



PASTORAL TIMES

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Living Lightly: Pastoral Futures in a changing world
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“You have watches, we have time”
Moussa Ag Asarid
PEOPLE



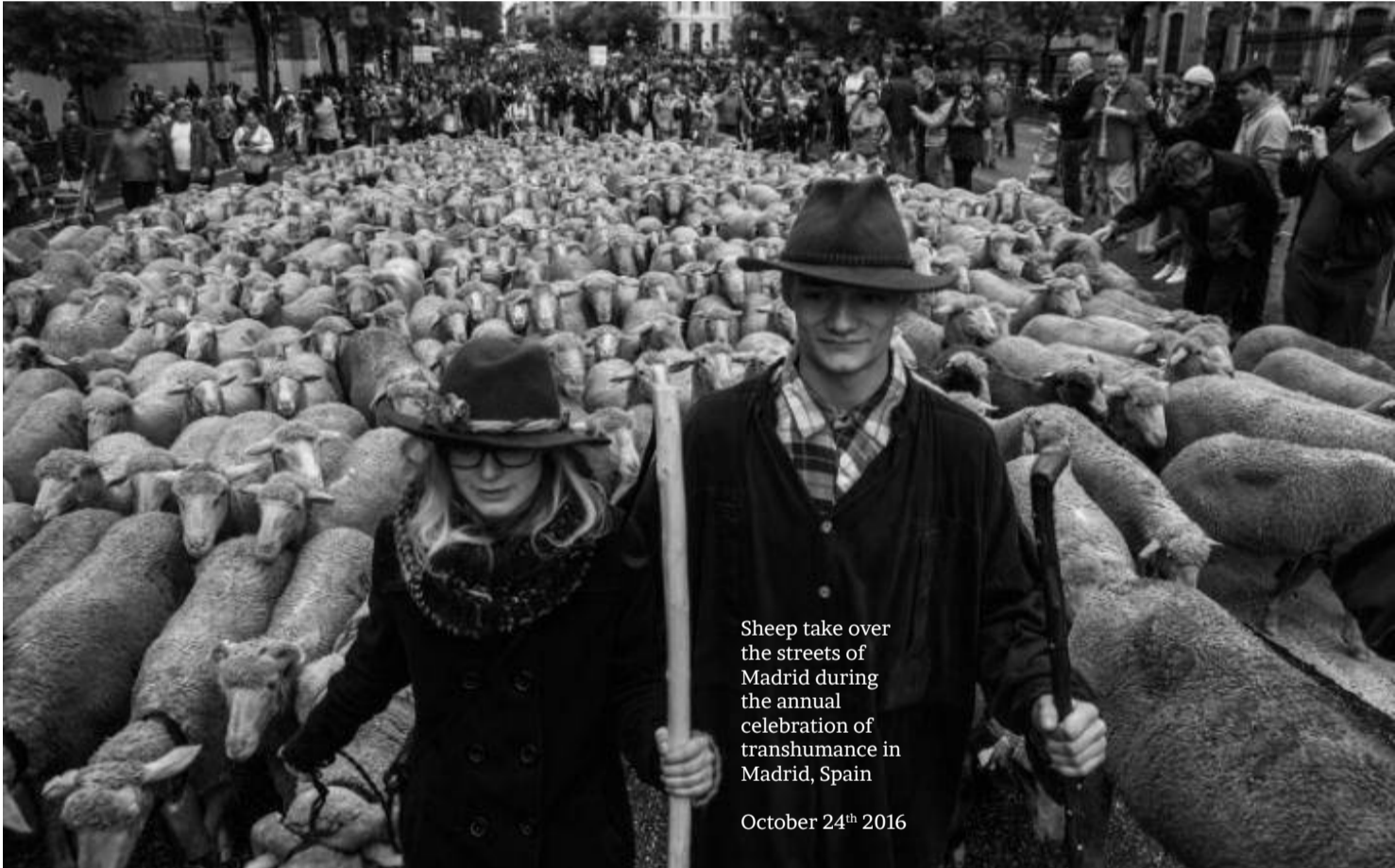
Following Kitchens
Aarati Halbe
FOOD



Shepherds that Worship Wolves
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EDITORIAL



How the Camel got his Hump
Rudyard Kipling
FICTION



MARCOS DEL MAZO—PACIFIC PRESS/LIGHTROCKET/GETTY IMAGES

Animals Get Their Own Highways in Spain

Spain is one of the largest and most biogeographically diverse countries in Europe, lying at the crossroads between Europe and Africa, with conditions ranging from the oceanic north to the semi-arid south-east, and the sub-tropical Canary Islands. Spain has vast areas of low-intensity farming, involving traditional livestock raising on semi-natural pastures, extensive arable systems with long fallow periods, and traditional orchards of olives, almonds and other fruit and nut trees. These types of farming have become known in Europe as “high nature value” farming.

Pastoralism is deeply rooted in Spanish culture and history, and it continues to provide numerous benefits in economic, ecologic, social or cultural terms. The world’s most endangered feline, the Iberian lynx, depends for its hunting grounds on the wooded pastoral landscape (dehesas) maintained by traditional livestock farming.

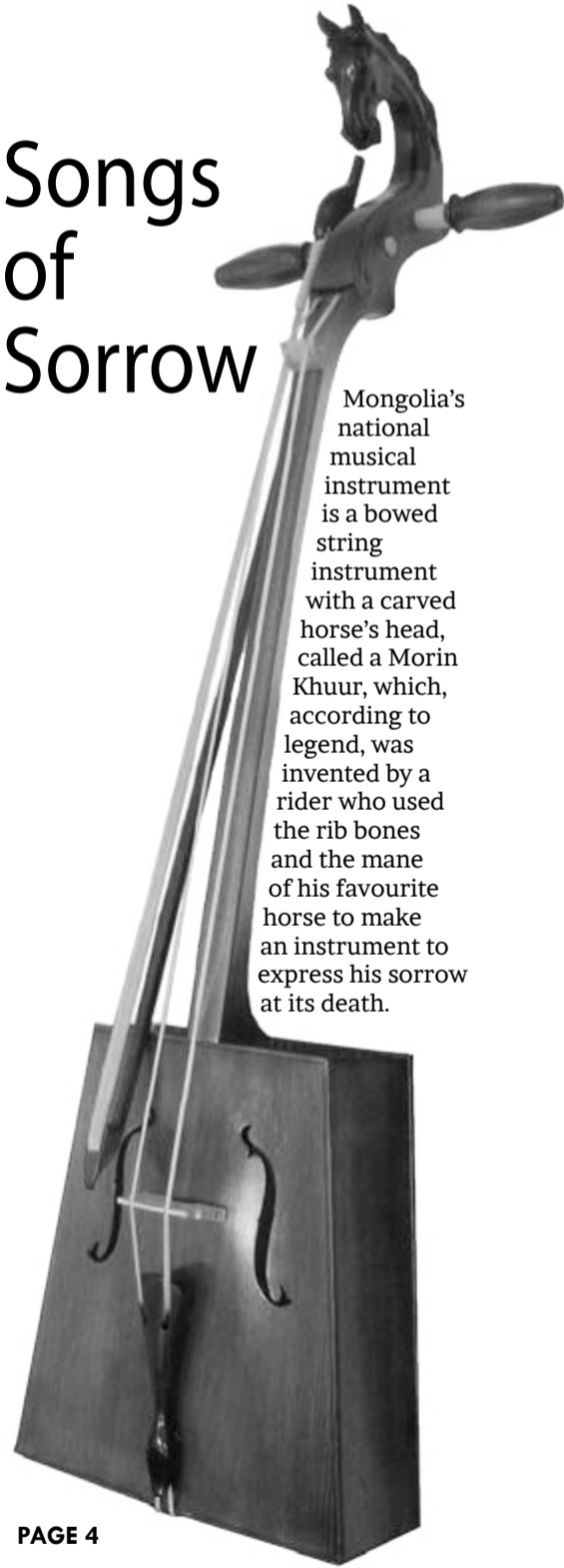
Transhumant pastoralism in Spain, particularly between mountain regions, connects ecosystems with a network of biological corridors in which livestock play the role of vector for native plants. Livestock



improves the fertility of soil through manuring, assist germination through gut scarification, and transport seeds (in their guts and fleece) for distances in excess of 300 km, thereby improving biodiversity

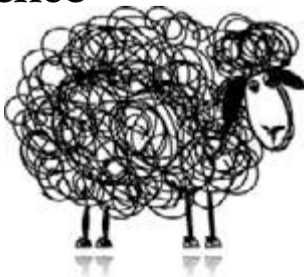
and ecosystem health and integrity in Spain’s rangelands. Recognising the role of pastoralists and pastoralism in improved biodiversity management and conservation, a 1995 Act of Parliament in Spain legitimises the country’s 120,000 km of Cañadas, or transhumance corridors, to ensure that pastoral flocks continue their transhumance and in doing so, continue to preserve the country’s biodiversity.

The country re-established the centuries old tradition of celebrating transhumance in 1994. Since then, thousands of sheep have taken to the streets of Madrid to draw attention to the cause of transhumance in Spain. Though the numbers of participating shepherds have declined, it is still a festival that people look forward to in the late October. On 24th October, 2016, some 2000 odd sheep took to the streets which closed for the rest of the public and were also given the right to graze free for four days following the festival.



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The Silence of the Lambs



PAGE 7



“You Have Watches, We Have Time”

Moussa Ag Assarid

He is the oldest of thirteen children of a nomadic family. Born in northern Mali by 1975, he moved to France to study Management at the University of Montpellier. He chairs the association Ennor France for the education of the nomads, developer of the School of the Desert, home to about fifty children Tuareg in the banks of the River Niger. He is the author of "In the desert there are no traffic jams" a book in which he describes his fascination and puzzlement over the Western world. The following is an interview on October 6, 2011 by Victor M. Amela in Spanish, translated into English by ARIEL Magazine.

Who are the Touareg?

Touareg means 'abandoned', because we are an old nomadic tribe of the desert. We are lonely and proud: masters of the desert, they call us. Our ethnic group is Amazigh (or Berber), and our alphabet is the tifnagh.

How many are there of you?

Approximately three million, the majority still are nomadic. But the population is decreasing. A wise man said it is necessary for a tribe to disappear to realize they existed. I am working to preserve this tribe.

What do they do for a living?

We shepherd camels, goats, sheep, cows and donkeys in an infinite kingdom of silence.

Is the desert really so silent?

If you are on your own in that silence you hear your heart beat. There is no better place to meet yourself.

What memories do you have of your childhood in the desert?

I wake up with the sun. The goats of my father are there. They give us milk and meat, and we take them where there is water and grass. My great-grandfather did it, and my grandfather, and my father, and me. There was nothing else in the world than that, and I was very happy!

Really? It doesn't sound very exciting.

It is. At the age of seven you can go alone away from the compound, and for this you are taught the important things—to smell the air, to listen, to see, to orient with the sun and the stars...and to be guided by the camel if you get lost. He will take you where there is water.

So that world and this one are very different.

There, every little thing gives happiness. Every touch is valuable. We feel great joy just by touching each other, being together. There, nobody dreams of becoming, because everybody already is.

What shocked you most on your first trip to Europe?

I saw people running in the airport. In the desert you only run if a sandstorm is approaching! It scared me, of course.

They were going after their baggage.

Yes, that was it. I also saw signs with naked women. Why this lack of respect for the woman? I wondered. Then at the hotel I saw the first faucet of my life: I saw the water run and wanted to cry.

Because of the waste, the abundance?

Every day of my life had been involved in seeking water. When I see the ornamental fountains here and there, I still feel an intense pain.

CONVERSATION WITH A PASTORALIST BANKER



Mr. Lal Singh was born in 1966 in Kolila, Alwar District (Rajasthan) in the Raika community of pastoralists. He is currently serving as Senior Vice President at Axis Bank and heading the Gujarat circle. He talks to Bhawna Jainini about growing up as a 'Raika' and the status of community in the present times.

most of them have lost their traditional livelihood.

Pastoralists are also not respected and perceived as backward in terms of education and technology.

When did you decide to get into banking?

After Post Graduation in commerce, I appeared for competitive exams and was selected as bank probationary officer in 1993 and the rose to Senior Vice President level in Axis bank.

How does your community perceive your success outside the traditional occupation?

Due to loss of traditional occupation, community is shifting to alternative occupation. Many Raikas have migrated to South Indian cities, Gujarat and Maharashtra to make a living in various occupations. Due to my success in banking, they became confident that a Raikas can become bankers also. I also advocated the concept and helped many Raikas to join banking industry. At present, there are about 100 Raikas who are working in various banks.

Do you still have ties with your community?

I can never forget my community. We founded Raika Education Charitable trust (RECT) to focus on education in the community. We build one hostel in Udaipur where 50 students from pastoral community are staying for graduation and post-graduation studies. Now there is plan to build one hostel in Ahmedabad, which will work as development center for the community.

We are also focusing to preserve our culture. We are starting one project to compile our songs. Another project is to make a movie to show pastoral life and their struggles for which a script is ready. My elder son is a filmmaker and younger son is musician. I am going to ask them to make a movie on the subject so that, outside world can know about our community. I will also request my younger son to create an album of Raika songs.

What can the urban world learn from the pastoralists?

Simple life, compassion, respect for each other and caring for our animal and environment.

What part of your childhood impacted you the most?

Courage, compassion, caring and leadership are important traits of any pastoral family. They helped me to rise in my professional career as a banker.

Was the transition from a nomadic upbringing, to urban sedentary lifestyle difficult?

Not very difficult, as my elder brother was working in Jaipur and he took care of me.

The Pastoralists contribution to the environment and economy is huge but they hardly occupy any space in the mainstream culture. What do you think is the reason for this?

Pastoralists find it difficult to graze their livestock these days due to closure of forests and modernization of agriculture. Farmers and pastoralists relationships have broken down, there is no interdependence anymore. Pastoralists haven't been able to adapt to the fast changing outside world. The animal assets are declining and

LIVING LIGHTLY

Artist on the Move

★ ★ JO BERTINI ★ ★

Deserts are often considered to be inhospitable but for Jo Bertini, no place feels like home more than a desert. A desert is a like a pot of gold for her, and she has been on the move in deserts in India and Australia.

We are pleased to present these gorgeous artworks, which are inspired by the time she spent with pastoralists in Gujarat and Rajasthan

3rd December 2016

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AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION

Shepherds that Worship Wolves

By Ilse Köhler-Rollefson

I am currently visiting the shepherding communities of the Deccan Plateau to see how the efforts by our partner NGOs to develop a Biocultural Protocol are coming along. I have the best possible guides: Nilkanth Mama, a leader of the Kuruba shepherd community and Gopikrishna of Mitran Handicrafts who knows the area intimately.

We started in Bagalkot in Karnataka where veterinarian Dr. Bala Athani from the NGO Future Greens is supporting rural communities with access to credit and marketing, as well as animal health care and other services.

In this area two developments are noteworthy: The large number of people who have recently taken up shepherding and the fact that the traditional breed of the area, the Deccani sheep, has almost totally been supplanted by a breed called Yellaga. The first shepherds we met belonged to the Valmyki community who are actually hunter-gatherers (and have the most amazing hunting dogs), but now herd sheep. They pen them overnight on farmers' fields, and during the day graze them on the uncultivated hillocks to which they have free access (Forest Department is not interfering). The lambs are penned during the day and given all kinds of supplementary feed to make them grow fast. By the age of 3-4 months they are already sold, fetching about 4000 Rs on the local market – which supplies the big cities.

One of the interesting topics raised by these shepherds was the role of the wolf. They were concerned that the wolf had disappeared from the area and explained that on every new moon they worship the pen, the wolf and their goddess. When a wolf dies they make a burial for it. And when an infectious disease hits, they leave a lamb in the wilderness to the wolves believing that this will prevent the further spreading of the disease. Without the presence of wolves they felt they had less protection against epidemics. (A recent survey of the wolf population in Karnataka has confirmed the correlation between sheep and wolves, and that shepherds are not a threat to them.) The Yellaga is a hair sheep breed that grows faster than the Deccani wool sheep and has the advantage of not needing to be shorn – a process that is not worthwhile these days when wool prices have hit rock bottom.



Picture of Balumama, a shepherd who lived from 1892 to 1966 and is now worshipped as a folk deity. He is wearing the "kamblī", an all-purpose woven cloth traditionally made from Deccani sheep wool, over his shoulder

“When a wolf dies they make a burial for it. And when an infectious disease hits, they leave a lamb in the wilderness to the wolves believing that this will prevent the further spreading of the disease. Without the presence of wolves they felt they had less protection against epidemics.”

Gir Sisters stand between their cows and lions

By Himanshu Kaushik

A popular poem by Jhaverchand Meghani hails a 14-year-old girl of the Gir forest who protects a calf from a lion, using only a stick and fearlessness. The heroism extolled in the 20th century Gujarati verse, 'Charan Kanya', was displayed on October 9 in real life in Gir when two sisters repulsed a lion attack to save their cows.

Santok Rabari (19) and her younger sister Maiya (18) live in Mendhawas, a hamlet in the Gir sanctuary near Tulshiyam in Amreli district. The sanctuary is the only abode of Asiatic lions. Ten years ago, their father Jehabbhai suffered a paralytic stroke. Since then, the sisters have been taking their cattle to graze in the forest.

When a lion approached their herd, Santok and Maiya stepped between the lion and cattle, holding up their sticks and looking squarely into the lion's eyes, said Mansukh Svagya, the founder of Jal Kranti, an NGO which works for cow welfare and water conservation. "When the lion backtracked, the sisters pressed ahead, forcing the lion to bolt." Svagya said he learnt of the girls' courageous stand from beat guards and local residents.

The article first appeared in The Times of India on October 20th 2016



Striking was also the similarity to the present day rams with the long shaggy hairs on the front part of the body making them look like lions!

In the more fertile parts of Karnataka around Belgaon where the soil is black, the Yellaga has not made that much inroads and there are still some weavers who make the traditional kamblī, the signature blanket of the Kuruba shepherd community.

While the kamblīs used by shepherds today are increasingly made from acrylic, those used for the worship of the local God Beerappa (the first shepherd who was made by God Shiva and who is the ancestor of all Kuruba) definitely need to be made from wool.

Near Kolhapur in Maharashtra we also tracked down the sacred herds of Balumama, a shepherd who died in 1966 but is now worshipped as a folk deity for his services to the rural poor.

Balumama had given his 60 sheep to his community for care taking, and by now his small flock has grown to 25,000 head and is divided into 14



herds that are grazed by volunteers and welcomed by villagers wherever they go, because they are thought to bring good luck and it is an honour to host them. As Gopikrishna emphasized, this is real community conservation of a genetic resource!

The income from this herd has given rise to a huge temple complex where people come to worship from far and near. And these herds are entirely black, they are almost glowing with blackness if that is possible.

Well, all this may sound very spiritual to any non-Indians, so lets get back to hard core economics. My visit yesterday to the flock of Nilkanth Mama that is taken care of by his two sons and one grandson (part-time) taught me a lot. The major income generated from this herd is actually from manure. The farmers pay 1 Rupee (or sometimes up to 2 Rupees) per sheep per night that the herds are penned on their fields. In Nilkanth Mama's herd that amounts to 300 Rupees per night or 9000 Rs per month, an income not to be sneezed at in rural India! And imagine what this practice saves the nation in terms of chemical fertilizer! And how it reduces greenhouse gas emissions, considering that fertilizer production is one of the biggest culprit in climate change!

Finally, I was so happy to see how the pastoralist occupation continues into the next generation! It gave me a little hope for the future.

About the Author

Ilse is a native of Germany but has been partly based in Rajasthan (India) since she met the Raika camel pastoralists during a research fellowship on camel socioeconomics and management systems in 1990/1991. She has more than 100 scientific publications in journals spanning various disciplines and published a number of monographs. Her work was recognised with a Rolex Associate Award for Enterprise in 2002, and the Trophée des femmes de the Fondation Yves Rocher in Germany in 2009.

Securing communal land rights in Kenya

By Judy Kimani and Timothy Njagi

Pastoralist societies around the world are currently facing more pressures on their land than ever before. Contributing to the land pressure, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, Community Land Act 2016 is the stance taken by policy makers who are pursuing policies that have sought to transform pastoralism into sedentary and intensified production systems.

Simply put, stop the migratory and extensive nature of livestock production, which require large sizes of land. In Kenya, after devolution, the demand for individualisation and privatisation on community land has increased as people seek to speculate in land markets and make huge returns by betting on the expanding urbanisation that is expected to follow devolution and development of mega projects, some of which are part of the Kenya Vision 2030 projects. As a result, land available for pastoralists who have maintained the large herds of animal herds has been declining. Similarly, the fragmentation of land in pastoral areas has complicated sustainable use of resources in these areas.

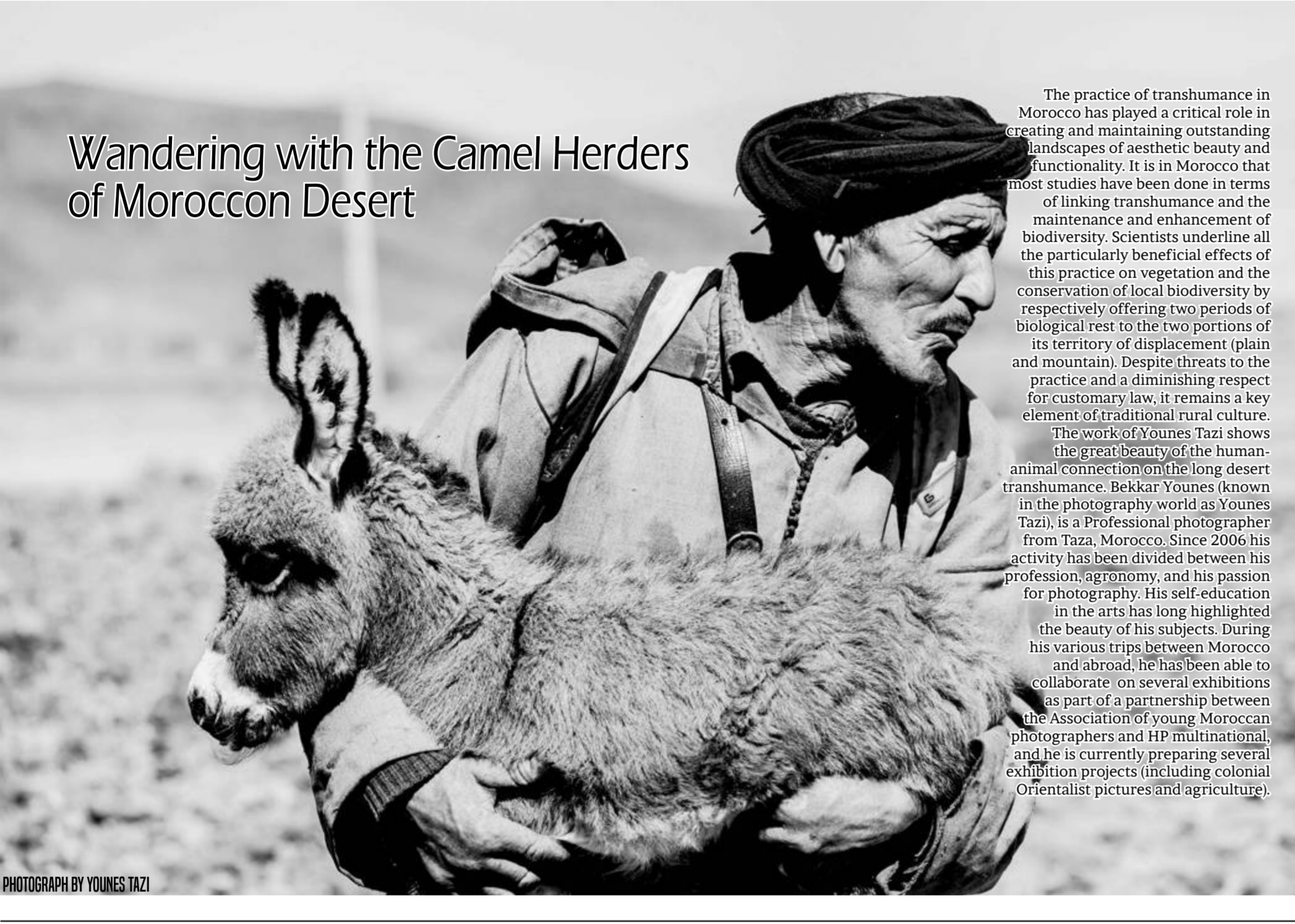
Research now shows that communities are efficient in the use of land, making most of scarce resources found in pastoral areas. They achieve this by adapting their productive activities to the high climate variability and uncertainty of pastoral areas. This makes their production systems to not only be the most suited but also the most sustainable compared to alternative uses.

This make the understanding of how these communities manage their land and utilize land to be critical especially to policy makers who seek to enact policies that have far reaching effects on their livelihoods as well as the sustainability of the ecological environment. Therefore, the enactment of the Community Land Act 2016 provides a fresh start for communities whose land the law will adjudicate. The Act recognises the customary laws among communities and their interest in the land. As regulations for the Act are drafted, priority should be given to strengthen community land governance institutions, to ensure that the objectives of this law are realised.

The article first appeared in www.standardmedia.co.ke

On the Move is a visual celebration of the lives and ecological knowledge of transhumant shepherds and nomadic pastoralists in the Mediterranean. The work of six professional photographers from Tunisia (Wassim Ghoulani), Morocco (Younes Tazi), Spain (Gema Arrugaeta), Greece (Stamos Abatis), Lebanon (Assad Saleh) and Turkey (Baris Koça) is presented in a striking collection of sixty photographs.

On the Move began its journey at the Bardo Museum in Tunis, then moved to the 9e arrondissement in Paris at the Salons Aguado.



PHOTOGRAPH BY YOUNES TAZI

Music

Songs of Sorrow

Story of Morin Khuur, Mongolia’s national instrument

The two-stringed fiddle morin khuur has figured prominently in Mongolia’s nomad culture. String instruments adorned with horse heads are attested to by written sources dating from the Mongol empire of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The fiddle’s significance extends beyond its function as a musical instrument, for it was traditionally an integral part of rituals and everyday activities of the Mongolian nomads.

The design of the morin khuur is closely linked to the all-important cult of the horse. The instrument’s hollow trapezoid-shaped body is attached to a long fretless neck bearing a carved horse head at its extremity. Just below the head, two tuning pegs jut out like ears from either side of the neck. The soundboard is covered with animal skin, and the strings and bow are made of horsehair.

The instrument’s characteristic sound is produced by sliding or stroking the bow against the two strings. Common techniques include

Photography

On the Move

A Photography Exhibition on Transhumant Shepherds and Nomadic Pastoralists in the Mediterranean

Next stop was at the Natural History Museum in Geneva, then in the beautiful Cultural Centre of Byblos, Lebanon. In February 2015 On the Move arrived in Madrid at the Botanical Gardens and then made stops in Asturias and Extremadura – the capital of Spanish transhumance. It then moved to Greece for a stop in the transhumant village of Metsovo before its stay in Athens. At each place people have been touched by the poignant images of these transhumant shepherds and nomads.

It really is an amazing journey!

The practice of transhumance in Morocco has played a critical role in creating and maintaining outstanding landscapes of aesthetic beauty and functionality. It is in Morocco that most studies have been done in terms of linking transhumance and the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity. Scientists underline all the particularly beneficial effects of this practice on vegetation and the conservation of local biodiversity by respectively offering two periods of biological rest to the two portions of its territory of displacement (plain and mountain). Despite threats to the practice and a diminishing respect for customary law, it remains a key element of traditional rural culture.

The work of Younes Tazi shows the great beauty of the human-animal connection on the long desert transhumance. Bekkar Younes (known in the photography world as Younes Tazi), is a Professional photographer from Taza, Morocco. Since 2006 his activity has been divided between his profession, agronomy, and his passion for photography. His self-education in the arts has long highlighted the beauty of his subjects. During his various trips between Morocco and abroad, he has been able to collaborate on several exhibitions as part of a partnership between the Association of young Moroccan photographers and HP multinational, and he is currently preparing several exhibition projects (including colonial Orientalist pictures and agriculture).



SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

“...the morin khuur repertory has retained some tunes (tatlaga) specifically intended to tame animals.”

December 2nd, 2016

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Book Review

A World without a Roof: Stories of Pastoralism from India

by *Sarita Sundar*

illustrated by *Somesh kumar*



Their hopes for future. By contrast, Rabrakhiya and Yellamma are have been trying to to keep their herds together in the face of several challenges. In their stories we feel the despair of being faced with a seemingly insurmountable adversity. Then we find how they surmount them - by seeking inspiration in sufi poetry and my celebrating the small victories.

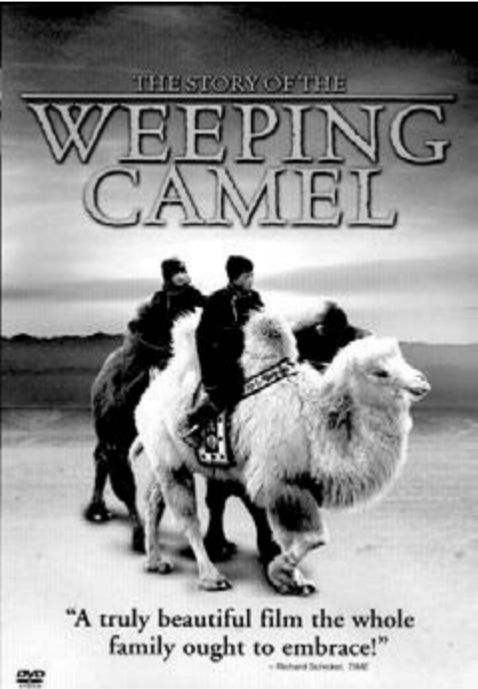
The stories are all in first person and intimate. Kumar’s beautiful illustrations add to the sense of familiarity. For a moment the chaos of our urban lives fall away and we can hear the tinkling of cow bells. When the spell breaks, the voices lingers.

Hardika Dayalani is a bit of a nomad herself. She has lived in Gujarat, Rajasthan and West Bengal. She worked with Hunnarshala Foundation in Bhuj and Shamli. Now she is an MPA candidate at University of Pennsylvania.

Movies

The Story of the Weeping Camel

Directors: Byambasuren Davaa, Luigi Falorni
Writers: Byambasuren Davaa, Batbayar Davgadorj
Cast: Janchiv Ayurzana, Chimed Ohin, Amgaabazar Gonson



Survival is a full-time job for the yurt-dwelling nomads of Mongolia’s Gobi Desert. And it is here that Mongolian documentary filmmaker Byambasuren Davaa focuses her lens on three generations of a Mongolian family who still maintain this ancient lifestyle. The elder generation is represented by grandparents Janchiv and Chimed, who live in the family yurt with their son Ikchee, his wife Ogdo, and their children Dude, Ugna, and Guntee.

Their days are spent tending a modest herd of goats, sheep, and camels, which includes such tasks as processing the dairy products, harvesting the wool, and seeing to the care of the newborn

livestock. And although the rhythm of everyday life seems routine and uneventful, the birth of an unusual camel colt poses a quandary that affects every member of the family.

After the difficult and painful birth of a rare white camel colt, the mother camel rejects it. Without nurturing sustenance from its mother, the frail camel colt cannot thrive. After several days of unsuccessful attempts to get the mother and baby to bond, the family decides that it’s time to engage the services of a shaman violinist to perform a musical bonding ritual. But because the violinist lives in the trading-post village of Aimak Center, the family must entrust their teenage son Dude and his younger brother Ugna to make the long journey on camelback to find him and bring him back to perform the ceremony. But even if the boys succeed in their quest, will his music have the power to soothe the savage breast?

Filed on location in the Inner Mongolian region of Aimak, The Story of the Weeping Camel features a cast of real-life Mongolian nomads with no prior acting experience. The film made the rounds of international film festivals in 2004, where it received an abundance of awards and accolades, and was ultimately nominated for Best Documentary at the 77th Academy Awards.

The Story of the Weeping Camel is a beautiful film, both visually and emotionally. With a touch of mysticism within the context of stunning reality, it creates a fascinating vignette of this vanishing way of life.

Celeste Heiter
Originally written for thingsasian.com

JUST LIKE THAT



Fiction

How The Camel Got His Hump

In the beginning of years, when the world was so new and all, and the Animals were just beginning to work for Man, there was a Camel, and he lived in the middle of a Howling Desert because he did not want to work; and besides, he was a Howler himself. So he ate sticks and thorns and tamarisks and milkweed and prickles, most ‘scruiciating idle; and when anybody spoke to him he said ‘Humph!’ Just ‘Humph!’ and no more.

Presently the Horse came to him on Monday morning, with a saddle on his back and a bit in his mouth, and said, ‘Camel, O Camel, come out and trot like the rest of us.’

‘Humph!’ said the Camel; and the Horse went away and told the Man.

Presently the Dog came to him, with a stick in his mouth, and said, ‘Camel, O Camel, come and fetch and carry like the rest of us.’

‘Humph!’ said the Camel; and the Dog went away and told the Man.

Presently the Ox came to him, with the yoke on his neck and said, ‘Camel, O Camel, come and

the Camel looked at his own reflection in the pool of water.

‘You’ve given the Three extra work ever since Monday morning, all on account of your ‘scruiciating idleness,’ said the Djinn; and he went on thinking Magics, with his chin in his hand.

‘Humph!’ said the Camel.

‘I shouldn’t say that again if I were you,’ said the Djinn; you might say it once too often. Bubbles, I want you to work.’

And the Camel said ‘Humph!’ again; but no sooner had he said it than he saw his back, that he was so proud of, puffing up and puffing up into a great big lolloping hump.

‘Do you see that?’ said the Djinn. ‘That’s your very own hump that you’ve brought upon your very own self by not working. To-day is Thursday, and you’ve done no work since Monday, when the work began. Now you are going to work.’

‘How can I,’ said the Camel, ‘with this hump on my back?’

‘That’s made a-purpose,’ said the Djinn, ‘all because you missed those three days. You will be able to work now for three days without eating, because you can live on your hump; and don’t you ever say I never did anything for you. Come out of the Desert and go to the Three, and behave. Humph yourself!’

And the Camel humphed himself, hump and all, and went away to join the Three. And from that day to this the Camel always wears a hump (we call it ‘hump’ now, not to hurt his feelings); but he has never yet caught up with the three days that he missed at the beginning of the world, and he has never yet learned how to behave.

Rudyard Kipling was one of the most popular writers in the United Kingdom, in both prose and verse, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries

Poetry

हम मालधारी

मुक्त मन और जीवन में मानने वाले
नबीयो, वालीयो, पीर पैगम्बरो
देव अवतारो, और आस्यो के
व्यवसाय केशज और वारिस
मालधारयित ही हमारा मरम, हमारा धर्म
और मालधारयित ही हमारा कर्म

दूध सा दिल, मक्खन सा मन
ठंड, घूप, बारिश या हो पवन सरसर सर
चलते रहे हम गाँव गाँव, नगर नगर
खेत हो या हो पहाड़,
तालाब, झरना, सरिता या सागर
प्रकृति ही हमारे पशु और हमारा घर
किताबी-ज्ज्ञान ना हो हमारे पास
परंतु पशु-ज्ज्ञान में पारंगत
सच्चाई, सादगी, सहष्णिुता, लकड़ी और कामड़ी;
हे हमारा रूग्गार

प्रकृति के पाँच तत्वों के परम रखवाले
सुख में छलकते नही, दुःख: में घबराने नही
अकाल, बाढ़ या हो मंदी
ना होते कभी हम हाताश
मेरा तुम्हारा नही पर हमारा ; ऐसी हमारी मनोवृत्ति
जीयो और जीने दो; जीवदया ही हमारी जीवन-मूली
आद आनाद काल से एक ही हमारी चाल
आगे भी रहेगा हमारा यही ढंग और यही ताल।

By Kaladhar Mutwa
Teacher, Writer, Sindhi Expert
Ghorewali, Banni, Kutch

Translated from Gujarati to Hindi by Uday Jain



What’s in Your Kitchen?

Finding Condiments in Moving Kitchens

By Aarati Halbe

I have this thing with condiments.

Take my fridge for example. Recently I realized I had five different kinds of jam in there! I wish I could say this is an irregular development but it isn't. When I was in graduate school I had five kinds of mustard barbecue, honey, extra spicy, whole grain and regular and three kinds of hot sauce. The variety just seems necessary and I can't pick a favourite! The rest of my kitchen, while it doesn't quite match my condiment obsession, is a similar exercise in excess. I revel in it, and I'm unlikely to change my ways any time soon, but I have to ask sometimes is this really necessary?

This past winter, I spent some time following migrating buffalo herders around the district. The drought had pushed them out of the grasslands they usually live in, and so we went where they went, trying to work out the why how when and where of temporary migrations. While we were at it, I found myself photographing kitchens.

“Those migratory kitchens were marvelous. Some people build small shelves, others use sacks strung between trees to hold their potatoes and onions and garlic. There is always a tree (whether on migration or not) that holds upturned milk cans while they dry.”

I like seeing how people organize their kitchens. What goes where? What takes priority? How many kinds of biscuits are in the snack stash? Also very important, which spices do you cook with often enough that they make it into your masala dabba? But those are urban kitchens. I've not yet worked out the guiding rules for rural kitchens (or more specifically, the many rural kitchens in Kachchh that I have been lucky enough to poke around in), but I have a few observations knocking around my head, and this moment of questioning the volume of my condiment stash seems like a good time to share them.

You don't need a lot to turn out a good meal. Those migration kitchens were marvellous. Some people build small shelves, others use sacks strung between trees to hold their potatoes and onions and garlic. There is always a tree (whether on migration or not) that holds upturned milk cans while they dry. The kitchen is always a

“In buffalo country, you always consume at least two dairy products with each meal.”

designated space, and it always has a boundary of some sort. Even if you can't see it, you'll sense it. While on migration, the women didn't always come along. Mostly, a few men moved out with the herds and while they were away, they handled their own cooking. Each person has their own speciality. “Abdullah makes better wheat rotis,” one man told me, “but only I handle the bajra.”

The first time I stayed the night in a village in northern Kachchh, I watched in fascination as my host pressed each ball of her chapati dough into a flat disk, and then deftly pleated the edges into the centre before folding it in on itself twice and then rolling it out. I have never underestimated the layers in the rotis I've eaten out there since. I thought the trick was in the rolling but I was off by a mile.

My offers to help in the kitchen are usually firmly and politely declined. And in fact, my skills are useless there! I can't chop vegetables without a cutting board. I haven't a clue how to light a fire. They already churned the milk earlier. My attempts to roll out rotis (a skill I have yet to learn properly, let alone master) have made some women laugh till they cry. I like to swap notes on favourite spices though, and I've learned that there is one universal task that bridges the skill gap. These days, my route in is to go straight for the garlic.



In February I stayed a few days with a family of seven and on one of those nights I peeled at least fifty little cloves of garlic for the potatoes we were cooking. Garlic goes in mostly everything and it usually goes in whole. As far as I can tell, it is only smashed when making chutney. Earlier this year, a coworker and I were asked to stay for lunch during a field visit. It was summer, and just so hot out, so my coworker asked them to keep it simple no need to sweat it out over a fire on our account. What followed was one of the most memorable meals I've had here. A simple combination – rotis and yogurt topped with garlic chutney. Chhaas on the side. In buffalo country, you always consume at least two dairy products with each meal.

Red Chilli and Garlic Chutney

Makes about ½ a cup

Ingredients

- 1 large head of garlic
- 13-15 dried red chillies
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp cumin powder
- ¼ cup vegetable oil

Method

1. Put the garlic, salt and cumin in your mortar and pestle and smash to a paste.
2. Set the garlic paste aside. Stem the chillies, break them into pieces and crush them to a paste with the mortar and pestle. Be warned that this takes time and can be frustrating. At the end, there should be the same volume of crushed chilli as of garlic.
3. Combine the chilli and garlic pastes and mix together well. Transfer into a heatproof bowl or jar.
4. In a small pan, heat the oil until a chilli seed sputters when tossed in. Carefully pour it over the chilli garlic paste and stir it in.
5. Set it aside to cool. Later, add it proudly to your shelf of condiments. Eat it all.



Aarati spent three years wandering around Kachchh trying to decide which livestock she loved best (the camels won). She likes books, crafts and collecting good stories - especially when recipes are attached!

I asked the woman we were visiting for a recipe immediately and she gave it to me happily. It was

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Dates: 4th, 6th and 8th December
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Anne Bruntse is a Danish/Kenyan agronomist specializing in Organic farming, including dairying and camel cheese making. She has run a dairy on her farm in Kenya for more than 20 years and worked as a consultant for a variety of government programmes and non-government organisations.



Butter Churned in Goats Stomach

PT Correspondent

In July this year we spent over 10 days in Changthan in Ladakh. It was our second day we were just getting to know the landscape, a Changpa family lovingly invited us in their tent. We spent the entire morning in the tent sipping endless servings of the 'butter tea' just after Lunch the lady of the house started to make butter. She poured curd in a large bag which looked like made of leather and started rolling it. Very soon we came to know he bag was actually goat stomach. It was fun, everyone took turns to shake it back and forth. When the butter was ready, we got to taste it. Being a vegetarian, for a few seconds the idea of tasting butter churned in goat stomach was revolting. But it turned out to be the most delicious butter, melting immediately leaving a burst of flavour, perfectly balanced - neither sweet and nor acidic. They believe that unlike machine made butter, this has softer texture and better taste. The leftover liquid was boiled and strained to yield cheese. This cheese is sun dried and stored for winters. Interestingly they consume more butter and cheese than fresh milk!!



SOURCE: MONIKA AGGARWAL

December 2nd, 2016

Abhishek Ghoshal

“Bhagwan jaane kya ashubh chhupa hua hai wahan” (God knows what evil is hiding there), Kishenlal Negi, the leader of a group of migratory herders based in the Pin valley, in the district of Lahaul and Spiti told me with a sigh. It was early August 2014, and I was in a remote sub-division of the district in Himachal Pradesh, surveying wild goats and vegetation for my doctoral research in wildlife biology. Negi, like many other herders, took his livestock grazing to the high mountains in the region during the summer months of July and August, and brought them to lower hills in the Shimla and Solan districts during winters.

Negi was telling me of a rumour: that the Shinsa, a small stream that flows through a high Himalayan pasture, had fallen under an evil spell, and that the pasture was killing herders’ sheep. He claimed he had had a direct encounter with the sinister pasture.

“Three years back, I decided to move my flock”, roughly 400 sheep and an almost equal number of Goats—from a pasture near the Bhaba pass to the Shinsa, deep inside Ensa valley,” Negi said. “I had been grazing them near Bhaba pass for about ten years. But the pasture had become very crowded and my flock was not growing well. I heard the Shinsa had no herders around it. So I made an arrangement with the villagers of Tailing” the closest settlement to the pasture.

“One of them did not survive, and the other one was traumatised. The donkey that died was his close friend. It was difficult to handle the surviving donkey. He simply wouldn’t move. He would just stand like a buddhu and stare blankly at the surroundings. I sensed something was wrong. Some evil was working.”

He paused to light a beedi, and then continued. “On the way, two of my donkeys carrying rations fell into the Pin river from the footbridge just before Tailing. One of them did not survive, and the other one was traumatised. The donkey that died was his close friend. It was difficult to handle the surviving donkey. He simply wouldn’t move. He would just stand like a buddhu and stare blankly at the surroundings. I sensed something was wrong. Some evil was working.”

He asked his beedi before going on. “We

Biting Cold for Pashmina

By Richard Mahapatra

The pristine beauty of the Changthang region in Ladakh is marred by the stench of death that hangs over it. In the past three months, thousands of changra goats, whose cold-shielding wool, six times finer than human hair, is used to weave the famed pashmina shawls, have died because of heavy snowfall.

News of sporadic deaths came in the first week of February from the inaccessible transit settlements of the nomadic Changpas who rear changra goats. Before the information could reach the state headquarters in Srinagar, there were more deaths. As per the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), 25,000 changra goats died in February and March, putting livelihoods of the Changpas at risk.

Read the full story here
<http://www.downtoearth.org.in/coverage/biting-cold-for-pashmina-40887>



KISHENLAL NEGI (SECOND FROM RIGHT) SHARED HIS EXPERIENCE OF HIS SHEEPS FALLING ILL

The Silence of the Lambs

A Mysterious Himalayan Pasture That Kills Only Sheep

reached Shinsa somehow. The area looked very dry, and difficult to negotiate with my flock. We had to cross water many times, and get past precarious, steep cliffs. Once we made it to the upper pasture, everything went fine for about two weeks.”

The beedi went out. He flicked it away. “Then, about 15 of my sheep fell ill. They started vomiting frequently. They ate less and ultimately stopped foraging completely. Within a matter of two or three days”—here he paused for a moment—“they died.”

This was the first time I heard a detailed account of the “evil” of the pasture. I began asking questions.

“Is there any particular time during summer when sheep die?” He wasn't sure.

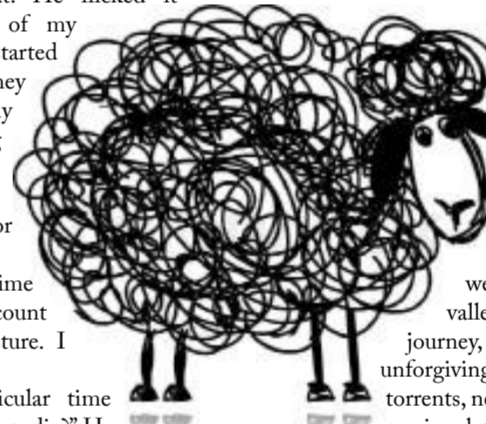
“Do the dead sheep belong to a particular age group?” I asked.

“Two kids died, along with roughly ten adults,” he told me.

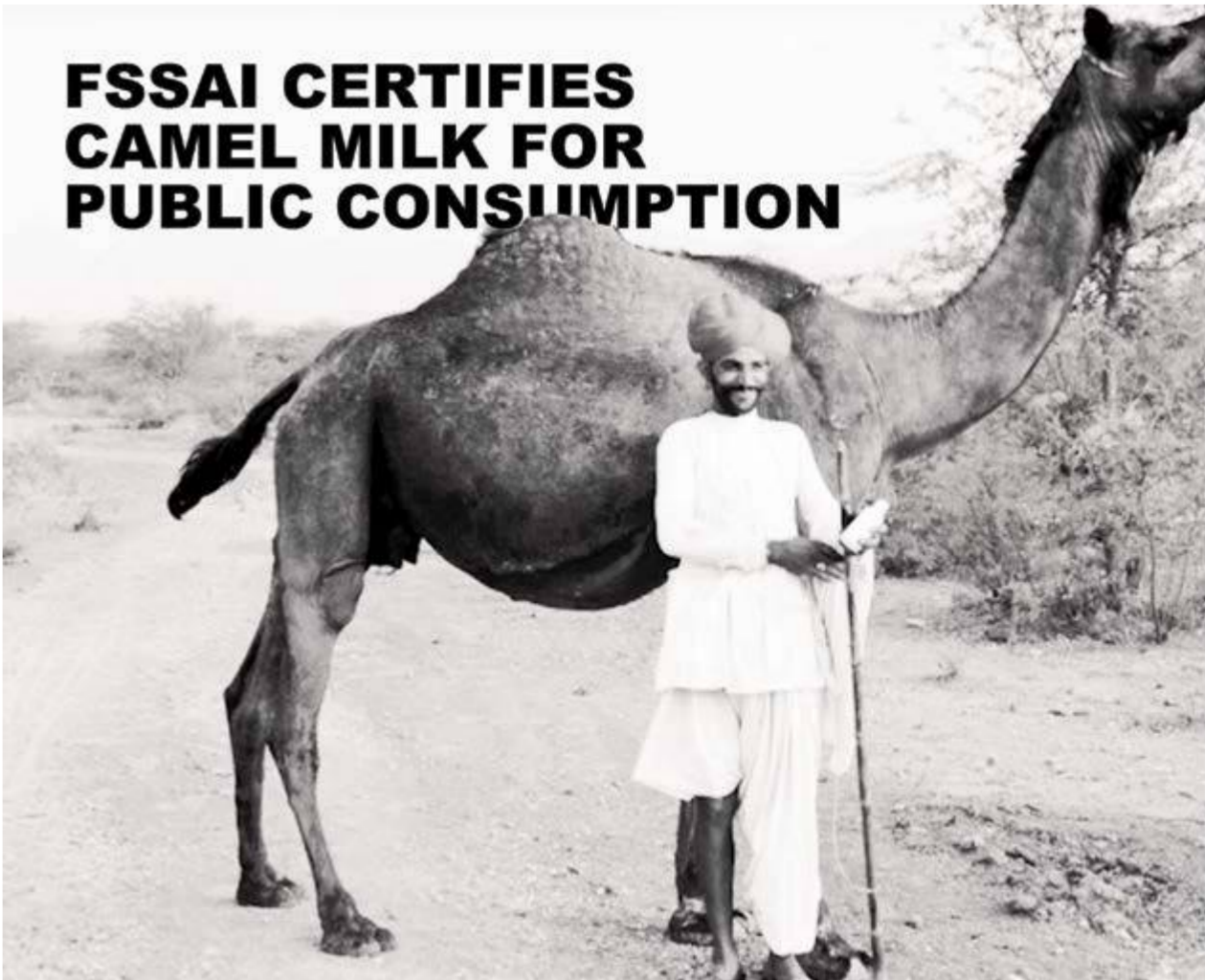
“Is it only males? Or females too?” “Both males and females.”

None of Negi’s goats, however, showed any signs of distress from grazing on the pasture.

Intrigued, I decided to visit the area where Negi had set up camp. Three days later, and with a few local helpers, I began the two-day trek to the Shinsa from Tailing. Lush fields planted with green and black peas, punctuated by patches of golden barley, welcomed us into the Ensa valley. On the second day of the journey, the terrain gradually turned unforgiving. We crossed gushing torrents, near-vertical slopes, and even an ice bridge, to reach the pasture, which stands at about 4,600 metres above sea level, by noon. We walked across the undulating pasture for about half an hour to reach Negi’s



FSSAI CERTIFIES CAMEL MILK FOR PUBLIC CONSUMPTION



former camp.

In Tailing, I had asked several villagers if there were any poisonous plants on the pasture. They told me there were none. And they were probably right. In the roughly 33-square-kilometre valley, we studied various plant species. We did not find any unusual or poisonous plants in the area.

A highly plausible explanation for the deaths, a theory I could not verify, is that they resulted from a seasonal accumulation of one or more secondary compounds in a plant. The concentrations of different secondary compounds in plants peak at different times in a year. These chemicals might turn an otherwise palatable plant toxic for a certain periods. But, even if this explanation is true, why were only sheep affected?

I posed the question to Gopal S Rawat, an expert on Himalayan vegetation and the dean of the faculty of wildlife sciences at the Wildlife Institute of India, in Dehradun. In an email, he told me that digestive abilities can vary among sheep and goats:

“In Greater Himalaya, over consumption of Strobilanthes wallichii”, a local plant more commonly known as kandali- “especially in bud condition is known to have mass mortality of sheep (not of goats),” he wrote.

“Otherwise, this plant is nutritious and not toxic. It has been proven that goats are much more adaptive and versatile in their ability to digest toxic plants. Future research would require

“We crossed gushing torrents, near-vertical slopes, and even an ice bridge, to reach the pasture, which stands at about 4,600 metres above sea level, by noon. We walked across the undulating pasture for about half an hour to reach Negi’s former camp.”

a lot more intensive interviews of the herders followed by food habits of goats and sheep.”

With our limited time and resources, we could not find out which compounds in which plant, or plants, might have caused the sheep deaths. Perhaps a larger team that samples the pasture’s vegetation across the seasons may have better luck.

Negi, however, has already found a solution to his problem. Last summer, he made an arrangement with a fellow herder in another part of the Pin valley. He temporarily exchanged his sheep with his friend’s goats, and at the end of the grazing season got them back again. The pasture claimed no sheep that year.

Art & Photo Exhibits

The varied colors of pastoralism have attracted artists from different walks of life. The exhibits will present the lands of Dhangars, the Gaddis, the Kutchi maldharis, and the Van Gujjars through the lenses of celebrated photographers such as Micheal Benanav, Christina Noble, and Kalyan Varma.

Jo Bertini, an eminent artist from Australia, has on the move and has been living and moving amidst camels for the last two decades. She has drawn the hues of pastoral lives in Rajasthan and Kutch on embroidered cloth and these works will be launched at the exhibition.

School Workshops

One of the objectives of the exhibition is to unlock the world of pastoralism in India for young hearts and minds. Flow India, an organization which works with schools has been commissioned to deliver ten workshops which will introduce school students and young adults (13-16 years) to the subject of pastoralism and inspire them to engage deeply with the subject.

Daastangoi

Dastan-e-Khanabadosh, is a story of nomadic pastoralists and the settled world. It follows the trails and trials of a neglected people, a forgotten way of life; told in a forgotten style of storytelling. Like the herder following the herd, storyteller Ankit Chadha has followed the herders in Gujarat, Uttarakhand and Rajasthan, to bring us their tales of living lightly on this earth.

2nd, 9th & 15th December, 2016
7:00 pm onwards

Curator’s Words

Sushma Iyengar

‘A roti if you don’t turn, will burn.
Horse tied to a place will loose its pace,
A leaf stuck to the soil will rot,
Knowledge that does not travel will shrivel’
So we stay moving with our herds..

It is the powerful simplicity of what Jaisingkaka said to me some years ago that carried the seed for this exhibition. A Rabari from Kutch, he has herded his animals for more than 45 years, walking more than 3000 kms each year, across India’s belly from the western tip of India to the edges of Orissa. Like him, millions of pastoralists roam the ever shrinking pastures of India, even as they continue to tread lightly on this land. And they carry with them compelling tales of living and herding, even as everything seems to be working against them! These stories too needed to move on and touch many of our settled and frenetic lives.

Breed Narrative

At the heart of the exhibition lies a set of 4 films that have been shot in Kutch and aims to transport viewers to the heart of landscapes of Kutch and give a glimpse of pastoralism as it exists in Kutch. These films focus on the absorbing relationships between maldharis, animals, land, and amongst one another.

Film Screenings

The art of Pastoralism, pastoral breeds, and communities have inspired many artists to produce outstanding cinematic work over the years. Sanjay Barnela, a renowned filmmaker and educator has curated a selection of films that presents a peek into pastoralism in regions across the world. Six of these films from this selection will be screened for public viewing during the exhibition on pastoralism while the others will be available for sale at the site.

10th, 12th 13th 14th, 16th, 17th December 2016
6:00 pm onwards

Beginner’s Book

The exhibition launches ‘A World Without a Roof, Stories of Pastoralism from India’. With its evocative illustrations and lucid narration, the book brings out the essence of pastoralism and pastoral societies. The book has been conceived, penned and visualized by Sarita Sundar, researcher and graphic artist, and illustrated by Somesh Kumar, with inputs from Arvind Lodaya.

Launch on 2nd December 2016

Music & Poetry

Artwork, songs, sounds, ideas and poetry come together in this exhibit to create a contemplative immersion in the poetic, philosophic and musical universe of the pastoral communities of Kutch. The poetry of Shah Latif, Mekan Dada, Kabir, Mirabai and other local poets comes alive through songs curated and recorded from the oral traditions of Kutch by Shabnam Virmani and Vipul Rikhi, with art by Roy Varghese.

3rd & 4th December 2016
6:00 pm onwards

Board Game

Fields of View, an organization based in Bangalore, and the curatorial team has developed a game installation that communicates the complexities of pastoral systems and the importance of commons to its players. The game draws on the varied relationships that pastoralists share with their eco system, other occupations, and a range of stakeholders, including the State.

Craft Narrative

Pastoralists in Kutch have been patrons of craftsmen for generations, and the social and economic inter-dependencies between these communities have shaped a unique set of relationships and crafts. The exhibition specifically looks leather artisans, potters, copper bell makers, weavers, embroidery, and block printers.



Pastoral Food & Workshop

Food is one of the most visible and accessible elements of any culture. The Pastoral Food Store offers the traditional Maldhari thali at lunch and dinner time, and the Banni Mawa, a popular dessert item from Kutch, will be available throughout the day.

Camel Milk Cheesemaking Workshop
4th, 6th, and 8th December 2016
11:00 am to 6:00 pm



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