deer	Nagarjun (Kathmandu)
Jungle cat	Nagarjun (Kathmandu)
Nilgai	Bardia NP
Spotted deer	Bardia NP
Hog deer	Bardia NP
Gangetic dolphin	Bardia NP
Wild boar	Bardia NP
Asiatic elephant	Bardia NP
Three-striped palm squirrel	Bardia NP
Blackbuck	Near Bardia NP
Indian one-horned rhinoceros	Bardia NP
Common mongoose	Bardia NP
Indian red flying fox	Kathmandu

Birds seen in Nepal

Black Francolin	<i>Francolinus francolinus</i>
Hill Partridge	<i>Arborophila torqueola</i>
Himalayan Monal	<i>Lophophorus impejanus</i>
Red Junglefowl	<i>Gallus gallus</i>
Kalij Pheasant	<i>Lophura leucomelanos</i>
Indian Peafowl	<i>Pavo cristatus</i>
Ruddy Shelduck	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>
Cotton Pygmy-goose	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i>
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>
Common Merganser	<i>Mergus merganser</i>
Eurasian Wryneck	<i>Jynx torquilla</i>
Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos nanus</i>
Brown-fronted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos auriceps</i>
Yellow-crowned Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos mahrattensis</i>
Rufous-bellied Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos hyperythrus</i>
Crimson-breasted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos cathpharius</i>
Darjeeling Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos darjellensis</i>
Lesser Yellownape	<i>Picus chlorolophus</i>
Greater Yellownape	<i>Picus flavinucha</i>
Grey-headed Woodpecker	<i>Picus canus</i>
Black-rumped Flameback	<i>Dinopium benghalense</i>
White-naped Woodpecker	<i>Chrysocolaptes festivus</i>
Great Barbet	<i>Megalaima virens</i>
Brown-headed Barbet	<i>Megalaima zeylanica</i>
Blue-throated Barbet	<i>Megalaima asiatica</i>
Oriental Pied-Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros albirostris</i>
Great Hornbill	<i>Buceros bicornis</i>
Red-headed Trogon	<i>Harpactes erythrocephalus</i>
Dollarbird	<i>Eurystomus orientalis</i>
Blue-eared Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo meninting</i>
Ruddy Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon coromanda</i>
Black-capped Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon pileata</i>
Blue-bearded Bee-eater	<i>Nyctyornis athertoni</i>
Blue-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>
Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	<i>Merops leschenaulti</i>
Pied Cuckoo	<i>Oxylophus jacobinus</i>
Sirkeer Malkoha	<i>Phaenicophaeus leschenaultii</i>
Lesser Coucal	<i>Centropus bengalensis</i>
Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>
Slaty-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula himalayana</i>
Plum-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula cyanocephala</i>

Red-breasted Parakeet	<i>Psittacula alexandri</i>
Little Owl	<i>Athene noctua</i>
Brown Hawk-Owl	<i>Ninox scutulata</i>
Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus</i>
Hill Pigeon	<i>Columba rupestris</i>
Common Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
Speckled Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba hodgsonii</i>
Laughing Dove	<i>Streptopelia senegalensis</i>
Spotted Dove	<i>Streptopelia chinensis</i>
Eurasian Collared-Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Barred Cuckoo-Dove	<i>Macropygia unchall</i>
Emerald Dove	<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>
Pompadour Green-Pigeon	<i>Treron pompadora</i>
Pin-tailed Pigeon	<i>Treron apicauda</i>
Black-tailed Crake	<i>Amaurornis bicolor</i>
Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>
Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>
Red-wattled Lapwing	<i>Vanellus indicus</i>
Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>
Brown-headed Gull	<i>Larus brunnicephalus</i>
White-winged Tern	<i>Chlidonias leucopterus</i>
Black Baza	<i>Aviceda leuphotes</i>
Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>
White-rumped Vulture	<i>Gyps bengalensis</i>
Long-billed Vulture	<i>Gyps indicus</i>
Himalayan Griffon	<i>Gyps himalayensis</i>
Red-headed Vulture	<i>Sarcogyps calvus</i>
Short-toed Snake Eagle	<i>Circaetus gallicus</i>
Eurasian Marsh-Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>
Common Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Steppe Eagle	<i>Aquila nipalensis</i>
Amur Falcon	<i>Falco amurensis</i>
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Intermediate Egret	<i>Mesophoyx intermedia</i>
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
White-bellied Heron	<i>Ardea insignis</i>
Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>
Little Heron	<i>Butorides striatus</i>
Yellow Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus sinensis</i>
Black Stork	<i>Ciconia nigra</i>
Black-necked Stork	<i>Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus</i>

Greater Adjutant	<i>Leptoptilos dubius</i>
Black-headed Jay	<i>Garrulus lanceolatus</i>
Red-billed Blue Magpie	<i>Urocissa erythrorhyncha</i>
Rufous Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>
Grey Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta formosae</i>
Hume's Groundpecker	<i>Pseudopodoces humilis</i>
Spotted Nutcracker	<i>Nucifraga caryocatactes</i>
House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>
Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>
Ashy Woodswallow	<i>Artamus fuscus</i>
Eurasian Golden-Oriole	<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>
Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina melaschistos</i>
Black-headed Cuckoo-shrike	<i>Coracina melanoptera</i>
Rosy Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus roseus</i>
Small Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus cinnamomeus</i>
Short-billed Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus brevirostris</i>
Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike	<i>Hemipus picatus</i>
White-throated Fantail	<i>Rhipidura albicollis</i>
Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocercus</i>
Ashy Drongo	<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>
White-bellied Drongo	<i>Dicrurus caerulescens</i>
Crow-billed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus annectans</i>
Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus remifer</i>
Black-naped Monarch	<i>Hypothymis azurea</i>
Asian Paradise-Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>
Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
Bohemian Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla garrulus</i>
Brown Dipper	<i>Cinclus pallasii</i>
Blue Rock-Thrush	<i>Monticola solitarius</i>
Pied Thrush	<i>Zoothera wardii</i>
Plain-backed Thrush	<i>Zoothera mollissima</i>
Scaly Thrush	<i>Zoothera dauma</i>
Dark-sided Thrush	<i>Zoothera marginata</i>
Tickell's Thrush	<i>Turdus unicolor</i>
Eurasian Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Chestnut Thrush	<i>Turdus rubrocanus</i>
Kessler's Thrush	<i>Turdus kessleri</i>
Eyebrowed Thrush	<i>Turdus obscurus</i>
Gould's Shortwing	<i>Brachypteryx stellata</i>
Lesser Shortwing	<i>Brachypteryx leucophrys</i>
White-gorgeted Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula monileger</i>
Small Niltava	<i>Niltava macgrigoriae</i>
Blue-throated Flycatcher	<i>Cyornis rubeculoides</i>

Rufous-breasted Bush-Robin	<i>Tarsiger hyperythrus</i>
Indian Robin	<i>Saxicoloides fulicata</i>
Rufous-backed Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus erythronota</i>
Blue-capped Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus caeruleocephalus</i>
White-throated Redstart	<i>Phoenicurus schisticeps</i>
White-capped Redstart	<i>Chaimarrornis leucocephalus</i>
Plumbeous Redstart	<i>Rhyacornis fuliginosus</i>
White-tailed Robin	<i>Cinclidium leucurum</i>
Blue-fronted Robin	<i>Cinclidium frontale</i>
Slaty-backed Forktail	<i>Enicurus schistaceus</i>
Spotted Forktail	<i>Enicurus maculatus</i>
Hodgson's Bushchat	<i>Saxicola insignis</i>
Jerdon's Bushchat	<i>Saxicola jerdoni</i>
Brown Rock- Chat	<i>Cercomela fusca</i>
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Bank Myna	<i>Acridotheres ginginianus</i>
Jungle Myna	<i>Acridotheres fuscus</i>
Hill Myna	<i>Gracula religiosa</i>
Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch	<i>Sitta castanea</i>
Velvet-fronted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta frontalis</i>
Wallcreeper	<i>Tichodroma muraria</i>
Brown-throated Treecreeper	<i>Certhia discolor</i>
Rufous-naped Tit	<i>Periparus rufonuchalis</i>
Grey-crested Tit	<i>Lophophanes dichrous</i>
Green-backed Tit	<i>Parus monticolus</i>
Winter Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
Black-lored Tit	<i>Parus xanthogenys</i>
Yellow-cheeked Tit	<i>Parus spilonotus</i>
Yellow-browed Tit	<i>Baeolophus modestus</i>
Sultan Tit	<i>Baeolophus sultanea</i>
Sand Martin	<i>Riparia riparia</i>
Plain Martin	<i>Riparia paludicola</i>
Eurasian Crag-Martin	<i>Hirundo rupestris</i>
Wire-tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>
Red-rumped Swallow	<i>Hirundo daurica</i>
Streak-throated Swallow	<i>Hirundo fluvicola</i>
White-throated Bulbul	<i>Alophoixus flaveolus</i>
Ashy Bulbul	<i>Hemixos flavala</i>
Mountain Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes maclellandii</i>
Black Bulbul	<i>Hypsipetes leucocephalus</i>
Grey-crowned Prinia	<i>Prinia cinereocapilla</i>
Grey-breasted Prinia	<i>Prinia hodgsonii</i>
Oriental White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>
Chestnut-headed Tesia	<i>Tesia castaneocoronata</i>

Pale-footed Bush-Warbler	<i>Cettia pallidipes</i>
Aberrant Bush-Warbler	<i>Cettia flavolivacea</i>
Lesser Whitethroat	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>
Smoky Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus fuligiventer</i>
Greenish Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus trochiloides</i>
Large-billed Leaf-Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus magnirostris</i>
White-spectacled Warbler	<i>Seicercus affinis</i>
Chestnut-crowned Warbler	<i>Seicercus castaniceps</i>
White-crested Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax leucolophus</i>
Greater Necklaced Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax pectoralis</i>
Rufous-necked Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax ruficollis</i>
Striated Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax striatus</i>
Streaked Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax lineatus</i>
Black-faced Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax affinis</i>
Red-faced Liocichla	<i>Liocichla phoenicea</i>
Abbott's Babbler	<i>Malacocincla abbotti</i>
Puff-throated Babbler	<i>Pellorneum ruficeps</i>
Spot-breasted Scimitar-Babbler	<i>Pomatorhinus erythrocnemis</i>
Slender-billed Scimitar-Babbler	<i>Xiphirhynchus superciliaris</i>
Scaly-breasted Wren-Babbler	<i>Pnoepyga albiventer</i>
Spiny Babbler	<i>Turdoides nipalensis</i>
Common Babbler	<i>Turdoides caudatus</i>
Striated Babbler	<i>Turdoides earlei</i>
Black-headed Shrike-Babbler	<i>Pteruthius rufiventer</i>
Golden-breasted Fulvetta	<i>Alcippe chrysotis</i>
Rufous-winged Fulvetta	<i>Alcippe castaneiceps</i>
Stripe-throated Yuhina	<i>Yuhina gularis</i>
Black-chinned Yuhina	<i>Yuhina nigrimenta</i>
Fire-tailed Myzornis	<i>Myzornis pyrrhoura</i>
Rufous-backed Sibia	<i>Heterophasia annectens</i>
Black-breasted Parrotbill	<i>Paradoxornis flavirostris</i>
Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark	<i>Eremopterix grisea</i>
Crested Lark	<i>Galerida cristata</i>
Thick-billed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum agile</i>
Yellow-bellied Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum melanoxanthum</i>
Ruby-cheeked Sunbird	<i>Anthreptes singalensis</i>
Mrs Gould's Sunbird	<i>Aethopyga gouldiae</i>
Crimson Sunbird	<i>Aethopyga siparaja</i>
Little Spiderhunter	<i>Arachnothera longirostra</i>
Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>
Chestnut-shouldered Petronia	<i>Petronia xanthocollis</i>
Plain-backed Snowfinch	<i>Montifringilla blanfordi</i>
Forest Wagtail	<i>Dendronanthus indicus</i>
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>

Richard's Pipit	<i>Anthus richardi</i>
Blyth's Pipit	<i>Anthus godlewskii</i>
Water Pipit	<i>Anthus spinoletta</i>
Brown Accentor	<i>Prunella fulvescens</i>
Maroon-backed Accentor	<i>Prunella immaculata</i>
Black-breasted Weaver	<i>Ploceus benghalensis</i>
Baya Weaver	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>
Fire-fronted Serin	<i>Serinus pusillus</i>
Spot-winged Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus rhodopeplus</i>
Great Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus rubicilla</i>
Red-fronted Rosefinch	<i>Carpodacus puniceus</i>
Crimson-browed Finch	<i>Pinicola subhimachalus</i>
White-winged Grosbeak	<i>Mycerobas carnipes</i>
Crested Bunting	<i>Melophus lathami</i>
Pine Bunting	<i>Emberiza leucocephalos</i>