Every year, the nomadic Gujjar and Bakkarwal communities migrate to the upper reaches of the Kashmir valley in summer. Gujjars are buffalo herders and Bakkarwals are keepers of sheep and goats. They rear their animals, between high and low altitudes, in the Western Himalayas. The Bakkarwal saw turbulent times at the beginning of the year when an eight year old girl from their community was brutally raped and murdered in Kathua, Jammu. Though their fight for justice continues, the children of Bakarwals and Gujjars are now looking towards a brighter future where they won't have to choose between their traditional occupation and education.

Ahead of the annual migration of nomadic Gujjars and Bakkarwal families this year, authorities in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir made arrangements for over two dozen schools to move with them to ensure proper educational facilities for students.

“Ahead of the annual migration of nomadic Gujjar and Bakkarwal families this year, authorities in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir made arrangements for over two dozen schools to move with them to ensure proper educational facilities for students.”

“These schools were provided 45 teachers for ensuring education in higher reaches during the annual migration in Kashmir,” an official spokesman said. He said district development commissioner, Rajouri, Shahid Iqbal Choudhary finalized the plan at a meeting of senior officers from various departments and heads of migratory schools along with staff.

The annual migration of nomadic Gujjars and Bakkarwal families began end of April this year. Choudhary directed that books and uniform were also provided to students before the migration.

Apart from educational aids, the department also provided sports equipment and first aid kits for each migratory school.

A comprehensive plan for self-defence training was also discussed and finalized. The students have been provided scholarship by the Tribal Affairs Department, the spokesman said.

He said the Chief Education Officer was directed to regularly monitor attendance in migratory schools during the period and it was impressed upon the heads of schools to hold mandatory parent-teacher meetings twice a month during the migration period.

The article is adapted from the story first reported by The Better India. It can be read on the link below:

https://www.thebetterindia.com/137952/mobile-schools-kashmir-gujjar-bakherwal-migration/
The World Nomad Games dubbed as the ‘Olympics for Nomads’ are the quintessence of nomadic spirit and strength. This year, over 2000 athletes and performers from 82 countries came together to celebrate and champion the global movement of ethno sports and culture.

The biennial games were held in the first week of September for the third time in the town of Cholpon Ata in Eastern Kyrgyzstan. Cholpon Ata lies on the Northern shore of the second largest saline lake Issyk-Kul which means ‘warm lake’ because it never freezes even though surrounded by snow covered peaks. This region is historically significant, Issyk-Kul Lake being a stopover on the Silk Road.

Kyrgyzstan is a mountainous country with little scope for agriculture. It is said that there was a time when all Kyrgyz were nomadic and semi nomadic pastoralists, which changed with the Soviet era. One of the main purposes of the games is for the revival and preservation of the region’s nomadic culture.

The entire week was a grand spectacle of heroism, dexterity, and inexhaustible physical and mental agility. Each day was an experience bouncing across multiple venues and discovering the spirit of games. The ethno village set up in the meadows of Kyrchyn gorge (40 kms from Cholpon Ata) evokes special memories of beautiful horses, yaks, camel, eagles and falcons; innumerable theatrical, musical, and dance performances, men and women in colourful costumes randomly dancing and singing, musical instruments I have never seen; art installations of nomad tools and instruments, an ethno-bazaar for buying memories and so much more.

Kok Boru

Kok Boru is undeniably the highlight of the Games, and easily the most dangerous game I have ever seen. Insane actually! It combines elements of polo, football and rugby. Players on horses wrestle and jostle with their opponents to take possession of a headless, 30 kilogram fresh carcass of goat, which they then hold onto as they gallop towards the end of the field, with the hope of throwing it into a round goal the ‘taikazan’. It gets rough and ruthless; Kok Boru is definitely not for faint hearted. The winning team gets to eat the goat. It is not uncommon for wolves to attack herds belonging to nomadic shepherds. To protect their livestock, shepherds hunted wolves. It is believed that nomadic shepherds eventually developed Kok Boru (Blue Wolf) to pass the time while returning to camp with the prized dead wolf. Now the wolf is replaced with a headless carcass of a goat. Kok Boru is the cultural symbol of sport in Central Asia, and the national sport of Afghanistan where it is called Buzkashi (literally goat grabbing).

It needs strength to lift the goat off the ground, hold it, and gallop towards the goal. Some of the players could not even pick it off the ground.

Musical performance at the games

The Kyrgyz hospitality and generosity was at its best in the hundreds of yurts at the Kyrchyn gorge, offering a range of traditional food and delicacies. There was also a competition for the best decorated Yurt.

Musical performance at the games

Selfie with an eagle was the most done photo op at the games.

By Monika Agarwal

Monika Agarwal is a management graduate who has worked with various national, regional and global alliances on pastoralism.
Ghee: Story of the Superfat we all love

By Aditya Raghavan

I have a dream where, in several kitchens across the country, people have a cabinet dedicated to their coveted collection of ghees. This idea is not revolutionary. Most food lovers today have replaced Dabur honey from their childhood with other honey varieties and are certainly how my mother and grandmother made ghee.

Both these techniques can be traced back to pastoral techniques that are still being practiced today. pastoralists have always had to deal with milk and its byproducts on a daily basis for centuries. They learned that by churning yogurt in a ter-and-feet motion, for a long enough time, and at the right temperature, they could extract butter from it. In households, the warm climate of the tropics necessitated boiling milk to keep it from going bad, and this led to the collection of readily available malai on a daily basis. Malai is different from fresh cream – it cannot be whisked into airy mousses.

Meanwhile in Western Asia and Europe, fresh cream was being separated from raw milk using a crankshaft system that spins milk fast, separating the heavier skimmed milk and allowing the lighter cream to drip down. The development of this mechanical system came from traditions instilled by pastoralists in the cooler climate there. Pastoral herders learned quickly that allowing raw milk to sit overnight in the cold would result in fresh cream rising to the top. This led to a tradition of consuming raw milk and its products – cheeses, creams, crème fraîche and French-style raw milk cultured butter (beurre au lait cru).

The key difference here is that we have always struggled to separate fat from milk, whether it is by the laborious churning of yogurt or by collecting small portions of malai. This struggle has inadvertently led to a far superior flavour. In both cases, fermentation plays a necessary role in developing and nurturing those flavours of the land and releasing microorganisms that add depth and character to the ghee.

Malai ghee has a gentle fermented dairy flavour on a backbone of notes of toffee that come about by caramelisation of the residual sugars in malai. This nutty, brown-butter flavour is a joy to enjoy in a tadka. With yogurt ghee, the content of sugars is reduced to a minimum, which results in a nuttier, more caramelised texture. Malai ghee, on the other hand, has a gentle sweetness that is reminiscent of fresh cream.

Malai ghee has a far superior flavour. In both cases, fermentation plays a necessary role in developing and nurturing those flavours of the land and releasing microorganisms that add depth and character to the ghee.

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By Arvind Lodaya & Nishita Chheda

Maldharin & Unt Gyani

Why are they angry with us?

Because we’re shortening lives.

Ah, let’s hurry and get out of their way then...

Randi 500m, the traffic creeps to a crawl...

Ah, we don’t want them any farther without oil.

Paradigm: 2018
Coping with the real world: Animal Intelligence versus Artificial Intelligence

By Ilse Köhler-Rollefson

A large proportion of humanity now spends much of its day in the virtual world, hooked onto computers or smartphones, answering emails, reading news in the internet, watching movies, or playing computer games. We press buttons instead of engaging in physical activity. In our way, our body has already become superfluous. But the next trend is just around the corner, or at least being talked about, our body and our brain are expected to take over not only many of our daily chores but also to be entrusted with analysing complex situations and huge data-sets to make ‘better’ decisions than humans with their limited computing abilities.

 Indeed, the world has become so complex that probably no human can any longer fully understand the connections between the different components of our multi-layered social and natural environment. Scientists develop computer models to predict the consequences of climate change and the impacts of various degrees of temperature rise. But have they really integrated all eventualities and factors into their models? Almost all scientists are highly specialized, locked into their mental silos and few of them are able to see the forest, rather than only trees, or minute parts of the trees.

Compare that with pastoralists: Day in, day out, they are coping with the real world. They know how to read “nature” and how to interpret the signs and signals sent out by the non-human components of our eco-system. They notice changes in the abundance of birds, insects, and plants, in weather patterns, in soil conditions, in the health of their herds, analysing their observations and hypothesizing on cause and effect.

In managing their interaction with the real world, pastoralists often rely on animal intelligence, piggy-backing on the instincts of their herd animals. It tends to be the animals that give the signals for migration to start. The buffaloes of the Van Gujars become restless when it is time to move up to the alpine pastures from the Himalayan foothills, the sheep of the Rebari in Rajasthan’s Godwar area can hardly be stopped from walking southwards at the time of Diwali when local pastures have dried up. The camels of the Thar Desert follow the clouds — they know where rain has fallen and cannot be prevented from racing off into that direction.

Animals also self-medicate and purposefully seek out and eat specific plants that can remedy their health problems. When they need the help of the herders, these make a diagnosis and provide traditional treatments based on etho-veterinary knowledge, in the absence of lab tests and computer print-outs of blood values.

Handling the environment is not just a question of animal instinct, but also of their learned behaviour — based on their own experience and that of their mothers and older relatives which plants are healthy and which to avoid. Transferring camels from one environment to another — for instance from the arid Thar Desert to the lush Aravalli Hills with their different types of vegetation is fraught with problems because they do not know how to forage in the new place — it takes months for them to learn.

The hill shepherds of Britain make use of “hefting” to keep flocks of sheep on particular stretches of common land without fencing. Lambs learn from their mothers where optimal grazing and shelter can be found throughout the year.

In pastoralist systems, the animals are respected partners, not just objects. The connection between people and their herds or flocks usually goes back many generations. For herd animals, social behaviour is more important than individual performance, and pastoralists have an excellent relationship with their animals for this quality. Contrast this with the scientific approach to animal selection which ignores social characteristics, as well as complex aspects like resilience, focusing only on physical characteristics and output. Selection is based on very specific ‘genomic’ characteristics at the DNA level, rather than at the animal as a whole. Will genomic selection consider all aspects necessary for breeding vigorous animals that can also deal with climate change and less than optimal feed resources? So far scientific selection in its focus on a small number of performance characteristics has driven an incremental narrowing of the gene pool, while pastoralists are the ones that have, until now, ensured diversity — of genetic resources, of production systems, of products. And diversity is the foundation of much needed resilience.

We need pastoralist production systems in which animals are respected and their intelligence is valued much more than industrial precision agriculture in which animals are reduced to mechanical input-output devices. My bet is that the former will outlast the latter!

“The buffaloes of the Van Gujars become restless when it is time to move up to the alpine pastures from the Himalayan foothills, the sheep of the Rebari in Rajasthan’s Godwar area can hardly be stopped from walking southwards at the time of Diwali when local pastures have dried up. The camels of the Thar Desert follow the clouds.”

The Kumbhalgarh Camel Dairy

By Ilse Köhler-Rollefson

India’s camel population is plummeting rapidly, down from over one million in the late 1980s to about 200,000 currently. This development is due to loss of its transport function and lack of appreciation for its food potential, among other factors. The endeavour by the Rajasthan government to save it by declaring the camel “state animal” only made the situation worse. Although there have been frequent announcement by government cooperatives about their intentions to support camel dairying, these plans still have to materialise.

Because of the dire situation, the Kumbhalgarh micro-camel dairy was recently set up on the stretch of common land without fencing. Lambs learn from their mothers where optimal grazing and shelter can be found throughout the year. Hills with their different types of vegetation is necessary for breeding vigorous animals that can also deal with climate change and less than optimal feed resources! So far scientific selection in its focus on a small number of performance characteristics has driven an incremental narrowing of the gene pool, while pastoralists are the ones that have, until now, ensured diversity — of genetic resources, of production systems, of products. And diversity is the foundation of much needed resilience.

Call for papers

Living Lightly: Pastoralism in a Changing World
Pune, India, February 15th-16th, 2019

The first edition of the Living Lightly: Pastoralism in a Changing World conference took place in New Delhi in late 2016 on the sidelines of the Living Lightly exhibition. The second edition of the conference is scheduled for the 15th-16th February 2019, to be held in Pune, Maharashtra.

While the broad theme of the conference remains the same, we are inviting presentations by young scholars including advanced graduate student research, recent PhDs or fresh work by young faculty. We invite abstracts of papers from anywhere in the world, as long as the research itself has been carried out in India.

Partial support for travel within the country can be provided.

The conference is a collaborative effort by Ambedkar University Delhi (http://www.aud.ac.in/index.html); Centre for Pastoralism (http://pastoralism.org.in); Institut de Recherche pour le développement (https://en.ird.fr/); and Indian School of Business (https://www.isb.edu). Each of these institutions is represented by an individual on the organising committee, as listed below. Please reach out to any of us for clarifications.

Abstracts may be submitted via https://goo.gl/q5nuEV
Deadline: 10 December 2018.

Organising Committee:
Ashwini Chhirmi, ISB (ashwini.Chhirmi@isb.edu)
Rohit Negi, AUD (rohit.aud.ac.in)
Vasant Saberwal, IIP (vasant@pastoralism.org.in)
Matthieu Salpeteur, IRD (matthieu.salpeteur@ird.fr)

More information at www.camelcharisma.com
Pastoralists may have delayed the formation of the Sahara desert by half a millennium

By Brooks Hays

According to a new climate model, the Sahara desert should have formed 500 years earlier than it did. The influence of hunter-gatherers and pastoralists may explain the delay in desertification.

The Sahara only became the desert it’s known as today some 5,500 years ago. Some 8,000 years ago, the band stretching across North Africa was green, home to diverse vegetation and populations of hunter-gatherers. Changes in the tilt of Earth’s orbital axis cause paths of seasonal monsoons in Africa to shift. These shifts explain why the Sahara alternates between dry and wet across long time-scales. Scientists have previously argued over-exploitation and degradation by humans accelerated the Sahara’s last transition from grassland to desert, but the latest findings -- published this week in the journal Nature Communications -- suggest the opposite is true.

"The possibility that humans could have had a stabilizing influence on the environment has significant implications," Chris Brierley, a geographer at the University College London, said in a news release. "It is likely that strategies used by early pastoralists, helping to maintain an open ecosystem, does not support the scenario of over-exploitation." Brierley said. "Our study shows that increasing human population and sustainable pastoralism did not accelerate and may have even delayed -- the decline of the Green Sahara." Around 1,100 years before the Sahara turned to desert, the region experienced an increase in the number of pastoralists, nomadic or semi-nomadic cattle-herders. Research suggests the Sahara’s herders were adept at adapting to environmental change and managing scarce natural resources.

"The spread of domestic animals across the Sahara occurred at a time of increasing climatic instability, and yet, these pastoralist populations thrived," King’s College London researcher Katie Manning said. "It is likely that strategies used by contemporary traditional herders, such as seasonal movement and selective grazing, were also used by these early pastoralists, helping to maintain an otherwise deteriorating ecosystem."

With field schools in Kenya, FAO teaches techniques to combat drought

To strengthen resilience in the Horn of Africa against natural hazards like drought, which can lead to cattle losses and increased food insecurity, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is supporting pastoralists in northeastern Kenya’s Mandera County to grow pasture for livestock.

"Like any other crop, pasture can be grown, nurtured and stored for use in times of need, allowing for a great rate of recovery of degraded land when needed," said Paul Opio, FAO livestock and pastoralism expert.

Composed of arid and semi-arid areas, Mandera County forms part of a cross-border region between Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia where pastoralist communities are highly vulnerable to recurrent droughts that degrade rangelands and reduce access to traditional grazing areas. In Mandera, hands-on learning methods for producing, managing and utilizing fodder are taught in a 'school without walls,' where groups of 20 to 30 men, women and youth learn through experiential and participatory sessions.

"The fact that societies practicing ‘pastoralism’ persisted in this region for so long and invested both economically and ideologically in the local landscape, does not support the scenario of over-exploitation."

"Women are able to produce, store and sell hay bales and are, therefore, no longer dependent on men for most of their upkeep," explained Shangayar Hassan Mohamed.

"As part of a partnership programme on drought resilience, FAO, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and others have formed a team of Eco-Agro Pastoral Field Schools (APFS) across five project sites."

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"The spread of domestic animals across the Sahara occurred at a time of increasing climatic instability, and yet, these pastoralist populations thrived," King’s College London researcher Katie Manning said. "It is likely that strategies used by contemporary traditional herders, such as seasonal movement and selective grazing, were also used by these early pastoralists, helping to maintain an otherwise deteriorating ecosystem."

Not initially part of community decision-making, the vice-chair of one group pointed out that breaking traditional barriers have benefited women and youth.

"Women are able to produce, store and sell hay bales and are, therefore, no longer dependent on men for most of their upkeep," explained Shangayar Hassan Mohamed.

"As part of a partnership programme on drought resilience, FAO, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and others have formed a team of Eco-Agro Pastoral Field Schools (APFS) across five project sites."

This story has been adapted from the article that appeared in The European Sting. https://www.europeanscience.org/2018/11/23/humans-delayed-the-formation-of-the-sahara-desert-by-half-a-millennium/
The Brokpa of West Kameng and Tawang districts in Arunachal Pradesh are a community of reclusive herders of the Monpa tribe. They are nomadic, move around in fixed patterns, and live in the mountains at altitudes ranging from 9,000 to 15,000 feet. They migrate to lower areas during the long winters from October to April, and move to the higher ranges during the summer and rainy seasons, from May to September.

One morning in November 2016, I started on a journey to Thembang village in West Kameng. Thembang is located at an altitude of around 7,500 feet. It is an entirely Monpa village of some 60 occupied houses. The nearest town, Dirang, is 26 kilometres away.

The next day I went to Lagam, a winter settlement of a group of Brokpa. To reach Lagam, located at 8,100 feet, I walked for around 11 kilometres for more than eight hours through dense forest. When I reached at 6 p.m., Pem Tsering, a 27-year-old Brokpa herdsman, welcomed me with a warm a smile.

The next day morning, I saw that Lagam is actually a tiny winter-time hamlet of Brokpa pastoralists. It has one small monastery. Around 40-45 people live here in 8 to 10 stone-and-bamboo houses with tin roofs. In November, the hamlet is full as the herders descend to this lower pastureland. From May to September, Lagam stays mostly empty as the young herders move out with their herds of yaks and horses to higher ground, such as Mago village. The elders usually stay back.

Mago, at 11,800 feet, is located along the disputed McMahon Line which demarcates northeast India and Tibet. To reach Mago in the summers, the Brokpa walk through mountain ranges and passes that are even higher – their route includes Lagam, Thungri, Chang La, Nyang, Potok, Lurthim, and then Mago.

Others can reach the area by road only from Tawang. Indian nationals from outside the region are allowed to stay here for just one night with special permission from the Indian Army. Because of the border dispute, even Brokpa who migrate to Mago have to carry government-issued identity cards.

The daily lives of Brokpa centre around simple rhythms. Their major source of income is yak. They collect its milk for cheese and butter, and sell these items in the local market. A barter system also exists within the community. “They exchange yak and milk products with the people staying in lowland areas, where agriculture is the prime occupation,” says Bapu Pema Wang, a Monpa from Thembang village, and a project officer with WWF-India’s Western Arunachal Landscape Programme. “We (his clan, the Bapu) barter trade with them; we exchange our maize, barley, buckwheat and dry red chilly for their butter, churpi and yak meat. Basically, they depend on us for food and we depend on them for food.”

Later this year, by mid-October, the Brokpa will make the descent from their summer pasture. “We walk through the jungle, find resources for grazing and firewood from the jungle,” Pem says. “This jungle is our mother.”

Old women generally do not go for grazing. They stay back in their villages. However, if needed they join their families to help them during summer season.

A fire is always lit in the Brokpa kitchen. It helps them to stay warm during the harsh winters.

A Brokpa man preparing for migration.

The Brokpas mostly eat rice (bought from markets at lower altitudes) and yak meat. They eat only a few vegetables like potatoes because the land here is not fertile enough to cultivate vegetables.

Ritayan Mukherjee is a Kolkata-based photography enthusiast and a PARI (People’s Archive of Rural India) Fellow.
“The Gold-Laden Sheep and the Sacred Mountain” is a film that tells the story of the Eveny, a nomadic reindeer herding community of Siberia. The film was directed by Ridham Janve and stars Arjun, a non-actor, in the lead role. Janve’s decision to use non-actors was a challenge, but he believes it was necessary to capture the simplicity of the mountain life.

The Eveny people have a deep connection with their environment and their reindeer. Janve wanted to capture this connection in his film. He spent time with the Eveny people and observed their daily activities, including their interactions with the reindeer. He noticed that the reindeer were not just animals to them, but were integral to their way of life.

Janve was interested in the relationship between the Eveny people and their environment. He wanted to capture the beauty of the Siberian winter and the harsh conditions that the Eveny people must endure. He used a technique called “walk on camera” to show the audience what the mountains looked like from their point of view.

The film also explores the relationship between the Eveny people and their reindeer. Janve wanted to show how the reindeer are crucial to their survival and how they rely on the Eveny people for their care. He used non-actors to create a sense of authenticity and to show the audience what life is like for the Eveny people.

Janve’s use of non-actors was not without its challenges. He had to train the actors to be comfortable in front of the camera, and he had to make sure that they were not putting on an act for the camera. He also had to make sure that the non-actors were comfortable with each other and with the crew.

Janve’s approach to filmmaking was influenced by Werner Herzog, who is known for his documentaries and films that explore the relationship between humans and the natural world. Herzog’s films often explore the relationship between humans and their environment, and Janve was inspired by this approach.

Janve’s film is a beautiful and moving exploration of the relationship between the Eveny people and their environment. It is a film that shows the importance of preserving our environment and our connection to it.

Recommended Reading:
- “Living with Animals and Reindeer People” by Piers Vitebsky
- “The Gold-Laden Sheep and the Sacred Mountain” by Ridham Janve

Movie Review

D uring a routine technical check before the screening of his film, “The Gold-Laden Sheep and the Sacred Mountain,” director Janve realised there was something wrong with the projection. The visuals appeared darker than what he had originally created. This was during the third screening of the film at the recently concluded festival.

Janve, a 2013 graduate from the National Institute of Design, who worked freelance towards filmmaking, had only two options: to cancel the screening or go ahead with it as it is. He did not consider the first option at all, neither did he want to go ahead with the second option. Rather, he improvised—he reduced the temperature in the auditorium to an extent where it became slightly improvised—he reduced the temperature in the auditorium to an extent where it became slightly chilly to add an effect and elevate the experience of the audience as they watched his Gaddi-dialect movie, set in the Chambal and Kargola hills of Himachal Pradesh.

Improvisation has been his mantra even during the making of the movie. Shooting in the hills came with its own challenges. There were some genuine problems, the most pressing was the lack of resources like electricity to charge electronic devices. Carrying a generator to the high altitudes did not make sense because it would have come with its own cost and challenges. So, he turned to solar power. And then it rained, and the shoot had to be halted.

At the centre of the film is an elderly shepherd Arjun (Bhedpal Arjun Pant) and his Nepali assistant (Lokendra Gurung). As much as the film is about the life of these two on the hills, focusing on their daily drill of taking the sheep and goats to graze and their banter, it also captures the folklore of the area. There is a plane crash in the region, followed by speculation of what may happened to the people and the rumoured gold and silver the plane was loaded with. And then begins Arjun’s adventurous journey.

It was important for Janve to cast people from the area to bring out the simplicity of the elements in the story. While Lokendra, who organises trips in the area, was an easy find, it took him days to find the perfect person to fit the role of the shepherd. Arjun. He had met almost every shepherd in the region, but could not find that one person in whom he could see his character. "The pastures where they take the herds to graze is up the hill, it is quite daunting to climb those. Plus, most of those places are a day apart from each other. Every time we decided that we need to go looking for a shepherd, it was very challenging to climb those. Plus, most of those places are a day apart from each other. "

During one of these treks, the two friends thought that a film could be made on the life of the shepherd. They took two weeks off from their jobs for the film. It was not a script, he says. But a treatment note of sorts. "We kept the script open because we wanted to open as we shot the film."

The first cut of the film was finished in 2018, after which it became a part of the NFDC’s Work in Progress Lab. “The film was seen by some very prominent people there. They shared their experiences and suggestions with us, some of which we incorporated in the film. It was very beneficial because we got noticed. Prior to that, we had no idea who is going to watch the film. We didn’t want to be free which comes with a lot of pressure, or being stuck under a contract with no pressure of a narrative or pace, or having to make it interesting. We didn’t want to make any compromises. When we wanted to stay true to what mountains are,” he says.

He then quotes Werner Herzog, “Walk on foot, learn languages and a craft or trade that has nothing to do with cinema. Filmmaking — like great literature — must have experience of life at its foundation.” The films of Werner Herzog, he says, have had a great influence on him as far as filmmaking style is concerned. “And while we were attempting to make the film, his words were resonating,” says Janve who is originally from Rajasthan and now lives in Goa.

Janve says, he had taken The Gold-Laden Sheep and the Sacred Mountain to film festivals, still discovering his language of filmmaking by venturing into new genres and mediums. One of his next projects would be set in his home state, Rajasthan, close to Udaipur. “It is a psychological thriller with a lot of local people acting in it. But along with a few trained actors, too, this time,” he says. (The article first appeared in The Week on the following link: https://www.theweek.in/film/review/living-with-animals-and-reindeer-people/11033)
Did you know?

Nanda Gaoli is a pastoral community that keeps the Gaoli cattle and the Nagpuri buffalo. They herd their cattle in deep forests of Wardha district in the state of Maharashtra, India.

Herding in the forests comes with many challenges and threats faced by the community and their animals. Tiger attacks are especially common in the region. However, tiger attacks are not a new phenomenon but is just an occupational hazard for which, the Nanda Gaolis have depended on a centuries old tradition. They burn beehives of wild honey bees and feed the ashes, mixed with the fodder to their animals. The community believes that by doing so, whenever a tiger or any other wild animal attacks, the animals unite themselves to form a protective shield around the herder.

The bee hives are burnt just before the monsoons, so that the honey bees rebuild their hives in time to benefit from the monsoonal flower bloom.

Story by Sajal Kulkarni
Illustration by Tapas Upadhyay

Find them out!

How much do you know about breeds of domestic animals in India?

Clues!

1. Buffalo breed named after the grassland in Kutch.
2. Named after a famous lake in Orissa. Milk from the buffalo can last up to 3 days without refrigeration.
3. This breed of sheep came from Spain and is known to give the finest wool.
4. Imported cow breed known for giving up to 22 litres of milk in a day.
5. The exquisite pashmina shawls come from this goat.
6. Hybrid of a yak and domestic cattle, this breed is used in the regions of Spiti and Ladakh.
7. The only breed of black sheep found in India and is used for weaving Gongadi.
8. The breed of pig named after an island in the Indian Ocean.
9. This breed of buffalo is named after its herding tribe that resides in the Nilgiri mountains of Tamil Nadu.
10. First recognised Indian breed of donkey named after a district in Himachal Pradesh.
11. The only breed of camel that swims.