

THE ROSE BOWL



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DSOBS Vision

To foster fraternity amongst Old Boys,
support School, and serve society.

THE ROSE BOWL 
SINCE 1985

NEWSLETTER OF
THE DOON SCHOOL OLD BOYS' SOCIETY

C O N T E N T S

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Vipul Swarup (438 K, 2000) [Digital]

FRONT COVER

Headstand by Mr Gurdial 'Guru' Singh (GU)
on the Summit of Trisul

Photo Courtesy Roy Greenwood (1951),
For Hills to Climb, 2001

BACK COVER

Oberoi House
Photo Courtesy The Doon School Archives

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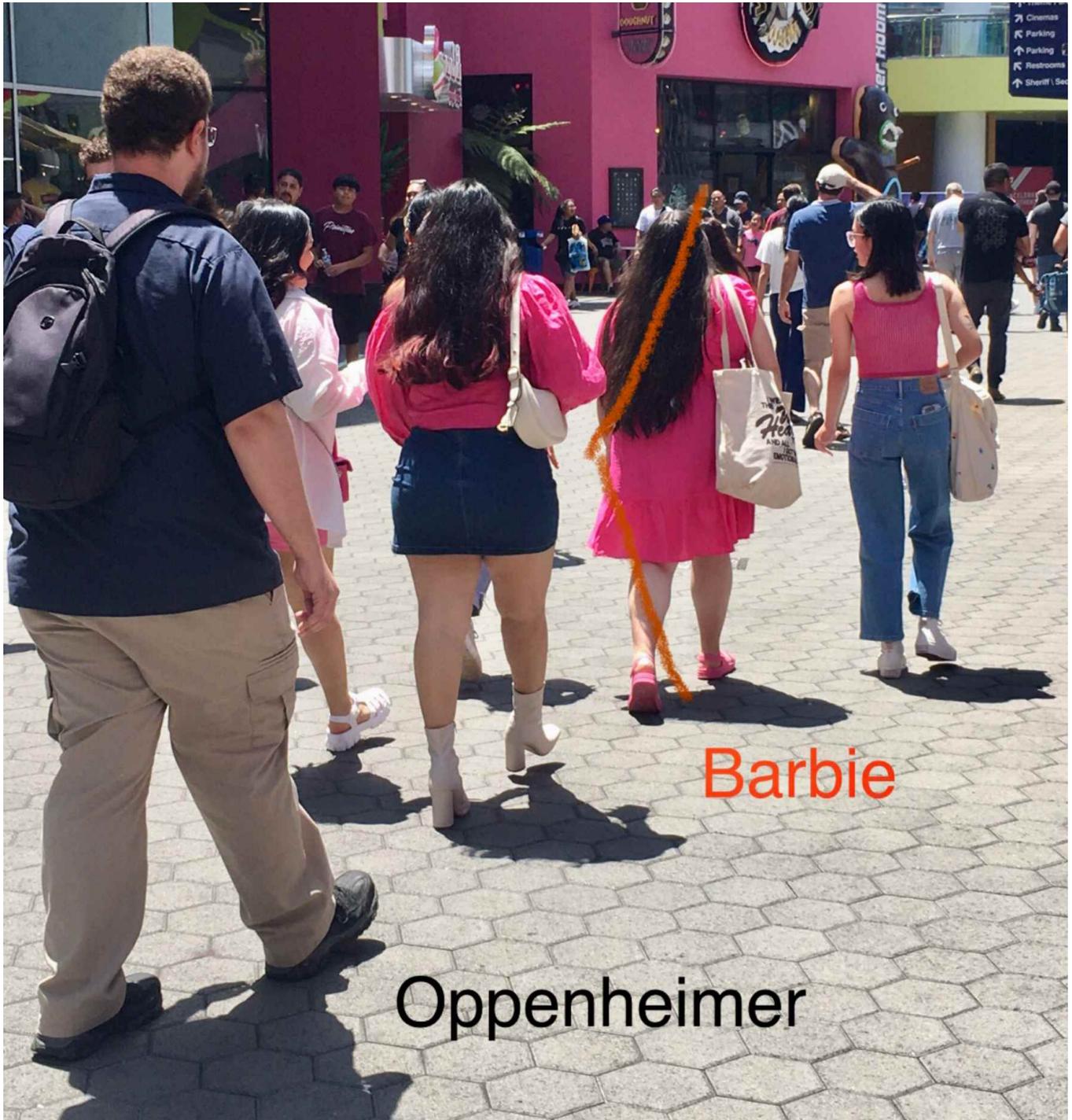
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The Guru of Barbenheimer



Hollywood wisdom

Now that I have your attention, let me explain.

This summer gave rise to something called

“Barbenheimer.” Was it a meme? Was it an offhand internet joke that mothballed into a massive social movement? Was it a portmanteau

of two high profile movies opening on the same weekend because Hollywood, in all its wisdom, calculated that their preferred demographics for Barbie, women, wouldn't watch Oppenheimer, and the men who flocked to that film wouldn't want to watch Barbie.

Why? Because, Hollywood.

So, to prove a point, we all set out to watch both movies on the same day!

For a moment, it was wonderful, the cinemas were full, people were out celebrating the movies, the threat of streaming and the dual strikes that had hung over everything like a, well, radioactive cloud was pushed out of our minds. Men, women, young, old, we were all together, revelling in a grand communal experience.

The one film is about a gifted protagonist leaving the confines of their perfect little world in order to venture out and embark on a hero's journey (why, because, Hollywood), endure an existential crisis,

all to find the essence of what truly lies at the centre of our existence. And the other is about the atom bomb.

Okay, I kid (a little). I guess Barbie is about venturing out into the world, head full of naive, preconceived notions about life, and figuring out that growing "up" is, well, complicated. And, in some ways, Oppenheimer is about the elasticity of time (and, yes, the atom bomb).

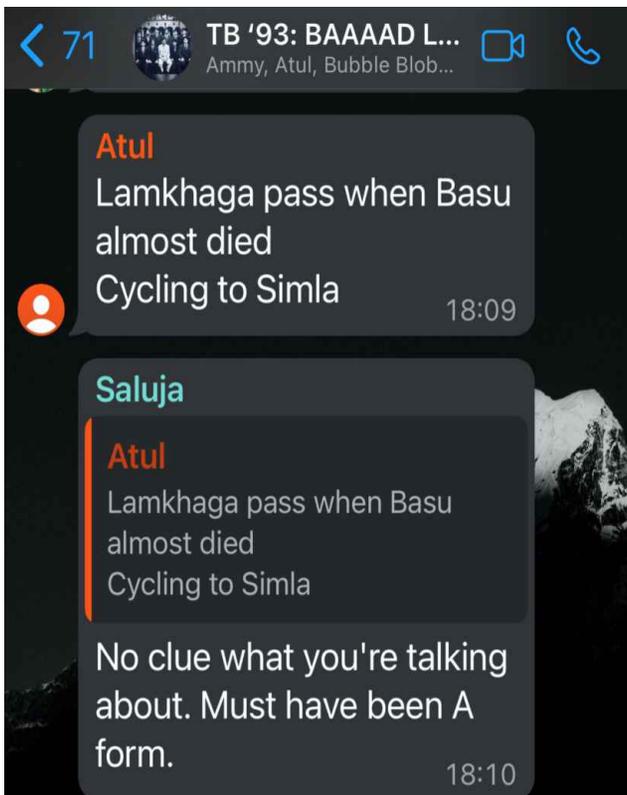
So, one second you're venturing out in the world, climbing mountains, almost dying on the way back, and the next, well, you're at your desk, no longer climbing mountains, and while you may have grown old, you certainly did not grow up. All in the blink of an eye.

Which brings us to the Guru of it all.

We had all heard of Guru, right? Why, well, we were not entirely sure how or why, but the name hung over us from the very beginning, like the whispers of the mountain gods themselves. I think I saw him in School once, someone said, "That's Guru" in the appropriate tone of hushed reverence, I looked, I saw him walk by, I wanted to go and say hello, or at least gaze upon his legendary face, but never screwed up the courage, and then, he was gone. All in the blink of an eye.

And now, all these years later, I think I've finally begun to scratch the surface of Guru, and what made him so special to generations of eager Doscos. His love of swimming, that unfailing memory, that surprising sense of humour, that willingness to go out of his way to help those in his charge, his self-effacement, his love of birds, of flowers, of classical music, of art, of books, and, of course, the mountains.

One second you're vicariously immersed in the world of Guru, and the next you can't help but feel inspired to venture out of the confines of your perfect little world and embark on your hero's journey in your perfectly pink car buoyed by the



Memories of Mid-Terms past



Basu with Anshu Dhar Jayal (407 T, 1993), of the famous Dhar Jayals, mountaineering royalty. Thanks to him and Atul Sabharwal (457 T, 1993), Basu made it down in one piece, barely



Clearly, a man of the mountains

wall-to-wall IMAX soundtrack in your mind and pledge to tackle the mountain that almost got you the last time (what doesn't kill you the first time can only make you stronger). After all, you're never too old to grow up.

Why? Because, Guru.

PS. A special thank you to Guru's nephew, Lt Col

(Retd) Mantaj 'Monty' Singh (204 J, 1969), for his absolutely invaluable assistance. Talk about a self-effacing hero!

PPS. Questions? Comments? Suggestions? Corrections? Articles? Photos? Existential doll and nuclear armament advice? Please email me: BasuRoseBowl@gmail.com

We've Got Mail

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

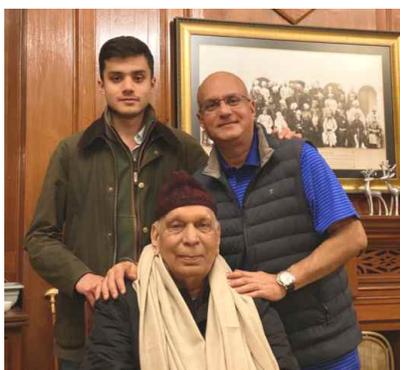
I am delighted to receive a copy of The Rose Bowl online and would like to congratulate you on its excellent get up, its attractive photographs, and the many interesting articles which keep one in touch with Old Boys spread far and wide.

With best wishes,

Srinivas Rao Adige
(62 J, 1953)

Dear Editor,

Here is a picture of three generations of Doscos based in Kotah, Rajasthan, which I thought may be of your interest.



From L-R: Ranvijay Singh (536 K, 2019), Shivraj Singh (244 H, 1958), Rishiraj Singh (636 K, 1988)

FOUNDER'S 2023

We are proud to be a tri-generational Dosco family!

Hopefully, there are many others like us.

Thanking you,

Shivraj Singh
(244 H, 1958)

Dear Editor,

I've been thinking about my dear batchmate **Arunesh 'Moe' Bajaj (238 J, 1965)**. Moe passed away in Dallas in May, 2022.

I had the privilege and pleasure of meeting Moe and the Hall of Fame golfer Ernie Els (I believe Moe was his Financial Advisor) a few years ago at the Delhi Golf Club.

We had a few laughs when I reminded him about his pretensions of being a fast bowler (his runup was longer than Charlie Griffith's). I remember telling him at an Inter House match that he ran faster than he bowled. He jokingly responded "See you at boxing shifts!"

Needless to say, I defended the rest of the match with extreme caution.

Best regards,

Digvijay Singh
(269 K, 1965)

Dear Editor,

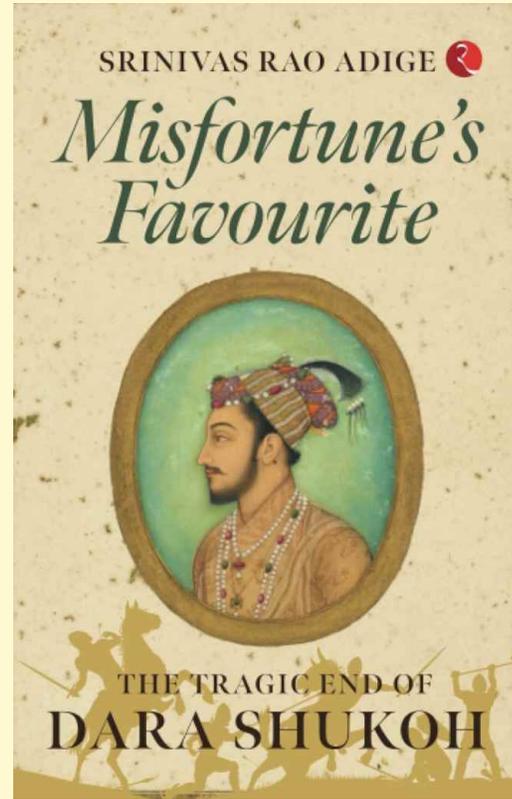
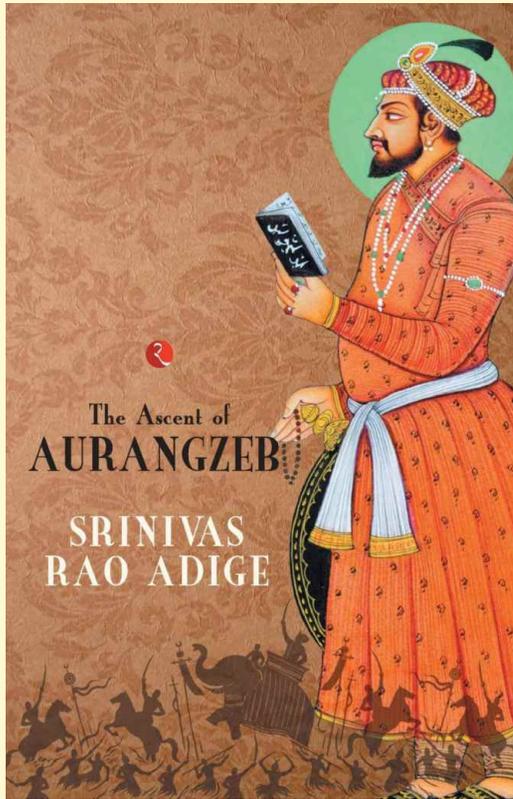
I greatly appreciate the tribute for our good friend, **Ashwan Khanna (593 K, 1980)**. His family were very glad to see it. I was also surprised to see the piece on me. Ashwan had reached out to ask for my bio last year and I had not given it much thought since then. I didn't realise he had submitted it.

Thank you for everything that you are doing for the alumni. The Rose Bowl is a wonderful and very impressive magazine! I know how much work goes into producing something like this, so thank you again for all your hard work!

With my best wishes,

Suneel Kamrani
(594 J, 1980)

Old Boys' News



Srinivas Rao Adige (62 J, 1953) has written two novels, the first of which is titled *Mughal High Noon*, and recounts the struggle for succession to the Mughal Empire between the four sons of the emperor Shah Jahan on receiving the news of the serious illness of their father, which leads to the eventual accession of Aurangzeb to the throne. His second novel is titled *Misfortune's Favourite* and recounts the last year of Dara Shikoh's life, as he attempts to flee the wrath of the emperor. Both novels are available for purchase on Amazon. Best wishes for continued literary success!



The author and his wife, Vasanti.



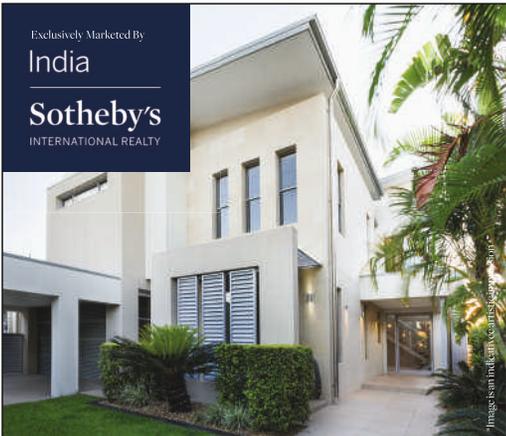
Kavita Prakash (794 T, 1981) has been invited to partner with Sunder Nursery Park in New Delhi. She will be conducting regular nature walks. She recently discovered new flora, including six fruits of the lone Arara Nut tree in the whole area. The tree is listed as vulnerable under the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Congrats to Kavita and many thanks for being such a wonderful ambassador for the natural world!



Fruit from the Arara Nut tree



Fruit from the Arara Nut tree



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Avinash Singh Alag (160 H, 1984) was awarded the National JagranJosh Education Award 2023 in New Delhi, for his work as an Educator. Avinash has been working towards the upliftment of the less privileged through his initiative, Gyanoday. The initiative has supported marginalised children over the past two decades, helping them stand on their feet and teaching them to live with dignity and self-sufficiency. A well deserved honour!



Following an election in Miami, FL, USA, **Amir Singh Pasrich (443 T, 1986)** was elected as the first Asian officer of the Legal Practice Division of the International Bar Association (“IBA”). He took over as Assistant Treasurer of the IBA in January 2023 and is the first member of the Indian Bar to have joined the IBA’s management board this millennium. The International Bar Association represents a majority of lawyers globally, with more than 80,000 individual members, and over 190 bar associations from 170 countries as its members. Congratulations Amir!

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Kaustubh Verma (27 J, 2008) has been promoted to the partnership of his law firm, Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co. He was previously a Principal Associate at the Firm, and is now a Partner. He specialises in private equity and M&A. He continues a strong legal tradition for Old Boys, including Bahram Vakil (372 J, 1974), Founding Partner at AZB & Partners, and Sawant Singh (355 H, 1992), Co-Founding Partner at Phoenix Legal, amongst many others. Wishing Kaustubh all the best!



Anant Gairola (479 J, 1993) recently left his desk job to start a business with his wife, Rashmi. They have taken a franchise for Seniors Helping Seniors, an organisation that employs senior citizens to provide in-home personal care for fellow seniors who want to live at home instead of moving into an assisted living facility. This is a cause they both feel very strongly about, and are excited to help develop holistic pathways to ageing. For more information, please visit www.seniorshelpingseniors.com. All the best with this worthy endeavour!



Future Old Boy, **Shauryajit Singh (472 H, 2026)**, currently in A Form, has been selected to represent Himachal Pradesh in the Junior National Football Tournament. Shauryajit is the son of Chandrajit Singh (600 H, 1988), and the grandson of the Late Ratanjit 'Potte' Singh (218 H, 1956). This is an incredible achievement and we wish Shauryajit all the best!



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Get Excited About the Dosco Card!

Rakesh Kaushik 603 T, 1979

Member, Executive Committee, The DSOBS
and Convenor, Dosco Card Sub-Committee



Rakesh Kaushik excited about his personalised Dosco Card!

Beginning in September 2023, we have started issuing the Dosco Card in a digital format which you can download on your phone and always have it handy when you tap into a wide range of benefits that this card offers to the Dosco community. The information on the card benefits is now also available to you through the WhatsApp Chatbot, “The DSOBS Concierge.” You can also find details of these benefits in The Rose Bowl.

The digital cards are being emailed to you starting with the latest school batches and will be reaching all the batches in the next

few months. You can continue using your physical card until you receive the digital version.

For those tuning in anew, the Dosco Card was put together to bring to the fraternity a range of benefits with select partners across the sectors of Hospitality, F&B, Wellness, Lifestyle, Fashion, Consumer Services, Financial Services, and Healthcare.

These benefits are available to all Doscors and their family members. We encourage you to share these details with your family as they may spot useful things which you may have missed out on (my wife was more than happy to inform me of a benefit package which covers support for all of our home appliances!).

When you actively use the Dosco Card, you don't just take advantage of the benefit it offers but you also rekindle your “Dosco Connect” and support the partners (many of them Doscors themselves) who are keen to engage with the Dosco community and help support the mission of the DSOBS.

We hope to see more and more Doscors keeping their card handy and using it more often. The DSOBS Secretariat will assist should you run into any issues.

The Dosco Card – don't leave Founder's without it!

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The
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Paradise Revisited

Nalin Khanna 563 H, 1980



Golf in paradise at Royal Springs Golf Course, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir

When Junaid Altaf (209 O, 2003), Vice President, The DSOBS, and his brother Owais Altaf (456 O, 2006) first broached the topic of extending The DSOBS Srinagar Golf Weekend to other parts of the Kashmir Valley, I thought they were living in a “Fool’s Paradise.” They were fifty percent correct,

with “Paradise” being spot on! Taking the words of Rahul Kohli (81 J, 1975) to heart, that The Doon School reflects a certain legacy, I realised that we had stumbled on to paradise and legacy, by adding Pahalgam to the Srinagar stop.



Lunch at Srinagar Golf Club House

This year, the third DSOBS Kashmir Golf Weekend was held from August 25th to 27th. Junaid and Owais set the ball rolling by putting together a delightful evening at Karan Mahal. Karan Mahal has a Dosco connection, being the Home of Dr Karan Singh (259 K, 1945) and an open house for his relatives, including the 1970s Hyderabad (A) Housemaster Mr RD Singh. It's located on the foot of the Shankaracharya Temple, overlooking Dal Lake. Junaid and Owais could not have found a more picturesque spot to host the dinner. We had attendees of all ages. Right from Manjit Singh (374 K, 1964), Himant 'Bundle Kapur (15 H, 1965), to Aditya Goel (113 H, 2020). A motley group of first timers to Kashmir included Abhishek Pande (99 K, 2013) and his brother Ashish (284 K, 2017), who unsuccessfully tried to extend their stay beyond Srinagar.

The golf next morning, at Royal Springs Golf Course, included four full groups. The heavy overnight rain did not prove to be a dampener on the score sheet. Divij Narain (453 K, 2000) led the scoreboard with a brilliant five over par followed by Ranjit Chaudhri (176 K, 1984) with a seven over par. This was quite fantastic given the wet conditions and very heavy fairways. At the other end of the spectrum (in terms of golf scores only) were Hemant Aggarwal (64 H, 1983) and Amir Pasrich (443 T, 1986). They seem to have been all over the course with mud stains on their shoes, clubs, etc! Clearly, they were checking out the large number of viewpoints on the course, whose hillside setting is akin to the Newlands Cricket Ground, at the base of Table Mountain, Cape Town, South Africa. Lunch followed the golf, and the rounds of Divij and Ranjit were rewarded with sleeves of golf



Dinner at Karan Mahal



Teeing off at the Lidder Valley Golf Course, Pahalgam



Checking out the Pahalgam course

balls donated generously by Akash 'Sotheby' Puri (230 T, 1998). Fittingly, The DSOBS President Sameer Dhingra (452 T, 1987) gave the closing touch whilst Dipika Kapur, the wife of the senior most golfer present (Himant Kapur), was on hand to give away the prizes.

From a planned group of eight golfers, some with wives, we emerged with a group of 20 to Pahalgam. Naaji Shah (602 K, 2000) joined in as did Nikhil Agarwal (490 O, 2006). Clearly the environment fired up Yash Johri (561 O, 2013) and Rishabh Aggarwal (343 J, 2017) to make swift changes in their travel schedule and head to Pahalgam, instead of returning from Srinagar. An evening of local sufi music by the Aru river was an added incentive. The location of the evening was at a heritage property that once belonged a family of DoscOs who graduated from The Doon School in the 1940s – namely HS 'Hari' Kapur (48 H, 1938), AK 'Nandi' Khanna (99 H, 1942), and SK 'Tishi' Khanna (50 H, 1944). Talk about legacy!

Sunday morning got off to a bright start with 12 of us on the Lidder Valley Golf Course, Pahalgam. The wives – Ratnamala (sister of former DSOBS President Rahul Kohli), Sonia Khanna, Shivani Pasrich, and Shubhra Agarwal joined us on the golf course and walked up the steep slope to the signature Hole 13. This area gives a view of the entire Pahalgam Valley – Aru, Lidder and Sheshnag – now popularly christened the Betaab Valley by Bollywood, after parts of the film Betaab were shot there.

The course was in perfect condition and Ranjit and

Divij both showed us how easy the sport was by shooting scores close to par. Arjun Kapoor (678 H, 1981) turned out to be the “giant killer” as a 20-handicapper – by getting a par on the 600-plus-yard Hole 4, and following that up with another few pars. The rest of us were suitably rewarded with sights of the mountain ranges that surround the golf course. The final killer was the trout that some of us devoured before heading home.

Hopefully, the “Fool’s Paradise” will not be a “Fool’s Errand” next year!



Watching the birdie



Dinner at Pahalgam

Age is No Barrier

The DSOBS in Kanpur

Ashutosh Goyal 392 K, 1986
Secretary, The DSOBS



Old Boys gather in Kanpur, UP

The first ever, perhaps, get-together of The DSOBS was held in Kanpur, UP, on March 24th at the Landmark Hotel. The event was sponsored by Yash Malhotra (05 K, 2014), owner of the Landmark, and curated by Kartikay Garg (196 H, 2016).

The event was a great success and witnessed the active participation of around 50 Old Boys, mostly from Kanpur and other cities of UP, like Lucknow, Allahabad, Varanasi, etc. The Regional Reps for UP (Central) and UP (East) were also in attendance. The President (Sameer Dhingra) and Secretary (yours truly) of The DSOBS were there to interact with the Kanpur Doscors, and to encourage the young and enthusiastic organisers.

Doscors from batches across 1960s to as young as the batch of 2023 were present. Age is no barrier for Doscors to interact, and everyone connected, sharing fond memories, narrating tales, and instances from their time at School and thereafter, and forging new friendships. It was wonderful to see the participation and enthusiasm of Doscors from the millennial batches. Their presence brought in a lot of joie de vivre to the evening.

Yash threw open the doors of YU, his hotel's rooftop bar and restaurant. The gathering filled the bar and spilled over to the beautifully appointed terrace. A live band played throughout the evening; it was eventually taken over by merry Doscors crooning



Old Boys posing with Sameer Dhingra (452 T, 1987), President, The DSOBS (third from left), and Ashutosh Goyal, Secretary, The DSOBS (right)

School songs. There were cocktails named after Houses, and everyone had fun partaking in the flavours of their respective Houses. Sumptuous snacks flowed nonstop, followed by a gastronomic, and quite spectacular, dinner spread.

Special thanks to Yash for graciously playing host and to Kartikay for curating the event. We look forward to having the energised Kanpur DoscOs remain engaged, and hope that get-togethers in Kanpur become a regular feature.



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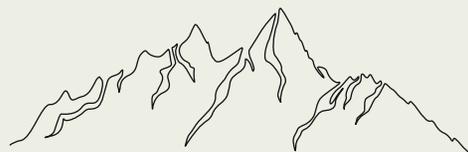
Sameer (second from left) and Ashutosh (third from right) getting ready to enjoy some dessert



Different generations of DoscOs connect

A promotional banner for Burgerama. On the left is a large burger with a sesame seed bun, cheese, and onions. In the center is the Burgerama logo, which features a stylized rocket ship and the text "BURGERAMA™". On the right is another large burger with a sesame seed bun, cheese, pickles, and bacon. Below the logo, the text reads: "BURGERS THAT ARE OUTTA THIS WORLD" and "25% OFF on www.burgerama.in USE CODE DSOBS25".

Celebrating Guru



GURDIAL 'GURU' SINGH (GU)

1924 - 2023



To Guru

Red-vented bulbuls, herons, swifts and sparrows,
 Each well-loved line of Tennyson or Mir,
 Sweet-scented stocks, delphiniums straight as arrows,
 The music of Beethoven or Kabir,

White, dawn-flushed peaks; deep valleys, lakes and passes,
 Each well-spent hour beyond the blackboard's cares,
 Loved once by you, these are, beyond all classes,
 Loved now by us, who are your natural heirs.

Duty aside, you gave us, as housemaster,
 Each well-judged gauge by which to shape our course:
 Acts more than words, and – quieter yet vaster –
 Right over wrong, and kindness over force.

Gentle and stern, teacher and friend, you made us,
 Under your eye, all we might hope or seek.
 Revered in life, your spirit now must aid us –
 Undying, unforgettable, unique.

Vikram Seth (250-J)
 June 2023

June 2023

To Guru

VIKRAM SETH 250 J, 1968

Red-vented bulbuls, herons, swifts and sparrows,
Each well-loved line of Tennyson or Mir,
Sweet-scented stocks, delphiniums straight as arrows,
The music of Beethoven or Kabir,

White, dawn-flushed peaks; deep valleys, lakes and passes,
Each well-spent hour beyond the blackboard's cares,
Loved once by you, these are, beyond all classes,
Loved now by us, who are your natural heirs.

Duty aside, you gave us, as housemaster,
Each well-judged gauge by which to shape our course:
Acts more than words, and – quieter yet vaster –
Right over wrong, and kindness over force.

Gentle and stern, teacher and friend, you made us,
Under your eye, all we might hope or seek.
Reversed in life, your spirit now must aid us –
Undying, unforgettable, unique.



THIS IS HIS LIFE

SUMAN DUBEY 167 J, 1958

Gurdial Singh on a gendarme on the Pumori ridge above Kala Pathar near Everest Base Camp, 1962 Indian Everest Expedition



Editor's Note

This has been reprinted from Himalayan Journal 75, 2020. All photos are courtesy of The Suman Dubey collection unless stated otherwise.



Gurdial Singh (standing) and Major John Dias (in hat), his long time climbing companion, in the Rishi Ganga gorge en route to Nanda Devi and the Sanctuary in 1961, probably his favourite mountain area of the many he explored in his decades of climbing and trekking

***“To See a World in a Grain of Sand and a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the Palm of your Hand and Eternity in an Hour.”***

- William Blake

Guru and John D, as he was often called, were the closest of friends, with a common attitude to climbing, a love of music and poetry, and the sensitivity, in William Blake's lines beloved by both, to see a world in a grain of sand.

On the mid-morning of May 28th, 1962, John Dias and I were in our tents on the South Col of Everest, having earlier seen off the summit party of Gurdial Singh, Mohan Kohli, and Sonam Gyatso on their attempt to reach the top of the world's highest mountain.



Supported by Hari Dang, the legendary Angtharkay and five Sherpas, they had soon become dots slowly making their way up the final pyramid, the support group going on a little ahead to help them to set up camp as high as possible and return before the three made for the summit the following day.

Suddenly, one dot detached itself at about 27,000 ft/8,250m and began to descend. It turned out to be Gurdial, who had decided to return, yielding his place on the summit party to Hari Dang. Few words were exchanged then but he said something about feeling dehydrated and didn't want to be a drag on the summit party.

This was the second Indian Everest expedition. After spending two nights in Camp VII near the site of the Hillary/Tenzing last camp, the three were obliged to turn back from just below the south summit by a combination of weather conditions and slow progress. It was not till 1965 that an Indian expedition succeeded in putting climbers on the summit of Everest – and nine, at that. But this incident reveals something at the core of Gurdial Singh as a mountaineer and a human being.

As he explained much later, reaching the top of Everest held no particular fascination for him, and he had agreed to be on the summit party because the expedition leader, Major John Dias, a close friend and climbing companion of many years, wanted him on it. At 38, he was the oldest and most experienced climbing member of the expedition, fit and capable, well-armed with the endurance and stamina required to reach the top. It would have been fitting climax to the accomplishments of someone who has been described as the first true Indian mountaineer.

This was long before climbing Everest had become a fad, when it was still a very serious endeavour. But Gurdial climbed for pleasure, to enjoy the mountains in the company of friends, to savour the beauty and grandeur of the high ranges, not to find fame or bag summits. On that morning almost sixty years ago, I suspect he just didn't feel completely in tune with the task, and easily shrugged off the prospect of climbing Everest in favour of his younger and far more motivated climbing companion.

Over several decades of climbing and exploring the Himalaya, particularly in Garhwal and Kumaon, there have in fact been many successful ascents by Guru, as he is affectionately known to his friends and the generations of the schoolboys he has taught and inspired. But the journey has been far more noble than

the narrow pursuit of mountain tops. It has been a life of exploration, travelling where few have been before, spending weeks together in remote regions, self-contained, independent and unshackled, on expeditions marked by camaraderie over conquest, refined by an uncommon sensitivity to nature, informed by a deep knowledge of mountain flora and fauna, to the accompaniment of poetry, literature and music. In a world where interests and abilities are narrowing, he has been something of a renaissance man who has lived an enviably full life while passing on his passions to many of the hundreds he mentored at their most impressionable age.

I am fortunate to have been one of them. Guru was already something of a legend when, aged 11 and freshly arrived in the Doon School, I had a choice to make of a mid-term excursion – a biannual tradition that encouraged boys to spend four or five days in the wilderness. Older boys went off on their own, younger boys were shepherded by schoolmasters. At the end of March 1954, I joined a group led by Guru and another master to climb Nag Tibba, slightly under 10,000 ft [3,022m] a thickly forested hill across the Aglar valley north of Mussoorie. The experience was unforgettable. We walked from Mussoorie along the Chamba path, down to the Aglar, exhilarated by views of the Bandarpunch range looming above. High 20,000 ft summits were identified; tales of adventure were recounted; names of those who had trodden on them were uttered in hushed awe. These were mountains that Doon School masters and former students had come to be identified with.

Sleeping on the floor of the Forest Rest House in Devalsari, in a magnificent deodar forest, we made do with thin sweaters and rough blankets. Summit day started before dawn. Shod in rubber-soled sports shoes more suited to the playing field than rough trails, we walked on snow for the first time and felt like we'd accomplished an Himalayan ascent when we reached the tall wooden “*jhanda*”, or flagpole, erected on the summit. We lost our way on the return, almost got benighted, and sang songs in the dark to keep our spirits up. It was my first “mountain” and I was bitten by the bug – but entries in the visitor's book at the Forest Rest House revealed that it was already a regular feature in Guru's life; he had climbed Nag Tibba numerous times with students, friends, and fellow schoolmasters.

Gurdial Singh owes his love of the high mountains to the Doon School, specifically the English masters who taught there. Among them were Jack Gibson, John Martyn and notably RL Holdsworth, an accomplished



*Base Camp, c12,000 ft on Bandarpunch, 1950. Tenzing seated left most and Guru next to Jack Gibson seated in the middle
Photo Credit: Jack Gibson*

sportsman, skier and mountaineer who made the first ascent of Kamet [7,756m] with Frank Smythe in 1931, and famously smoked a pipe on the summit.

Mountains had played no part in his Guru's early life, spent in the plains of the Punjab. Born on New Year's day 1924 in a village in Gurdaspur district, into a relatively affluent landed family, he was the third of five sons. His father was the first Indian to be inducted into the newly formed Military Farms and Cantonment Service, which meant that he spent his early years moving from one cantonment to another. But he was a precocious youngster who matriculated at the age of 13 and joined Foreman Christian College in Lahore at 14. Not surprisingly, he sailed through college, acquiring two Masters degrees, in History from Government College in Lahore and in Geography from Aligarh Muslim University. The latter included a course on the history of geographical exploration which is when he first read about mountain climbing. In the meantime, he had also become an accomplished horseman, swimmer and shooter.

Armed with these qualifications, Guru returned to his village home – and wrote off to the Doon School and Mayo College, setting out his degrees and sporting skills and applying to become a teacher. Sight unseen, the Doon School offered him a job right away – a vacancy had arisen, and a replacement was urgently needed. So in the summer of 1945 he joined the school – eventually retiring 34 years later in 1979 as Deputy Headmaster.

As a mountaineer he started modestly enough. His first treks were in Kashmir, in the Sonamarg region – walking to the Kolahoi glacier and crossing the Yamhar pass to the Sindh river in 1946, and doing the Amarnath cave circuit from Sonamarg to Chandanwari in 1947. Still just trekking, his next excursion was in 1948, when along with Martyn, Gibson, and two schoolboys, the Koregaokar brothers (who later achieved fame in school by climbing the Matterhorn in cricket boots), spent a few days visiting Dodi Tal and climbing a few hours above to Darwa Top, about 4,000m. The following year, he was back in these hills with Willi Unsoeld, who in 1963 made the first ascent of the West Ridge of Everest and had been a guest at the school, before joining his first real expedition – to Bandarpunch [6,316m], in 1950.

This was the third expedition in which Doon School masters were joined by Tenzing Norgay, not yet a climber of renown, who reached the summit with Roy Greenwood, a Physical Training instructor at the Indian Military Academy, Dehradun. Bandarpunch was Guru's first climb on a real mountain, and he climbed to the last camp at around 19,000 feet. Of Tenzing, he has the fondest of memories, describing him as “the most modest human being conceivable” and recalling that his “broad smile won over people in a big way.”

Tom Longstaff's autobiography, *This My Voyage*, describing his 1907 ascent of Trisul [7,120m], had just been published. It propelled Guru and Greenwood to make the third ascent of the mountain in 1951. Tenzing would have been with them, had the French on Nanda



Devi not made him the more attractive offer of being Sirdar on their ill-fated expedition. On top of Trisul, Greenwood did a spontaneous, exuberant handstand and Guru followed with a headstand. These antics apart, this climb is recognised as the first ascent of a major Himalayan mountain by an Indian climbing for the love of it – and thus regarded as the birth of Indian mountaineering.

The ascent also enabled him in 1952 to become the first Indian member of the Alpine Club in London. Guru's other notable takeaway from this expedition was the great value of Garhwalis in supporting climbing expeditions. He climbed with Sherpas, of course, but many tough men belonging to higher villages like Bampa and Ghamsali, joined him on expeditions in the years to come. They included stalwarts like Kesar Singh, who had climbed Kamet with Smythe's party – clad in local footwear made of straw, rather than boots – and in later years Kalyan Singh and Dewan Singh.

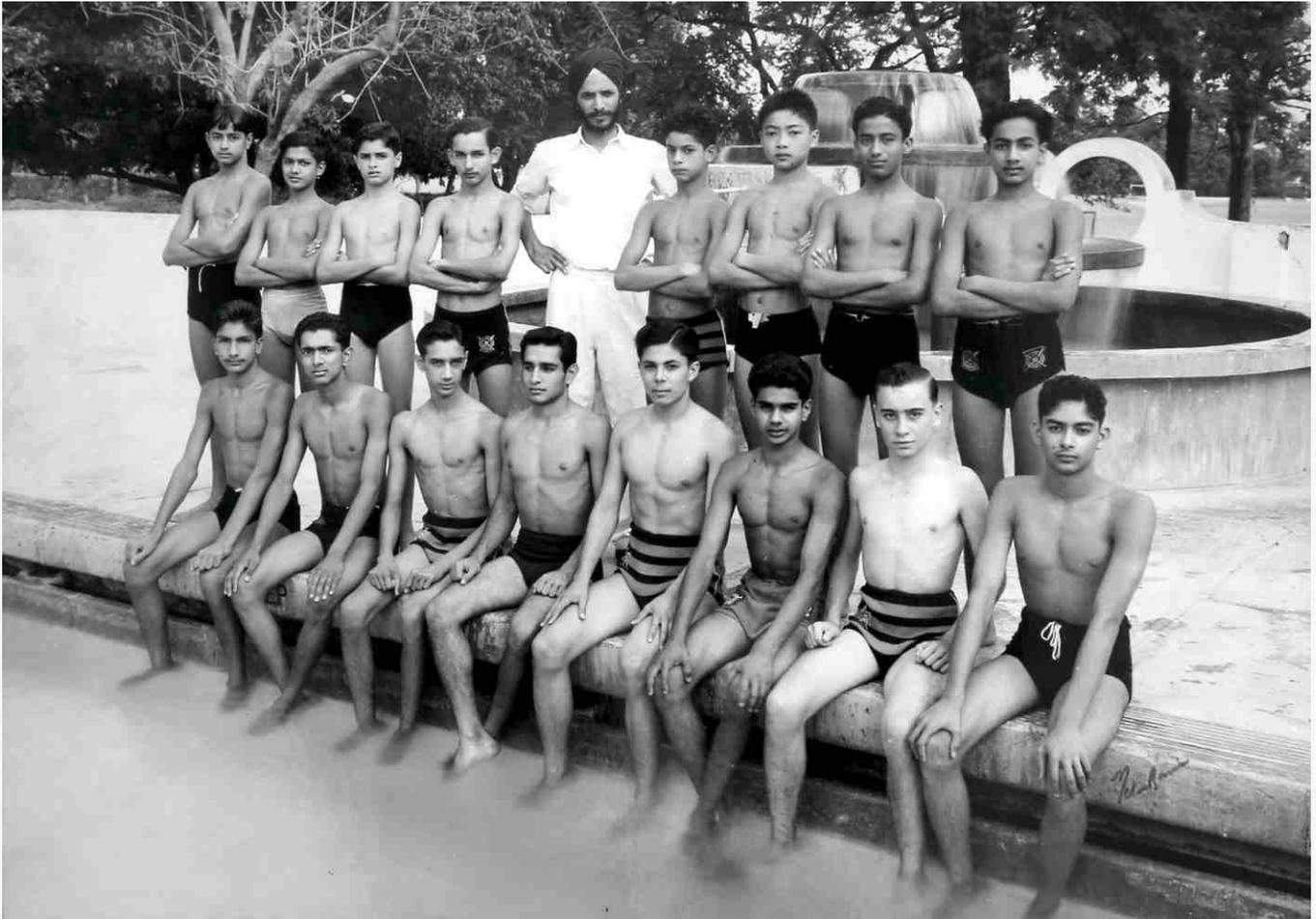
Guru's focus next shifted to Kamet. By this time it was the Bengal Sappers of the Indian Army, based in nearby Roorkee, who had taken to mountain climbing, thanks to the presence of both Major General WE Williams, a British officer who became Engineer-in-Chief after

Independence, and Nandu Jayal, a Sapper officer and Doon School alumnus, who was fast becoming a well-known climber in his own right. The army engineers were focussed on Kamet, and Williams, who had been on Bandarpunch, invited Guru, fresh off his pioneering ascent of Trisul, to join their expedition in 1952. They turned back less than 600 feet short of the summit, sinking in soft snow after taking a wrong line on the broad final pyramid. The following year, they were all back on Kamet under Jayal's leadership (the expedition included Guru's youngest brother, Jagjit, then a cadet at the Military Academy) and climbed to within 100 feet of the summit when severe dehydration – something Guru recalls they hadn't encountered seriously on earlier expeditions – turned them back. But Jayal did get up Abi Gamin [7,355m], the peak across from Meade's Col, the site of the last camp.

A long trekking visit to the region of Tibet (including Manasarovar) bordering the yet-undisputed Bara Hoti plateau followed before, in 1955, Kamet beckoned again. Tenzing was now world famous for his ascent of Everest and working as Director of Field Training at the newly established Himalayan Mountaineering Institute in Darjeeling. So the Sappers turned to equally experienced Angharkay as Sirdar. Indeed, before



An archival picture of the 1951 Trisul group



Guru and The Doon Swim Team 1951

Standing From L-R: Vikram Narain (197 K, 1960), Shamsunder Aggarwal (53 K, 1954), Satish Moolgaokar (79), Peter Pratap Naharwar (89 H, 1952), Guru, Ajay Mallik (259 K, 1955), Tiger Thaike Winston Yawnghwe (203 K, 1954), Jawahar Lal Agarwal (18 H, 1951)

Sitting From L-R: Harender Pal Singh (46 H, 1953), Ashoka Ranganathan (33 T, 1951), Amarjeet Singh (286 J, 1953), Hari Inder Paul Verma (268 T, 1952), Vimal Narayan Bhagat (50 K, 1951), Jai Singh Koregaokar (166 K, 1951), Vibhu Raj Bhalla (245 K, 1953)

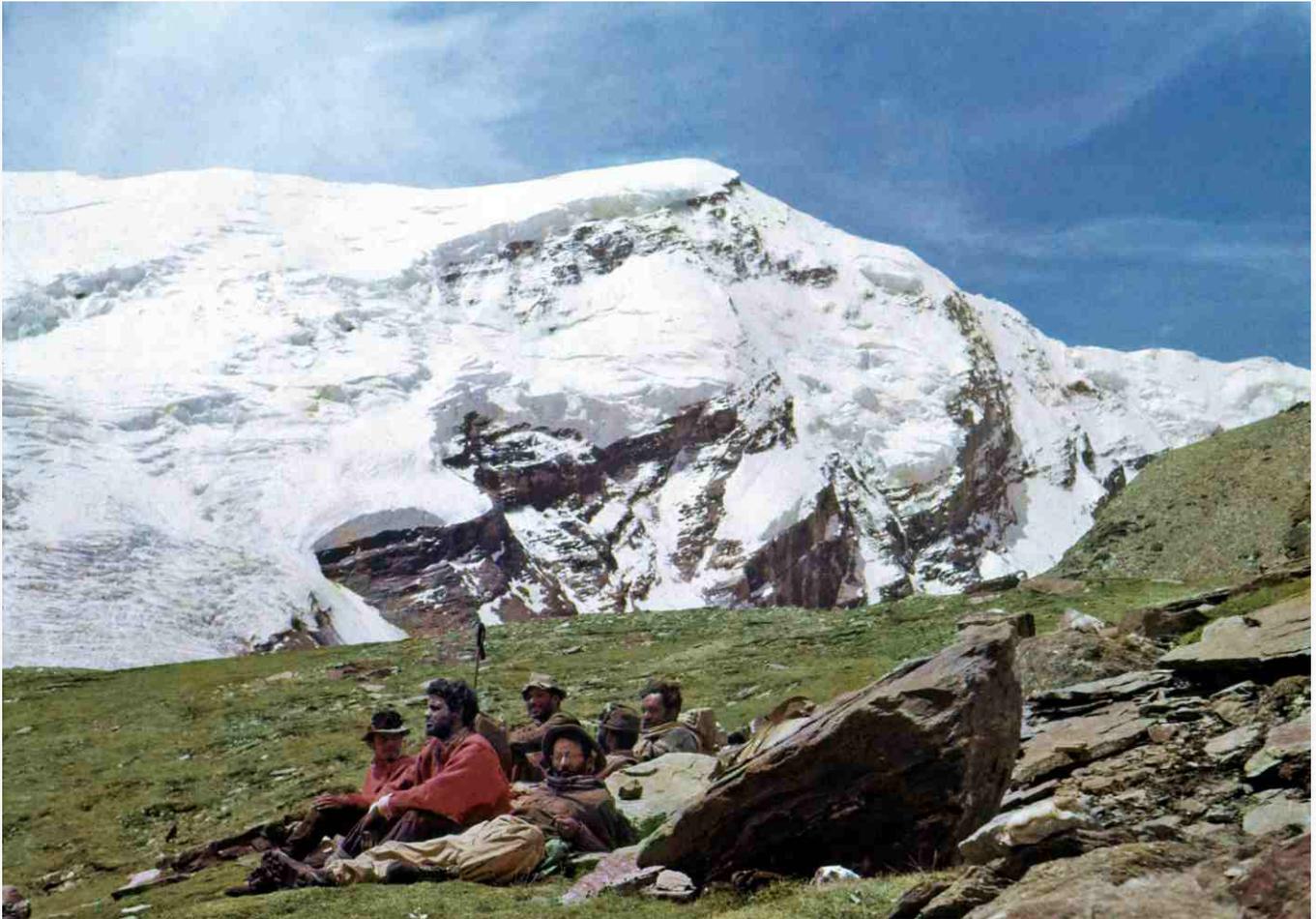
Tenzing climbed Everest, Angharkay was the better known Sherpa for his heroic support of the French on Annapurna in 1950. The Kamet expedition was a great success. Not only did Nandu Jayal and others climb the mountain, the expedition also succeeded on Abi Gamin the same day.

It happened like this: on summit day, leaving before sunrise, Nandu Jayal soon found that he'd forgotten his sun goggles in camp. John Dias volunteered to give his to Jayal and return to Meade's Col to fetch them. Guru came back with him. At Meade's Col they realised that a return towards Kamet was impractical, so they decided to go the opposite way, and accompanied by Kalyan and Dewan were soon atop Abi Gamin. The climb was notable for one other reason: it was the first time Guru used crampons!

Then followed what might be called his Nanda Devi

phase. But it began with a tragedy. In 1956 he set out with a small group for Mrigthuni [6,857m], the gentle mountain on the outer ring of the Nanda Devi complex, just east of Trisul. At Dibrughetta, three long walking days from Lata village, one of the members, fellow schoolmaster Nabendu Chukerbutty, fell ill suddenly and died from pulmonary edema. But not before Indian Air Force officer Nalni Jayal, also a Doon School alumnus and cousin of Nandu, who was on this expedition, made a heroic effort to get the Air Force to airdrop medicines, walking in one day from Dibrughetta to reach the telegraph lines in Joshimath. But to no avail. The death was a big blow. Guru was in charge of swimming and geography at the Doon School, and Chukerbutty was a recently recruited geography teacher whom Guru was introducing to the high mountains.

Not only was Guru a highly engaging and motivating teacher, he was innovative in his approach. His main



The 1961 Nanda Devi expedition with Mrigthuni (climbed by Guru in 1958) in the background. The only posed group from that trip. From L-R: Suman, Hari, Guru (behind), Doctor Sharma (front), John Dias (head turned away), and Captain KN Thadani

subject was geography, brought more to life with the use of coloured chalk on dull black and greenboards. His lessons would include topics off the curriculum weaving in mountaineering terms and concepts and exploration history. Another of his passions, introduced to him by Jack Gibson, was western classical music. Occasionally he would announce that the class would that day abandon the set curriculum – for music! We would troop to his rooms to be treated to the sublime cadences of Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony* (“There's nothing unfinished about it,” he told us), the dancing rhythms of Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*, or the melodic evocation of rural summer in Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*. “Did you hear the cuckoo?” he would ask, as the call of the bird was rendered on clarinets in the second movement.

His abilities as a teacher were widely recognised. In 1957 the British Council facilitated a year for him at Gordonstoun, a school in Scotland founded by the German educator Kurt Hahn and known for its emphasis on sports and demanding physical outdoor activities. The months he spent there and in the UK enabled him to meet climbers like Tom Longstaff, John Hunt and NE Odell, among others. It also gave him a

taste of Scottish climbing: John Ray, who was later to become headmaster of Tyndale Biscoe School in Srinagar, took him to climb several Munroes (“mountains” taller than 3,000 feet) including Ben Nevis, the highest in the UK.

Returning to India, he was back on Mrigthuni in 1958, and succeeded in making its first ascent. The following year he teamed up with AD Moddie, a future President of the Himalayan Club, to spend much of the summer of 1958 trekking around the Nanda Devi massif from the Milam valley through the Girthi Ganga and down the Dhauli Ganga.

And that brought him face to face with India's new-found infatuation with Everest, triggered by the Hillary and Tenzing ascent, which drove Jawaharlal Nehru to take a personal interest in the establishment of the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute in Darjeeling under Jayal's directorship. It was only natural that the Sponsoring Committee, which had earlier organised expeditions to Cho Oyu (on which, in 1958, Nandu Jayal died of pulmonary oedema), would look to the country's most experienced climber to lead the first



Meeting Lord Louis Mountbatten (1947-48)

From L-R: Mr JTM Gibson, Bidhu Dhar Jayal (10 T, 1939) who taught at Doon (1944-47), Guru, Mr Sudhir Khastgir, Mr KB Sinha, Mr KNP Nair, and the Headmaster Mr AE Foot. Photo Courtesy: Lt Col (Retd) Mantaj Singh (204 J, 1969)

Indian expedition that was being planned for 1960. The committee was headed by a senior member of the ICS, SS Khera, who invited Guru to be the leader.

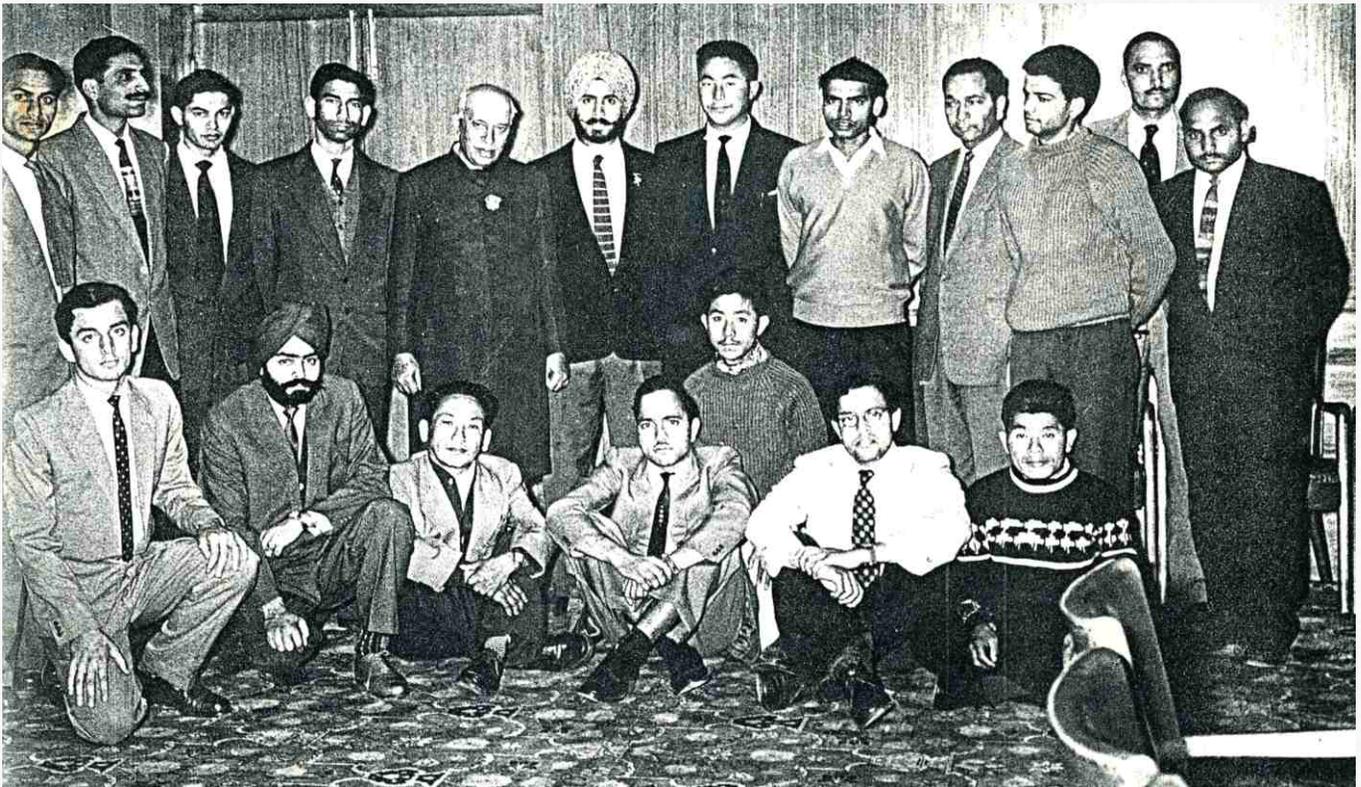
As Guru puts it, for about two months he was in the saddle. Not being used to the ways of officialdom, he found it irksome. While Guru wanted a free hand choosing his team of climbers, Khera had some names that had to be included. Guru wanted the best equipment available anywhere, but Khera wanted him to use what was being manufactured by the ordnance factories – largely untested on the heights. Eventually, Guru gave him a list of equipment that necessarily he wanted imported. When this wasn't accepted, he turned his back on the expedition – along with John Dias, who gave voice to some acerbic thoughts on what he called “*sarkari* mountaineering.” The leadership passed on to Brigadier Gyan Singh, then HMI principal. As with Dias, Guru declined even to join the expedition.

He didn't waste time, though. In 1960 he took a big step, compliant with his own fascination for Nanda Devi, organising an expedition to the unclimbed Devistan I, [6,680m] which would take him for the first time into the Nanda Devi Sanctuary. And in another first that speaks volumes for his mentoring capacity, he also took along a teenaged student, Dilsher Singh, who had no previous mountain climbing experience. The

expedition didn't succeed but it was a rare penetration in those days of the Rishi Ganga gorge, and it whetted his appetite for more.

In 1961 he returned with a more ambitious goal, Nanda Devi itself, and for the first time felt the need to approach an outside agency, the Indian Mountaineering Foundation, for financial assistance. Remarkably, Guru had so far paid from his own pocket for all his climbing. Even on the army expeditions to Kamet, officers on the team paid according to their ranks, ranging from Rs 300 for a Lieutenant to Rs 500 for a Major. He recalls that the total costs on most expeditions – all self-funded and very frugal – came to between Rs 800-Rs 1000 per person. The more ambitious 1961 Nanda Devi expedition cost RS 22,000, toward which, in another first, the Mount Everest Foundation in London contributed £400 and the IMF about Rs 12,000. Interestingly, Jawaharlal Nehru agreed to be its Patron. Guru had written to him on an impulse and Nehru surprisingly agreed, though he did write back to say he wasn't sure what exactly a Patron was supposed to do.

Guru ranks the 1961 expedition as one of his most treasured memories. Continuing his practice of inviting a teenage novice, he agreed to my being part of it. And there couldn't have been a more thrilling introduction to mountain climbing than in the company of men like



The 1962 Everest expedition calling on Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru (Capt Narendra Kumar, far right, wasn't on the climb but came along)

Gurdial and John Dias. We were six climbers, fast friends by the end of it, three Sherpas and a dozen Garhwalis from villages like Lata, Bampa, and Ghamsali. In ten carefree and largely self-contained weeks in the Rishi Ganga basin, we climbed to 6,000 metres on Nanda Devi before realising we weren't equipped to tackle such a tall mountain in monsoon conditions. But we did make the first ascent of Devistan I, the second of Maiktoli [6,803m] and almost made a hat-trick to the top of Trisul by moonlight.

An expert on Himalayan flora, Guru took pains to educate the rest of us ignoramuses on the abundant variety and beauty of Himalayan wildflowers, especially as we slipped into the verdant rainy months. We were expected to remember Latin names and identify the rainbow blooms dotting the lush pastures. One day, John Dias, on being asked once too often, what flowers he had encountered, tersely replied, "Primula bloodyfooliana". Guru and John D, as he was often called, were the closest of friends, with a common attitude to climbing, a love of music and poetry, and the sensitivity, in William Blake's lines beloved by both, to see a world in a grain of sand.

Things began to slow down for Guru after the 1962 Everest expedition. He had turned back from the summit attempt but ended up spending six consecutive nights on the unforgiving South Col at 8,000m, mostly

without supplemental oxygen to ensure that everyone got off those extreme heights safely. Not many have spent so many consecutive days at this altitude, today melodramatically called the "Death Zone."



Guru and Chris Bonington, 2003. Chris is one of the most accomplished climbers of his generation; we went on treks together and that year had called on Guru on our way to the Great Himalayan National Park



Visiting Vice-President Dr Radhakrishnan in February 1962, prior to leaving for the Everest expedition. Hari and Suman are seated on arm-rests on the extreme left and right, respectively. Major John Dias, leader, is to the right of the VP. Guru is standing behind the VP



Suman, Guru, Mr Hari Dang. There were three of us from School on the South Col of Everest at the end of May 1962. Here's a picture of us 52 years later at Guru's 90th birthday lunch. Hari was part of the summit team, and lost some toes to frostbite as a result, having missed the summit by 400 feet or so. Guru spent six nights on the Col (I wonder if anyone else has matched that?) in support of the summit team, from arrival on the Col to departure. He yielded his place on the summit attempt to Hari. I was there with him for three nights, the windiest place I've ever been to!



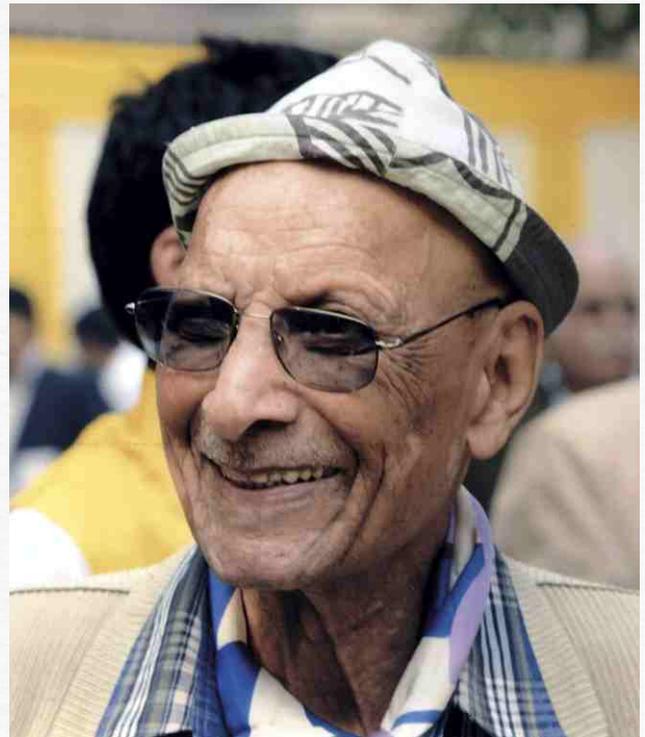
The IMF wasn't yet done with Everest. In 1965 Guru was invited to join the third and eventually successful Everest expedition led by Mohan Kohli. By now it was such familiar territory for many of the members that it was almost an easy climb. And it went like clockwork in perfect weather conditions. Although nine reached the summit, he believes that if there had been more oxygen, more could have made it.

That turned out to be his last major outing. A few small expeditions came sporadically in later years. In 1966, he was on Reo Purgial I [6,816m] when he, Balwant Sandhu and I with Sherpas Ang Phutar and Chinze turned back about 40-50 metres short of the summit because mists obscured the cornices on the summit ridge. Had we waited for the dry Tibetan air to drive away the mist, we would have stepped on top in less than half an hour. In the early 1970s he was back on Bandarpunch, but not doing much climbing.

He joined some IMA expeditions led by Brigadier Darshan Khullar as adviser and also accompanied women's courses at the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering for about ten years. Over the years, he collected several honours, including the Arjuna Award in 1965, the Padma Shri in 1967 and the IMF Gold Medal in 1983. In the 1990s and 2000s, he worked with another close friend, Aamir Ali – a pupil at the Doon School when it first opened, briefly also a teacher there, later serving with the International Labour Organisation in Geneva – on a proposal to convert the heavily militarised Siachen Glacier region into an International Peace Park.

Of the Indian climbing scene he feels strongly about much that passes for contemporary Indian mountaineering, such as the obsession with Everest that bespeaks, not a love of the sport, but worldly benefits such as publicity and reward. He decries the tendency to repeat easy routes, sometimes accomplished only because of the professional services of Sherpas and other experienced climbers from the hill communities. Few Indians test their mettle on difficult climbs, unclimbed routes, on lower but more challenging mountains that need higher levels of skills and offer greater satisfaction than well trodden routes up the more famous summits. Many Indians have climbed Everest but all, save a minuscule number, by the two well-prepared common routes. Guru laments that no one has attempted the West Ridge, for example.

Now, less than four years short of 100, Guru has stepped back from his beloved mountains, from travels to the four corners of the earth, even from the games of



Gurdial Singh at 90

bridge that filled his afternoons at the club in Chandigarh. Guru never married. The story may be apocryphal but his reply to those who quizzed him about his bachelorhood is said to have been, “Well, I am married – to the mountains!” Most of his old friends have passed on – Nandu Jayal lost long ago to the mountains, John Dias to sudden illness in 1964, and others like Aamir Ali and Aspi Moddie to old age. Among his peers, only Nalni Jayal remains. But numerous other relationships stay vibrant, built on long years of deep affection and common interests. At one time, they provided him ports of call wherever in the world he found himself, for the diaspora of the Doon School has spread far and wide. Today, they manifest themselves in the many former students who make it a point to drop in on him whenever possible. His mind remains razor sharp and he has better recall than most of those he has taught. He is liable to surprise his visitors with details of their school days or events that they themselves have long forgotten. I have yet to meet anyone who felt that he wasn't welcomed or acknowledged visiting him. And his values, like his interests and spirit, continue to shine undimmed: old-fashioned values, perhaps, based on decency, rectitude, integrity, honour, and fair play. He remains a beacon of excellence, a role model and a symbol of high character.

To paraphrase the words of the Bard whom he loves, it can be said of him, “His life was gentle, and the elements so mixed in him that Nature might stand up and say to all the world, This is a man!”



The five brothers

From L-R: Lt Gen Sartaj Singh, Mr Gurdial Singh, Brig Jagjit Singh, Maj Inderjit Singh, and Brig Hartaj Singh, 1959

Guru and His Family

HARPAL SINGH 322 H, 1965

It appears that the early travels with his father, Capt Faujdar Singh, into the North West Frontier and the Gilgit region may have been the trigger for Mr Gurdial Singh's love for the wild, particularly the mountains. An interest that became a passion melting into his very identity. He was the fourth of six siblings, five brothers and a sister. Amongst the brothers, he was the only one who did not serve in the Armed Forces, whereas the rest of his family, a full five generations, contributed to cause and country.

True to character, Guru, as he was fondly called, charted his own course in how to serve the country. Many a generation of young Indians who attended his geography classes were mesmerised by the depth and

width of his knowledge, and, most importantly, for his passion for flora and fauna, and his abiding love of the mountains. This side of him is well-known by much of what has been written about him. But let me share some aspects of another side that is less known of him and his family.

Guru's siblings referred to him either as "Gurdial" for those who were older, and "*Bhaji*" by those who were younger. Interestingly, quite distinct from tradition, the younger generation, of which I was a member, referred to him as Uncle with the reverential "*Ji*" attached. The only one out of turn was me, for I addressed him as "*Mamaji*" representing the specific nature of my relationship with him. I, however, suspect that he was



From L-R: Mr Gurdial Singh, with his nephew Lt Col (Retd) Mantaj Singh (204 J, 1969), brother Lt Gen (Retd) Sartaj Singh (George Medal, Padma Bhushan) holding Mantaj's son Udaytaj Singh (268 J, 2004), 1986

probably most comfortable with Uncle though he never explicitly said so. Guru was never emotionally explicit, in a mushy sense, in conveying his feelings. In fact, during our years in School, he was even more rule-bound with us five youngsters of the next generation who went to Doon, as compared to his other wards. In my second Term at School, having won the Juniors Cross Country race, and still catching my breath, all that I got from him was a "Well, well, well done Harpal" in a flat, yet typical, Guru tonality.

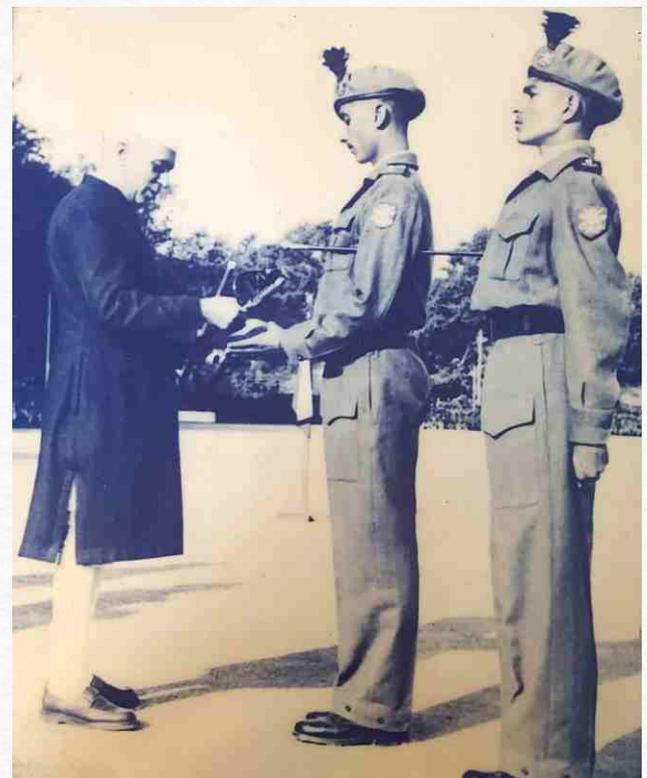
It is only in his later years that we realised, to our great surprise, the family man he really was. In the years when he was somewhat more confined to his home, Guru was a treasure trove of family memories about his siblings and their children during conversations with us. He was almost reverential about his older brother Sartaj, holding him in enormous respect along with his elder *bhabhi* Dalip. It was touching to have him refer to his other brothers Hartaj, Inderjeet, and Jagjit always with the suffix "Ji" whilst recounting the times he spent with them. These lively stories and anecdotes could fill a book. Of his siblings, only his youngest brother Jagjit, who was also an avid mountaineer, was a Dosco. About his sister Gurdip, my mother, I heard him recount how he attended her wedding during the turbulent times before Partition.

In spite of being a bachelor, Guru had evolved a particularly gentle and respectful relationship with his *bhabhis*, knowing each in a special way, just as he did for all the students he taught and interacted with. The

artful way in how he sometimes conveyed dissent was exemplary for its elegance of approach. Starting with an endearment or sometimes a naughty quip, he would go on to expressing his displeasure and dissenting view and then end by gently appearing to acquiesce to the others' point of view. It left the others wondering whether the response should cause disquiet or, as was always the case, greater respect. Guru was a master in how to endear and to yet make a point. This tantalising quality earned him great affection amongst his *bhabhis* who were Dalip, Narinder, Amarjit, and Pammi in order of seniority.

Dalip, the homemaker, was always the one whose home welcomed the family and everyone enjoyed her hospitality as also her affection. It was Narinder who commanded special respect with a disarming firmness and Guru traversed that landscape with great dexterity. In Amarjeet, he saw the gentility of a saint and often enjoyed her morning breakfasts. Pammi being the youngest enjoyed special status by that count alone. Guru walked the family landscape with comforting ease and often invited himself over for breakfasts and dinners at the homes of his siblings.

Expectedly, for the teacher he was, and for his enviable knowledge, the next generation of family held him in



Guru's younger brother, Brig Jagjit Singh, AVSM and Bar, VSM, (91 J, 1949) receiving the Sword of Honour from PM Jawaharlal Nehru at IMA, Dehradun, 1953



The family soon after Independence, Deolali, July 1948

From L-R: Brig Hartaj Singh, Mr Gurdial Singh, Mrs Dalip Kaur, Brig Jagjit Singh, Maj Inderjit Singh, and Lt Gen Sartaj Singh

awe and still recount wonderful anecdotes of their memories of him. Pam, the youngest of that grouping, cannot forget how she was always disarmed, if not embarrassed, when he would always stand up to welcome her when she entered the room. In her view, he was the quintessential gentleman. Manhar cannot forget the Sunday breakfasts with the multitude of stories he shared and emotionally expressing the strong family ties Guru had with the family. A view wholeheartedly shared by all of the next generation as Mala, Kanwal, Gurtaj, Kiran, Amrita, Ajaytaj, Navtaj, Diltaj, and Mantaj fondly mention in family get-togethers and in our WhatsApp group. Guru's affection for the family spilled over to his persistent enquiry of the third generation of youngsters, 18 in all, in whom he maintained a keen interest. Of them, Jaivir, Amartaj, Udaytaj, and Shivtaj also studied at Doon. Not surprisingly, he was always keen to know how each of his nieces and nephews were doing and their respective passions. It would not be complete if I did not mention the spouses of the next generation who unsurprisingly were as inspired by him as were the rest of us.

For many of us who were lucky to have been in class with him or joined him on expeditions, as Gurtaj and

Mantaj on a memorable visit to Kashmir in search of the blue poppy, or me in my second term in School accompanying him for a climb of Nag Tibba, the sheer intensity of experience will remain lifelong memories deeply etched into our very souls. His stories, experiences, and expansive knowledge of nature and its intricacies are engraved in family memory and are a source of great joy as we recount them in family gatherings. From the early get-togethers in Gurdaspur to fireside chats in Dalhousie, to the home in Chandigarh, there was no setting which did not add a potful of Guru's tales to the family's memory bank. Gurtaj refers to him as a veritable encyclopaedia of history and natural science; Kiran cannot forget her fear of ensuring that all words spoken in his presence were correctly pronounced; I cannot forget the YC he gave me in School for the innocuous misdemeanour of being found perched on a tree. If Guru was an encyclopaedia on Nature and its wonders, Mantaj has earned the right to be called the encyclopaedia on Gurdial. The time he spent with Guru in his later years allowed him unique access to Guru's countless adventures. But the person for whom Guru had developed a particularly soft spot was Diltaj who, it can be said, mothered him all through his 90s.



Guru with his grand nephews and grand nieces



Mr Gurdial Singh (standing third from left) on the occasion of his 90th birthday at the Chandigarh Golf Association (CGA), Chandigarh, with his younger brothers and family members including Maj Inderjit Singh, Amarjit (centre), Brig Jagjit Singh (standing second from right), Dilsher 'Lollipop' Singh Virk (140 K, 1959) (standing third from right in the rear), January 1st, 2014



Mantaj, Guru, and Harpal celebrating Guru's 90th birthday



From L-R: Udaytaj Singh, Shivtaj Singh (457 J, 2006), Lt Col Mantaj Singh, Col Gurtaj Singh (14 H, 1967), Mr Gurdial Singh, Maj Inderjit Singh (387 T, 1965), Maj Navtaj Singh (350 T, 1969), Harpal Singh, Arjun Grewal, Jessie Grewal, and Col Ajaytaj Singh

For his larger than life engagement with students, their families, his own extended family, and for the many friends he made, Guru was truly a people's person. A teacher, friend, and mentor without compare.

His loss is a loss to the mountains and to the wild, to the wind and water, the forests as they have lost one of their most ardent admirers. But his spirit prevails on all whom he touched and inspired.



Rhododendron Companulatum - Above the tree line. Photo Courtesy: For Hills to Climb



Guru and The Doon School Swimming Team, circa 1958

BRIEF, WITH A SIMPLE

Our heartfelt condolences on the sad passing away of Guru. What a wonderful way to go, having reached the top of the mountaineering world as also the top of The Doon School world and just nearing his century. We were, indeed, lucky that he spent such a quiet and distinguished life in Doon – also driving his Everest White Fiat and growing sweet peas in his garden.

I feel privileged that I got to work with him in Doon. When I joined, he

was away on the Indian Everest Expedition. I had already become acquainted with his aura in Doon during his short absence. Yes, even in his absence, I became aware of his humility, in every way.

On his return from the expedition, I was struck by his voice – rich baritone – and a quiet, winning smile. And I never heard him raise his voice anywhere or scowl at anyone. Once, during our Chambers, I was critical of Pitre, as the timetable in-charge, for giving

himself off from Friday Break to Monday breakfast. Guru, the Deputy Headmaster then, only butted in, “AD, that is a stroke of luck!” And the matter ended there.

I heard that once two boys (I am forgetting their names) while walking down the Jaipur House corridor a little late at night said, “Gaida is a bastard.” The boys did not realise that Guru was just behind them. However, they heard Guru from behind, “Gaida is not a bastard; he has a mother and a father!”



SENSE OF HUMOUR MR AN 'AD' DAR (AND)

It was fun to watch Guru referee our soccer matches in his khaki shorts. I loved watching him at the swimming pool training the swimming team. After my first year with him, he made me the Sunday morning Free Swimming In-Charge, which I thoroughly enjoyed even though I was no swimmer. Guru had swum for the Punjab University Swimming Team in the pre-partition days and was then wearing a turban. I got to see him without a turban because he sacrificed it for his Everest expedition by inviting Hakim, the School barber, one night just before

leaving for the expedition to give him a haircut. Hakim was flabbergasted! Thus, post expedition, I saw him without a turban.

Without a turban I did see him but not with a wife. When asked, "When are you getting married?" The answer was, "I am married to the mountains!"

That was Guru: brief, with a simple sense of humour.

To be honest, all of us who have known him as a colleague or as

students will always remember him with respect, fondness, and trust. For me, in particular, was his simple drawing room set with taste. I was taken aback when he even invited my mother for a dinner in his Jaipur House residence. My mother spoke no English and was a pure vegetarian. And that was our Gurdial Singh, simple and honest and courteous. I will always remember him with much respect and love.

May God grant him abiding peace by his side!



A Life Well... Lived

SHIV 'FAUJI' KUNAL VERMA 182 H, 1976



Guru at the site of Camp 1 with Reo Purgyol behind. Photo Courtesy: Suman Dubey (167 7, 1958)

After his Everest expedition, a brewery in Scotland had bottled a dozen bottles of single malt whisky in his honour. That was in 1965.

I was not in touch with Guru, having last met him in 1985 during the Golden Jubilee Founder's Day where Rajiv Gandhi as an Old Boy and PM was the Chief Guest. I was then with the Associated Press and seeing Guru striding along, had joined a group of reporters who asked him if there was anything in common about all the Doscos who were then in politics? Some of the names I recollect were Pilo Mody (255 H, 1943), Dinesh Singh (265 K, 1942), Sanjay Gandhi (339 K, 1963), Arun Singh (207 K, 1959), Kamal Nath (366 H, 1964), etc.

Guru, who was striding along in front of the Main Building heading towards the Rose Bowl, paused for a second, held up his hand like he used to, and said: "Well... they were all duffers!"

A quarter of a century later, my book *The Long Road to Siachen* was published in 2010. At the launch at India International Centre (IIC), almost all my classmates who were in Delhi at the time had turned up, as had stalwarts like Lt Gen ML Chibber and Colonel 'Bull' Kumar who had played pivotal roles in the conflict. The latter had been with Guru on the 1965 Everest expedition as well, and their group photo was in the book. KK sir (Mr Krishna Kumar Candeth), under whom I had been the chief editor of the School's satirical magazine, had written a detailed review of the



From L-R: Guru, Ram Niwas Mirdha, Rajiv Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, Founder's Day, 1970s

book that was published in *The Rose Bowl* and he was kind enough to say enough good things about it to have caught Guru's attention.

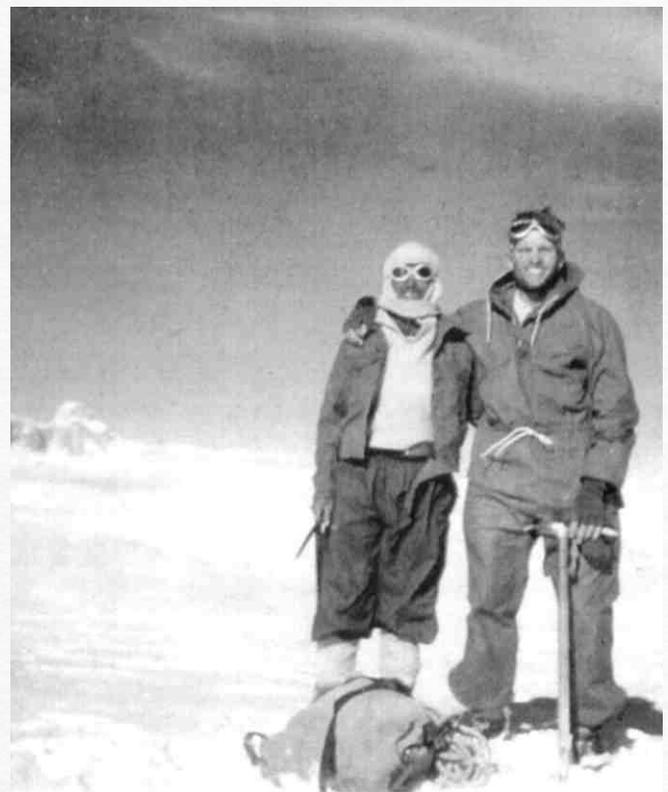
A couple of months later, Guru called my number, having taken the trouble to track it down. My wife, Dipti, answered the phone, gave me a quizzical look, and handed me the receiver mouthing the word "Guru" for though she had never met him, I had talked a lot about him. The familiar voice got straight to the point, "Well... Fauji, you have written this book on Siachen!"

"Yes, sir," I said, wondering what was coming.

"Well... it's a wonderful piece of work. I want to discuss with you a map..."

During the brief conversation he mentioned Nalni Dhar Jayal (100 T, 1943) and Aamir Ali (214 K, 1939), who at the time were spearheading the call to make the disputed glacier into a peace park.

"If it's not too much trouble, do come to Chandigarh to see me," said Guru. Before I could say anything, he then said he had the one remaining bottle of single malt, and



*Dawa Thondup and Roy Greenwood on the summit of Trisul with the twin summits of Nanda Devi in the background.
Photo Courtesy: Gurdial Singh, 1951*



From L-R: Sudhir Sahi (116 T, 1963), Nalni Dhar Jayal, Guru, Mrs Greenwood, Aamir Ali, and Roy Greenwood

how he was saving it for a special occasion. Thanks to Bond (Mr SK Vohra, SKV), I quickly figured the whisky was then 46 years old.

I had just finished working on the three-part *Northeast Trilogy*, and since it was being printed at the time I had to reschedule my trip to Chandigarh, not once, but twice. The third time I had to reschedule, Guru got really irritated and said he would come to Delhi. He gave me very precise instructions, saying the Shatabdi Express would reach at such and such time, it would then take him exactly these many minutes to get to Vasant Vihar where his nephew Sartaj resided, and that I should meet him at a quarter past seven.

Dipti and I reached early, marked time in the car, then

rang the bell at the appointed minute. Guru met me with such affection, I was overwhelmed. He recalled every dig we had made at him in our School magazine, especially a cartoon of him going past Welham Girls' School repeating to himself, "Well... I am married to the mountains and rivers!" We were joined by Nalni Jayal the next day, who came all the way from Dehradun. Both of them wanted me to make a map on the actual alignment of the Salto Mountains subrange. "Is it to the north of NJ 9842 or is it to the west?" Guru was obviously exercised about the exact alignment, for the area had been left unmarked during the 1972 Shimla Agreement when the LoC had been drawn up. The line had terminated at Chalunka with the words "...and hence north to the glaciers."



We met again at Nalni Jayal's house in Dehradun a few days later, watching the rain sweep across the tea gardens in front of his house, while eating cake and drinking some excellent Darjeeling brew. Siachen, I began to realise, held a special place in the hearts of mountaineers of Guru's generation for most of them had done part of their training for Everest in the Shyok Valley.

I drew up the map, using all the reference material available at the time. It took me almost a fortnight, for it was tedious work. By then Northeast Trilogy was out and the presentation box with the volumes, though pretty heavy, was looking spectacular. I headed for Chandigarh, finally, where I was to stay the night with RP sir (Mr RP Devgan, RPD) and Sumali ma'am at YPS, Mohali where he was the principal. In the evening, we set off for Sector 8, Chandigarh, where Guru resided. On that day, India was playing a one-day match against England, so RP sir said he would go there first, that way I could later discuss whatever I wanted with Guru. I did not mention the single malt, for some things are better left unsaid.

Guru opened the bottle and it made a soft squeaky sound when the cork was rotated. Guru poured over the map, got a protractor, and measured due north. He seemed satisfied India had done no moral wrong. I got chicken sausages, a second drink, and all this while Guru sat there holding the trilogy to his chest. The next day I met him again. He had been through each and every page. "This," he said emotionally, "is one of the best things to have come out of the Doon School." He then wryly added, "But it will only get famous after you have passed on!"

A few years later, Vikram Seth (250 J, 1968) and I drove down to see him in Chandigarh. Guru was 93 by then. Again, we had precise instructions, so, in the spirit of things, I picked up Vikram at 4:07 am. We were a bit early, so we stopped at a dhaba. At the appointed hour, he received us outside the room where he was sitting. He had Vikram's and my books on the table. I settled down to watch his interaction with "the suitable boy" for he had been his Housemaster as well. The first thing they did was recall a conversation they had had about Beethoven when Vikram had joined school as a D Former. "This is going to be fun..." I thought to myself.

It was. "Well... Vikram," said Guru, "the best years of my life were till I was ninety-one-and-a-half!"

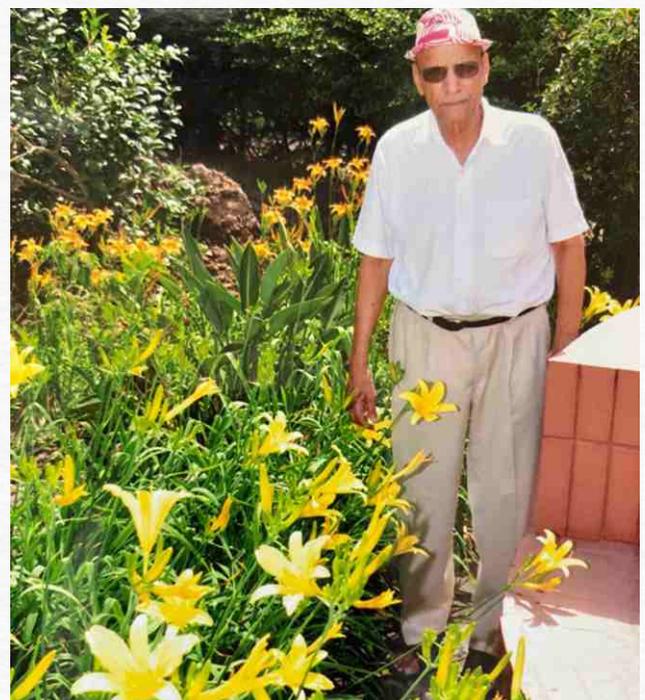
He could still drive then, but had become increasingly more confined to his room. "My biggest fear," Guru

confided, "is that I might lose my memory!" Guru then recalled his first impressions of a young Vikram, with whom he had an involved discussion about Mozart and classical music. Considering he was talking of their first meeting that was half a century ago, the recall was amazing. The conversation meandered on to Thomas Hardy, and Guru wondered if a comma on page such and such was superfluous. Vikram was keeping pace with ease, but I couldn't even remember the blasted cover of the oversized book that we used to lug around. And Guru was the one worried about his memory!

Well... Guru's gone now. Just how remarkable a man he was is best illustrated by what happened 200 metres below the summit of Everest in 1965. It was the first Indian expedition, and Major HPS Ahluwalia, who was the lead summit party, had run out of oxygen. Guru was the second team and history beckoned, for he would be the first Indian to fly the tricolour on top of the highest mountain in the world. But Guru stopped. He unclipped his oxygen and gave it to Ahluwalia. That was Guru, the ultimate team man, driven by a sense of ethics that like the line from Chalunka, could not deviate even a centimetre.

For our generations who were taught by him, teachers like him were The Doon School. Every time a bird called, he would pause mid-sentence and say, "Well... what is that bird!"

Rest in peace, sir... so long as the birds keep calling, we shall never forget you and what you did to shape all of us!



Guru in his garden at Chandigarh, 2005



The Quintessential Purist

SUDHIR SAHI 116 T, 1963



Celebrating Guru



What a life! A special anniversary lay barely six months ahead. Next New Year's Day, January 1st, 2024, Guru would have notched an amazing one hundred crowded years.

Nevertheless, recalling Guru's 90th ten years ago, and cognisant of medical protocol, just a very few of our Class of 1963 Old Boys hoped to persuade him to lead once more, memory sharp as ever, this time a short virtual trip down legacy lane.





Similar spirits lay uncorked earlier on at the India International Centre (where else?) amidst sterling bonhomie just as Guru, modest as ever, greeted several of his earliest contemporaries: Aamir Ali (214 K, 1939), Gautam Khanna (897 K, 1982), Bidhu Dhar Jayal (10 T, 1939) and Kusum, Nalni Dhar Jayal (100 T, 1943), Amina, together with Dhruv Sawhney (328 K, 1992) and Rati Sawhney, Harpal Singh (322 H, 1965), Mantaj Singh (204 J, 1969), Sheela and me.

Guru, quintessential purist, was embarrassed by praise of any kind, not the least for his 1951 Trisul summit headstand, the first Indian ascent of a major 7,000m Himalayan peak. In many ways, this also highlights Doon's pioneering role in the sport, Guru's visits stretching across the range from the Indus to the Brahmaputra. There were, of course, other goings on in the School's realm of Himalayan adventure, be it on land, air or water; principally during the Mid-Term break and summer vacation. Among the early ones was the 1937 Kalindi Khal crossing on the Alaknanda-Bhagirathi watershed by four friends namely Tenzing Norgay (Honorary Doon alumnus!), John Martyn, Sherpa Rinzing, and Jack Gibson.

The question remains: going by the age, fitness, and skill levels of several British Everest expedition members, why were John Martyn and Jack Gibson never invited?



Mr John Martyn (1935-1966)
Photo Courtesy: Jack Gibson



Nandu Jayal, Principal with instructors Tenzing, Ang Tharkay, Gombu and others of the HMI. Photo Courtesy: Jagjit Singh



Mr Jack Gibson (1937-1953)
Photo Courtesy: Himalayan Journal

Holdy (Mr RL Holdsworth) was invited to join the 1924 British Everest expedition, but the invitation was withdrawn when team demigod George Mallory declined Holdy's request to carry skis.

Born in that fateful year 1924, Guru once mentioned this episode to which Holdy attributed his remaining alive to ski again... even as Everest was shut down for nine years to atone for the 1924 British expedition's insensitive lama dances in central London.

However, this embargo did not, and could not, curb the spirit of mountain adventure. Thus, the inner sanctuary of Nanda Devi was reached for the first time in 1934 by Eric Shipton and Bill Tilman, leading to the first ascent of the divine summit in 1938 by Tilman and Noel Odell, but not before Tenzing Norgay arrived on The Doon School scene in 1937 via Kalindi Khal.

Be that as it may, the first ascent of Everest triggered interest in the sport of mountaineering, encouraged by Prime Minister Nehru. Born in 1926, and like his many siblings at Doon, Narendra 'Nandu' Dhar Jayal (101 T, 1942) acquired a reputation for strength and empathy with nature. Mentored by Holdy, Guru being invited as Course Adviser, and Tenzing Norgay as Director of Field Training, Nandu became the first Principal of HMI-Darjeeling, building up a strong training faculty comparable with the world's best. Their training pitch can be gauged from the fact that the HMI's earliest

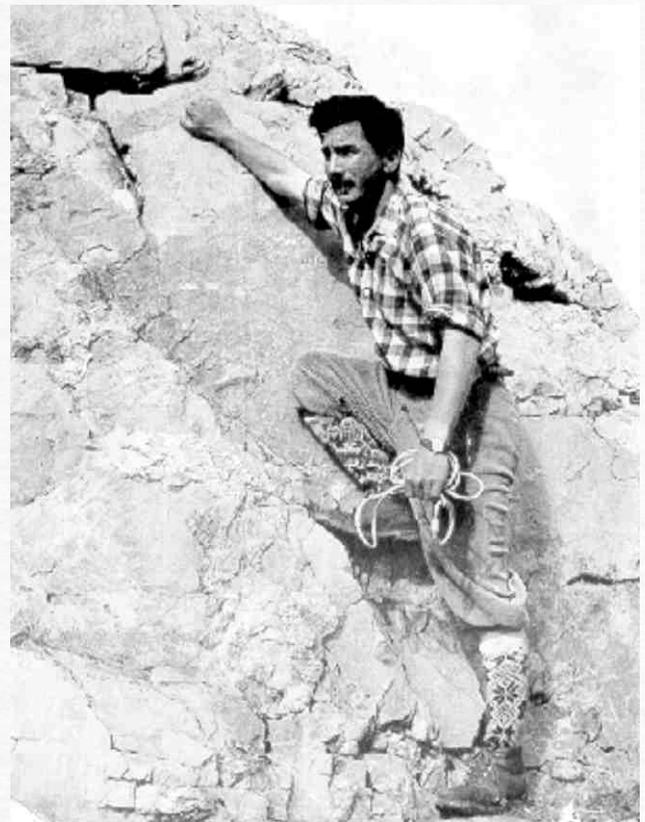
Advance Courses included expeditions to Kamet, Abi Gamin, Saser Kangri, and Nanda Devi. In this context Guru's definitive role was similar to his guiding the IMA-Dehradun and NIM-Uttarkashi.

Unfortunately, Nandu's tragic death on Cho Oyu in 1958, and John Dias's passing four years later after Everest 1962, confined the sport in new trendlines. Nevertheless, Guru remained the quintessential purist, not for a moment hesitant at the South Col "Death Zone" on Everest, giving up his oxygen cylinders to provide the younger man a crack at the summit.

But fissures in the relationship with nature pained Guru. In his foreword to Holdy's Kamet and Valley of Flowers 1931 handwritten Diaries (integrated with the Dosco online archives) Guru says:

"The unveiling of this remarkable treasure going back ninety years is timely as the Himalaya cries out for protection against the ravages of climate change, inconsiderate development, and irreversible environmental damage."

Guru's sincerity and affection will never fade. May his values continue to inspire us.

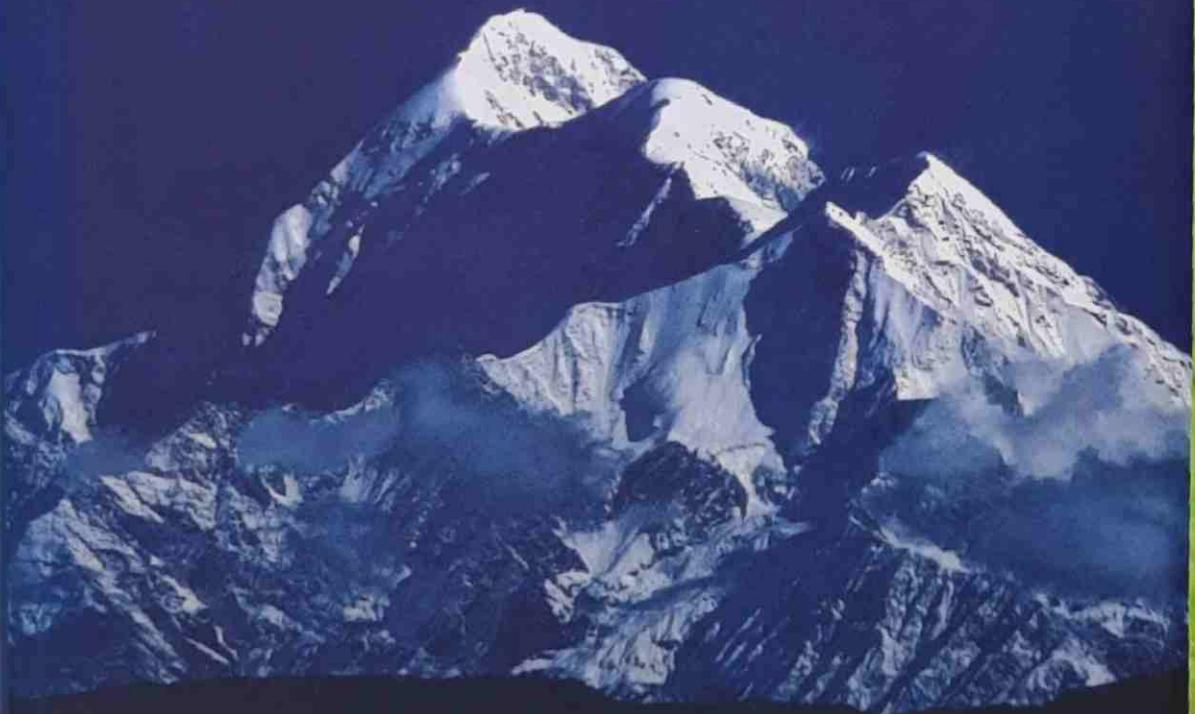


Nandu Jayal at Rosenlavi, 1954
Photo Courtesy: Mountain World, 1955

Breakfast with Guru

PRABIR BASU 138 T, 1962

For Hills to Climb



Editor

Aamir Ali



Mr Gurdial Singh or Guru, as he was universally referred, was the quintessential school and house master, revered by generations of Doscos, who saw him as the embodiment of wisdom and inspiration in their educational and pastoral journey through School. He was a legend.

By the time I came under his tutelage, it was C Form geography and Guru was already an icon. Countless stories abounded about his remarkable accomplishments in mountaineering and that famous response to queries regarding his marital status: “Wal, I am married to the mountains!”

Guru's classes were a joy to attend. One was transported to far corners of the earth with his brilliant in-depth descriptions of their numerous physical and environmental features, so much so that years later when one finally got to visit some of these places they all looked uncannily familiar. Geography was by far my best subject in School, thanks to Guru.

Sadly, Guru was attached to Jaipur House and I was in Tata, so it was only by chance that we'd run into him on Mid-Term treks and weekend outings. But on the few occasions we did, one recalls his unhurried, even paced strides, never stopping till the destination of the day was reached. If one offered him whatever one had on breaks in the little tea stalls on trek routes, he would politely

decline and walk on citing the ominous nimbus gathering in the western skies.

Walking alongside him on those rare occasions has been some of the most enriching and unforgettable experiences of my life, imbibing his incredible mind and profound knowledge of the natural world along the way.

Then out of the blue, fifty years later, I get this call from friend and neighbour Michael 'Mike' Dalvi (370 T, 1963) informing me that Guru had expressed a desire to have breakfast with me at my place the following day on his way to Chandigarh.

I added up the numbers and asked Mike, “Guru will be nearing 90, will he still remember me from all those years ago?”

“Wal, why do you think he wants to meet with you? He remembers you as clear as daylight!”

I was, of course, thrilled to bits and couldn't wait to have the great man over.

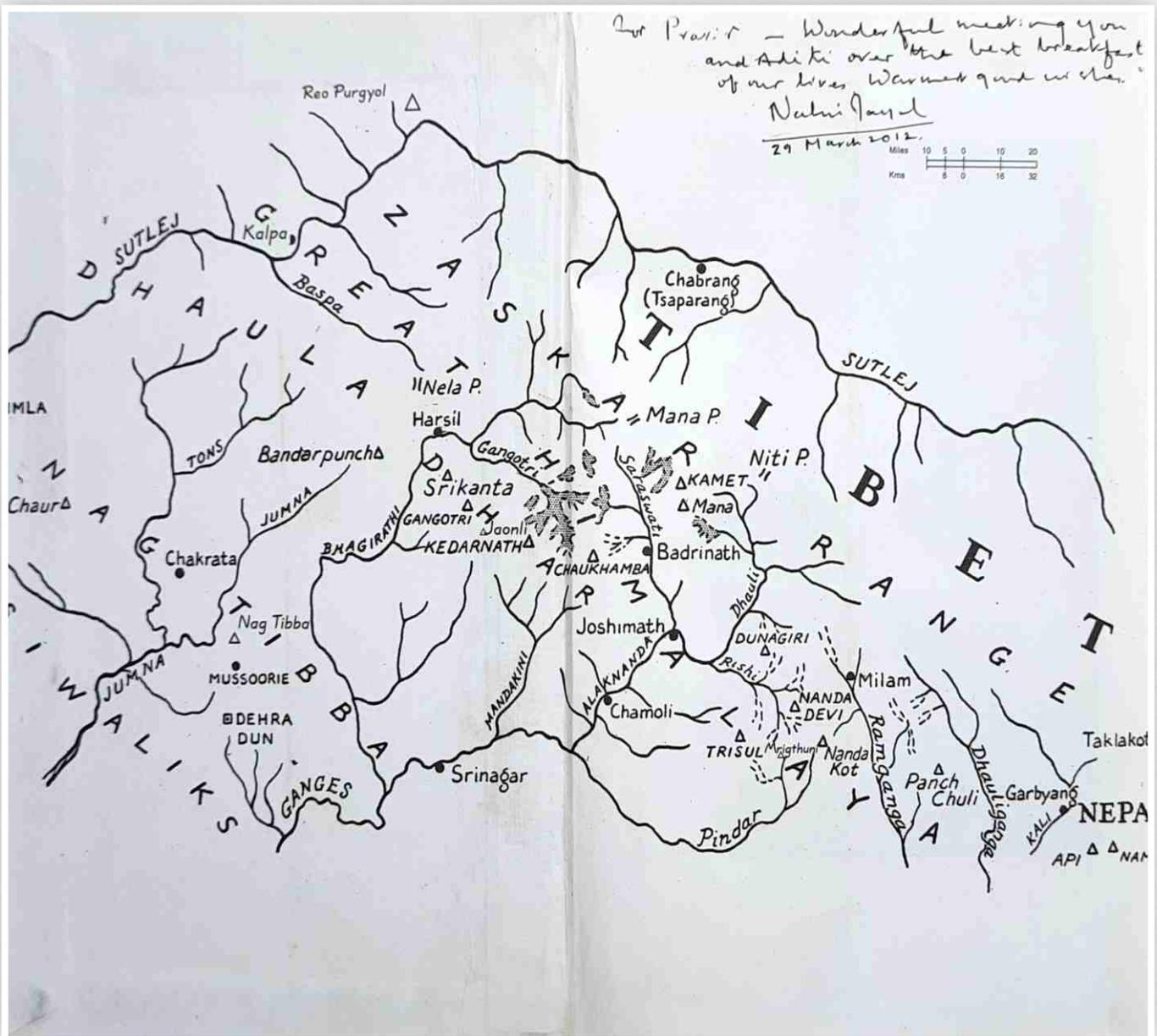
The following day, Mike, along with Himant 'Bundle' Kapur (15 H, 1965), accompanied by Guru and his old mountaineering buddy Nalni Dhar Jayal (100 T, 1943) duly arrived at the farm at the stroke of breakfast time. Neither Guru nor Nalni, close to 90 himself, needed any help getting out of Mike's high SUV. After a very warm handshake and an even warmer “Wal Prabir, it is so good to see you,” Guru took a walk about in the

outdoors taking in the various varieties of flora and fauna and offering a few helpful tips which have all been happily implemented to great benefit.

Over the next two and a half hours, and complemented by a multi-layered seven course breakfast provided by wifey, Guru delighted us with his incredible memories pouring out of a crystal clear mind.

Of the many areas of his eventful life story that he shared with us that morning, a few that come to mind were related to the early days of Doon. He spoke very admiringly of Mr Arthur Foot and his meticulous attention to detail in setting up the School. Guru narrated a story of how, soon after his arrival in Dehradun, the Headmaster had gone to Shantiniketan to meet with Rabindranath Tagore and ask his help in obtaining an art master and a music teacher for his new school. Tagore duly obliged, and the school was blessed with the multi-faceted musical talents of Mr V Shirodkar and the legendary artist Mr Sudhir Khastgir.

From them, Guru learned the language to better understand and enjoy the Rabindra Sangeet, Mr Shirodkar would play. He sang a few lines for us from one sung by Suchitra Mitra, his favourite, and asked if I could play the original song for him, which I did to his great enjoyment. Guru's wide ranging love for music across the genres was well known, as was his deep



Nalni Dhar Jayal's inscription

appreciation of the classics from the emotionally charged symphonies of Beethoven, to the more lilting concertos of Mozart, to the occasional singing of songs like "Lili Marleen" himself.

For the better part of the morning, however, it was understandably the mountains with Guru and Nalni. Between them, they gave us a most enthralling firsthand portrayal

of the early expeditions to Bandarpunch, Kamet, Trisul with Guru's famous headstand on the peak, Nanga Parbat, Nanda Devi, and Everest. Added in were narratives of the escapades of the iconic Holdsworth, Martyn, Gibson, 'Nandu' Jayal (Narendra Dhar Jayal, 101 T, 1942), Mr Hari Dang, among others, and their enormous contributions to Indian mountaineering.

Breakfast over, Nalni very kindly presented me with a hardcover copy of their highly acclaimed *For Hills to Climb*, with an appreciative note in one corner. Guru saw the note, and said "Wal Prabir, keep the other side of the page for me. I'll come back to sign it."

Alas, that space remains forever reserved for the great man.

Rest in peace, sir.



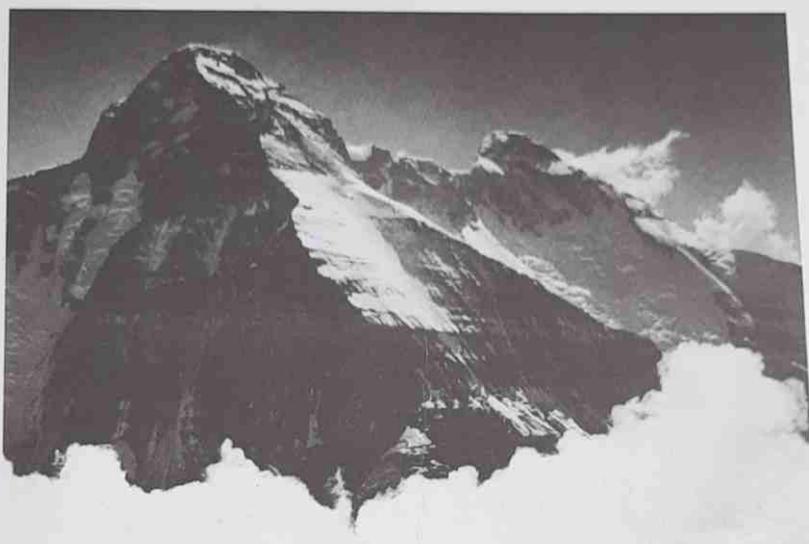
Aamir Ali was at the Doon School 1938-39, then taught there 1944-46. After a short spell as

Associate Editor, *Trend Magazine*, he joined the International Labour Office in 1947 and retired in 1985 as Director of Personnel. He is married and lives in Geneva; he has one son, also settled in Geneva.



Gurdial Singh joined the Doon School as Assistant Master in 1945 and retired as Deputy

Headmaster in 1979. He carried out extensive treks and climbs regularly in the Himalaya over a period of forty years. In recognition of his achievements in the high hills he was awarded the IMF Gold Medal, Padma Shri, and Arjuna Award.



Nanda Devi from Camp I on Devistan

(Photo: Gurdial Singh, 1961)

FOR HILLS TO CLIMB

The Doon School Contribution to Mountaineering:
The Early Years

*"Creator of life and light... We thank Thee...
for deep water to swim in...
for hills to climb,
and hard work to do..."*

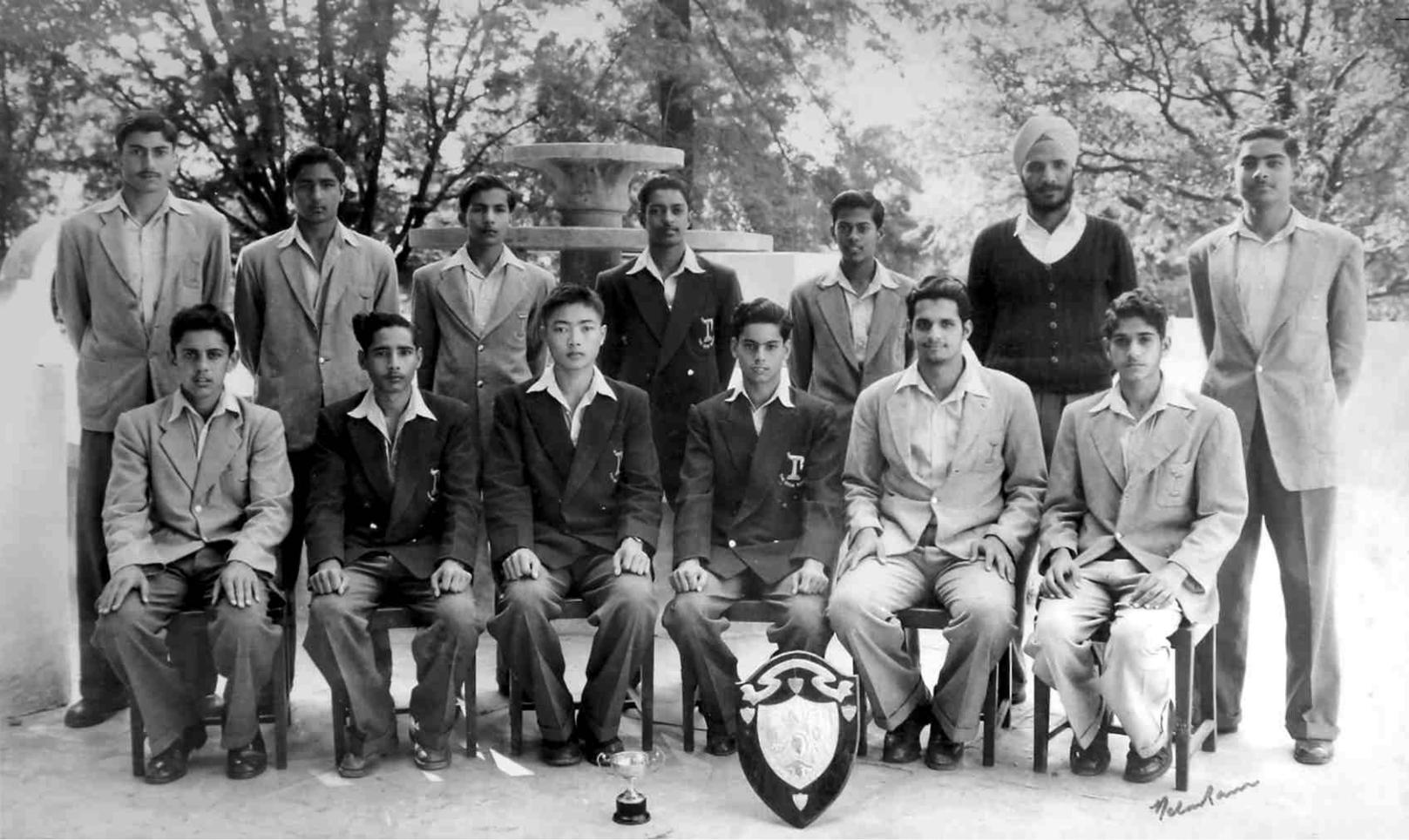
J. S. Hoyland

Edited by
Aamir Ali



The Doon School Old Boys' Society

Space forever reserved...



Guru with the School Swimming Team, 1954

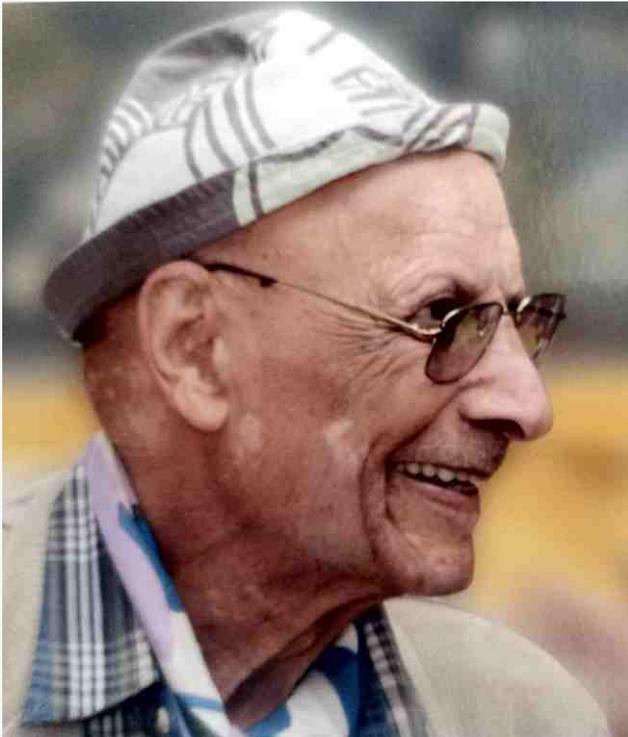
THREE LESSONS FROM AN UNFORGETTABLE TEACHER

KARAN THAPAR 238 J, 1971

Out of affection we called him Guru but, in fact, that is precisely what he was. Not a *vishwaguru*, as is the fashion these days, but a genuine, dedicated, caring teacher. An Indian Mr. Chips, if you like. Guru was the moniker by which The Doon School boys knew Gurdial Singh. It was a very apt nickname. It's also how he'll be remembered after his death earlier this year.

I was ten when I first met Guru. He was House Master of Jaipur House. A big, tall man, who, at my age, seemed even taller and bigger. But when Guru smiled, my fears and concerns were swept away. When he laughed, I would crack up. There was no way I could stop.

Officially he taught me geography, but actually he taught me some of the best lessons I have learnt. The first was not just the most difficult, but also the most revealing of myself.



Guru's imprint is unmistakable

In the 1960s, Doon valued its sportsmen far more than scholars. This meant that a child who had never swung a cricket bat nor kicked a football was at a significant disadvantage. My talents lay in acting and debating and, yes, cramming too. But these were looked down upon.

Guru, however, would find ways of making artistic talents feel better than sporting achievements. He would recall clever sentences from my debates – and I could sense this was praise – or a dramatic posture I struck on stage. And, though he was gently taking the mickey, he was also conveying how attentive he'd been – and made me feel special. In his estimation, this was sufficient reason to make me House Captain in my last year, even though the best I'd achieved at sport was Juniors III in cricket. On the one solitary occasion the ball had come in my direction, presenting me a sitting catch, I dropped it.

Guru, thus, gave me the confidence The Doon School would never have imparted on its own. He helped me grow up, become aware of my limitations as much as my talents, and to handle

setbacks, mistakes, and failures. He taught me to pick myself up and go on. A necessary lesson, because I often stumbled and fell.

Years later, when I was an adult, I recalled another lesson from Guru. Punishment is not necessarily the best response when someone has erred. There are times when overlooking the error is better.

Many are the times when Guru practiced this principle. It covered instances of blatant naughtiness to crafty lying to foolish, but willful, pranks. He was always aware of my mistakes but overlooked them. Yet, from the expression on his face I knew he expected better. Even as a teenager that made me feel bad. More than anything else, I wanted to be in his best books. His disapproval was, therefore, crushing. Guru knew that was punishment enough.

I try to remember this lesson when others make mistakes but it isn't easy. It requires wisdom and restraint. Guru had both. I often have neither. This is a lesson I haven't properly learned.

The third lesson, I'm glad to say, I do practice. It's a simple one. A little bit of etiquette makes a significant difference to the impression you leave behind. Greet people when you enter a room and never forget “please” and “thank you.”

I don't think Guru ever explicitly told me to do this but, then, his example was always there for everyone to see. So careful was his cultivation of good manners and so high the regard in which we held him, that simply by emulating his example these graces became a habit for the rest of us. I learnt by imitation.

As I look back on my life, Guru's imprint is unmistakable. I don't know if the Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton, but certainly the man in me was shaped by the House Master of Jaipur House.

That's why he will always be my guru.



Guru, the Stalwart with a Subtle Sense of Humour

DARSHAN SINGH 90 T, 1962



Left: Lt Gen Sartaj Singh, George Medal (awarded by King George VI in 1943 at Buckingham Palace), Padma Bhushan (awarded after the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971)

Right: Dalip Kaur, wife of Lt Gen Sartaj Singh

Those who studied in The Doon School during its third decade would have had their formative years deeply moulded by various stalwarts who taught at that time and built the foundation of a great School. Two such persons were Mr Gurdial Singh and Dr SD Singh. Both also became Housemasters at Jaipur and Tata respectively.

Mr Gurdial Singh was the third among six siblings (a sister and five brothers). His brothers had a strong connection with the Indian Army, mainly Artillery. His elder brother, Lt Gen Sartaj Singh, was well known to our family and, coincidentally, he and my father settled within about 100 metres of each other in the early stages of the city of Chandigarh. Mr Gurdial Singh later built his own cottage within the compound of his



elder brother and, therefore, my parents had considerable contact with Mr Gurdial Singh over meals and, especially, over games of bridge. Mr Gurdial Singh lived a disciplined life, maintaining strict timings. His memory was phenomenal till the end. He could remember the height of a mountain up to the last foot.

His exploits are well known, the most dramatic being a headstand on top of Trisul. He was the first Indian admitted to the Alpine Club and was the recipient of an Arjuna Award and a Padma Shri. To have had a teacher such as him was a privilege and far more than any parent would have



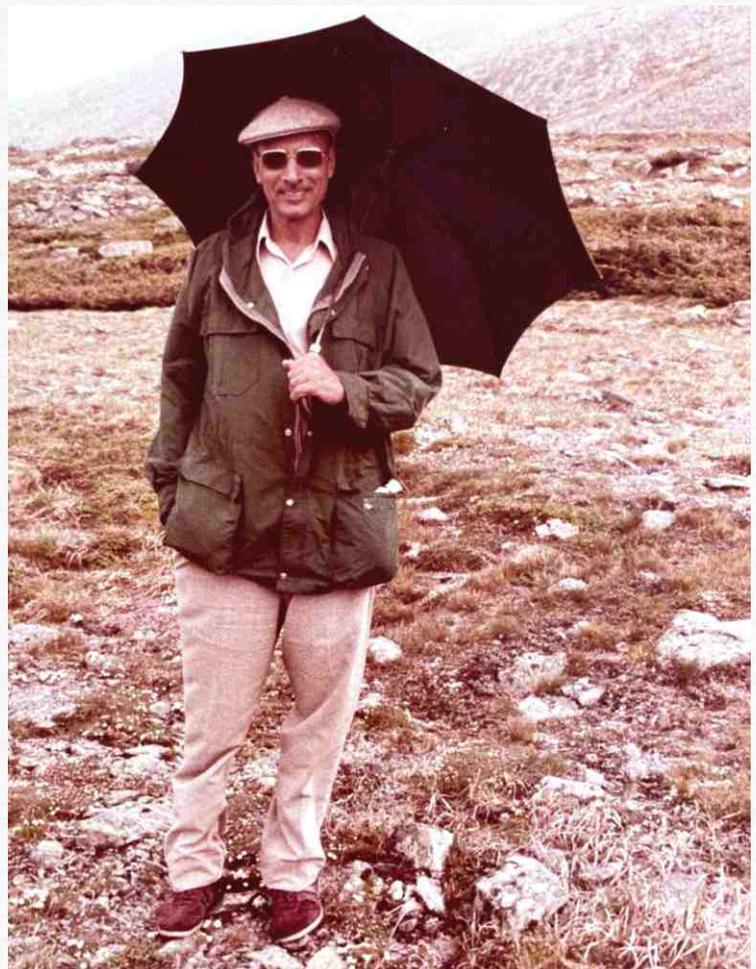
Mr Gurdial Singh's Alpine Club membership card

imagined when admitting his son into The Doon School.

Mr Gurdial Singh was never married, though he would gloriously state that he was, indeed, married to the mountains. He lived to be 93 years old and, unfortunately, at that age the body does not have the same levels of energy and so he would say with considerable sadness that "old age was a curse."

There is much more to say on Mr Gurdial Singh which, of course, was known to all of us who came under his expansive wing. But, in conclusion, I would say that once in class he referred to the sea on India's east as "BB." Anxious students were told that it did not stand for Brigitte Bardot but, instead, for the Bay of Bengal. So, through it all was a streak of subtle humour.

I pay my humble tribute and salute Guru.



Guru smiling in the rain



GURU AND DOC SINGH

MR YOGENDRA DURLABHJI

What can I truly say about Guru and Doc Singh – that they were legends, that they were outstanding human beings, that they were as different to each other as chalk is to cheese?

Guru was unique, inspirational, and an outstanding mountaineer, someone who always encouraged you to walk the extra mile, to climb the extra yard, and to rough it out in all conditions, in all weather – no matter what the terrain, no matter what the conditions, no matter how difficult the climb. He could easily say so because he had done it all. He had been there, done that, and come out smiling. He was a dedicated climber, one of the best in the world, and could never understand why everyone at Chandbagh could not climb the way he could. I have been on many expeditions with my

colleagues at The Doon School, and with several Old Boys. No prizes for guessing who the inspiration was! He was always ready to state his point of view at Chambers. This he did freely, frankly, and unequivocally. To him, I shall look upon with eternal gratitude – of making us fine men, and fine boys, and fine human beings. I went climbing often with Bond (Mr SK Vohra, SKV), RP (Mr RP Devgan, RPD), KK (Mr Krishna Kumar Candeth), Shorty (Mr Sheel Sharma, SKS, 345 K, 1964), etc. We would go to sleep in our tents at night, completely exhausted – but we knew that Guru at Chandbagh was happy that we were doing what he had encouraged us to do. Thank you so much, Guru, for being unique, for being inspirational, for being an excellent human being. I shall never, ever forget you.



Guru in the mountains. Photo Courtesy Suman Dubey (167 J, 1958)



Doctor Singh (Dr SD Singh, SDS) was a completely different person. He was calm, he was cool, and he was soft spoken. He always encouraged us to read better, write better, and think better. I fought with him on several occasions – KK and I – on the subject of awarding marks for the work submitted by the boys. In reality, this was, maybe, a byproduct of how we had studied in school. KK and I had been to schools where a very high score was 60, 62, 64; these were considered outstanding grades. Doc Singh encouraged us to go the whole way; he felt, if an essay were good, we should mark it in the 90s. He always argued that essays should be graded like answers in maths. We always argued otherwise, but he was still a fantastic human being.

We lost him to Scindia School, and that was a huge, huge loss. He went on to become the Headmaster of Scindia, and was rated one of the best their school ever had. Doc Singh, I learnt softness and gentleness from you – that I will never forget.

In essence, we learnt a lot from both these people. I hope I can absorb, and acquire, at least some of the virtues that they had. If I do, I can, hopefully, save some goodness for my old age.



Doctor Singh, calm, cool, soft-spoken



Mr Yogendra Durlabhji, aka Yogi Jain, taught at The Doon School beginning in the 1970s



The Family Elder

RAJNISH WATTAS

DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR

SURYA SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE



From L-R: Binnie Singh, Lt Col (Retd) Mantaj Singh (204 J, 1969), Prem Seth, Mr Gurdial Singh, Leila Seth, Mahima Singh, Rommel Varma (254 J, 1964), and Vikram Seth, 2012

Recently when Vikram Seth (690 J, 1981), the celebrated novelist and poet, spoke in a packed hall at Panjab University, he fondly recalled his three major connections to Chandigarh, the most significant of which was a tribute to his Guru – Gurdial Singh – his Housemaster in The Doon School, now residing in the city. He described Guru's house as a shrine for him and fondly recalled the hugely inspirational role the legendary teacher of geography had played in his life. He even remembered how he made teaching of the subject memorable with his poetic descriptions of the Tropic of Capricorn in Urdu!

No wonder, Vikram's mother Leila Seth, in her autobiography, *On Balance*, wrote, "There is no doubt that the biggest influence on him in school was his housemaster – Guru – a bachelor and an avid lover of the mountains. He had been a part of various Everest expeditions... taught geography and guided Vikram in many ways. He encouraged him to appreciate Western classical music and allowed him to listen to his prized collection of records.

"Since I never went to Doon School, it was a chance meeting that brought me to Guru's fold. Way back in 1992, travelling by air from Delhi to Chandigarh, I noticed that my seat mate was a dignified, sprightly gentleman, wearing a golf cap. As I was craning my neck to savour the view of the snow-clad Himalayan peaks appearing on my side, he quipped in by naming almost all the key peaks we passed by – which like apparitions, soon vanished – engulfed by hazy mists. Of course, little did I know that I was talking to a legendary climber, a Padma Shri recipient and Arjuna Award winner, besides numerous other accolades.

"Over the years, he became a family elder who would very often show up at my house in the early hours of morning, and if I was still sleeping as was usually the case, he would quietly leave some wonderful book for me to read! And if awake, he wasted little time in pointing out the birds visiting my garden, identifying their names and even simulating their calling notes! His one single indulgence was a cup of coffee made especially by our cook for him. Every new book by



Vikram Seth at Panjab University

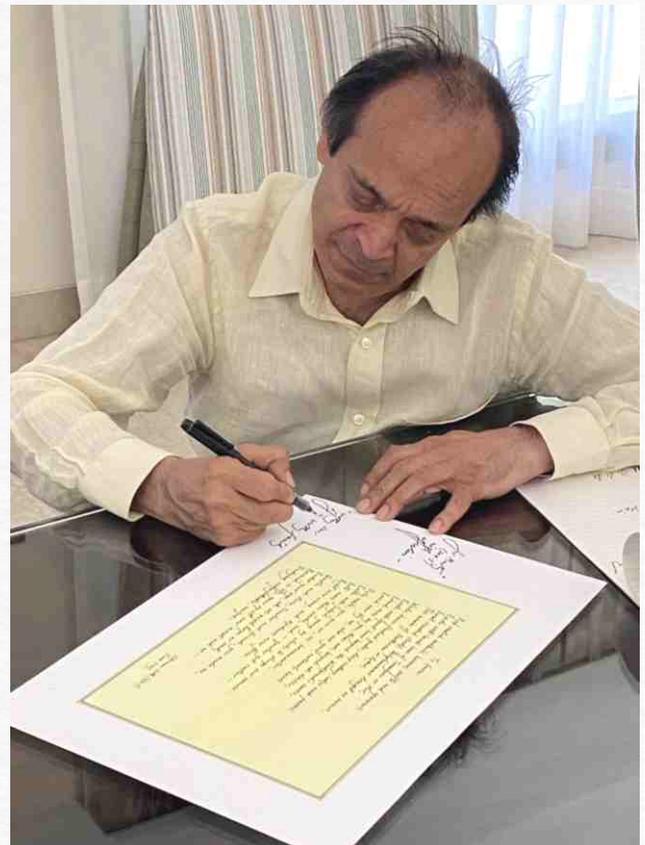
Vikram with the words “For Guru” inscribed on it would be generously shared with me.”

Rather prophetically, Gurdial Singh wrote in Vikram Seth's 1968 Term Report, “Fortunate is the school which has a boy like him on its rolls, and fortunate the Housemaster who has a boy like him under his care.” In fact, much before the formal announcement of Seth's engagement at Panjab University, I got a call from Guru, choking with excitement and breathless about “Vicky's visit to the city and my house!” Though he himself could not make it for the talk at the university in the cold weather, he was there with Seth all along.

The quiet, self-effacing 93-year-old Guru still loved his game of bridge, a stimulating conversation about a new book, sitting by the blazing fireplace over a single malt! The last time when I visited him, recovering from a hip replacement, I espied a shadow of effete weariness falling on his frail wrinkled face. Rather uncharacteristically, he recited a poem by Walter Savage Landor:

“I strove with none, for none was worth my strife:
Nature I loved, and, next to Nature, Art:
I warm'd both hands before the fire of Life;
It sinks; and I am ready to depart.”

No way Guru, you have many more hearts to warm as yet!



Vikram Seth inscribing a poem written in Guru's honour

Mr Gurdial 'Guru' Singh: Messages of Condolences

LT COL (RETD) MANTAJ 'MONTY' SINGH 204 J, 1969



From L-R: Dr Karan Singh (259 K, 1945) Mr Gurdial Singh, his nephew Lt Col (Retd) Mantaj Singh, and Prannoy Roy (66J, 1966)

I want to thank the entire School community very much for all the messages of condolences that have been shared with our family. Mr Gurdial Singh left the impact of his unique personality on all who knew him. The family and I have been overwhelmed by the messages received from scores of DoscOs, mountaineers, and many others.

Ashok B Gokhale (216 K, 1945)

I am greatly saddened to learn that Mr Gurdial Singh has passed away. He was a legendary Master who, by example, helped build the character and minds of countless young impressionable schoolboys. Although my contact with him was limited as I left School in 1948(1), I used to hear nothing but praise and admiration for Guru from DoscOs of all age groups

whom I happened to meet over the past 70 years! May his soul rest in peace.

Kuldip Singh Madan (318 J, 1950)

When I joined school in January, 1948, I was so impressed seeing a tall, handsome, turbaned sardar, Gurdial Singh. We students called him Sir, it was much



later amongst the Old Boys he was known as Guru, because of his name being Gurdial Singh.

If anyone had to learn geography and be good at it, it was only through Guru's teaching style. My grandkids are, to this day, impressed when we get to discuss world geography because of the teaching style of our Guru.

I left school after doing SC in December, 1950. Guru and I met next in Dehradun after 50 years, when our class was celebrating its Golden Jubilee in October, 2000. He came up to me and said "How are you Kuldip?" I was floored with his remembrance of my name!

Sadly, I didn't get to see him after that. May God rest his soul in peace.

Shomie Das (HM, SRD, 165 H, 1951)

Guru and I joined School the same year – 1946. He taught me how to swim. He taught me rock climbing. He taught me how to play bridge. He gave me two marks for identifying the bird sitting on the window. And he taught me with a sweep of his hands across the blackboard about the Pampas. A most complete schoolmaster. Rest in peace GU.

Nawshir D Khurody (38 T, 1953)

One memory of my geography teacher remains with me. He took his classes under trees and over hills and valleys. And a walk to Mussoorie.

Raj Kumar Pratap 'Pete' Singh (162 H, 1954)



Guru visiting 'Pete' Singh

In memory of the late Guru who visited our family castle Hingolgadh near Jasdan, Gujarat, twice, along with Lovraj Kumar (168 J, 1941) and Pesi Wadia (116 K, 1954). They often joked that though Pilo Mody (255 H, 1943) won one seat, he actually occupied two in Parliament!

Ashok Malik (230 H, 1954)

About four or five years ago my wife and I visited Guru in Chandigarh and spent some time with him and chatted about various things.

At one point he said "Well Ashok" – those words in his inimitable accent transported me about 65 years back to School to his corner classroom. Pointing to a painting, he said, "Can you tell me which city that is?"

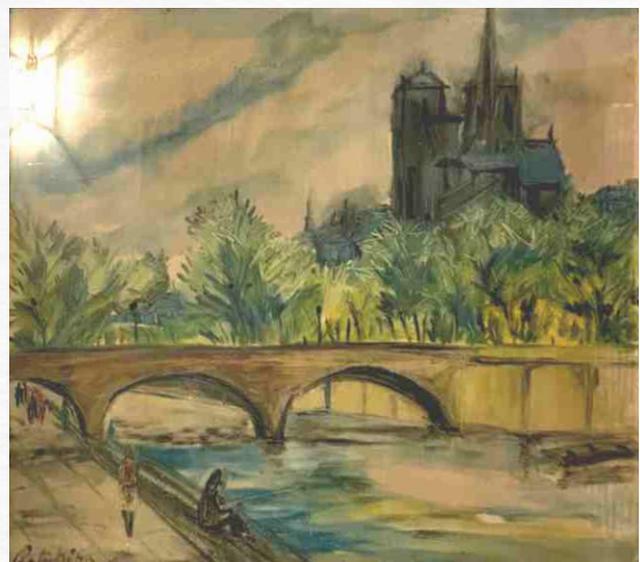
Fortunately, I knew the answer. "Paris." was my reply.

"Yes, and can you identify that building?"

Once again, I came up with the correct answer: "Notre Dame."

"Yes," he said, "Rathin Mitra painted it for me, and I gaze at it and the garden outside."

After about half an hour we reluctantly took his leave. Rest in peace, dear Sir.



The painting correctly identified by Ashok

Pronobendra Narayan Deb (119 J, 1955)

One Saturday entertainment programme, someone (I can't be sure if there was an Entertainment Committee) thought up a most innovative item for the evening. Boys



would come onto the stage and mimic a Master's idiosyncrasy, and the audience was asked to guess who the Master was.

One of the chaps simply said, "Vell boys, how was the Mid-Term?" And everyone in the audience shouted

"Mr Gurdial Singh!" We were, in those days, always very respectful of our teachers, and only a few of us would address one of them by their nicknames (Holdy, Guru, Gibby, etc.) even after leaving School.

Gurdial Singh was reported to have remonstrated later, saying, "I don't say vell. I say *vell*."

I was personally witness to the first paper, but not the second.

DG Rajan (307 H, 1956)

My heartfelt condolences to the family members of Mr Gurdial Singh on this sad and irreplaceable loss to all of us. He was the person who nurtured me from 1951 to 1957. He taught me geography and ensured I did extremely well in my Senior Cambridge examination in 1956. In addition, he was my guardian angel in guiding me to represent the School in all three major games, and also teaching me how to climb and conquer the Nag Tibba peak. We pray for his soul to rest in peace.

Aftab Seth (189 J, 1959)

I was a student of Guru from 1954 till 1959. In most of my End of Term Reports he would write in his cryptic manner: "Every inch a Geographer." I have never enjoyed classes more than I did with him and got my highest mark in the Senior Cambridge Exam in his subject.

He also introduced us to Western classical music. He returned from a term in England with a Grundig tape recorder and a record player. He used to play the symphonies of Beethoven and explain some of the background.

He had a phenomenal memory and recalled many details about each of us. He was utterly unique! We will never have another like him.

Dr Pratibha Malhotra Narang (343 J, 1963)

I am deeply grieved and shocked to learn about the passing away of the legendary figure from our School. This is the end of an era. Sir was our neighbour when

he was the Housemaster of Jaipur House. Everyone knows about his love for the Himalayas, but I am not sure how many of us know about his profound love for Western classical music. Every evening we would get to hear pleasant musical symphonies from the likes of Beethoven and Mozart originating from his house. It was because of him that geography became one of my favourite subjects. I used to love his classes and I am sure all who had the good fortune to be his pupils will agree with me.

He was very affectionate and I personally experienced this when he came all the way from Nagpur to visit me at Wardha. I had offered to go and meet him at Nagpur, but he insisted on coming, saying that he would love to have lunch with me and my husband. Ravinder. Once, I went to meet him in Chandigarh and he opened my page in the Dosco Record and marked all the awards that I had received! He was so happy and I was blessed.

Rest in peace, Sir. You shaped our lives and we will never be able to forget you.

Alok Chandola (344 H, 1963)

Guru joined The Doon School, Dehradun, as Master in the Autumn Term of 1945. My father, Mr BP Chandola, had joined the School in the Spring Term of the same year. Guru was the first person to pop by at our home to see me as a newborn in early 1948, and he had a huge influence on my upbringing and my life.

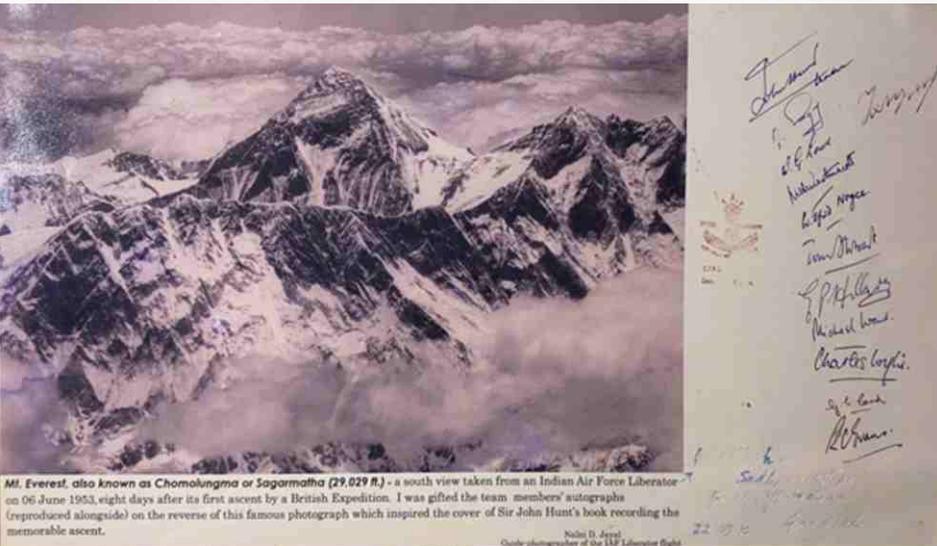
Besides being our geography teacher at School, and my father's colleague, Mr Gurdial Singh was an inspirational personage in one's little life. He introduced us to birds, trees, wild flowers, dark forests, alpine meadows, Himalayan glaciers and the high mountains beyond, and the value these lend to our lives.

He was our mentor on two mountaineering expeditions in 1967 (Reo Purgyl) and 1970 (Saser Kangri), and generously gifted much of his climbing gear to me in my late teens. An irreplaceable, joyful, and glorious era of mountaineering ends with Guru's passing.

Respectful salutations, Sir. May the meadows, snowfields, and high mountain places beyond the rainbow keep your soul and spirit in eternal peace.

Ravi Lai (218 H, 1964)

Mr Gurdial Singh got his hair cut the night before going on a mountain climbing expedition, possibly to Everest. The Tata House Barber told me that he was summoned



The autographed Everest photograph



A turbaned Mr Gurudial Singh, 1955

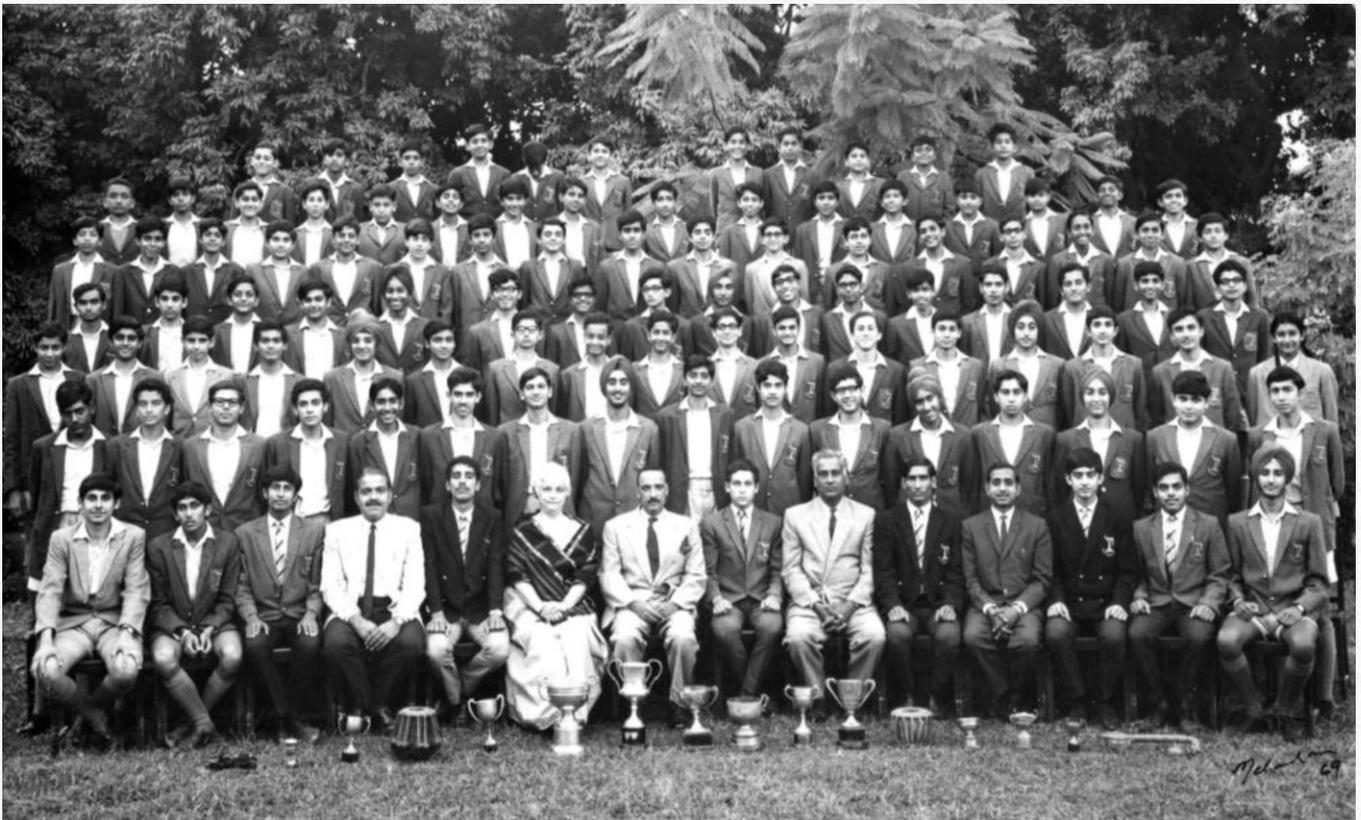
one late evening to Guru's house. When the Barber was told to cut his hair, he almost collapsed with fear. Nevertheless, he said he invoked Allah and did the job whilst trembling in his boots.

Gurdial presented me a photograph of Everest autographed by the expedition members when he and Nalni Dhar Jayal (100 T, 1943) lunched with us in 2010. he lights of Chandbagh may burn a little dimmer

because of Guru's passing, but the Heavens above shine brilliantly because of his homecoming!

Vikram Seth (250 J, 1968)

What a great teacher he was, and what a wonderful man. I was lucky to have been taught by him, both in and out of the classroom. I will always be grateful for



Jaiipur House, 1969, Guru sitting front row, centre



that. The fact that he isn't here leaves a gap in our world.

Rajiv 'Xeke' Sinha (113 T, 1969)

The best teacher and educator the School has ever had. Dedicated, passionate, fair, and unique in encouraging his students to think further than what was in the curriculum. I used to love his classes so much that I gave up Maths in A Form, and took up Geography for my ISC exams, despite being a science student. I nearly lost out on getting admission into medical college because of that. But, I never regretted a single day of having made that decision despite carrying the weight of eight subjects in ISC. We will always remember him.

Rajesh Wadhwa (258 J, 1969)

My sincere heartfelt condolences for the legend of our times. He was a pillar of strength when I joined School. Besides the geography that he taught us all, he was instrumental in my learning to swim and rock climbing. He is someone whose memory will always be close to my heart. The end of an era.

Rabin Lai (287 T, 1969)

My deep condolences to Monty and the family. Guru is inescapably part of our fondest memories of School. In that sense, for many of us, he is not gone.

Vivek Matthai (476 H, 1975)

I am a Dosco from the 1975 batch. Guru taught us I and remember him taking us rafting and trekking. He loved classical music. A person of strong values, he had a full life. A true legend of The Doon School, may his soul rest in peace.

Alok 'Omi' Kumar Singh (456 H, 1976)

Guru was Mr Gurdial Singh, initials "Gu." He used to put his palm on the world map and say "Gentlemen, this Aakland (Auckland)!" which hid the entirety of New Zealand, and parts of Australia as well, leaving kids like us not so good in geography absolutely zapped as to where exactly Auckland was!

His khaki shorts on the Games Field was the most prominent feature of his unmistakable presence. A wonderful and calm person, I never saw him lose his cool.

He was the recipient of the Padma Shri award for

sacrificing his oxygen cylinder to his fellow climber at the last camp before the Mount Everest summit, which he did not himself reach. This was way back in the 1960s when climbing Everest was a big deal without today's modern equipment.

Deepak 'Charlie' Kandhari (600 H, 1980)

I, like a lot of my schoolmates, am Guru's non biological child and share his family's deep, personal loss.

I was fortunate to be at school when he was a Guru there, in the true sense of the word.

Many will share his love of the mountains, flora, and fauna. Even after 40-odd years of leaving School, I remember him when I hear the call of a cuckoo, see immaculately-cut grass on the golf course or hear "Here Comes the Bride."

The last one is because Guru did a clear-out of his house before retiring and gifted the Film Society his vast collection of records (mainly 78s) of western classical composers. Instead of Hariprasad Chaurasia and Shivkumar Sharma's *Call of the Valley*, we played one of those 78s for Assembly the next day, as the Headmaster strode up the length of the Auditorium to the podium lectern. Guru was the only one who latched on to the fact that Boozy (Dushyant Singh Rathore, 590 K, 1980) had played Wagner's "Wedding March!"

Udai Banerji (72 H, 1983)

Guru was an inspiration to many Doscos to take up mountaineering and trekking, and develop a love of the outdoors. A humble man, he turned back from the South Col of Mount Everest so others could go on (in the days before the current circus of hundreds lining up to step on to the summit). That selflessness will continue to be an inspiration.

Gaurav Dar (575 H, 1988)

I grew up admiring Mr Gurdial Singh. I was just ten years old when he left Doon. I inherited some of his mountaineering equipment, like his oxygen mask, and felt like a proper mountaineer. I read of his many mountaineering achievements and felt lucky to walk down the same pebble-strewn roads in Doon as Gurdial. I was always keen to meet him once I was a bit older and during a trip to Chandigarh with my father, I met him. What a glorious day that was! May his memories continue to inspire young and old alike in Doon.



Ode to the Koel

PRADEEP SEN 30 J, 1969



Guru

This is my tribute to Mr Gurdial Singh. Other than the mountains, his other passion was birds. On many occasions, after handing out the Cambridge sheets for a midterm test, his attention was diverted by a question about birds posed by a student in a childlike show of artlessness, the test soon forgotten!

'Excuse me sir, but what is that bird that is perched on the window sill?'

'Then spoke the Guru.'

Dawn has spread with the *Koel's* call
On river mountains brown and tall
The *Koel* sings with beak and wings
A sheaf of plumes under water's fall.

Grass is curled; the pear is plucked
Toddy from the tall trees sucked.
Sheaves of wheat, a heap of maize,
Where sheep and cattle glide and graze.
Where leaves are spread and seed is tucked.

The *Koel* flies as the mountain lies
With brushwood and with drying stumps;
On spindle wood's hoary clumps,
Under smoke-filled graying skies.

The darkening grove of mango trees
The buzzing of a thousand bees
Massed on a trunk in a squirming hive
Just below the black crow's dive
The strum and twang of antient breeze.

The *Koel* glides
The *Koel* slides
Through the sodden air and sky
Where the starlings group and fly
To where the misty mountains lie.

Onto the rim of the village well
Where the waters foam and swell
Wings dip in slant and slide
Across the hill's gladed side
Above the ring of the temple bell.

The *Koel's* perch
The *Koel's* search
For songbird *Shama* of shaded hills
Where the crevices the north wind fills
The temple, monastery, and a church.

The *Koel's* tweet
A bleat but sweet
Like a woodwind curved and long
The abrupt halt but always strong
Outside windows where mornings meet.

The *Koel's* flip
The *Koel's* dip
Into the heart of forest sky
Where leaves float and petals fly
And squirrels scamper through twig and chip.

Winter's gone, the March wind blows
Flowers die as the summer grows
The *Koel* continues to sing and wing
The beak and tail the slide the fling
In every season from start to close.

Thank you, sir.

GURDIAL SINGH JI: HOW HE SHAPED ME ETERNALLY... AND "PHYSICALLY"

VIJAY 'VJ' SINGAL 375 K, 1963



Guru with the School Swimming Team, 1949

Standing L-R: Bharat Singh (54), Inamuddin Chowdhry (226 T, 1949), Mr Gurdial Singh, Paramjit Lal Badhwar (229 H, 1951), Morad Chowdhury (227 T, 1949)

Sitting L-R: Pratap Kumar Kaula (90 T, 1947), Ran Vijai Singh (294 J, 1949), Ashhar Hussein (95 K, 1948), Satish Malhotra (293 J, 1948), Jayanta Deb (277 H, 1950), Gustad Kermami Irani (249 K, 1949), Ajit Khettry (302 J, 1950)



Following the passing away of Guru, there was, as expected, an outpouring of tributes on WhatsApp and other social media, with many of my fellow Doscocs testifying to how Guru had inspired them, shaped them, affected them, and so on. Well, here is a specific example of Guru shaping someone eternally and “physically.” And, trust me, I am not being hyperbolic.

During my School days, my acquaintance with Guru was somewhat peripheral, limited to his geography class because I was not in his House (Jaipur), I was a non-entity on the sports field, and I left School before becoming a Prefect.

In 1981, after learning that Guru was about to visit the US, I somehow reached him and urged him to spend a few days with me and my wife here in Houston. I enticed him with promises of showing him some of our famous museums, special art exhibits, the Symphony, and other crown jewels of Houston's cultural scene. You can bet that I felt ten feet tall when he changed his travel plans and accepted my invite, subsequently spending about a week with us.

Now the shaping part.

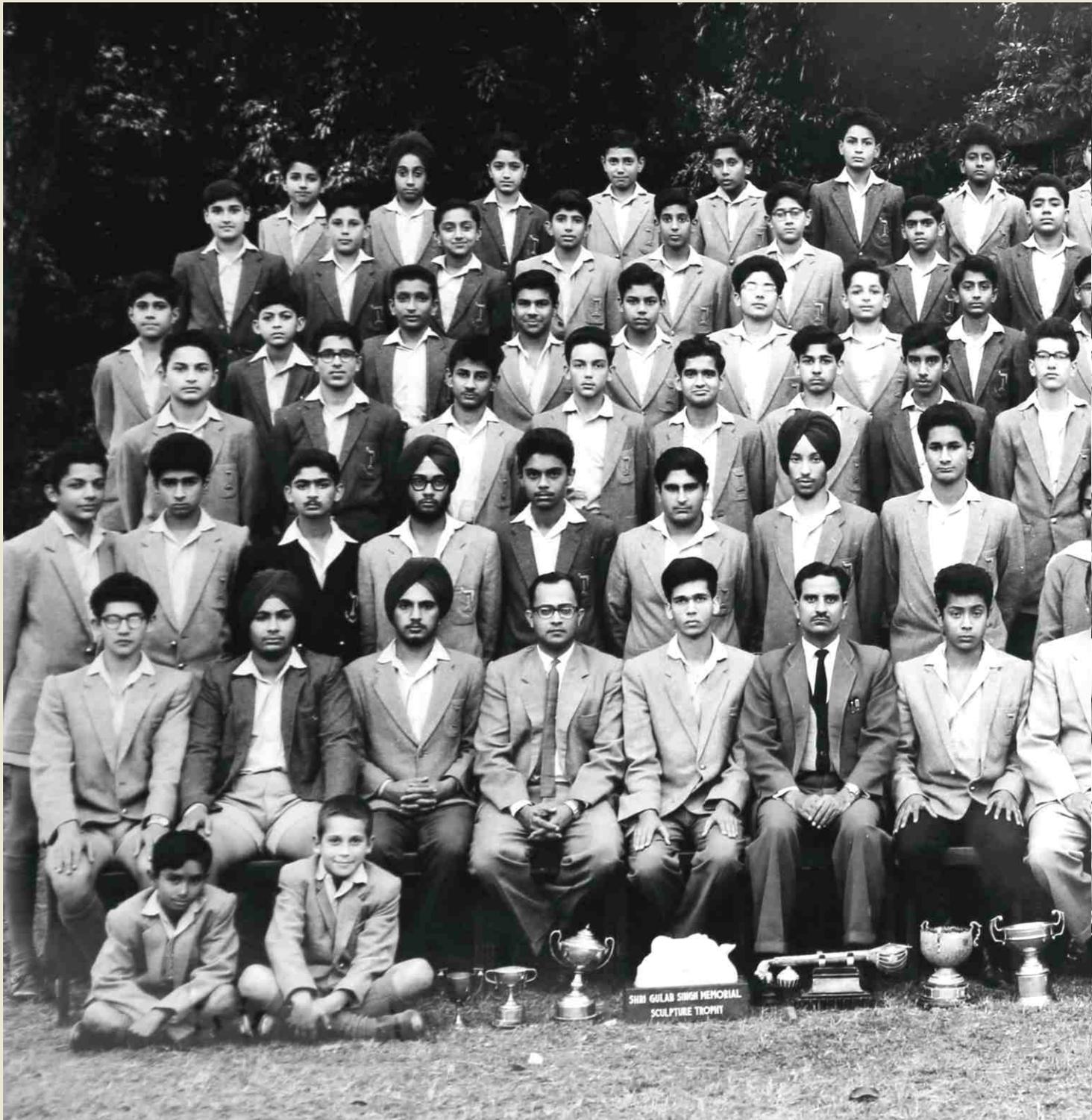
One day, on observing that I (a 33-year-old at the time) was not making time to engage in any sort of “PT” or other physical activity, he chided me gently and then demonstrated about a dozen of his favorite exercises, still as spry as ever. Given that I was upstaged by a man decades my senior, I had no choice but to launch my regimen of physical fitness.

Now, some 42 years later, I still perform Guru's exercises (plus a few more) every day!

No question, I will remember Guru until my last day.



A HOLIDAY

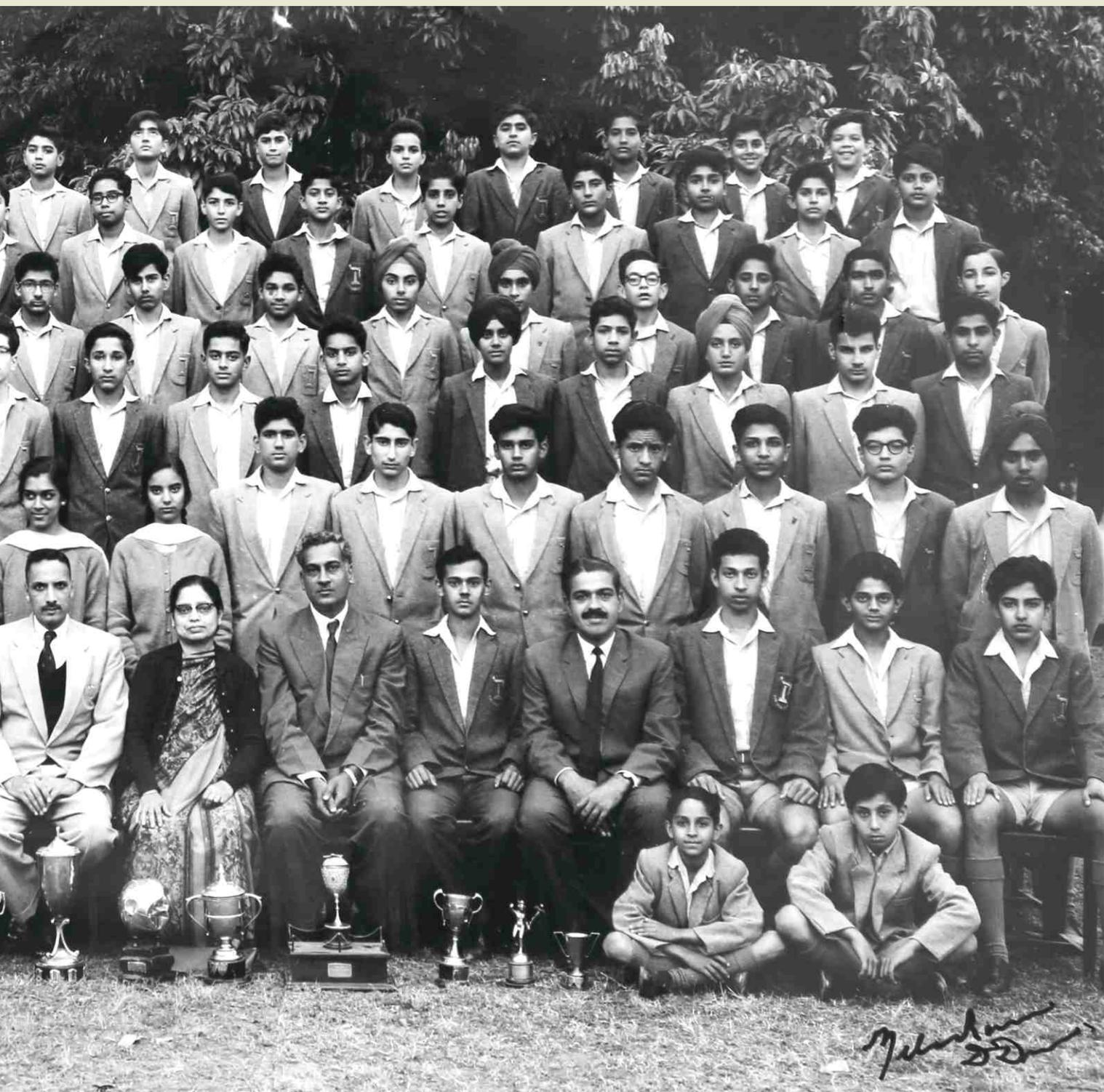


Guru (sitting front row centre) Jaipur House, 1963



WITH GURU

NOEL HENSMAN 765 H, 1982





My memories of Mr Gurdial Singh (Guru) go back to when he was our neighbour. My father, Mr Viji Hensman, was the Housemaster of Kashmir B and Guru lived next to us. I have to admit that as a young boy playing around in our garden or the Main Field, we were always worried about the football going in Guru's beautifully kept garden! He had a stern face that always left me a bit scared of him.

One summer break I was sick, and so missed going out with my family for a holiday. Guru knew of this and made an offer, through my parents, to take me on a trip with him to Chandigarh where I could meet and stay with Sunil Michael Caleb (901 K, 1982), a classmate and good friend of mine. Guru offered to bring me back as well. I was quite surprised but probably more scared, given my underlying fear. Anyway, my parents convinced me to go and meet Michael and have a break.

So, off Guru and I went in his Fiat.

We drove to Delhi where we stayed with a relative of his. My initial fears of Guru disappeared shortly after we left Dehradun. Gone was that stern countenance, replaced by a warm smiling face that kept sharing and talking, teaching me so many things while we drove.

After two nights in Delhi, we got on GT Road to Chandigarh. It used to be one of the most notorious roads for accidents those days. We came across at least ten accidents on the way and Guru would stop at each and every one to ask if everyone was alright and check if there had been any fatalities. We can only thank God that there were no human lives lost in any of those accidents, but we did have many dead sheep in one where a truck had turned turtle.

We arrived safely in Chandigarh. Guru dropped me at Michael's place where I enjoyed two or three days, after which picked me up and we returned home safely.

This holiday has remained entrenched in my mind purely because I was not sure I should have even gone, but it turned out to be a very enjoyable and memorable trip I had with one of our most loved masters at School, Guru.

In my memories of him as a teacher are his love for birds, and his ability to recognise a bird by just being told what it looked or sounded like. Of course, we used this as a good tool to ask him about a bird we had heard or seen when we had a class test and the entire period would go by in a nice long lecture about the bird! At the end of the period he would say we will have the test in the next class, only for us to possibly try the same diversion tactics again.

These memories remain, while the stern look on his face fades. Thank you, Guru.



A SURPRISING SUBVERSIVE

ARUN KUMAR 99 K, 1976



Mr Gurdial 'Guru' Singh (GU)

Many Doscos will remember the late, great Guru as a pillar of the Dosco establishment, but I always regarded him as a subversive element at School. Two anecdotes to support this view:

A few of us would periodically publish - actually, cyclostyle by hand late at night, in the best revolutionary style - a satirical magazine that made fun of students, and, occasionally, the stuffier teachers. The teachers felt this took away from their dignity and complained to Guru. Guru's solution was to ask us to always lampoon him in every issue, so that when any teacher came to him to complain, he could throw up his hands in sympathy and say "What can I do? They are making fun of me, too!"

The other anecdote: one day he started our geography class by reading an article on inflation from the newspaper. By then we were used to his idiosyncratic style of teaching, with its heavy emphasis on identifying plant species and bird calls. But, after five minutes of listening to this talk about inflation I was fed up and asked him to stop and teach geography instead, so we wouldn't flunk our year-end exams. Guru gravely put down the newspaper, peered over his half-moon specs at me, and said, "Mr. Kumar, there's nothing I can teach you about geography that's as important as you learning what inflation is."

Turns out he was right.



Nature Spoke to Him

SANJEEV MEHRA 359 J, 1975

I write to share my thoughts about Mr Gurdial Singh (“Guru”), who was an inspiration, an institution, and a role model of a teacher. His teaching left a lasting impact on me, and I am sure, countless others. He was a kind, gentle soul, and I will greatly miss him.

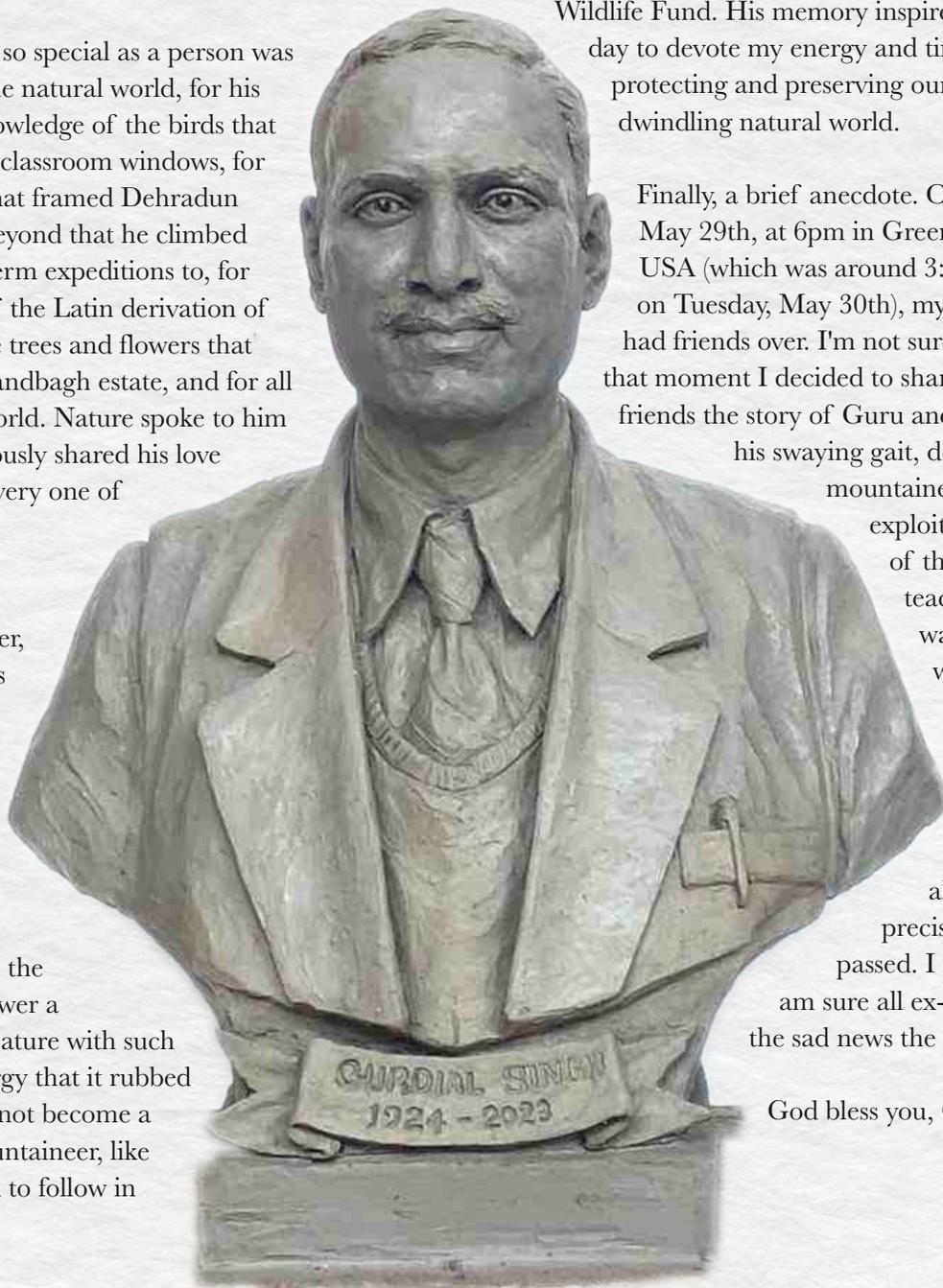
What made him so special as a person was his passion for the natural world, for his encyclopedic knowledge of the birds that flew by his open classroom windows, for the mountains that framed Dehradun and those well beyond that he climbed and took Mid-Term expeditions to, for his knowledge of the Latin derivation of the names of the trees and flowers that adorned the Chandbagh estate, and for all of the natural world. Nature spoke to him and he so generously shared his love of nature with every one of us he taught.

He was my geography teacher, if memory serves me right, in C Form. And, to this day, I remember fondly his willingness to divert from the subject matter in the classroom to answer a question about nature with such passion and energy that it rubbed off on me. I did not become a teacher or a mountaineer, like some he inspired to follow in

his path, but I did develop a lifelong interest in protecting the natural world, which I have tried to pass along to my four boys. His mentorship inspired me to develop an ongoing interest in conservation, and I have tried to give back by serving as a trustee of Trout Unlimited, and as Co-Chair of the World Wildlife Fund. His memory inspires me every day to devote my energy and time to protecting and preserving our rapidly dwindling natural world.

Finally, a brief anecdote. On Monday, May 29th, at 6pm in Greenwich, CT, USA (which was around 3:30am in India on Tuesday, May 30th), my wife and I had friends over. I'm not sure why, but at that moment I decided to share with my friends the story of Guru and I mimicked his swaying gait, described his mountaineering exploits, and spoke of the legendary teacher that he was. Perhaps it was fate, and I don't know at what time he left us, but it seems it was almost at that precise moment he passed. I received, as I am sure all ex-Doscocs did, the sad news the next day.

God bless you, Guru.



Guru's bust being readied for its permanent place at School



MY GURU

ROMMEL VARMA 254 J, 1964



Manaslu

I was fortunate to have Guru as my Housemaster in Jaipur House in the mid-sixties, and I sat next to him on the senior table for almost two years.

I was inexplicably drawn to the Himalayas from my youth as one had a stunning view of the Himalayan range: massifs of Annapurna Himalchuli and Manaslu from the rooftop of my village home (all among the twenty highest mountains in the world). I heard stories about them as the Abode of Gods, and the idea that Shiva lives on Kailasa and his better half, the Goddess Parvati, is the daughter of Parvat Raj Himalaya. On clear days I had views of Gaurishankar; divinity personified as mountain peaks. But what intrigued me

and fascinated me was the mountain Manaslu, the name suggesting “*Manas*” (mind), “*slu*” (home). Taken together: “a home of the mind.”

The idea sank deep inside me, do these associations help one achieve a more expanded awareness of a higher mind? We have yogis in the Himalayas but surprisingly no “Yoga of the Himalayas.”

At the dining table, my conversations with Guru explored these ideas. There was little available in the way of understanding their sanctity; mere mention of Shiva's blessings that ensue upon reaching the foot of Kailasa and that the Ganges flows down from the



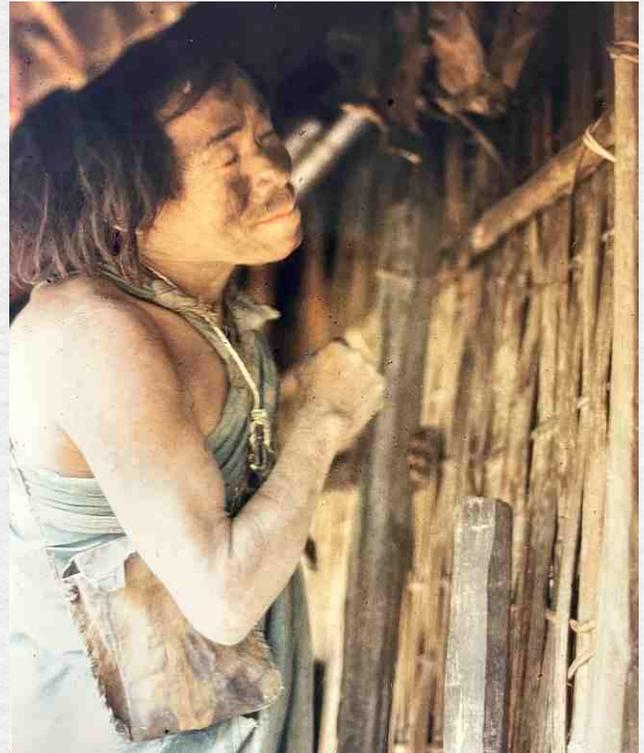
Himalaya and that Benaras is sacred on the banks of Uttarvahini Ganga flowing north pointing again and again to the celestial regions.

And there was foreboding: avalanches, frostbites, death, and danger. Guru had experienced tragedies on the 1962 Everest expedition; a sherpa, Nawang Tsering, hit by a falling rock dying in agony just a few hours later. Then my father's close friend Harishwar Dayal, India's ambassador to Nepal, on an adventure trek in 1964 succumbed to altitude sickness at 17,000 ft in the Khumbu region of Everest.

All this we would discuss: "Sir, is it worth it all?"

And he gave me the mantra that pushed me onward: "Go forth not as a soft tourist, but as a tough real life adventurer and leave a mark for future generations to tread a higher evolutionary path, making the world a better place, and humans a happier lot."

I was given to understand that one of the unique features of The Doon School was its sprawling 65-acre campus inside which the faculty and students lived together enabling a much closer interaction with one another. On account of this, Guru had developed that deep understanding of my quest, and the Guru in him took on an advisory role. He spent several weeks with me at my home in Bihar, even accompanying me to research libraries, and would often travel from Chandigarh to attend my lectures. He even gave me his expensive aluminum rucksack, and names of reliable guides in the Garhwal Kumaon Char Dham regions.



A member of the Sulung tribe

I showed him first the pictures of members of the Sulung tribe, hunter-gatherer nomads in NEFA (now Arunachal Pradesh) inside the Indo-Tibetan border, which enabled my search into deep anthropology for a histocultural understanding of the holy Himalayas.

That seeking with the mark of a *guru-shishya parampara* will continue as a Yoga with humble *pranams*, and salutations to the memory of My Guru.





Unforgettable

RUPIN JAYAL 870 H, 1982



Guru and Dr Karan Singh celebrating Guru's 90th

I have known Mr Gurdial Singh (Sir) my entire life. He shared a passion for the mountains with my father Nalni Dhar Jayal (100 T, 1943) and the two remained lifelong friends – bonds forged by

the spirit only mountaineers understand. My earliest (if foggy) memories are of Sir visiting my parents while my father was District Commissioner of Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh, when I was a toddler. Throughout my life Sir was a fascinatingly informative, engaging, and wonderfully heartwarming presence.

I was lucky enough to have Sir as my Deputy Headmaster while I was in School, and have some indelible memories. His love for his garden and especially a square of Taj grass that he kept immaculately weed free and perfectly groomed. He shared a wonderfully whimsical sense of humour with my mother. She insisted that he treated his rows of flowering plants just like his students by ensuring they were all flowering at the right time and all growing to the same height. His love of music, which created an invaluable bond with my brother Arvid Jayal (277 J, 1969). Him singing “Lili Marleen” during one Golden Night (apparently encouraged by my irreverent mother).



Mr Gurdial Singh with his erstwhile student Dr Karan Singh (259 K, 1945)



Narendra 'Nandu' Dhar Jayal (101 T, 1942) and Nalni Jayal at c 15,000 ft with Amrit Ganga valley in the middle distance and the Kamet group of peaks in the background. Photo Courtesy: Gurdial Singh, 1952

I will never forget the time during the IMF jubilee celebrations when a young Rajiv Gandhi (203 K, 1960), not yet Prime Minister but clearly the emerging leader of the Congress Party, upon seeing Sir quietly walking away, virtually leapt off the stage to greet him. Sir, in his typically modest way, was walking away because he did not want to bother Mr Gandhi.

His memory was legendary and if he was fascinated by

the mountains, I was always fascinated by his recollections of events long past. And the way he was always able to recount them with a freshness and enthusiasm that was astonishing. I remember the last time I met him with my brother in Chandigarh in early 2020. He regaled us with his recollections of his visit to my brother's home dating back to the 1980s. Episodes that we had forgotten were recounted with a freshness that made them seem like they took place just the day before.

My abiding memories of Sir is of him being the quintessential Master, utterly devoted to all those fortunate enough to have been his students. He was the epitome of courtesy and modesty. I never recall him having anything other than positive things to say about all those he spoke about. He exemplified positivity and was incomparably generous. He had an irrepressible spirit and was an unforgettable personality. But for me what he exemplified best was mountains – the adventure, the honour, the irrepressibility of spirit, and the courage to never be intimidated by a mountain, but rather be inspired by it.

“The mountains were his masters. They rimmed in life. They were the cup of reality, beyond growth, beyond struggle and death. They were his absolute unity in the midst of eternal change.”

– Thomas Wolfe



Guru during his 90th birthday celebrations, along with Lt Col (Retd) Mantaj Singh (204 J, 1969), Harpal Singh (322 H, 1965), and Nalni Dhar Jayal



A Colossus Spreading Goodness

M C T P CHIDAMBARAM 135 H, 1976



Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF) Silver Jubilee, New Delhi, 1983

Front Row From L to R: Rupin Jayal (870 H, 1982), Parash Moni Das, IPS (298 H, 1969), Mr Gurdial Singh, Brig Jagjit Singh, AVSM and Bar, VSM (220 K, 1942)

What a loss to the world.

He was like a Colossus who strode the Earth, spreading goodness everywhere he went. As a human being and a teacher he was second to none. What an amazing memory he had! He could recall every boy's number and House, no matter how many years it might have been since the boy had passed out of School.

In my case, he taught two generations of our family. My father in the late 1940s (PM Chidambaram, 125 H, 1949), and myself in the early 1970s. I still remember going on a Mid-Term with him somewhere in the Kumaon hills. He had organised an army lorry for that trip.

It was in the 1990s that he started to travel in South India, which he regretted not having done earlier. He was our guest at home in Chennai during this period, and loved spending time in our coffee plantations in the

Hassan district in Karnataka and in the lower Palani Hills in Tamil Nadu. He would walk the length and breadth of the plantations, and brought to our notice the various avian species that would visit. It was indeed an eye-opener!

I also remember, distinctly, when our daughter was still a little girl and whom he would call fondly by her name, staying at his home overnight on our way back from Kullu-Manali. It was such a pleasant time being with him. He took us around Chandigarh showing us the city as he knew it, where he went for walks and the club he would go to.

All in all, such wonderful memories of such a wonderful person who touched the hearts of everyone who had the good fortune to know him. He was one of a kind. He will be missed very much.

May his soul find the freedom it deserves.



A Venerated Master

ARIJIT CHAUDHURI 206 J, 1954



Like many, I was grieved to learn of the death of Gurdial Singh. May I, therefore, narrate an incident concerning him?

In the middle fifties, the *Weekly* occasionally ran short of material to fill the four pages of which it then consisted. When that happened, the Master in charge of it asked if such could be found among the weekly essays we had to write as part of our homework. An essay written by me appeared therein.

Guru visited Calcutta sometime in the nineties to receive an award from, I think, the Himalayan

Mountaineering Association. I met him on this visit at a gathering of Old Boys organised by Ashim Mukherjee (44 T, 1958).

While talking to me he mentioned my essay, which I had completely

forgotten. He said he would send me a copy. He did so, and on it was written in his hand, "from the DSW of 55 years ago."

Apart from his remarkable memory, the incident shows the extraordinary pains he took to find and copy the *Weekly* and send it to me, especially as he was living in Chandigarh at the time.

Is it any wonder that we venerated him?

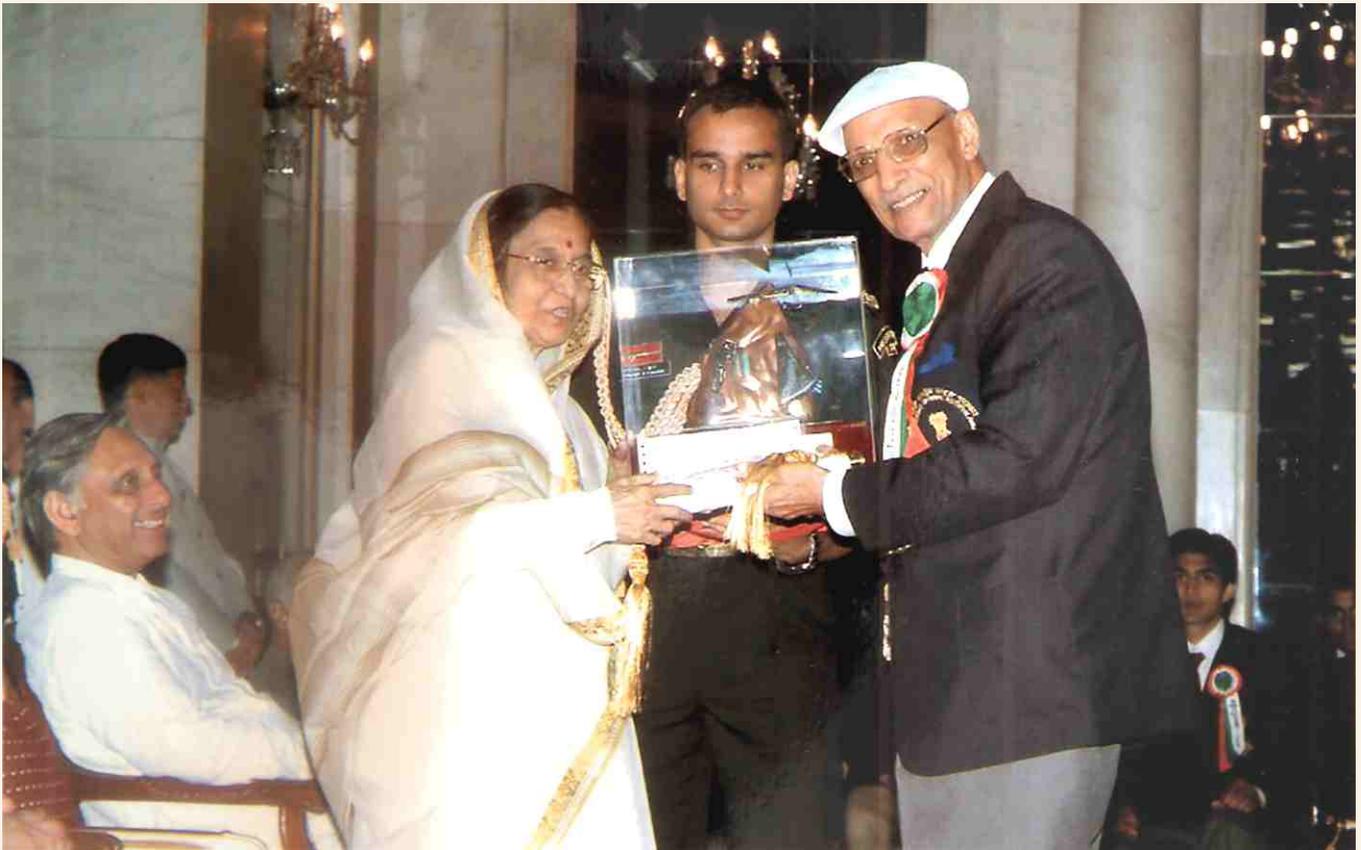


*Guru's award from
The Himalayan Club Kolkata Section*



SCALED MANY PEAKS

SANJAI BANERJI 387 H, 1976



Mr Gurdial Singh being awarded the Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award by President Pratibha Patil for his services to Indian mountaineering

The Indian mountaineering community, and the Indian Mountaineering Foundation mourns the loss of its oldest member and mountaineering stalwart, Gurdial Singh, aged 99.

Gurdial Singh, born January 1st, 1924, is credited with leading India's first mountaineering expedition to Trisul (7,120m) in 1951, and he is famous for performing a headstand on the summit. Apart from being the first Indian to be included in The Alpine Club, Singh was given the Arjuna Award in 1965 for his contributions towards Indian mountaineering.

He scaled many peaks including Bandarpunch, Trisul, Kamet, Abi Gamin, and Nanda Devi. In 1965, he was a member of the first Indian Expedition Team to Mount Everest led by Captain Mohan Singh Kohli, when nine

climbers summited. In 1967, he was awarded the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award in India. In 2007, Gurdial Singh was given a Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award for his contributions to Indian mountaineering.

He joined The Doon School in 1945, where he was Deputy Headmaster and was fondly known as “Guru” by his students. He inspired many to take up mountaineering, like Ankur Bahl (193 J, 1976) who summited Mount Everest in 2016.

I was privileged to be taught geography by him and dedicated my book *The Mountaineering Handbook* to Gurdial Singh Sir in 2022.



Mr Gurdial Singh, Sir John Hunt (leader of the first ascent of Everest in 1953), and Mr Hari Dang

To Give, and Not to Count the Cost

SHIV DAYAL 'JUTAY' SRIVASTAVA 454 K, 1974

Nature has bestowed the Doon Valley with high mountains, towering snow-clad peaks, lush green vegetation with verdant pine forests, Deodar, oak trees, rich flora and fauna and, to appreciate and compliment Nature's bounty, Gurdial Singh (Guru, as he was fondly called). God's gift to The Doon School.

An institution in himself, a colossus who strode the portals of Chandbagh with elan, grace, and indefatigable zeal. He had an infectious enthusiasm that had young impressionable minds vying for his attention, and the pearls of wisdom that came as naturally as the gushing waters from the hills. He was the fresh fragrant

breeze, that whiff which swayed you to reverence.

A man of simple, spartan habits. Every morning in his khaki shorts doing exercises on the Main Field, watching all of us doing PT under 'Darra' (Mr Darshan Singh, our PT In-Charge). Darra's incessant whistles and roaring



commands, his favourite, “O! Bloody!” (pronounced “O! Blutty” by him), kept us on our toes. If Guru noticed any slackness on the Main Field, you were nudged appropriately!

Guru to us schoolboys was not only a mentor, an idol, but an exemplar to be emulated in life. He commanded respect and personified the finer traits: humane, sensitive, and brimming with kindness.

His passion for mountaineering earned him the sobriquet: “Guru is married to the mountains!”

His vast repertoire in ornithology had me spellbound. During geography class if the Coppersmith Barbet called in its distinctive “tuk tuk” call, Guru would have pin-drop silence to explain the unique call of the Coppersmith and the reason for its name, resembling the striking on metal of a coppersmith with a hammer! Learning was fun, and his geography classes had varied inputs that imparted a sea of information.

Similarly, his knowledge of the trees in Chandbagh was phenomenal. His reeling off names of species of Pine, *Pinus longifolia* near Foot House, *Pinus sylvestris*, etc, opened our eyes to be curious and develop inquisitive minds at an

early age and, thereby, hone our talents.

Sir's knowledge knew no bounds and while cheering during Inter House cricket matches, he often corrected us by telling us that when a batsman leaves the ball you didn't have to say “Well left alone,” rather “Well let alone!”

Guru, as Deputy HM, taking the morning Assembly when HM was on leave, was also an education. The music that played before HM entered the auditorium was a routine ritual for us oblivious to the genius of Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, and Chopin. It was Guru who told us of the intricacies of the various symphonies that we used to hear without appreciation, and that ignited us to refinement.

Guru was an epitome of Precept and Practice going hand in hand. We watched the movie made about India's first expedition to Mt Everest under Col MS Kohli titled *Nine Atop Everest* (also a book by the same name) which had Guru as one of its members. In the movie, oxygen cylinders get buried under heavy snow caused by an avalanche, and the group to summit next runs short of its quota. Guru willingly comes forward and gives his own cylinders to enable them to summit, and sacrifices his own attempt

to reach the top!

What a devotion to team spirit and the high moral ground.

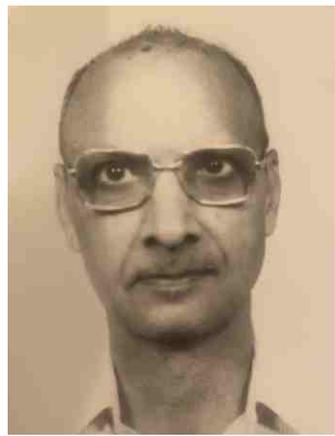
When Guru addressed the morning Assembly and our School Prayer was read by him, particularly the lines “To give and not to count the cost,” it always struck me that Guru himself was a living example of this virtue.

Guru was idolised by Dosecos and he requited it in ample measure. Guru leaves behind a rich legacy and Chandbagh is the poorer without him.

If only the trees, the buildings, the birds of Chandbagh, and, above all, the mountains, mute witness to this many splendoured personality could speak, they would tell a tale of exemplary moral frame of flesh and bones whose indelible footprints in the sands of time rekindle many a heart to be a hero in life's onward march – still pursuing, still achieving, and never to yield.

He lived his life full of years and honours and will always remain in our hearts as a true friend, philosopher, and guide.

Of all the sad words of pen and tongue the saddest are these: Rest in eternal peace, dear Sir, as flights of angels carry you to your heavenly abode.



Guru

The Jewel of Consciousness

DEV KUMAR GOGOI 234 J, 1971

Editor's Note

This has been excerpted from the chapter "From Assam to Arunachala," included in an anthology titled Who Am I? Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi published by The Hindu Group, Chennai, 2020.

My Housemaster was a towering figure of a man, both literally and figuratively, whom the whole school affectionately called "Guru." In the school timetable, way more complex than the periodic table of elements, space permitted only two alphabets to represent each teacher. Guru's was "Gu."

Guru was a team member of the first Indian expedition to successfully climb Mt Everest in 1965. The national euphoria can scarcely be imagined today. When the Arjuna Award was offered to the expedition leader, he refused to accept, unless all nineteen team members got it, too. And so they did. Guru played a key role in the joint effort that placed nine members on the summit, holding the fort, as it were, on the freezing, windswept South Col (7,906m) for several nights, spanning four successful summit forays, without oxygen. That's another world record.

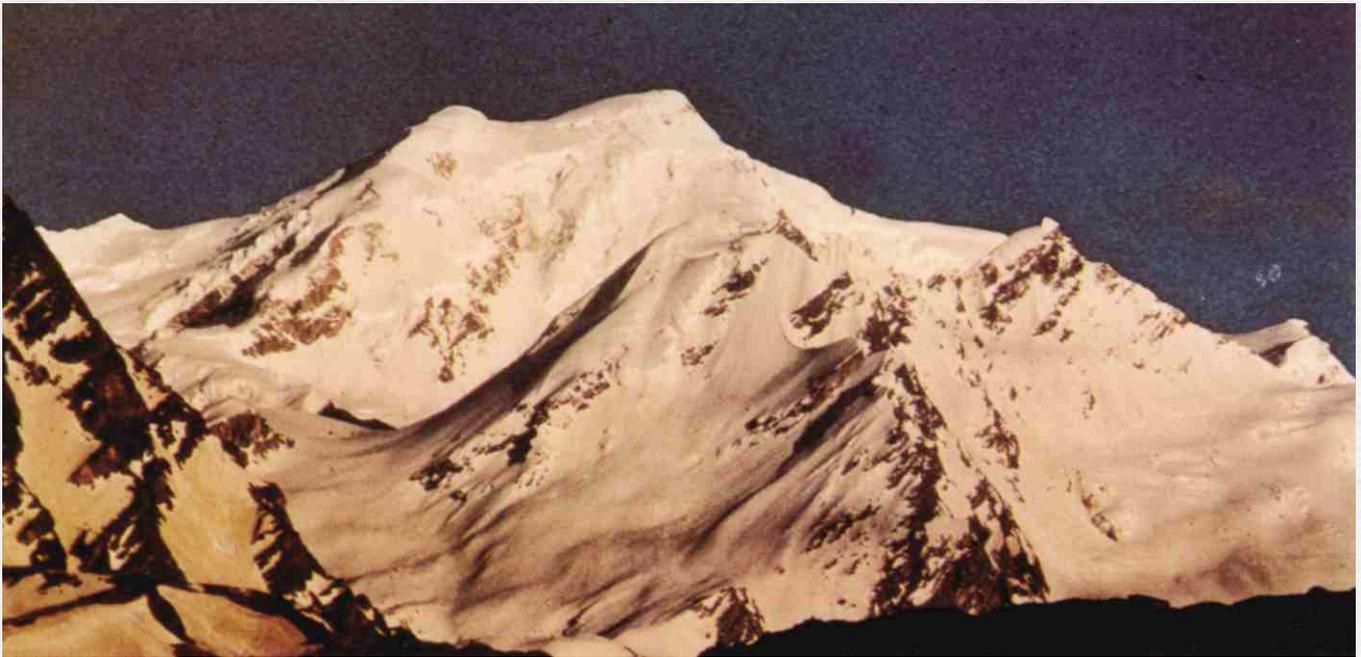
So when Guru asked me one morning to fetch about a dozen *mani* stones from the Art School to his house on campus, it was an offer I couldn't refuse. These stones are ubiquitous throughout the Himalayas, found atop remote mountain passes and sacred spots along the trail, each inscribed with a chiselled prayer, usually "Om Mani Padme Hum!" Each was the size of a plate and weighed several kilograms. It was not possible to do it all by myself. Luckily, my classmates were kind, and we did it as a team, much to Guru's satisfaction.

How was I to know that I was actually cradling in my arms the most powerful mantra north of the Himalaya, "Om, the jewel (of consciousness) in the lotus (of the heart), swaha!"



Trials by Guru

ANIL TALUKDAR 384 K, 1970



View of Jaonli, 21,760 feet from Advance Base Camps, c 15,00 ft. Photo Courtesy: SC Biala, 1996

Mr Gurdial Singh taught me geography lessons in two Forms and I have him to thank for at least one of the traits he instilled in me.

“Ghadda” or “Guru,” as he was popularly known, has been the reason why many of us of that generation are curious and appreciative of all the things nature has given us, starting with what he himself often proclaimed as his better half, the mountains!

Everyone who has been a student of his class will remember his sudden exclamation in the middle of a lecture when he would listen keenly to the call of a Great Himalayan Barbet (*Megalaima virens*), or the Himalayan cuckoo

(*Cuculus saturatus*). He would even go to the large window of his class on the first floor to have a quick look-see and then return to his lecture. Then he would tell us about the bird and its call.

I had an encounter with Guru one fine day after the Trials results were announced and we had been given back our answer sheets. Having taken advantage of the plaster I had on my right leg due to a sports injury, I had smuggled in some pre-written answer sheets to the exam and had handed them in with others I had written there. To my eye it wasn't easily discernible that there was a difference in the handwriting, ink, or the similarity of the answer sheets. Guru, somehow, came to know that my Trials geography

paper was much better than his opinion of me, so I was told to stay back after class to see him. He clearly told me off in a manner that was not offensive. I was admonished in a calibrated steady tone, as was his manner. I left without feeling degraded, relieved that the ordeal was over.

Geography became my most favorite subject, I received the best marks in that subject in the ISC Examinations and even today impart short, informative lessons in geography to my students who are studying as undergraduates in the hotel management programs we have at the Kukreja Institute of Management and Catering.

I miss him. RIP Guru.



Guru: Of Birds and Beethoven

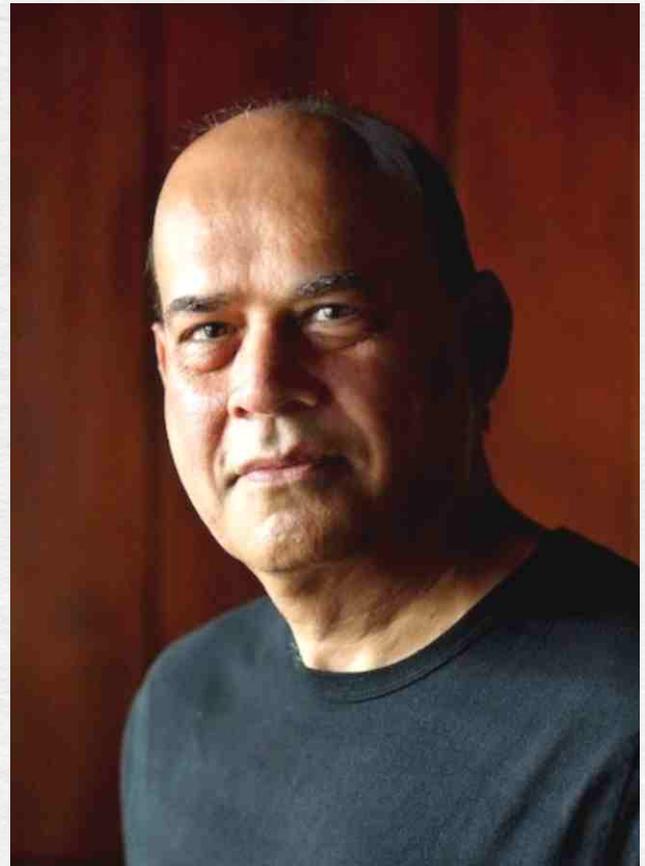
DR VIVEK BAMMI 362 H, 1971

Great teachers open up dimensions of life and learning much beyond their subject area expertise. They inspire curiosity, inquiry, and exploration rather than formulaic responses or conformity to external convention. Gurdial Singh, “Guru,” transformed my inner being with two questions interspersed in his geography lessons:

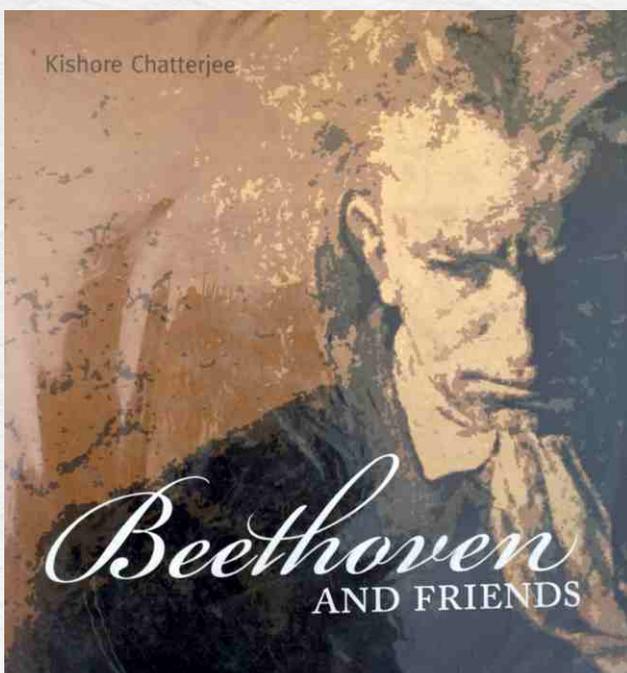
“Did you listen to the birds?”

Here was the mountaineering hero conveying his love of nature at the most intimate level. Chandbagh is a micro paradise, and from this exhortation there developed a lifelong regard for every living species, every lowly plant on this wondrous planet. Guru was an ecologist and an environmental warrior much before those qualities took on the urgency of our times. From him, I learned the power of observation, the majesty of nature in every leaf, in every sound.

“Did you listen to the Beethoven symphony played at Assembly this morning?”



Dr Vivek Bammi



One of Guru's most cherished possessions

I had no idea that these first chords would germinate into a passion for every note of that genius, the one who dared to explore every conceivable human emotion and something beyond emotion itself: a conquest of adversity turned into the most magnificent celebration of the human spirit. It was the perfect combination, appealing to the rebellious streak of the teenager with the quest for some transcendent identity and a spiritual home.

The common thread in these questions was active listening: as I grew into my experiences in education and parenting, I realized that this is the most important life skill of all.

Guru had opened the door to inexhaustible joy.



The Whole World Came Alive in His Classroom

PREETINDER SINGH VIRK 242 K, 1956



Gu, 1983

This is a photograph of Gu, as we all called him, from June 1983, on the Alpine Garden of Mt Washington, NH, USA.

Gu was a wonderful geography teacher who made the subject, and

the whole world, come alive in his classroom, for all the terms from B1 to S1 of my time in School. But beyond that, he shone as an enthusiastic exponent of Himalayan hiking. He fired up my classmate Vibhu Raj Bhalla (245 K, 1953) and me to attempt a weeklong hike, in May 1958, from Gwaldam to

Gohna Tal in the Garhwal Himalayas north of Kausani. In fact, he generously lent us a couple of his rucksacks and sleeping bags, and an ultra-precious, cloth-backed Survey of India (SOI) map of the terrain.

The hike offered us up close views of sparkling mountains Trisul and Nanda Ghunti, and the roaring rivers Pindar and Nandakini and Birahi Ganga, not to mention the dark blue, fjord-studded, Gohna Tal, which was still a deep lake at the time.

All indelible memories inextricably associated with Gu.

Gu visited the USA in 1983, and I was lucky to be included in the Boston leg of his trip (partly because my parents were bridge-playing friends with his older brother Gen Sartaj Singh). From my place, we drove north to New Hampshire to visit Gu's mountaineering friend H Adams Carter aka '*Bhalu Saab*' (because of his lumbering gait). And while in New Hampshire, we went to its highest peak, Mt Washington, 6288 feet, which is pretty tame compared to Trisul at 23,360 feet. Gu, nevertheless, took a short hike to its Alpine Garden, a rocky shelf that is above the treeline and hosts a myriad of tiny flowers, some of which Gu identified by their botanical names, such as Geum, a kind of a yellow primula. The photograph of Gu, with his signature umbrella, was taken in this area. Amongst nature.



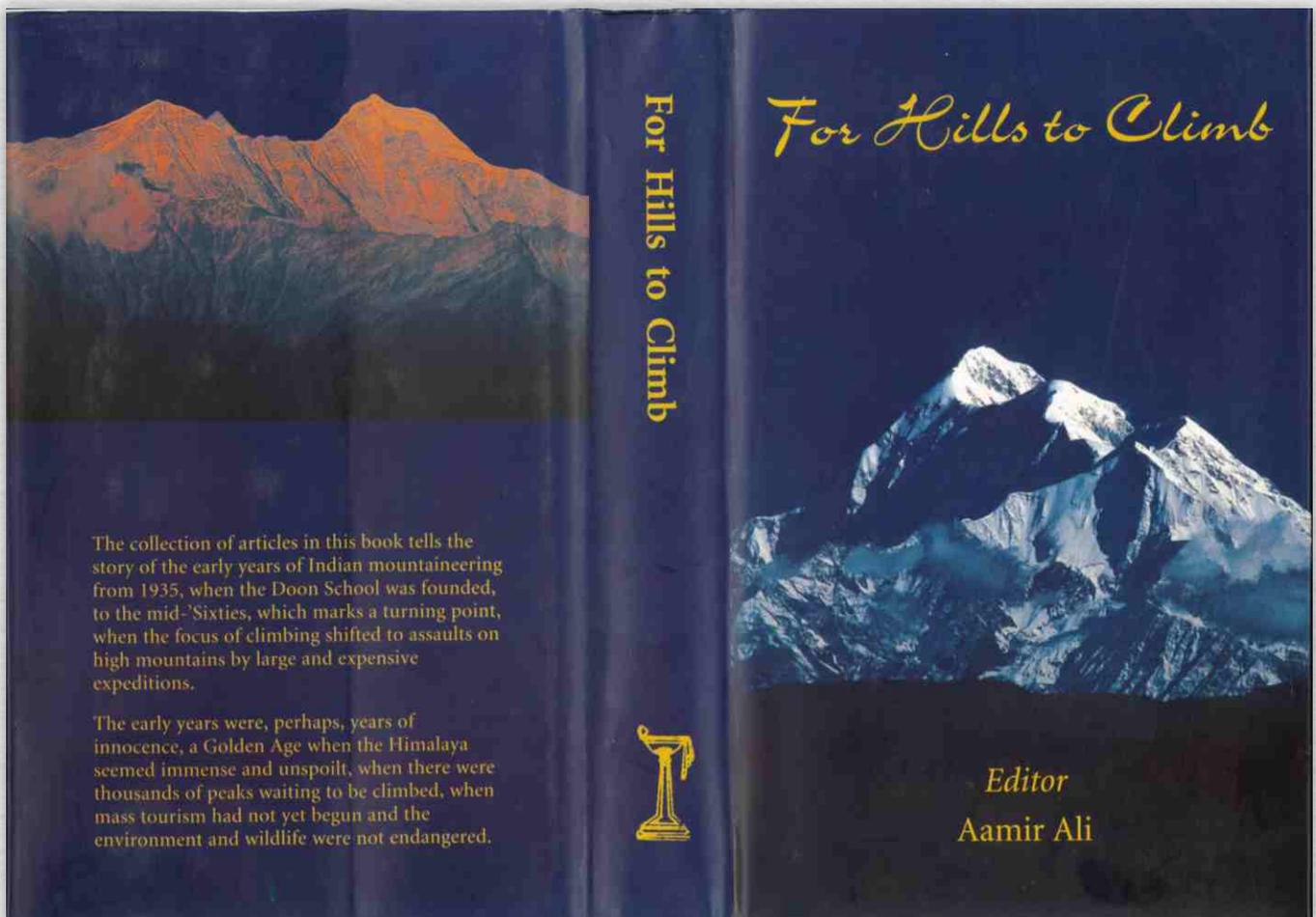
For Hills to Climb

EDITOR AAMIR ALI 214 K, 1939

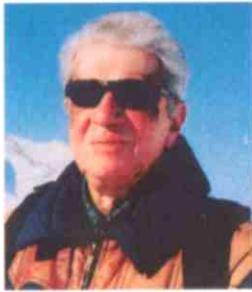
PUBLISHED BY THE DOON SCHOOL OLD BOYS' SOCIETY, 2001

The collection of articles in this book tells the story of the early years of Indian mountaineering from 1935, when the Doon School was founded, to the mid-'Sixties, which marks a turning point, when the focus of climbing shifted to assaults on high mountains by large and expensive expeditions.

The early years were, perhaps, years of innocence, a Golden Age when the Himalaya seemed immense and unspoilt, when there were thousands of peaks waiting to be climbed, when



Aamir Ali



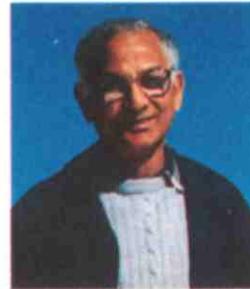
Aamir Ali was at the Doon School 1938–39, then taught there 1944–46. After a short spell as

Associate Editor, *Trend Magazine*, he joined the International Labour Office in 1947 and retired in 1985 as Director of Personnel. He is married and lives in Geneva; he has one son, also settled in Geneva.



Gurdial Singh joined the Doon School as Assistant Master in 1945 and retired as Deputy

Headmaster in 1979. He carried out extensive treks and climbs regularly in the Himalaya over a period of forty years. In recognition of his achievements in the high hills he was awarded the IMF Gold Medal, Padma Shri, and Arjuna Award.



Nalni Jayal was at the Doon School 1936–45. After a brief spell in the Indian Air Force he was in

the Civil Services until 1985. For nearly half of his service he served as development administrator in mountain areas, and the last decade was devoted largely to promoting environment in all its aspects in India. This included the setting up of, among others, the Nanda Devi National Park. Environmental issues were again his principal concern during his decade-long spell with the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage. He is now addressing social and ecological concerns in the villages of Uttaranchal through the Himalaya Trust, a voluntary organisation.



mass tourism had not yet begun and the environment and wildlife were not endangered.

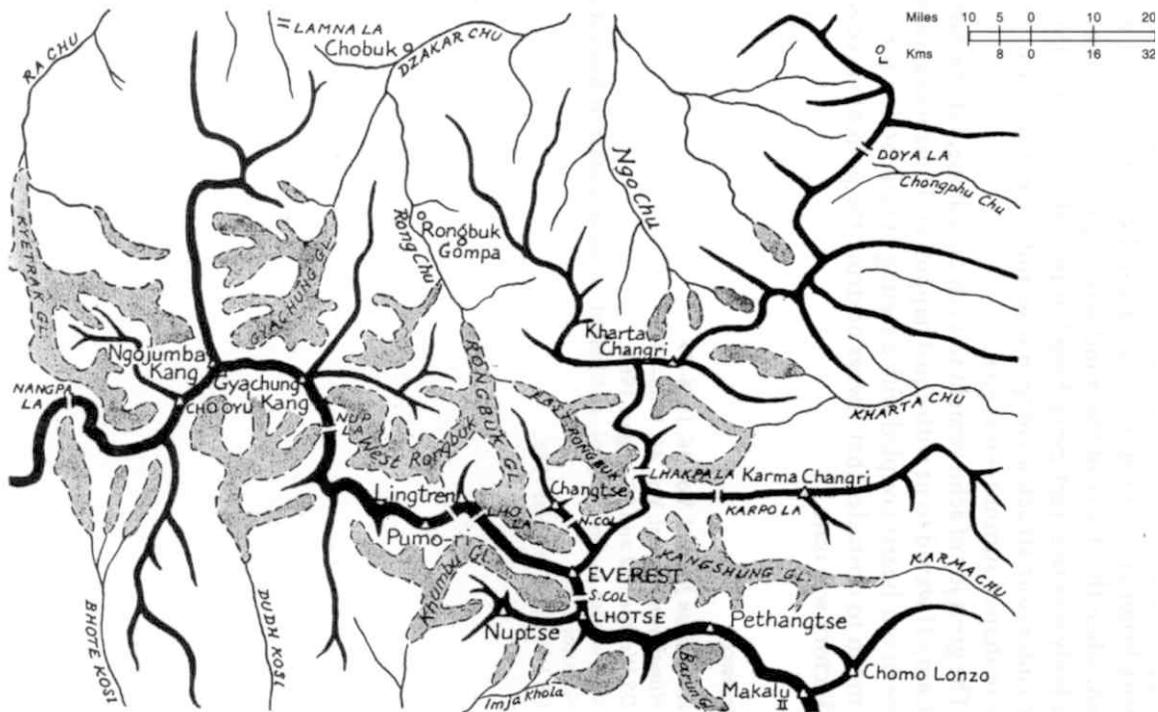
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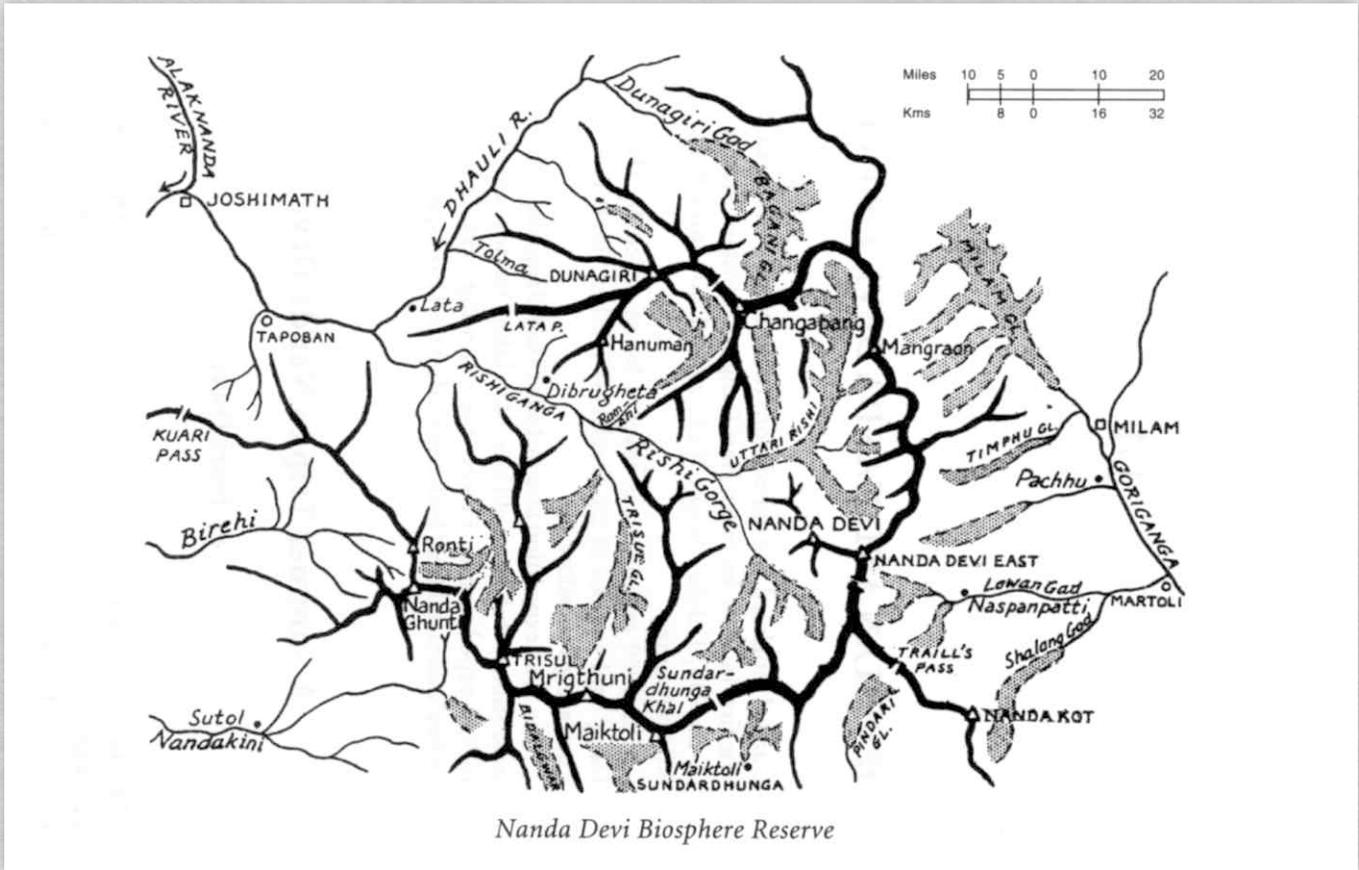
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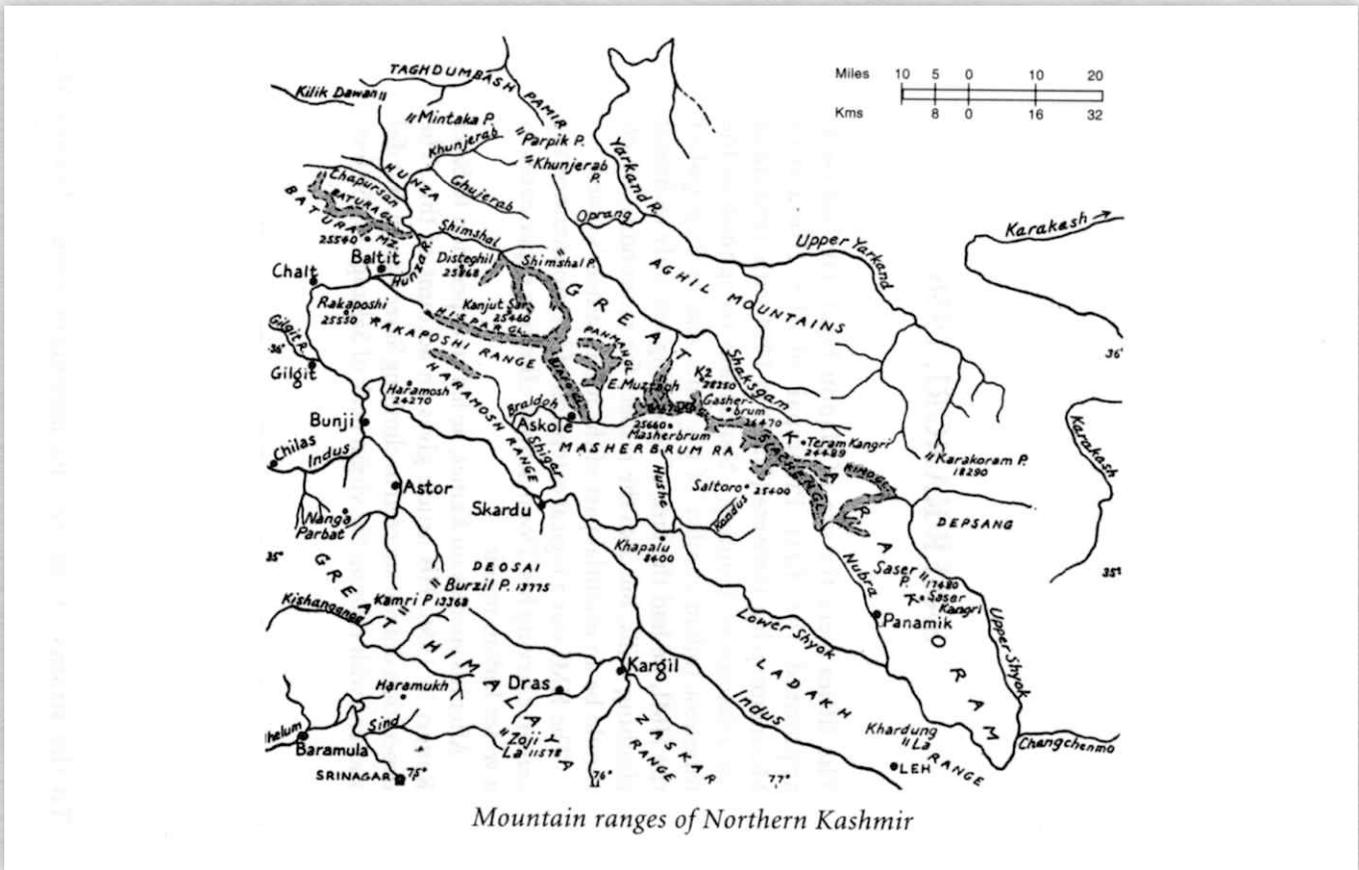


The Everest group of peaks

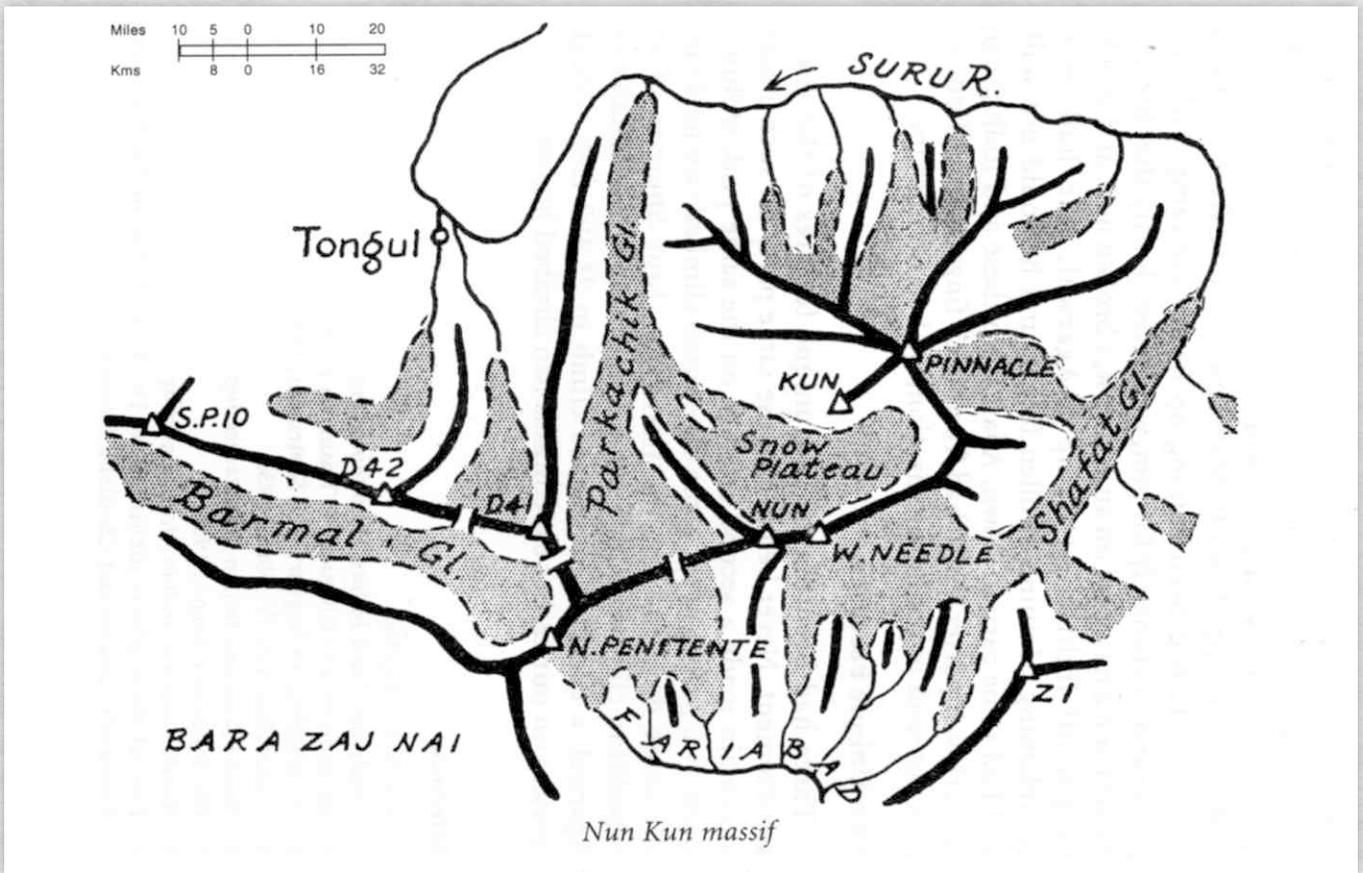
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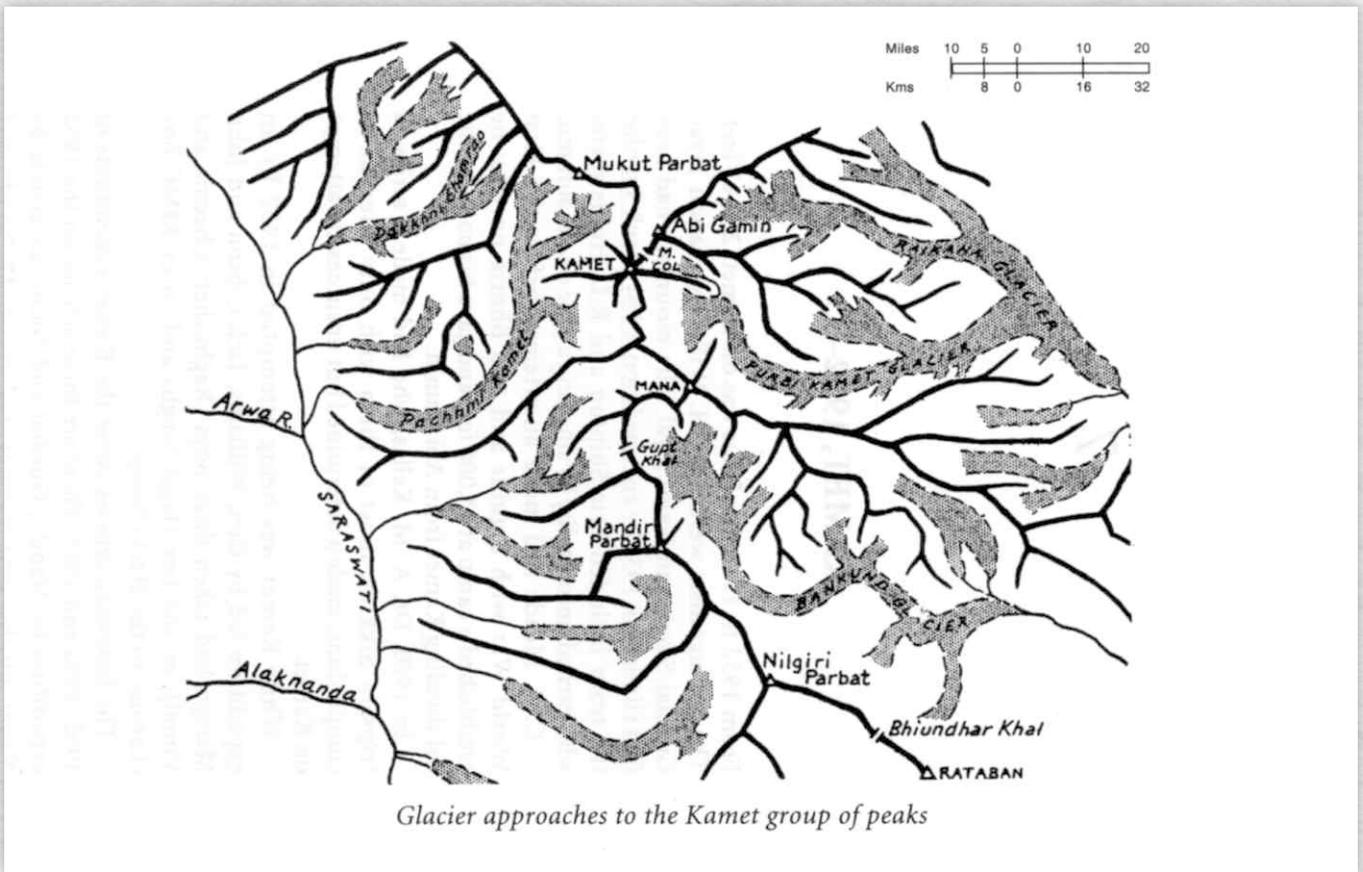
Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve



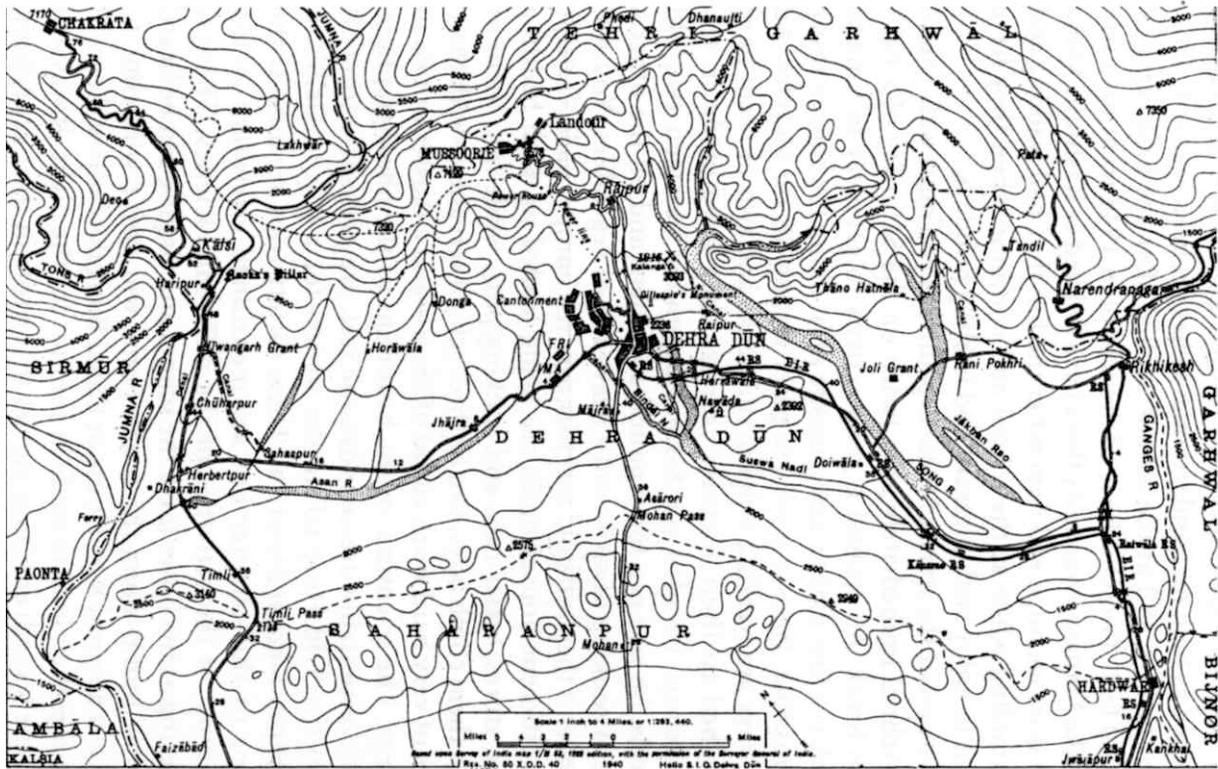
Mountain ranges of Northern Kashmir



Nun Kun massif

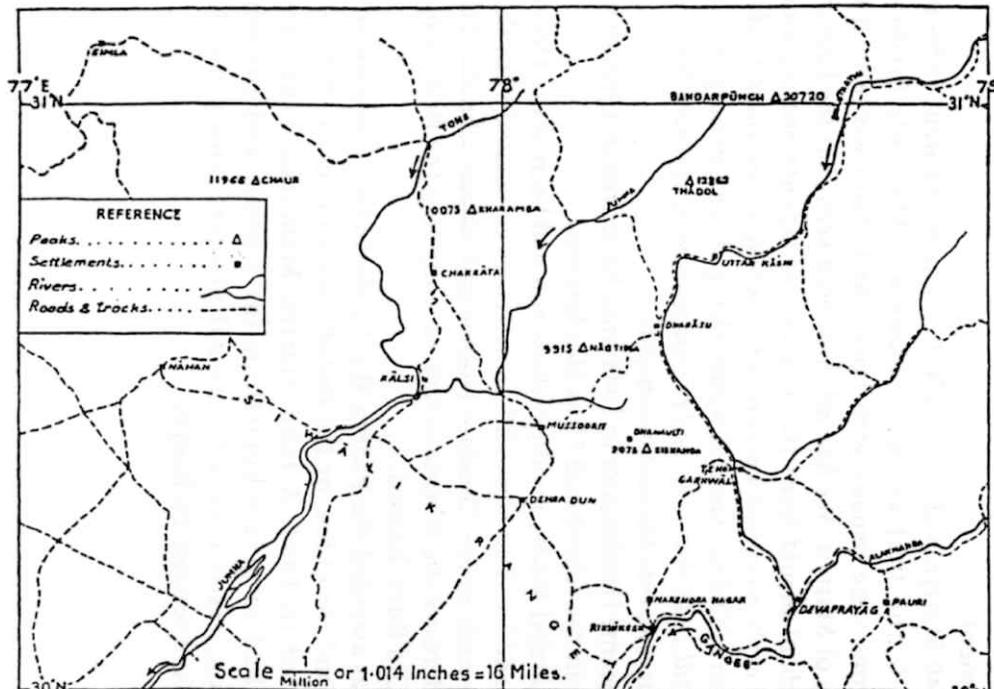


Glacier approaches to the Kamet group of peaks



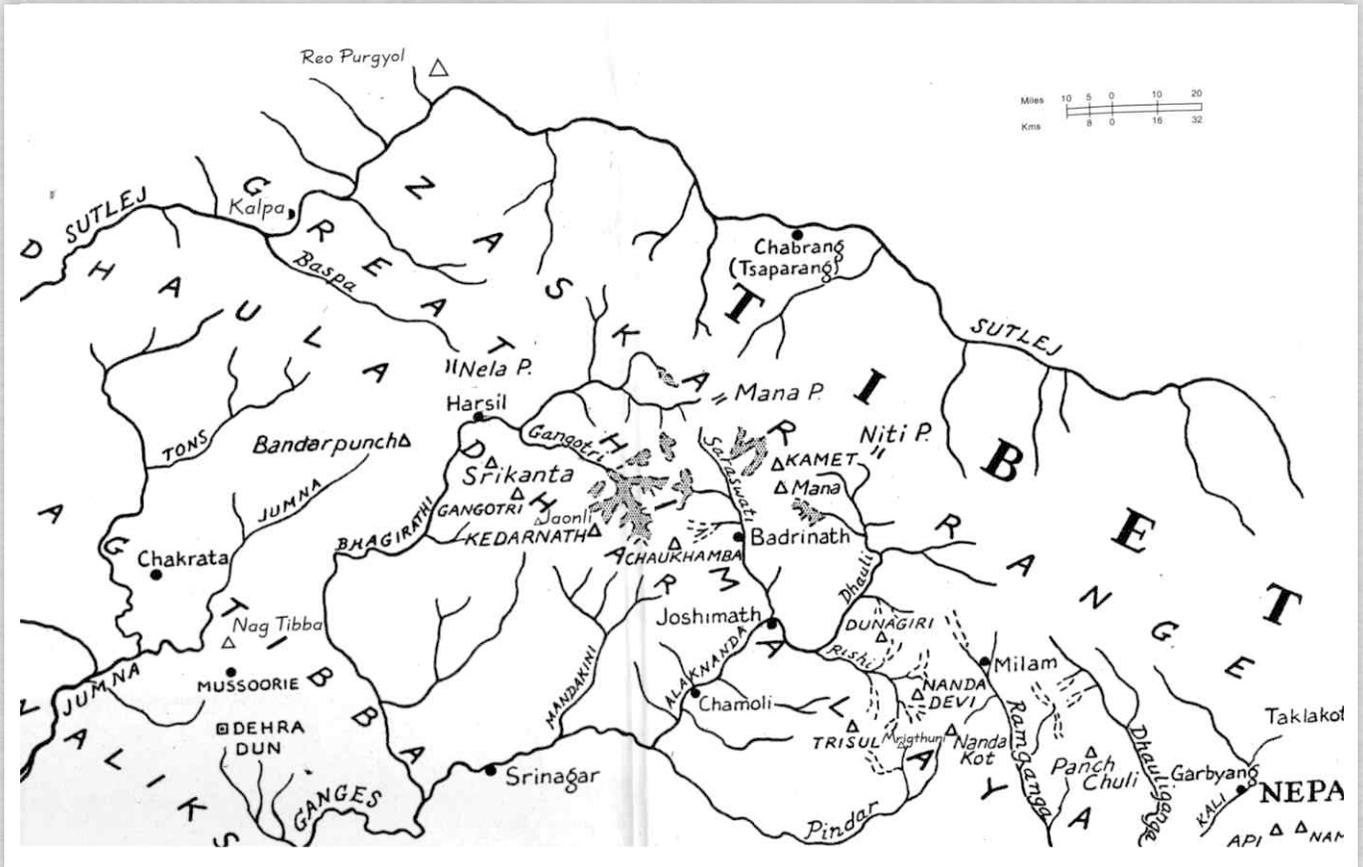
Survey of India map of the Doon

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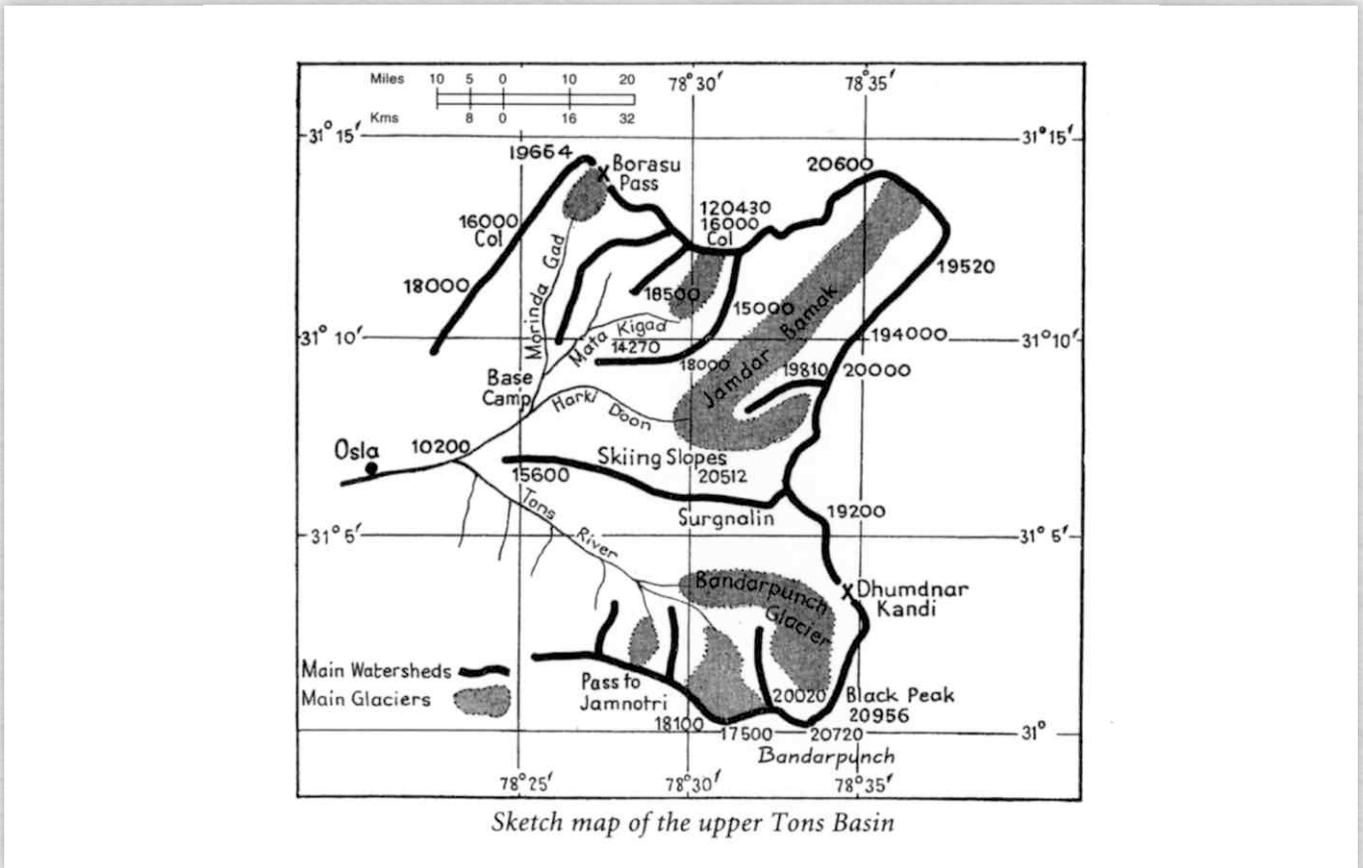


Map covering area of 'Midterm' expeditions

Map covering area of 'Midterm' expeditions

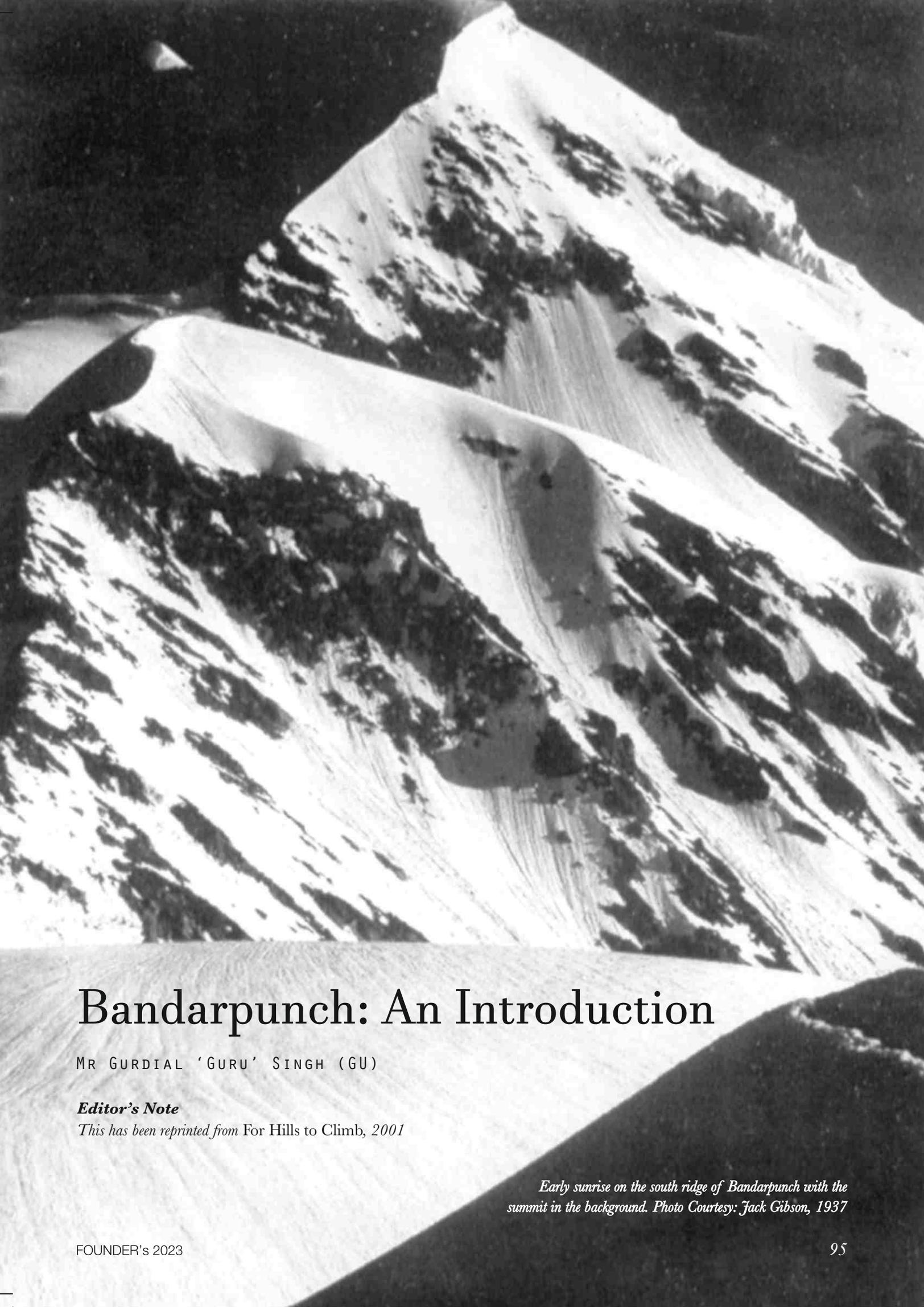


Map covering area of 'Midterm' expeditions



Sketch map of the upper Tons Basin

Sketch map of the upper Tons Basin



Bandarpunch: An Introduction

MR GURDIAL 'GURU' SINGH (GU)

Editor's Note

This has been reprinted from For Hills to Climb, 2001

Early sunrise on the south ridge of Bandarpunch with the summit in the background. Photo Courtesy: Jack Gibson, 1937



Many members of the School are familiar with Bandarpunch, 20,720 feet peak in the Garhwal Himalaya. The name has figured prominently in various phases of school life. Those of us whose haunts are the hills during the midterm break, have, on a clear day, seen it looming large in the white mantle of the Inner Himalaya; while those who believe in a more sedentary midterm have been introduced to the peak either in a school society meeting or in an exercise on contours in the classroom.

The approaches to Bandarpunch have been the scene of climbing exploits of many parties led mostly by JTM Gibson... The pioneers were Messrs Martyn and Gibson who, in 1937, reconnoitred the route to the south-east ridge – probably the only practicable route to the summit. The 1946 climbing party which included Messrs Holdsworth, Gibson, Nandu, and Chengappa, aimed at climbing to the top. Mr Holdsworth, with two others, succeeded in passing well above the highest point reached by the previous parties, but had to return unsuccessful owing to the unfavourable snow conditions and lack of sufficient equipment. This attempt had, however, paved the way to success for subsequent parties.

I was introduced in spirit to the mountain in 1948 when, in company of Messrs Martyn, Gibson, Pratap and Jai Sinh (two students) I observed it from close quarters during a Himalayan holiday. It looked as delectable as the other giants that stretched to the eastern horizon. I was, however, filled with awe in sighting it, for my novitiate not yet behind me, it looked unfriendly and incredibly difficult. Little did I know then that only two years later I would be a member of the party that would accept the challenge offered by its untrodden summit.



Bandarpunch, 1950

MR GURDIAL 'GURU' SINGH (GU)

Editor's Note

This has been reprinted from For Hills to Climb, 2001.



Jack Gibson (1937-1953).

Photo Courtesy: Himalayan Journal

Once the idea of making an attempt was mooted, the fate of Bandarpunch hung in the balance for the seventh time. So our party consisted of Mr Gibson, Major-Gen Williams, RE, Cadet Jagjit Singh, Sgt-Inspector Greenwood, and myself, with three Sherpas, Tenzing, Kim Chok Tsering, and Kusang, set out on June 9 from Dehra Dun in a load-cum-passenger carrier which was sent to us very kindly by His Highness of Tehri Garhwal.

We collected 32 Dhotials (who were to act as load carriers beyond the

road head) from Rishikesh, and reached Dharasu the same evening, dust-covered and weary. A dip in the glacier-fed Bhagirathi revived our spirits, and we rejoiced in the presence of low pine covered hills around us. Here the commodious rest house gave us ample room to resort our loads, which we distributed among the Dhotials with as much fairness as we could manage. Each willingly shouldered 60 lb load approximately — a happy beginning, we thought.

The journey to the base camp, which was pitched in the upper reaches of the Hanuman Ganga, a tributary of the Jumna river, was made in easy stages, except the eighteen-mile march to Uttarkashi. (It is a small town of picturesque ashrams and temples.) Here when we threw all modesty to the winds on the bank of the river, not caring that there were onlookers, we were the subject of caustic comments from the people around. Even the devout pilgrims — they are generally an apathetic lot — were excitedly curious, and a few venturesome among them asked us what exactly we had come for. When told, our aim must have seemed futile, and a trifle foolish, to those who were contemplating to seek salvation by offering rituals at Gangotri and other shrines of Uttarakhand.

At Uttarkashi we included in our “troupe” a Harsil man, Gabar Singh, whose experience of a season's climbing with the Swiss Himalayan Expedition of 1947, coupled with his natural aptitude as a hill man of carrying heavy loads, stood us in good stead later.

On 12 June the party reached Dodital, 9,000 feet, after passing through a wood and which abounded in ferns and orchids, snakes and monals; a panther was also encountered at a dangerously close range. The lake, sombre yet attractive, was fringed with the marsh marigolds (*Caltha palustris*), and we camped by its side under the shade of firs, birches and sycamores. The most interesting feature of the lake appeared a short while later in actual fact. Fabulously rich in brown trout, it gave Mr Gibson an opportunity of which anglers dream, and to us — the dreamers of a different sort of dream — the chance of feasting on trout cakes and “gourmandizing” on trout in baked, boiled or fried form. A monal fell victim to our shotgun not far from the lake. Just as we had found trout a pleasant thing to feast upon, midges must have also felt equally elated on seeing us. Hordes of them made their presence felt in an irritating manner on the exposed part of the body.



Nandu Jayal, Principal, with Instructors Tenzing, Ang Tharkay, Gombu and others of the HMI. Photo Courtesy: Jagjit Singh

We were thrilled to catch fleeting glimpses – the mists tantalized us by parting intermittently – of Bandarpunch and the Hanuman peaks on the morning of 14 June from the Pandrasu ridge, which acts as a water-parting between the Bhagirathi and the Jumna. Here, at 12,500 feet, midst anemones, blue, yellow and white, pink and purple primulas and yellow corydalis, all of which gave us an indication of more prizes ahead, the stomach needed a rare treat as much as the head and *paté de fois gras* sandwiches seemed appropriate to the occasion. While descending the north slope of the ridge, the khukris, wielded by Gibson and the indefatigable Tenzing, came in quite handy, making the wade through *Rhododendron companulatum* a less irksome business than it otherwise would have been. We came across a gully filled with snow which speeded our progress in spite of the raw efforts of some of us at glissading. A natural snow bridge across the Hanuman Ganga was a pleasant

midst gentians, fritillaries and white primulas, on a raised platform by the true right bank of the river. Very soon the afternoon rain drove us to seek shelter inside the tents where we mused on what the morrow would bring.

The Base Camp, 11,800 feet, was reached the next day, on a clear sunny morning, after a march though lush meadows. Situated in idyllic surroundings, it commanded a good view of our objective, Bandarpunch, and its satellite, Hanuman peak. As tinned food was to appear more often on the menu to save the problem of carrying (unless we were prepared to act as beasts of burden) and cooking fresh food above the base camp, the afternoon was spent in sorting out the stores. Eighteen Dhotials were paid their wages and sent back, while the rest settled down contentedly in natural rock shelters.

Everything had worked according to plan so far – a feat of organization

on which we could congratulate ourselves. And to crown all this, we were all in high spirits at the immediate prospect of coming to grips with the mountain.

The next day, 16 June, dawned fine. The dome of Bandarpunch, only five miles away and 9,000 feet above us, presented a breathtaking spectacle in the pure morning air of the high hills. Serene and majestic, it intensified our ardour for mountaineering and seemed to urge us to go ahead with the task we had set our hearts upon. We set out from the Base Camp with a feeling of great exultation and aimed at reaching the same position (on the SW face of the peak) where the 1946 party pitched Camp One – at approximately 16,000 feet. As we carried sizeable loads the journey became progressively difficult on loose rock and soggy snow for our unacclimatised bodies. We reached the rocks of Camp One in a state of exhaustion. While most of us suffered from glacier lassitude induced by the fierce rays of the sun, the Sherpas, who were hardly affected by this feeling of nausea, prepared fairly good tent platforms on ground that looked unpromising. Altitude had ruined our appetites; hot stew and ovaltine were swallowed for the sake of making the “machine” go smoothly rather than for any particular desire for them. Before we retired indoors the clouds lifted for a little while and revealed the setting sun dipping behind the ridge that separates the basins of the Jumna and the Hanuman Ganga. The rays lit up patches of dark clouds in the western sky, changing the gloom of mist of a few minutes before into a glorious spectacle of iron grey and various shades of red.

Camp Two was established at



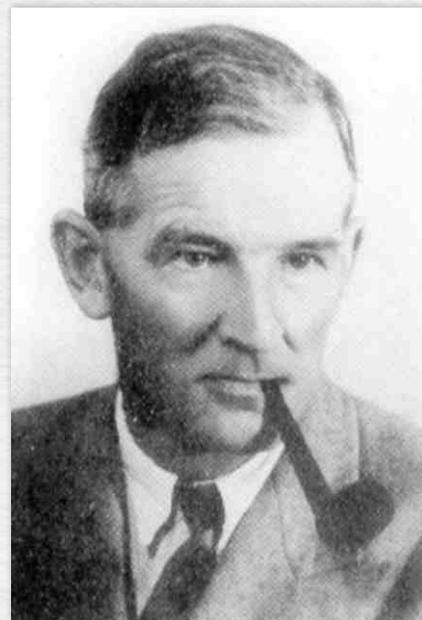
18,200 feet on 18 June, after a short but arduous climb over rock and snow of moderate difficulty. Sited on the south-eastern ridge, it turned out to be an excellent view point. Looking east the Gangotri Massif was particularly impressive. To our left, and to the north-east of Bandarpunch II, our objective, stood the formidable rocky pinnacle of Bandarpunch I, commonly known as the Black Peak; to the right somewhere below Harsil, rose the smooth north face of the Hanuman peaks.

As accommodation and food at the ridge camp were restricted, Jagjit, Gabar Singh and Tsering roped up and went back to Camp One to join Major-Gen Williams and Kusang, leaving Mr Gibson and Tenzing to share one high altitude tent and Sgt Greenwood and myself the other.

19 June dawned brilliantly. We thanked Providence for the glorious views, impossible for those to imagine, who do not come to the high hills. After administering a dose of porridge to our reluctant stomachs, we left on a reconnaissance trip for a possible Camp Three site. A few minutes' walk across the level snowfield took us to the foot of the "Rocks." Though they looked impossible to negotiate from a distance, no serious difficulty was experienced in scaling them, as there were convenient hand-holds and footholds all along. Above the final rock tower, which we reached after an exhilarating climb of nearly two hours, was a small though fairly level camp site on snow. As the weather was fine and we fairly anxious to look on the other side of the corniced hump in front, we put on our crampons and advanced along the ridge for nearly 300 feet vertically. Then we decided to do a horizontal traverse along the

east face just below the cornice, all four on one rope, instead of continuing up the ridge. Tenzing, the strongest and most experienced of us all, was put in the lead to cut steps. The snow was in good condition and there was little likelihood that it would avalanche. We soon reached that part of the ridge where there was a fairly wide stretch of snow platform, which we estimated at 19,500 feet and which was well beyond the highest point reached by Mr Holdsworth, Nandu and Tenzing in 1946. As it was almost noon and we had not reckoned on attacking the summit that day, we returned to Camp Two, well satisfied with the day's work. Here mug fulls of hot tea were served to us by Tsering and Gabar Singh who had come up from Camp One with more loads.

The summit party was chosen the same afternoon. It was arranged that Sgt Greenwood, Tenzing and Tsering – the fittest three among us – would have an assault on the following day, while the rest of us were to climb down to Camp One. On 20 June the summit party left Camp Two at 6:30am. The previous day's reconnaissance saved valuable time, so within two hours they reached the wide snow saddle beyond the corniced hump. After pitching a tent and depositing inside it their spare clothing and bedding they started climbing up the fairly steep snow and ice slopes – at an angle of at least 50°. They moved very cautiously, belaying one another on what looked the vilest bit of blue ice. They were first seen (three tiny dots wriggling up a dazzling white slope) from Camp One at 10:30am. Half way across the south-west face of the mountain stretched a crevasse, which after a long traverse along the lower rim, was crossed nearer its summit end.



RL Holdsworth. Photo Courtesy: The Doon School-Sixty Years On

Then they climbed in the direction of the ridge; once on it, the black figures merged with the deep blue sky and were lost to our views. We had, however, every reason to hope that they would succeed in reaching the summit.

The last "kink" (of possibly three hundred ft of steep snow-covered ice) necessitated step-cutting. They toiled up along the ridge, feeling very weary after a few steps; but gradually the slope eased off and at 12:30pm, the coveted prize was almost within their grasp. It was a fitting reward to the unremitting efforts of Tenzing that he was told to tread the summit first. Greenwood and Tsering followed, the former so exhausted that he was quite unable to fulfil his promise that if they ever succeeded in climbing to the top he would do a "hand-stand" there.

After exchanging congratulations and a short rest – there were no views as there was a thick pall of cloud – they stepped down the mountain slope one by one. At the top of the ice slope they invoked the



Base Camp, c 12,000 ft on Bandarpunch. Photo Courtesy: Jack Gibson, 1950

use of an ice piton to safeguard themselves. At one place there was the danger that the snow slope they were treading upon might

avalanche, so they moved more quickly. Sleet and hail added to the difficulties of descent and they had to be very cautious. At 4:30pm after

a very strenuous day, they arrived back in Camp Three where Mr Gibson, who had come up from Camp One, greeted them.



Gurdial reached the summit in 1975 when he was invited to accompany the advance course of women trainees of the National Institute of Mountaineering, Uttarkashi Ed.



Ascent of Trisul

GURDIAL 'GURU' SINGH (GU)

Editor's Note

This has been reprinted from *For Hills to Climb*, 2001, edited by Aamir Ali (214 K, 1939)



Members of the Trisul Expedition, 1951. Photo Courtesy: Surendr Lall

Scarcely had Roy Greenwood and I returned from the trip to Bandarpunch in 1950 than we started making plans for the following summer. Inspired by the epic tales of exploratory mountaineering, as told in the accounts of FS Smythe, EE Shipton and HW Tilman, suggestions for various high-altitude treks in Garhwal were mooted, rejected, only to be resuscitated, until Trisul (23,360 feet) appeared on the scene. From then onwards all other plans,

quite suddenly, receded into the background and Trisul loomed larger and larger in our thoughts.

The die was cast with the arrival of Tom Longstaff's, *This My Voyage* in the world of books. Nothing could have been better timed. I do not suppose I stopped poring over it until I knew the modest, exciting almost lyrical, narrative of his amazing climb by heart. From a camp at about 17,500 feet, Longstaff, the brothers, Alexis and

Henri Brocherel, two guides from the Italian Alps, and Kabir, a Gurkha soldier, had reached the top of Trisul in 1907. Nearly 6,000 feet had been done in a day: a *tour de force* which would have been impossible under adverse conditions of snow or weather. Fortune had smiled on them. Well, perhaps, we too would be privileged to follow in their footsteps – or at least so we hoped.

Greenwood, though my companion in the plot, left both the task of forming a party and the labour of organization to me. The former was readily accomplished. Two old boys of the Doon School, Surendr Lall and Nalni Jayal, who had long desired an introduction to the high hills, were invited to join the party. Their acceptance meant that, whatever the fate of Trisul might be, we kindred spirits all, could at least be sure of the lasting satisfaction of congenial company shared and enjoyed in a mountain venture. The average age of the party was 25 and not all of us were yet certified climbers; but being fully aware of our limitations and deficiencies, we vowed not to tempt Providence.

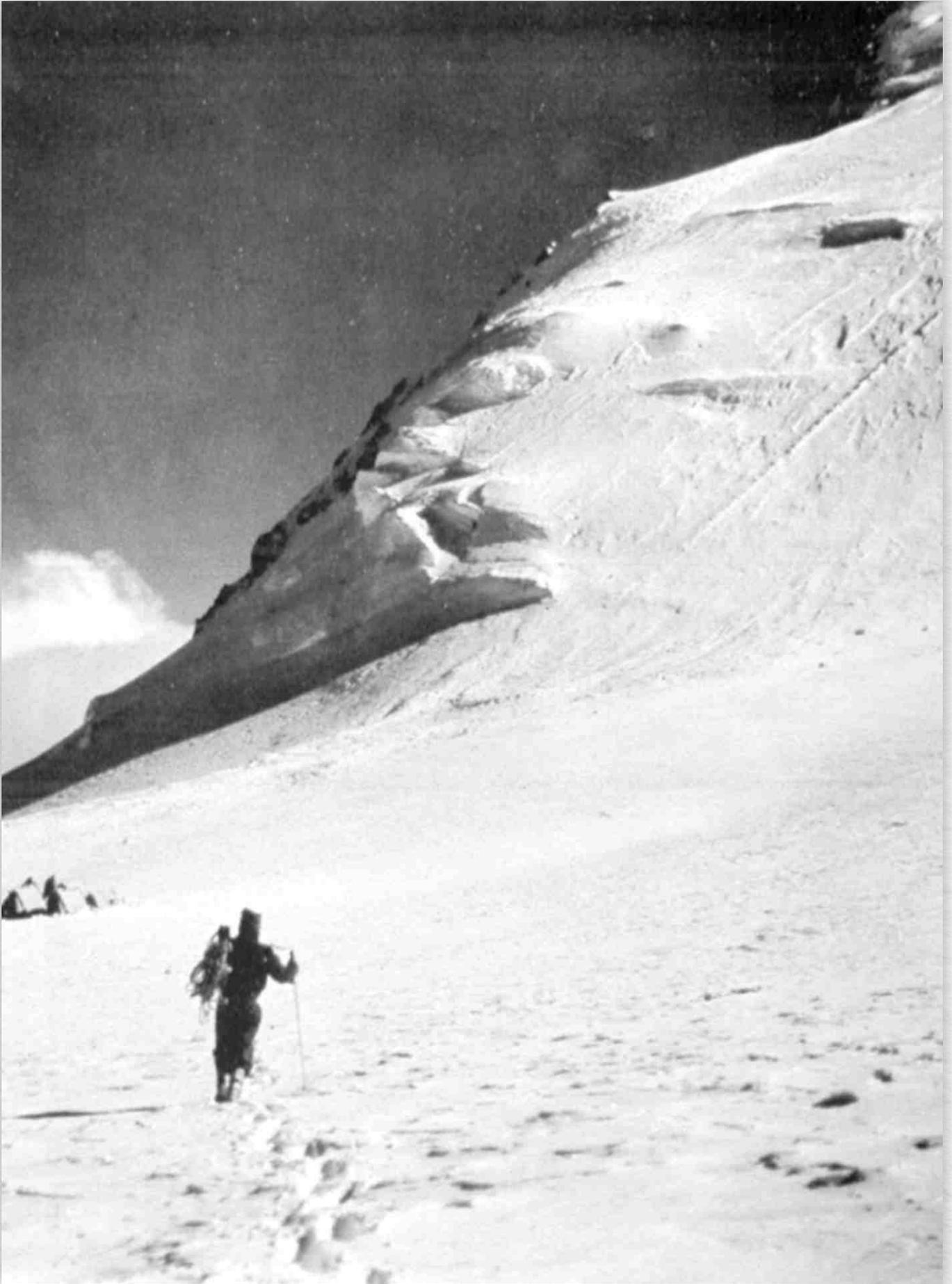
Modest Organization

The organization was as modest and simple as possible, for no other reason that none of us was a person of affluent means – least of all the schoolmaster in the party. The Mount Everest Foundation, a pillar

of great support to many expeditions, was not then born and our expedition was born too soon.

However, the Himalayan Club and, through the sponsorship of General

Williams, the Quarter-Master-General's Branch of the Army Headquarters loaned us some valuable equipment. Messrs Welcome and Burroughs were quite liberal, at least about



Camp V on Meade's Col on Kamet. Photo Courtesy: Surendr Lall



supplaghanadine, which was supplied in such large quantity that we appeared adequately equipped to treat all the pilgrims who might suffer from dysentery on the route to Badrinath.

One luxury, however, we did not forgo and that was of employing three Sherpas; the Garhwali porters had not yet got their “ticket.” Having travelled with Sherpas before and entertaining some doubts as to our capacity to carry out the venture, I knew our success would depend a good deal on their knowledge of mountaineering. I conducted negotiations direct with Tenzing Norgay, hoping he would be able to come himself. But this was not to be; the French Nanda Devi expedition had appropriated him at the last moment. Instead, he sent the reliable Gyalgen Myckje, as Sirdar, and Dawa Thondup, a “Tiger” of high merit, whose record was so impressive that it would, probably even today, be the envy of the entire community of climbers in the world. A veteran of many pre-war expeditions, notably to Everest and

Nanga Parbat, he had, at the age of 43, climbed Abi Gamin (24,130 feet) in 1950 with the Anglo-Swiss expedition. Our third Sherpa, Lhakpa Tsering, had no big climbs to his credit; yet he was not only at home on rock and snow but a willing hand at any time.

On the appointed day our party of seven members assembled at the Doon School – the trysting place of several expeditions before and since. The headmaster, himself a firm believer in the educative value of hill-training, permitted me to begin the summer holidays three days before the term was scheduled to end to enable us to outwit the monsoon.

On 7 June 1951, we left for Kotdwara, the railhead; thence two days' journey by bus, first across the foothills and then along the Alaknanda, brought us to Chamoli. Three days later we reached the last human habitation, the village of Lata, at 7,600 feet. Here we reorganized our baggage into porter loads of 56 lbs each and made the acquaintance of a Bhotiya of Bampa

village, Kesar Singh who, to everyone's delight, volunteered to accompany us and take upon himself the task of finding 15 porters.

Kesar Singh was thrilled to learn that his fellow countrymen were proposing to make a bid for Trisul, which he had himself scaled in company of Peter Oliver in 1933 – two years after his historic climb to Kamet (25,447 feet) with Smythe's expedition. The spirit of adventure rekindled in him as he sat in the courtyard of the village dharamsala regaling us, in an exuberant manner, with accounts of his climbs in the thirties. Little did I then know that I would see a lot more of him, as I did on the three expeditions to Kamet. On our first attempt in 1952, this extra-ordinary man reached Meade's Col, though he was on the far side of 50. “Theatrical, keen and determined,” as Oliver described him, he certainly was; also perhaps a notorious scrounger – but, all in all, a most lovable character. Therefore, it was with great sorrow that I learnt of his passing away in 1957.

A Glorious Vision

“Flies during the day and midges at night” – this laconic comment in my diary sums up our feelings towards this settlement in Garhwal. So, it was with great relief that we set off for Lata Kharak, a delectable flower-covered grazing ground on a windswept ridge above the upper limit of birch trees. The exhausting climb of 5,000 feet was soon forgotten when we breathed the pure, balmy and invigorating mountain air and saw the glorious vision of the rugged spires across the Dhauli-Ganga and the snowy peaks of Ronti (19,895 feet),

Nanda Ghunti (20,710 feet) and Bethartoli Himal (20,840 feet) across the Rishiganga.

After a day's rest, we headed towards the Lata-Tolma ridge in mist. The weather steadily worsened, and it was in disconcerting sleet that we crossed the rather sensational 14,700 feet pass leading to Durashi glen. We staggered and slithered over wet rocks and snow-filled gullies, doubting our sanity in choosing this mode of spending a holiday. But, gradually, conditions began to improve; the mist lifted to

reveal not only the Rishi gorge, which was now several thousand feet below us, but also the broad alp of Durashi, which lay spread out in front of us. Though chastened in spirit, we purred with delight once again. Nalni had the unnerving experience that day of altitude sickness, no doubt aggravated by the effects of cold for he had improvidently been wearing his tennis shoes all along.

The next morning saw us on the “curtain” ridge, so called because it screens the middle and upper parts of the Rishiganga valley.



From here we sighted Dibrugheta, “a fragment of Arcady dropped amid chaos,” in Longstaff’s apt words. We quickly descended to this alp and soon our eyes were luxuriating on the rich fare provided by its *lloydias*, *fritillaries*, *anemones*, *cypripediums* and *potentillas*. We camped beside a stream and, on the opposite bank, beneath a clump of willow trees, saw the resplendent tents of the rearguard of the French Nanda Devi expedition. It was a happy party which got together that evening to celebrate this chance meeting of mountain-lovers.

Next day dawned fine and we had

our first view of the heavenly Nanda Devi (25,645 feet) when we emerged from the fir forest overlooking Dibrugheta. Along a craggy hillside, which was cut by deep gullies, lay our route. There was no track of any sort, and those of us who lacked instinct for the right way got lost for some hours. We dropped down to Deodi, 10,800 feet, to camp under birch trees about 200 feet above the Rishi. The site showed signs of recent occupation, and a placard attached to a tree indicated the direction of a bridge; a thoughtful act on the part of a French climber, Robert Walter of Pondicherry, who too was heading

towards Trisul. We felled another tree to ensure safe crossing over the rough bridge. As we were striking camp the next morning, I saw Greenwood boldly scrawl the words “Trisul 6 Days” on a massive strip of birch bark, which he installed next to the site of the bridge. The timetable had till then run so smoothly that our optimism was becoming almost unbridled. The ascent of the next 2,000 feet was completed through a tangled mass of rhododendrons. Heading south, we entered the catchment basin of the Trisul *nalla* and pitched camp in a trough near the snout of the Bethartoli glacier.

Base Camp Established



Trisul Base Camp, c 15,500 ft. Photo Courtesy: Gurdial Singh, 1951

Wearily we crossed the glacier next morning. Nalni and Surendr, in particular, made heavy weather of the trudge on the moraines; they lost touch with the rest of the party in that chaotic wilderness of rocks and caused us great anxiety for a long period. Following a *barrhal* track on the divide of the left-bank moraine of the Trisul glacier, we eventually

established our base camp on a level, grassy hollow at a height of 15,000 feet. Save for the drawback of lack of fuel, it was difficult to imagine a kindlier site. It was sheltered and all around us was turf bedecked with *primulas* and *saxifrages*, while close at hand was a runnel of clear water. The stern, yet glorious, spectacle of both Devistan (21,910 feet) and

Dunagiri (23,184 feet) could be seen to good advantage. Rapturously, Nalni poured forth melodies from the music of Mozart and Beethoven.

While Nalni and Surendr re-organised loads and recovered from the exertions of the previous day, Greenwood and I, eager to see what lay ahead, left the base camp with light loads. Our route alternated between the top of the moraine and the trough below to its west. After rounding a long series of cliffs, we saw the moraine turn sharply in a westerly direction towards a towering ice-fall. Instead of following the curve of the moraine, we climbed a moderately steep slope covered with evanescent snow. As we ascended a flock of *barrhal*, silhouetted against the sky, watched us with interest from a projecting buttress on our right. On our left, beyond the ice-fall, stretched the snowfields on the north-east slopes of Trisul. We levelled some rocks opposite the ice-fall, pitched a tent,



*Camp I on Trisul with Devistan and Nanda Devi in the background.
Photo Courtesy: Gurdial Singh, 1951*

dumped the loads inside and sped down to Robert Walter's camp for a hot drink, and thence to base camp to celebrate Bandarpunch day round a blazing fire.

Next day, Camp I was occupied by the whole party except Kesar Singh and the porters who, being ill-equipped, returned to base camp. The same afternoon, Greenwood,

Dawa, Gyalgen and I climbed another 500 feet in thick mist to dump stores at Robert's camp. Altitude had begun to tell on Nalni and Surendr, as evidenced by splitting headache and severe lassitude. Accordingly, at supper, it was arranged that Greenwood and I, with Dawa and Gyalgen, should put "rush tactics" to the test, leaving the others to follow the advance party if they felt fit enough to climb, or, if not, to return to the base camp and await the arrival of the summit party on June 25.

Four of us lay cheek by jowl in a "Meade" tent that night. Though reasonably warm, sleep was out of the question owing both to our cramped state and to lack of acclimatization; and anything which broke the stillness of the night – the rumble of a distant avalanche, the tinkle of falling rocks, the spasm of rapid breathing, or the moan of an ailing companion - seemed to contribute to insomnia.

Imposing Nanda Devi View

In sparkling sunshine we joined Robert the next morning. As we looked back, we beheld, behind a dip in the Devistan ridge, the imposing head of Nanda Devi. This double-turreted Peak asserted itself in the views which we were privileged to enjoy during the next few days. Accompanied by Robert and his Sherpas, we, now heavily laden, resumed the climb over glistening snowfields. Robert, Greenwood and I took leads in turn, as we were less encumbered than our Sherpas. Progress was slow and it was tiresome work breaking the trail, especially as the morning

advanced and the sun shone with pitiless intensity. At 3pm, with the arrival of the usual afternoon mist, we decided to set up Camp II on the gentle slopes stretching to the east of the northern ridge of Trisul, at an estimated height of 19,500 feet. Just as we ensconced ourselves inside our sleeping bags, the snow began to fall.

We awoke to a glorious morning on 23 June to find a low pile of drift snow near our feet. The preparation of a hot drink took longer than expected owing to a brisk wind, which interfered with the rather delicate task of handling a primus

stove in a small tent. This and the bitter cold prevented an early start. Robert gave us the disquieting news that he did not feel well enough to start with us; he decided to wait and attempt the peak from a higher camp. Altitude, we hoped, would not claim him too.

At 8:30am the wind having abated, the summit party set off to complete the final lap. Dawa carried a light rucksack containing a rope, photographic material and some food. After an hour's climb, we tied on the rope, partly because the névé ahead seemed riven with concealed



Peaks of Garhwal with Nanda Devi and Trisul in the distant background from Camp IV on Kamet. Photo Courtesy: Gurdial Singh, 1951

crevasses and partly for its moral support in keeping the party together. Soon, Dawa, not satisfied with the rate of progress, was in the lead. Steadily, we climbed in his footsteps. The Devistan group of peaks sank lower and lower and by 2pm was completely enshrouded by a sea of clouds, through which Dunagiri, the twin peaks of Nanda Devi and the distant Kamet group peered like floating castles.

After nearly six hours of the weary struggle, the climb still seemed interminable with the same unbroken horizon of snow above us, until, at 3pm, the somewhat gentler slope of the summit ridge was gained. Here Gyalgen announced that he had reached the end of his tether. He looked a very tired man – he had obviously reached the absolute limit. Dawa attributed his exhaustion to petrol fumes inhaled

while brewing tea in the morning. We instructed him to await our return, and then resumed the wretched business of putting one foot in front of the other. Gasping for breath, Greenwood and I tugged at the rope. Dawa turned around and, with a mixture of firmness and politeness, emphasized that time was pressing; therefore we must quicken our pace. What prodigious energy he had!

The Summit Reached

4:15pm: the tip of Shiva's trident was ours at last! No flag was planted on top. Instead Greenwood erected a tripod – not an easy task with numb fingers – and he clicked his camera through 360°. The only demonstration of joy I can recall was our homage to Mother Earth:

we bent our heads low and pointed our feet skywards, though Greenwood remarked that our attempts lacked technique.

Forty minutes of exalted life on the summit were followed by a rapid descent. For a while we stopped at

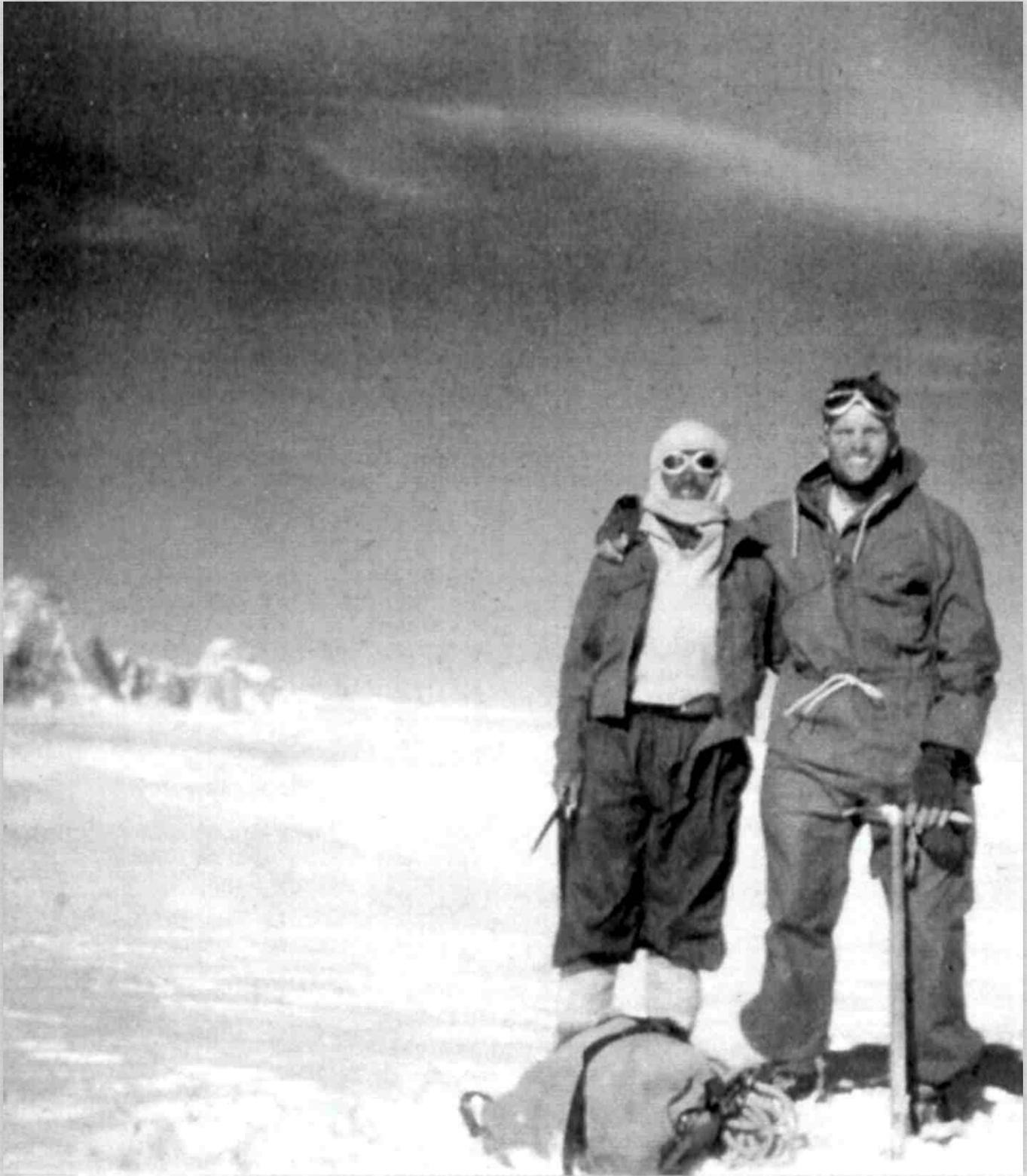
Robert's Camp III to exchange salutations. Clouds were tinted with the glow of sunset when, just after 7pm, the weary but contented lot of us reached Camp II. The signboard at Deodi had been vindicated and a dream fulfilled.



On 24 June, we raced down the gleaming snowfields and, after collecting the left-over loads at Camp I, wallowed in the comforts of the base camp before midday. Greenwood, still assailed by the

thoughts of high ridges, stayed behind with Dawa and Lhakpa to attempt Mrigthuni (22,490 feet), while the rest of the party retraced its steps towards the lower levels. Double marches enabled us to reach

Joshimath on 28 June, where Gyalgen and I took leave of Nalni and Surendr to spend another month in the high valleys of Garhwal.



*Dawa Thondup and Roy Greenwood on the summit of Trisul with the twin summits of Nanda Devi in the background.
Photo Courtesy: Gurdial Singh, 1951*



Headstand by Gurdial on the summit of Trisul. Photo Courtesy: R Greenwood, 1951



Gurdial Singh

AAMIR ALI 214 K, 1939



An aerial view of the Everest group of peaks with Khumbu Glacier. Photo Courtesy: Indian Air Force, 1953



*Camp III, c 20,500 ft on Kamet. (The circle indicates the location of *Christolea himalayensis*.)
Photo Courtesy: Nalni Jayal, 1952*



Camp IV, c 22,000 ft on Kamet. Photo Courtesy: Gurdial Singh, 1952



Editor's Note

This has been reprinted from For Hills to Climb, 2001.

Gurdial Singh was born on New Year's Day 1924. He was educated at Government College, Lahore, and Aligarh Muslim University. At the age of 18 he won the Punjab State and University swimming championships for 100m and 200m backstroke.

He joined the Doon School as Assistant Master in 1945 and retired as Deputy Headmaster in 1979. His

love affair with the Himalaya began in 1948 with a four week high-altitude trek with Willi Unsoeld, later of the Everest West Ridge fame.

Since then he has been in the mountains practically every summer. He was on Jack Gibson's expedition to Bandarpunch in 1950; he led the expedition to Trisul in 1951, the first success of an Indian expedition on a major peak. He was on Kamet in 1952, 1953 and again in 1955 when he climbed Abi Gamin.

He spent the summer term of 1957 teaching at Gordonstoun under the auspices of the British Council, and this enabled him to climb in Scotland and the Lake District. He led expeditions to Mrigthuni 22,490 feet in 1956 and a successful one in 1958; to Devistan I in 1960; to Devistan 21,910 feet and Maiktoli 22,320 feet in 1961. In 1962 and 1965 he was a member of the Indian expedition to Everest.

He became an *eminence grise* to

mountaineers, often accompanying training groups from the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering (Uttarkashi), and introducing young mountaineers to the plants, birds and animals of the high hills. In 1952, Gurdial was the first Indian to become a member of the Alpine Club (his application was spontaneously supported by Tom Longstaff). He was awarded the Arjuna Award in 1965, the Padma Shri in 1967, and the President's Gold Medal of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation in 1982.

Gurdial's influence in the mountaineering world went far beyond his numerous expeditions. He was an active member of the Himalayan Club, serving as the Local Secretary for Dehra Dun 1954-64, and as Vice-President 1966-71.

Being unattached, he could cast aside any worry of responsibility to the family and take calculated risks in a sport new to Indians of that era.

In a tribute to Gurdial when he was retiring from the DS, John Martyn wrote: *"If Guru's love of mountains is his first characteristic then I think we must put second his desire for self effacement, his dislike of the limelight. And here I would like to mention a third characteristic, which is his perfectionism... In 1960 it was decided to send an Indian expedition to Everest, Nandu Jayal had he been alive would have been the obvious choice for leader... and so the offer was made to Guru... What I think prevented Guru*

from becoming leader was his perfectionism. He was not satisfied with what he understood were to be the arrangements for equipment."

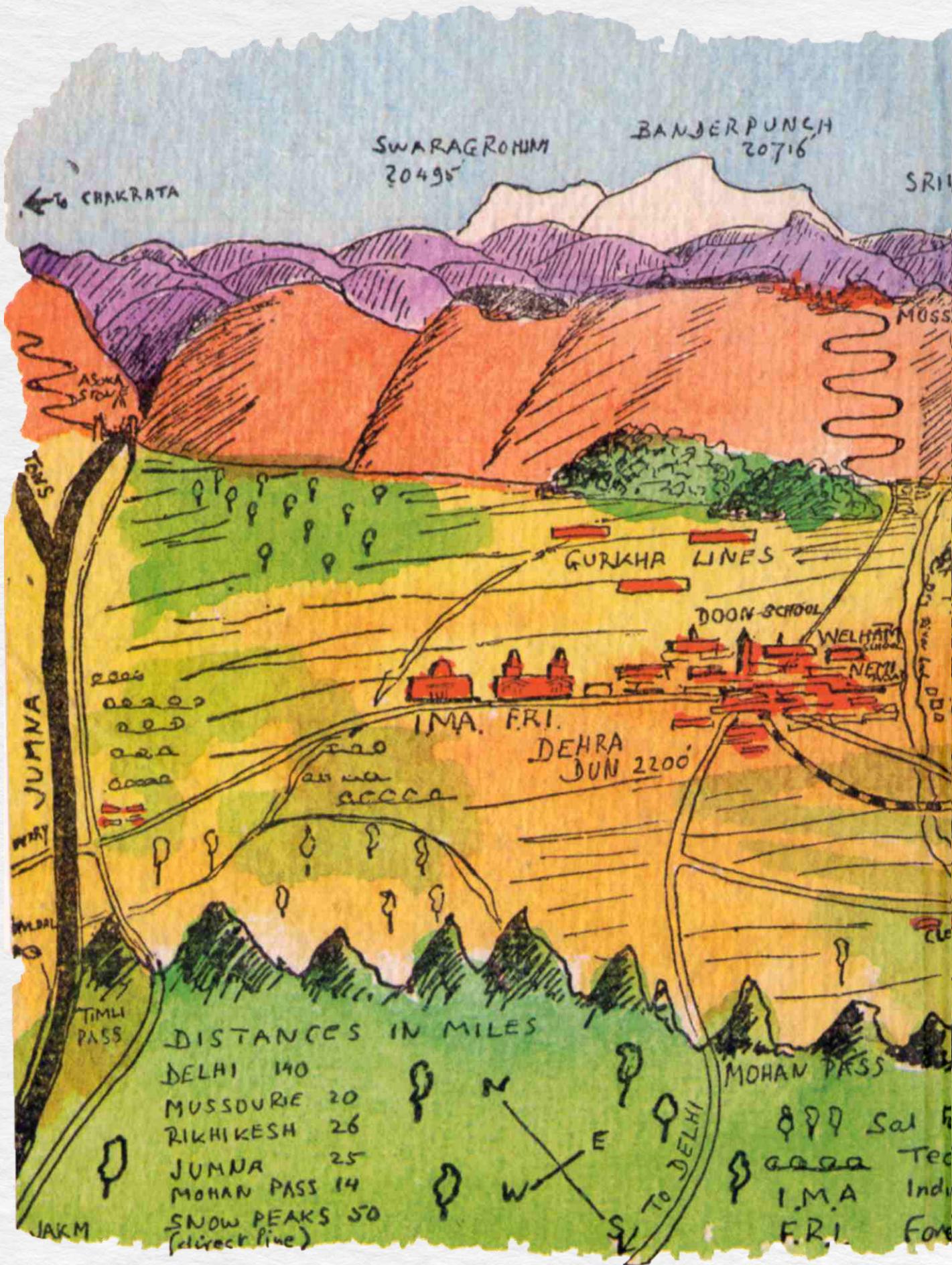
What has drawn him to the mountains so deeply? His explanation:

"The locational advantage of living at the doorstep of the Himalaya was a real benefit, as was an assured summer vacation in my profession. But the clarion call to the imagination came really from the books on mountain adventure and polar exploration that lay on the book-shelves of two legendary colleagues, Jack and Holdie. The delectable prose of Leslie Stephen, an early prophet of climbing as a sport, was a major influence. He wrote in the *Playground of Europe* with utter sincerity: 'I say that I enjoy being on the top of a mountain, or, indeed, half-way up a mountain; that climbing is a pleasure to me, and would be so if no one else climbed, and no one ever heard of my climbing.' Such a genuine approach, so simply put to counter the doubts of non-believers, remained true also of a few of my fellow-travellers in the high hills as well as mine."

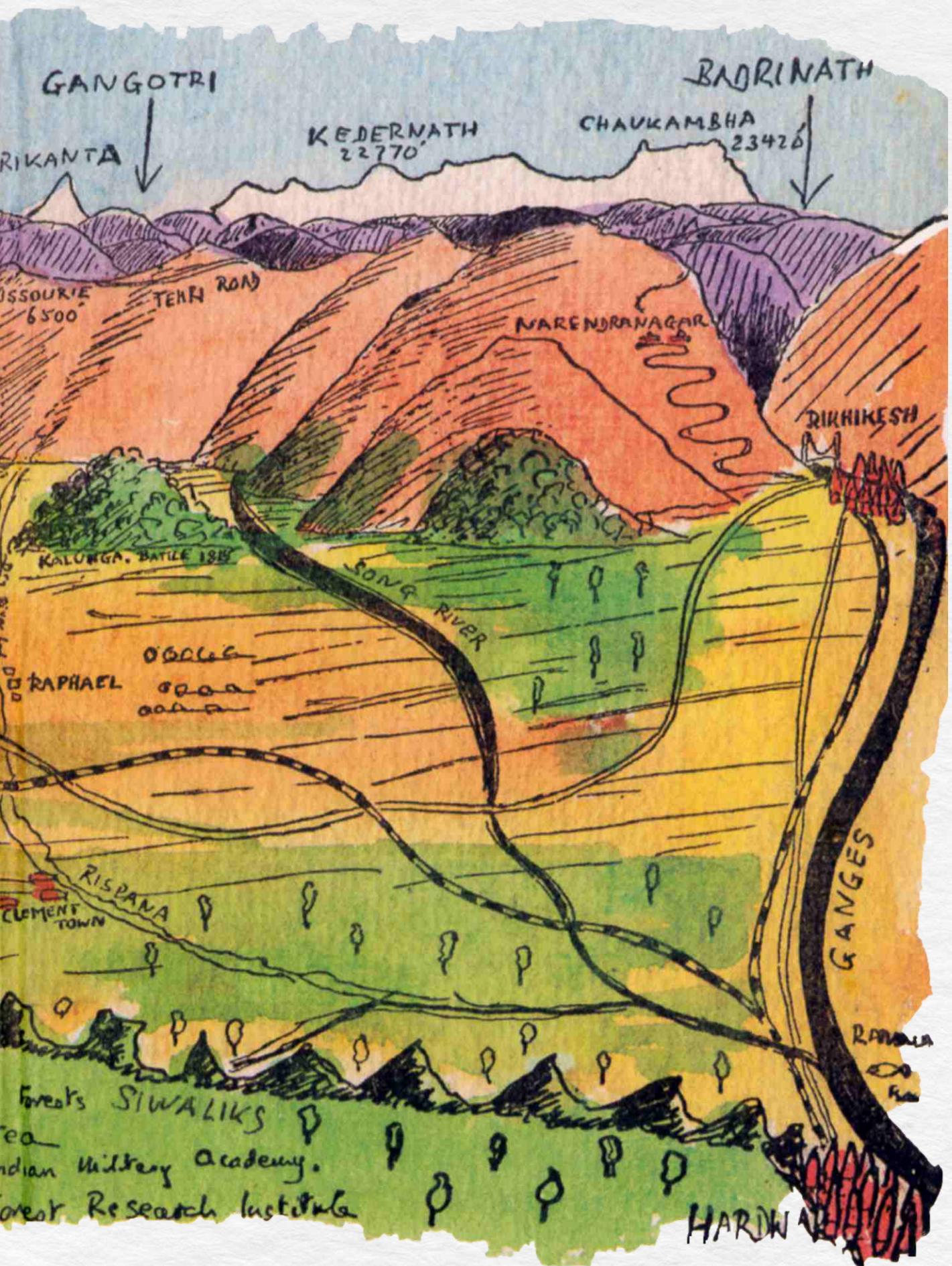
His hobbies, or rather passions, are classical music, bird watching, gardening and bridge. He travels a lot and 34 years as a schoolmaster have bequeathed to him a network of former students, assuring him a warm welcome wherever he goes, in India or abroad.



View from a c 19,000 feet peak looking south towards Rohtang Pass, RAF Expedition. Photo: Nalni Jayal, 1954



Guru's hills to climb





Editor's Note

Reprinted from The Rose Bowl, April 2014.



Gurdial Singh

A Profile

Born at village Uddoke in Amritsar district in Punjab on Jan 1, 1924, Mr Gurdial Singh is among the early educationists who attained a rare degree of proficiency as a mountaineer. A student of Government College, Lahore and then Aligarh Muslim University, Mr. Gurdial Singh excelled in sports with swimming claiming the bulk of his attention. He was, in fact, the State and University champion in the backstroke event over the 100 and 200 metres at Lahore in 1942.



Meeting Lord Louis Mountbatten (1947-48) L-R: JTM Gibson, Bidhu Dhar Jayal (10 T '38) who taught at Doon (1944-47), Sudhir Khastgir, Guru, KB Sinha. KNP Nair and the Head Master AE Foot

Keenly interested in mountaineering, he spent a good part of three decades in going to the high hills. His early feats include the climb to Bandar Punch (20, 720 ft), as member of Jack Gibson's expedition in 1950. He organized the first Indian expedition to Trisul (23, 360 ft) in 1951, reaching the summit with R. Greenwood and D. Thondup. He accompanied General William's expedition to Kamet (25, 447 ft) in 1952 and was with the Bengal Sappers again the next year when Major N.D. Jayal ascended Abi Gamin (24, 130 ft) with sherpa Pemba Sunda and Garhwali Puran Singh. He also joined Major Jayal's successful expedition in Kamet in 1955 and climbed Abi Gamin along with Captain John Dias and three local hillmen – Kalyan Singh, Diwan Singh and Bijai Singh.

Gurdial Singh had amazing endurance and has the distinction of having spent six nights, most of them without oxygen, on the South Col (26, 200 ft) in 1962.

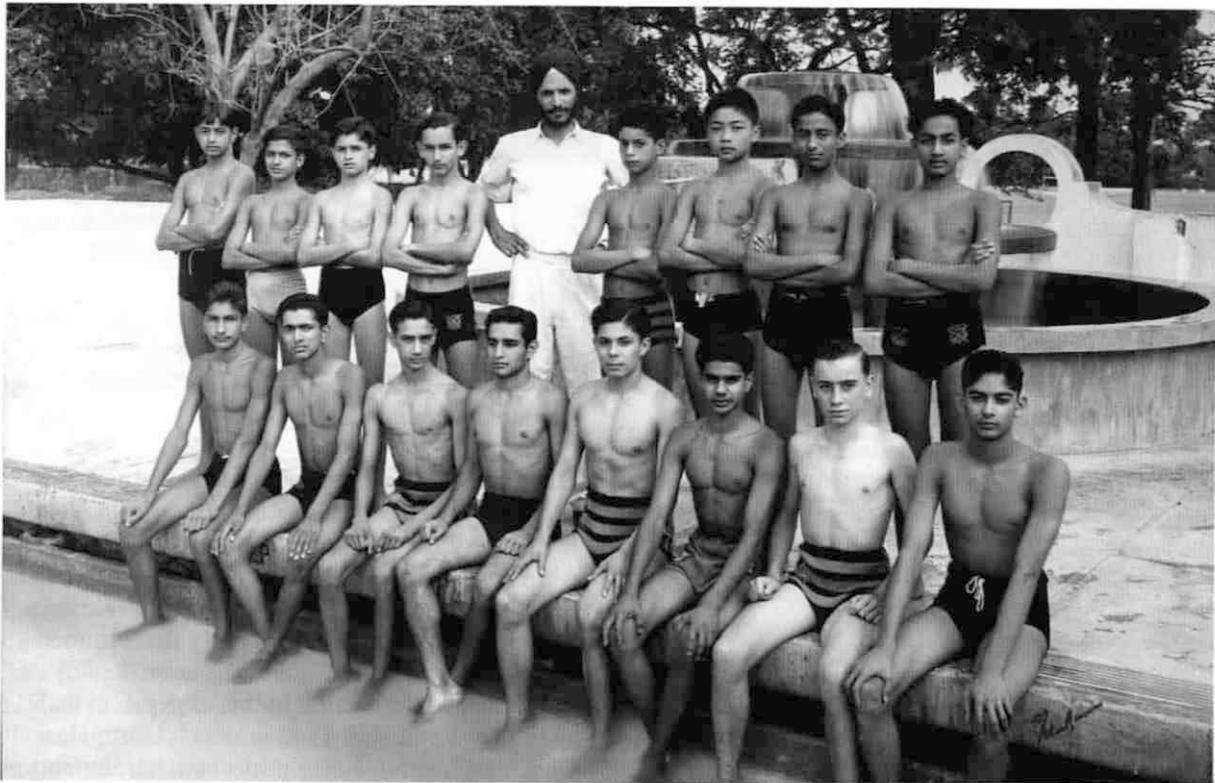
This is the longest known period of stay by any amateur climber on the South Col. He climbed Bandar Punch at the age of 52. In 1952, he became the first Indian to be elected to the premier climbing club of the world, the Alpine Club, London. He was invited, as an adviser to expeditions, by the Bengal Sappers, Indian Military Academy, Regiment of Artillery and Nehru Institute of Mountaineering.

He taught at the Doon School for 34 years and retired as Deputy Headmaster in 1979. In 1957, he also taught at Gordonstoun School at Scotland under the auspices of the British Council. During the period he stayed abroad, he trekked the Scottish hills and the Lake District. At one time a regular contributor of articles on adventure and mountaineering, Gurdial Singh was awarded the Arjuna Award in 1965, the Padma Shri in 1967 and the IMF Gold Medal in 1983. His brother, Lieutenant General Sartaj Singh, distinguished himself in the 1971 war with Pakistan and was awarded the Padma Bhushan.



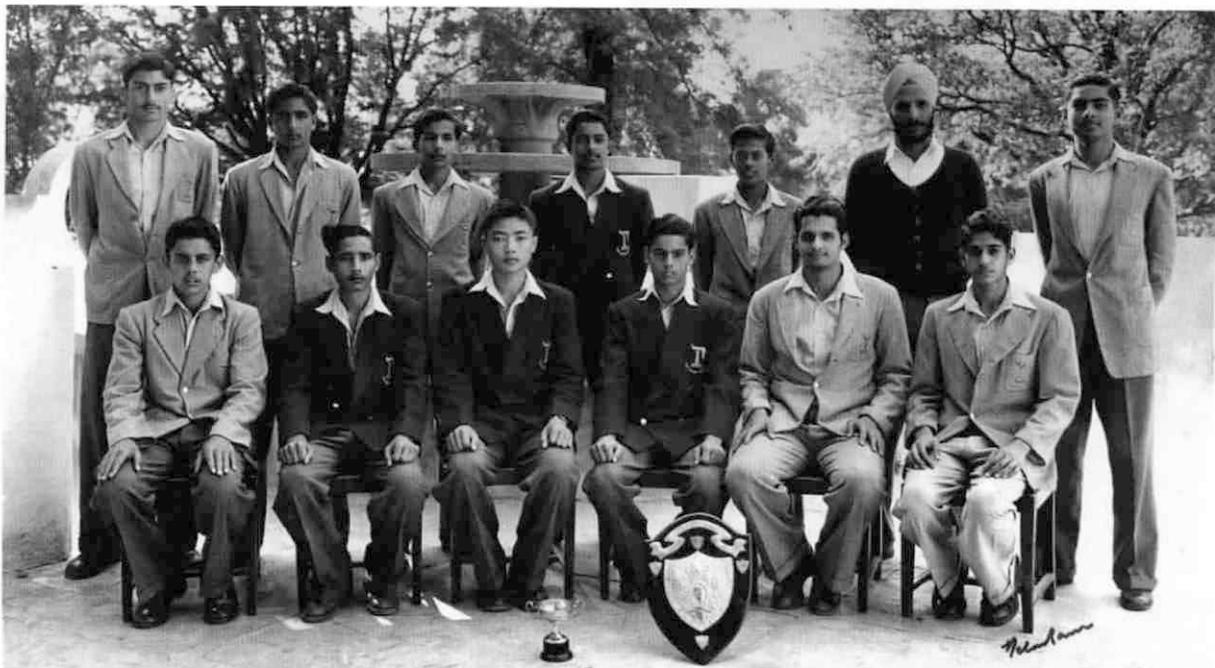
School Swimming Team 1949

[This information on Guru is reproduced from the book 'India's Highest Sports Awards and those who won them'..... Ed]



School Swimming Team 1951

Vikram Narain (197), Sham Sunder (53) Satish Moolgaokar (79), Peter Naharwar (89) Gurdial Singh, Ajay Malik (259), Winston (203), Jawahar (18) Harinderpal (46), Ranganathan (33), Amarjeet (286), HIP Verma (268), Vimal Bhagat (50) Jai Sinh (166), Anil Moolgaokar (75), Vibhu (245)



School Swimming Team 1954

Inder Pal Khosla (163), Badan Singh (128), Jitenderpal (41), Bheem (100), Vishnu Lal (183), Gurdial Singh, Deb Roy (305) Pat Pritam Singh (229), Vijay Kohli (175), Winston Thaik (203), Ajay Mallik (259), Pesi Wadia (116), Homi Bam (127)

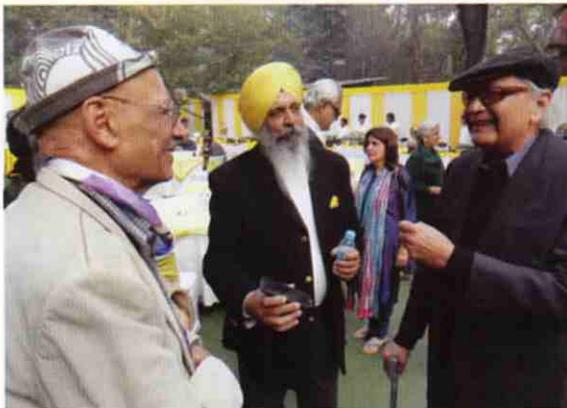


Guru's 90th birthday

Sudhir Sahi (116 T '63)

Guru to all, Mr Gurdial Singh reached one more significant summit this New Year's Day... his 90th birthday.

Bracing winter sunshine and enthusiastic planning by nephews Harpal and Mantaj led to the spirited Base Camp pitched on Gobindar Chopra's lawns in Delhi. Guru strode in, ageless as ever, enabling us to felicitate him, recall his unique accomplishments in the Himalaya, his love of classical music, and celebrate his lasting imprint on the lives of generations of Doscos.



Guru, Gobindar Chopra, Darshan Singh, Tutu, Askari Imam

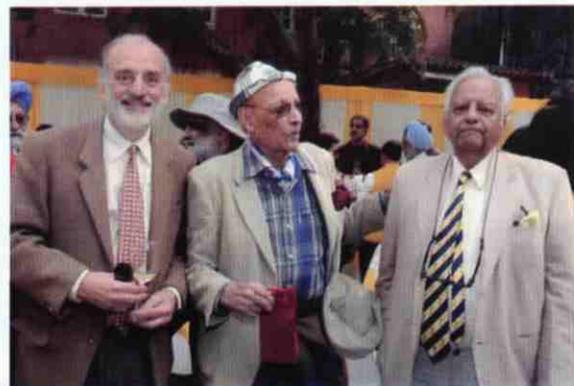
Spontaneous words of welcome, reminiscences and mementoes heightened the proceedings.

Switch to 1951... when Guru, as expedition leader, climbed Trisul on the outer wall of the Nanda Devi Sanctuary in Garhwal, becoming the first Indian mountaineer to achieve a major Himalayan ascent. Recalling that memorable expedition, Suman Dubey presented Guru with a long shot of Trisul, the sun's rays showing off its cornices, together with a black and white photo of Guru's acclaimed headstand on the summit. Predictably, Guru was modest about these goings on with words to the effect that such things do happen. In actual fact, much of the Dosco kinship with the mountains is owed to Guru and his contemporaries Jack Gibson, Holdy, John Martyn

and the great many others who nurtured countless mid-term breaks in the Garhwal hinterland.

The forbidding Nanda Devi Sanctuary has always been a magical amphitheatre. In 1958, Guru was back there, for the ascent of Mrigthuni with Aamir Ali and Rajendra Vikram Singh.

For Guru, in some ways, this was just the beginning. Across the Dhauli Ganga, with Nandu Jayal, there were major expeditions to Kamet and Abi Gamin. And in 1961, he returned to the Inner Sanctuary of Nanda Devi yet again, mentoring a predominantly Doon School party that climbed Devistan-I and Maiktoli. This became the key forerunner to the second Indian expedition that attempted Everest in 1962 in which Guru, Hari Dang and Suman Dubey performed heroic feats at high altitude. Three years later in 1965, on the third Indian Everest expedition, Guru was within reach of the world's highest summit but characteristically stepped aside to 'give a younger man the chance'... unheard of in today's mountaineering melee of bounty hunters.



The Everest 1962 Dosco trio Suman Dubey, Guru, Hari Dang

Switch back again, to Guru's geography classroom... and we heard Aftab Seth recount the vivid felicity with which not just the Doon valley, the high Himalaya or map reading but, equally, far off wonders of nature such as the Orinoco, the Chinook and the Chip Chap came alive.



Mantaj & Harpal with Guru displaying the silver salver presented by Haripal Gill



Guru with Dr Karan Singh

Warm words of friendship from Nalni Jayal and a silver salver presented by Haripal Gill echoed our collective goodwill. As Dhruv Sawhney put it, Guru's legacy is inspirational and continues to enrich us.

The final lines in Eric Shipton's Nanda Devi (1934) perhaps foresaw Guru's enduring tryst with the mountains, "Return to civilisation was hard, but, in the sanctuary of the Blessed Goddess we had found the lasting peace which is the reward of those who seek to know high mountain places."



Mantaj, Suman Dubey and Harpal with Guru displaying the Trisul cornices



KR Palta, Guru, Suman Dubey, Pushy Chopra, Sudhir Sahi, Indrave Mann, Nalni Jayal, Nayanjot Lahiri



My Mountain Guru

Suman Dubey (167 J '58)

9⁰th birthdays don't happen very often, so I'm sure I speak for all of us when I say I am delighted and privileged to be celebrating Guru's. For me he has been a hero, a mentor and teacher and, most of all in my adult years, a friend.

In my school years, he figured in some accomplishments I was proud of: a distinction in geography, my colours in swimming.

But his most enduring gifts to me have been western classical music and mountain climbing. Many of you probably had similar experiences. Some time in B form, Guru announced one day out of the blue that instead of geography class we would go to his rooms to listen to some music.

That was the first that time I heard Beethoven's 6th symphony, the Pastorale. And I can still hear his voice in the movement after the passing of the storm saying - not sure I can get this right - "Did you hear the ku-ku?" I don't know how many Doscocs went on to sing opera or great choral masterpieces, but my part in performing the Mozart Requiem a few years ago began back in the mid-1950s in your rooms, Guru. Thank you for bringing me decades of joy.

What can I say about mountain climbing? It was you who opened up that glorious world to me. Who else would have taken an eager

18 year old with absolutely no experience of the High Himalaya on a 10 week expedition to one of the most spectacular and challenging mountain areas in the world, the Nanda Devi Sanctuary? You did, twice. You first took Dilsher in 1960 and then me in 1961.

I don't know if you will remember, Guru, but our very first summit together was actually

Nagtibba, 60 years ago next month. You and Mr B K Sinha were the masters with us. On our way back we got a bit lost and I remember vividly our return to Devalsari in the darkness - a long line of somewhat nervous school boys singing to bolster our morale with you striding confidently in the lead.

In subsequent mid-term expeditions we also climbed Kharamba and Deoban. But it was the Nanda Devi expedition, on the summits of Devistan and Maiktoli that our master-student relationship evolved into a

friendship. Then came the 1962 Everest expedition. You, the oldest member of the expedition, set something of a record on that trip, spending 6 nights at the South Col, at 26,000 feet. It is a bleak and unforgiving place, a flat space between Everest and Lhotse, larger than several main fields together, and is precisely positioned so that the Jetstream funnels straight through from east to west at always over 100 km an hour. (Most of you experience the jetstream as commercial flights are buffeted by it when



Headstand by Gurdial on the summit of Trisul
(Photo: R. Greenwood, 1951)



Bandarpunch Base Camp (12000 Ft) with Tenzing Norgay, Jagjit Singh, Gen. H. Williams, Greenwood, Kim Chok Kusang (1950)

they climb through the 26,000 ft level.)

On the South Col the wind seldom stops which means that tents are flapping noisily day and night. You can't get out and sit or stand. Having demarcated a toilet area 50 meters away from the tents, we would take 15 minutes to reach it leaning into the wind and less than one to return riding the wind. Incidentally, over the years and with the advent of commercial Everest ascents huge amounts of expedition waste, excrement and even dead bodies lying frozen for eternity, have turned the South Col into the highest dump in the world.

Guru was part of the three-member group that was going to make an attempt on the summit at the end of May. In support were John Dias, Hari Dang and I, along with the great sherpa Sirdar Angharkay and five other tough sherpas. So three of the six climbers at that point had a Doon connection! On the day of our summit Guru set out with the others (John Dias and I stayed behind at camp) but after a while I saw a lone figure descending back to the Col. It was Guru and it turned out that around 27000 feet he felt he

was not moving well and decided to let Hari Dang replace him on the summit group. I hope he will tell us if this was an act of generosity or he really felt that he would jeopardise the summit attempt. But either way it was typical of someone who has achieved so much but made very little noise about it.

Guru is erudite and deeply sensitive to fine mountain literature, but he has rebuffed all suggestions to write about his own life. Happily, in 2008 Harish Kapadia and I were able to get his agreement to participate in the Himalayan Club's oral history programme – and recorded several hours of autobiographical conversations with him.

Guru, a month ago, on the day after your actual birthday I took a picture of Trisul. Your ascent of Trisul in 1951 is regarded as the beginning of Indian mountaineering. I hope this picture of the sun hitting the mountain at dawn will remind you of those wonderful days and your many many adventures since then. It is also a small token of my enormous gratitude to you and what you have meant in my life. Thank you.



Mountaineering Expeditions associated with The Doon School

1936 to 1984

- 1936 – **Tibet** – Martyn, Clough, Moinuddin
- 1937 – **Banderpunch reconnoiter** – Gibson, Martyn, Tenzing, Rinzing
- 1942 – **Arwa glacier** – Holdy, Martyn, Nandu Jayal, Ravi Mathai, Balram Singh
- 1944 – **Tibet** – Ranjit Lal, Ladli Prasad
- 1946 – **Banderpunch** – Holdy, Gibson, John Monro, Nandu Jayal, Chengappa Nanda, Tenzing
- 1950 – **Banderpunch [20, 720 ft]** – Gibson, Gurdial, Jagjit, Maj Gen Williams, Greenwood, Terming, King John, Kenjan
- 1951 – **Trisul [25447 ft]** – Gurdial, Greenwood, Nalni Jayal, Surendra [Bandy] Lall
- 1951 – Nandu Jayal, member of French expedition
- 1952 – **Kamet** – Gurdial, Nandu, Maj Gen Williams
- 1952 – **Neelkanth**- P.K. Misra was a member of Tilleey's expedition
- 1953 – **Black Peak** – Gibson, Charlie Narendra Singh, Henry, Deb, Krishnaiya, Raman, Guzdar
- 1953 – **Abi Gamin [24, 130 ft]** – Nandu Jayal led a sappers expedition, included Gurdial and Jagjit
- 1954 – **Nun [23410 ft]** – Nalni Jayal was a member of the French expedition
- 1954 – **Tibet** – Gurdial
- 1955 – **Abi Gamin [24130 ft]** – Nandu Jayal, Gurdial
- 1955 – **Kamet** – Gurdial, Nandu and others
- 1955 – **Black Peak [20,956 ft]** – Gibson led a combined Doon & Mayo expedition
- 1955 – **Lahaul Spiti** – Nalni Jayal, member of RAF expedition. First ascents of Tarogiri, Srilata, Asha Giri, Shikhar Beh and an unnamed peak.
- 1956 – **Mrigthuni [22,490 ft]** – Gurdial, Nalni, Mohinder Lal, Rupinder Lal and N. Chuckerbutty who died of suspected pneumonia.
- 1956 – **Saserkangri [25, 170 ft]** – Nandu Jayal led the expedition
- 1957 – **Nanda Devi** – Nandu Jayal led the expedition
- 1958 – **Mrigthuni** – Gurdial, Aamir Ali, Mohinder Lal, Rajindra, Vikram Singh, Kalyan Singh
- 1958 – **Cho-oyu [26, 867 ft]** – Nandu, Jagit and other. Nandu died of pulmonary oedema.
- 1960 – **Everest** – Rajendra, Vikram Singh was a member of this first Indian Everest expedition. Gurdial had been asked to lead it but declined the offer.
- 1960 – **Devistan** – Gurdial, Dilsher Virk, Hari Dang
- 1960 – **Annapoorna II** – Jagjit was a member of Col. Robert's expedition
- 1961 – **Nanda Devi** – Gurdial, Dang, Suman Dubey and others climbed Devistan I [21, 910 ft], Maiktoli [22, 320 ft] and Trisul [23,382 ft]
- 1962 – **Everest** – Gurdial, Dang, Suman Dubey were members of India's 2nd Everest expedition
- 1964 – **Lahaul** – Dang was member of Indi-French expedition
- 1964 – **Jaonli [21,760 ft]** – Dang, Dhar, Bhatt, Alok Chandola, Kalam Singh, Gautam Vohra, Sayaji, Pochkhannla, Adil, Sudhir Sahi, Tejeshwar, Ashok, Surinder,



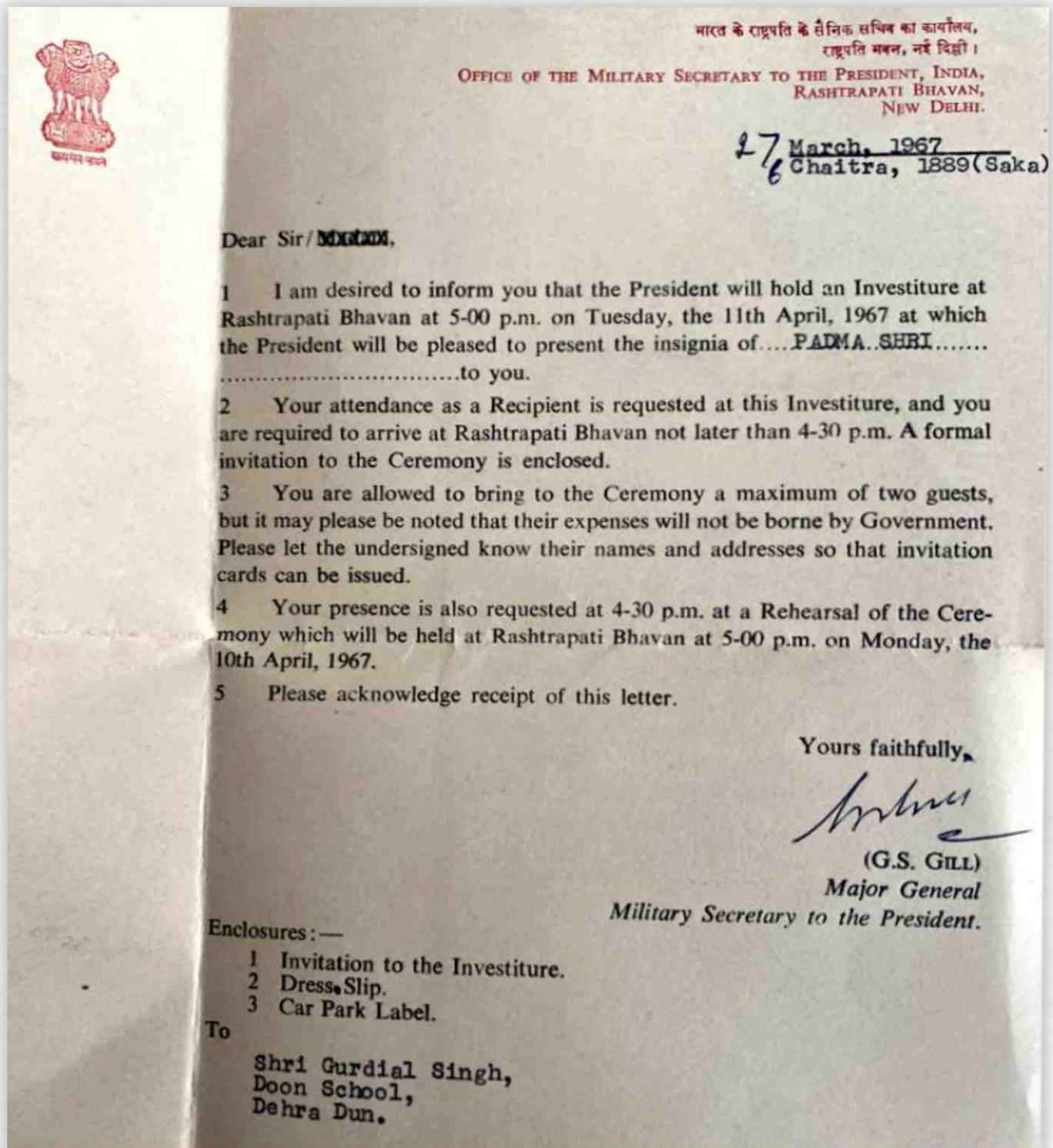
- Summanwar, Ravi Raj, Grover
- 1965 – **Everest** – Gurdial was member of India's 3rd Everest expedition. P.K. Das provided the expedition with weather reports
- 1965 – **Banderpunch** – Gautam Vohra, Akhilesh Manglik, Ashok Chakravarti, Ranjan Das were members of St. Stephen's expedition
- 1965 – **Jaonli** – Dang, Martyn, Vohra, Dar, R.D., Prannoy, Darius, Sumer, Siddhraj, Rommel, Udayan, Pingo
- 1966 – **Jaonli** – first successful ascent to peak – Dang, Vohra, Elgin, Jai, Subir, Chaw, Pingo
- 1967 – **Leo Pargial** – Alok Chandola led an NIA expedition
- 1968 – **Deoban glacier** – Gurdial, member of IMA expedition to a peak 21390 ft at the head of the glacier.
- 1968 – **Swargarohini** – Dang, Navzar, Elgin, Yogi Agarwal and others, climbed Black Peak instead
- 1969 – **Saserkangdri [25, 170 ft]** – Alok Chandola member of IMA expedition
- 1969 – **Kishtwar** – Rommel was a member of the Indo- British expedition
- 1971 – **Banderpunch glacier** – P.M. Das, member of 2 man expedition. Later he, accompanied by a porter, explored the Ramganga glacier
- 1973 – **Parbati Parbat** – P.M. Das, member of St. Stephen's expedition
- 1973 – **Har ki Doon** – school expedition
- 1973 – **Black Peak** – Darshan Singh, Sudhir Sahi, Das, Senapati and others
- 1973 – **Angudri** – P.M. Das, member of St. Stephen's expedition
- 1974 – **Gang Dhua and Leo Pargial** – Jagjit, Navtaj, Mantaj accompanied an IMA expedition
- 1974 – **Dharamsura** – P.M. Das accompanied Delhi University expedition
- 1974 – **Sahastrataal** – Vohra led a Doon School expedition
- 1975 – **Swargarohini first ascent** – Canadian group organized by Dilsher Virk, led by Peter Fuhrmann
- 1975 – **Rupkund** – Vohra led a Doon School expedition
- 1975 – **Rudugaira** – Vohra led a Doon School expedition
- 1975 – **Nanda Devi** – Jagjit and Chandola members of Indo Japanese expedition
- 1975 – **Banderpunch** – Gurdial with the NIM advanced course
- 1981 – **Rudugaira** – Vohra, Fanthome and 4 boys
- 1981 – **Bhagirath II [21, 490 ft]** – P.M. Das made an Alpine ascent
- 1981 – **Mukarabeh** – P.M. Das led an expedition
- 1982 – **Black Peak** – Fanthome led a DS expedition
- 1982 – **Har ki Doon** – Naidu led a DS expedition
- 1982 – **Gangotri I** – P.M. Das and others
- 1983 – **Gosainkund** – Satinder, Mehrotra, Ross, Sandeep, Ajay, Viren, Bharat, Rahul Kumar
- 1983 – **Sangla** – Naidu led a DS group
- 1983 – **Mana [22, 038 ft]** – P.M. Das, member of pre Everest expedition
- 1983 – **Sahastrataal** – Ajay Nath, Sharad Arora, Sorabh, Feroze, Sandeep- midterm break
- 1984 – **Black Peak** – Biala, Mahey, Nautiyal, Sunil, Divyajyoti, Bipin, Bikramjit
- 1984 – **Har ki Doon** – Kukreja was a member of St. Stephen's expedition
- 1984 – **Manostang Kangri [24, 951 ft]** – P. M. Das member of St. Stephen's expedition

[This has been reproduced, with minor corrections, from 'Doon – the story of a school' by Sumer B. Singh (299 J '68)Ed]



Guru at Home

LT COL (RETD) MANTAJ 'MONTY' SINGH 204 J, 1969



The Padma Shri certificate of Mr Gurdial Singh, dated March 17th, 1967

Mr Gurdial 'Guru' Singh was born in Village Uddoke, District Amritsar, Punjab on January 1st, 1924. He was

educated at Cantonment High School, Lahore Cantt, United Punjab.



Government College, Lahore.
Character Certificate.

Name. Gurdial Singh.
Religion and Caste. SIKH.
Father's name. Captain Faujdar Singh M. B. E.
Father's designation and address. Village Kakyanwala. P.O. Warburton Dist
Sheikhupura.
Date of birth. 1st January, 1924 Now reading in Class.
First entered in the College in 1939. in III Yr Class
left in 1943. in VI Year Class
after taking the M.A. Examination in History.

University Examination record:-

			Division.	Marks.
(i)	M. S. L. C.	--	Ist	541
(ii)	Intermediate.	--	3rd	308
(iii)	Bachelor's degree.	--	3rd	252
(iv)	Master's degree.	--		

Subjects of study:-

Intermediate History, Geography and French.
B. A. History, Geography and Military Science
M.A. History.

Health and Physical Efficiency. He has a strong physique and good health.

Games and Athletics. Boxing, Swimming.

Whether a member of the 1st team in any game or a captain of any team? College Colours in Swimming, U.T.C. and Rifle Club.

Whether a member of U.T.C. (Scouting, Rovering, Camping)? Member for 3 years. Rank held- Company Quarter Master Sergeant.

Hobbies, Social Service, or other interest or activities. He takes interest in Boating.

Any other offices held or scholarships or distinctions won in games and studies. Athletic Roll of Honour (Swimming) College, University and Punjab Back stroke champion 1941

General remarks on the candidate on such qualities as personality, courage, initiative, self-reliance, resource, reliability and capacity for leadership.

He is a young man with a pleasant personality. He belongs to a high family of Sikhs the members of which have rendered meritorious services to Government in War. He has a keen sense of responsibility and can be entrusted

with Government post of a high status.

S. J. Srinan
Principal,
Government College, Lahore.
-10711-

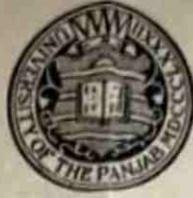
Character Certificate from Government College, Lahore



Roll No. 418.

Registered No. 37.1.75.

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PANJAB.



ARTS.
SESSION 1943.

This is to Certify

That Gurdial Singh
son of Captain Faujdar Singh
of the Government College, Lahore

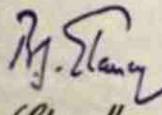
has obtained the Degree of

Master of Arts

in this University at the Examination held in April, 1943, and that he was
placed in the Second Class, the subject of Examination
being History


Registrar,
Senate Hall, Lahore.

The 22nd December, 1943.

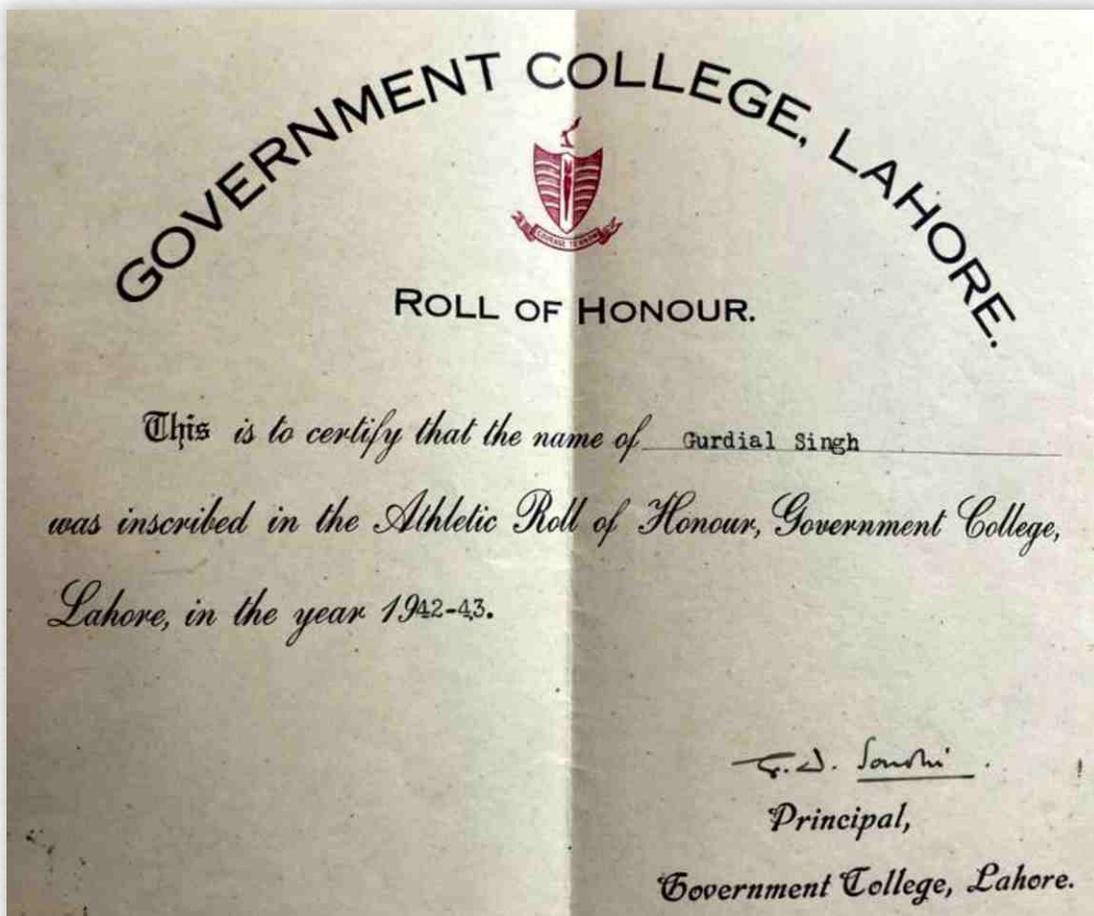
Countersigned

Chancellor,
University of the Punjab.

Master of Arts from Government College, Lahore, part of The University of the Panjab

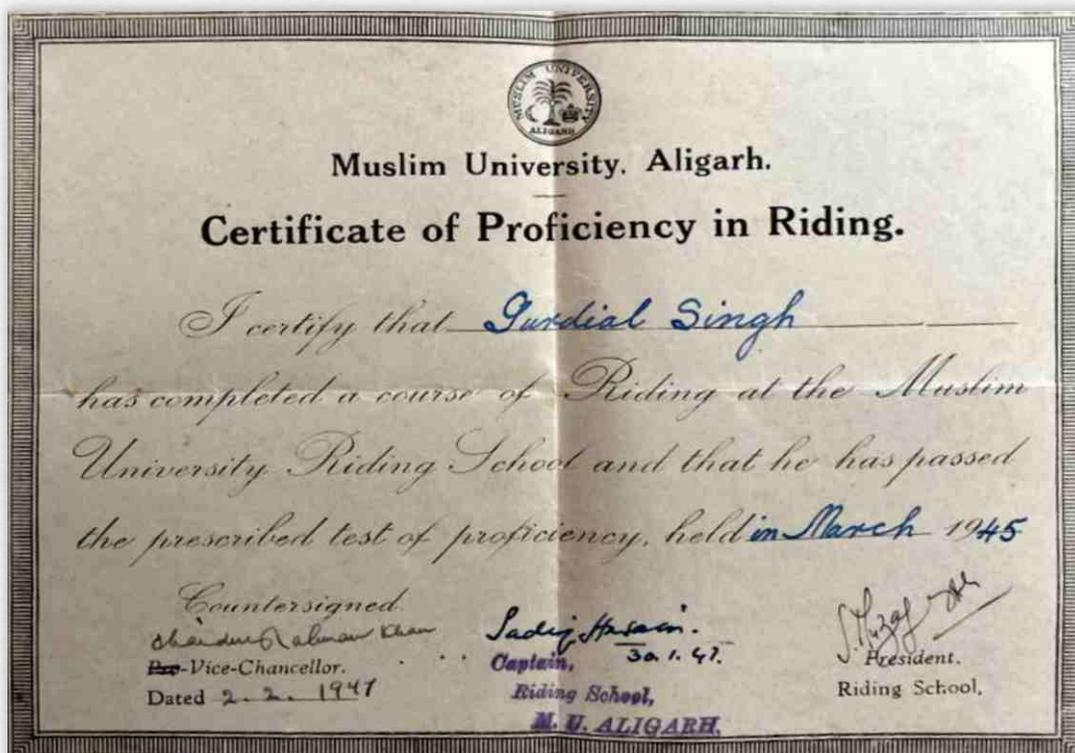


He received his BA in English, History and Geography, at Govt College, Lahore. His MA was in Geography

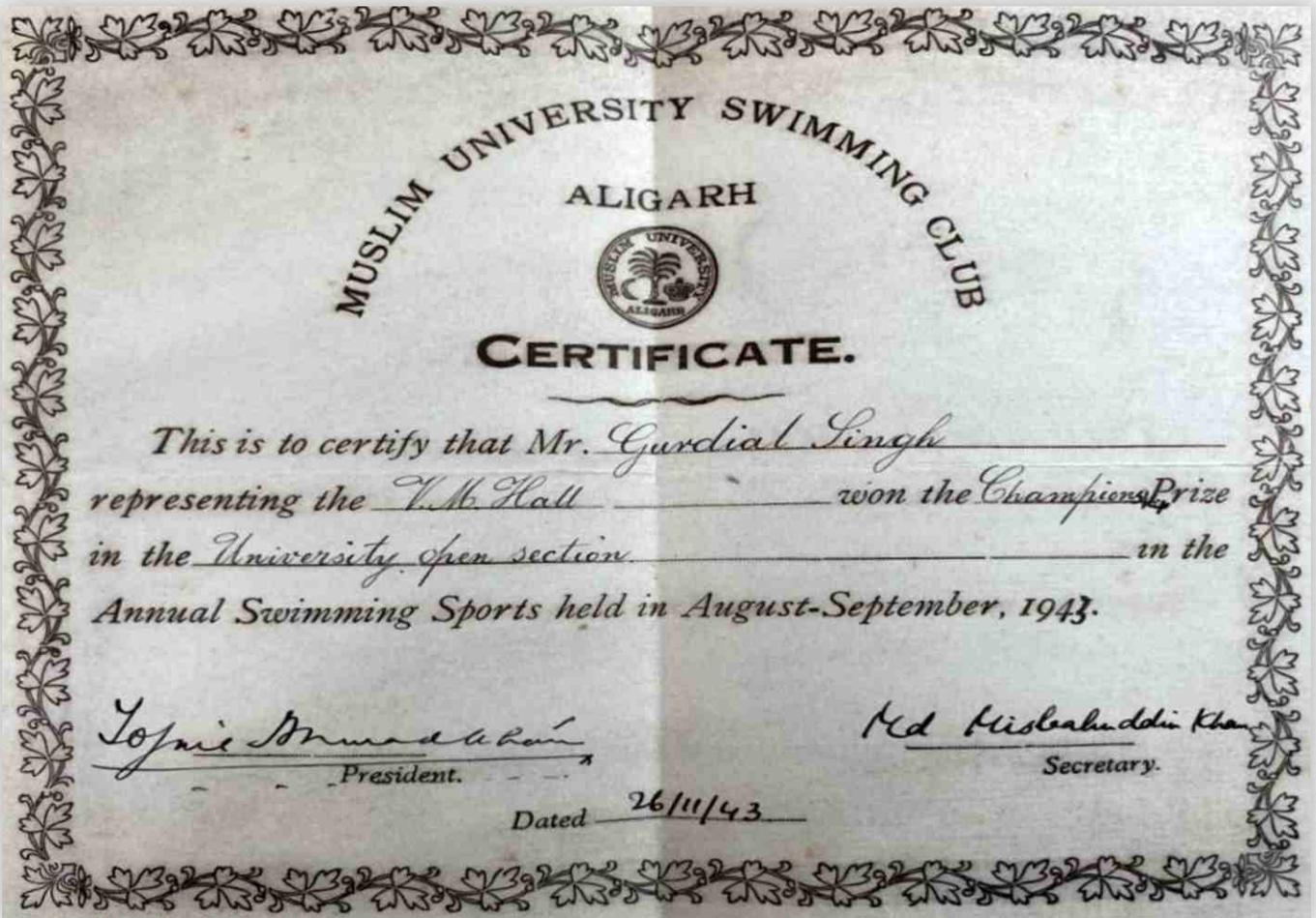
from Aligarh Muslim University, Uttar Pradesh.



Guru's Athletic Roll of Honour



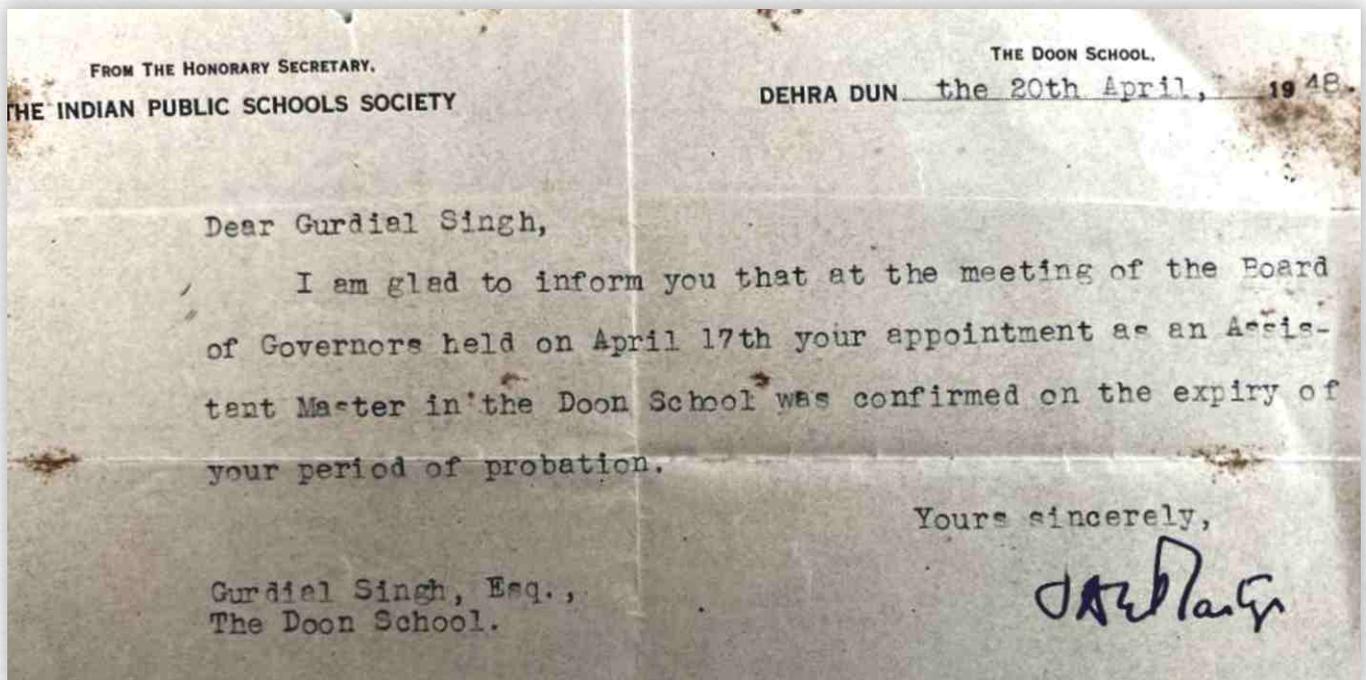
Guru's Certificate in Riding



Guru winning the Swimming Championship

Guru was a Punjab State-level swimmer of repute. He was keen on horse riding. The Rampur Raja had offered

him horses with army instructors to train the students of AMU. Guru attended the trainings at Rampur.



Mr JAK Martyn's acceptance of Guru joining The Doon School as an Assistant Master, confirmed on expiry of probation, dated April 20th, 1948



The Doon School,
Dehra Dun,
3rd December, 1948.

The Secretary,
Federal Public Service Commission,
New Delhi.

Dear Sir,

I wish to apply for the post of Lecturer in Geography in the Inter Services Wing of the Armed Forces Academy, Dehra Dun, advertised in the Hindustan Times of Sunday, November 28, 1948.

I hold the Master's degree both in History and Geography in the second division from the Universities of the Punjab and Aligarh respectively. Immediately after finishing the post-graduate courses of study, I joined the staff of the Doon School, Dehra Dun, as an Assistant Master, and since then I have been mostly concerned with the teaching of Geography up to the Cambridge School Certificate standard.

In my college days, I was a member of the 4th (Pb) Bn. University Training Corps for a period of three years, and held the rank of C.Q.M.S. at the time of leaving. I also hold a proficiency certificate in riding from the University of Aligarh.

In the field of sport, I won the Punjab Amateur Swimming Championship both in 100 and 200 metres backstroke swimming in 1942, and also the Championship prize in the Aligarh University Open Section in the Annual Swimming Sports held in 1943. Since 1946 I have been in-charge of organising this sport and coaching boys in swimming and diving in the Doon School.

I am a national of the Dominion of India by birth. I was born on January 1, 1924 and shall be completing my twenty-fifth year next month.

My father, the late Captain Faujdar Singh, M.B.E., served as Military Estates Officer in the Military Lands & Cantonments Department under the Ministry of Defence in the Government of India.

The following persons will act as references:-

1. J.A.K. Martyn, Esq., M.A. (Cantab),
Headmaster, Doon School, Dehra Dun.
2. T. Swaminathan, Esq., I.C.S.,
Secretary to Govt., U.P. Civil Secretariat, Lucknow.
3. C.D. Jayal, Esq.,
12-B, New Road, Dehra Dun.

At present, although my salary is only Rs. 230/- excluding dearness allowance, I enjoy, besides other benefits, completely free board and lodging which in the existing high cost of living amount to a substantial sum. The scale of pay, as advertised, is not sufficiently attractive to me considering the facilities I enjoy in the School, but I shall gladly accept the job if I am given an initial start of Rs. 620/-. I believe my qualifications entitle me to the start I have asked for.

I am enclosing herewith a postal order (No. Q196519) for Rs. 7/8/-.

I trust you will favourably consider my application.

Yours faithfully,

(GURDIAL SINGH)

Draft Application for joining The Inter Services Wing of the Armed Forces Academy, Dehradun, as a Lecturer in Geography. Dated Dec 3rd, 1948. This was in case he was not made a permanent Master at The Doon School.

THE STAFF. HEADMASTER

(HM) A.E. Foot, M.A., (Cantab)

Assistant Masters.

- *(M) J.A.K. Martyn, M.A. (Cantab).
- *(T) C.L. Howell Thomas, M.A. (Cantab).
- *(G) J.T.M. Gibson, M.A. (Cantab).
- *(H) R.L. Holdsworth, M.A. (Oxon).
- (K) V.N. Kapur, B.A. B.T. (Punjab), Diploma Hygiene and Physical Education (Glasgow); Diploma S.G. & A. (Sweden)
- (Me) C.P.S. Menon, M.A. (Madras), M.Sc. (London), F.R.A.S
- (Mo) S. Muinuddin, B.A. (Delhi), Diploma for Directorship of Physical Education, (Madras), L.C.P. (London)
- (Mh) R.L. Mehta, M.A. (Punjab); M.A. (Oxon), (on leave).
- (Bh) H.S. Bhai, M.A. (Edin); M.Ed. (Leeds), ph.D (Leeds); Diploma in Education (Leeds) F.R.ECON. S
- (C) W.L. Clough, M.A. (Cantab).
- (Kh) Sudhir Khastgir, Diploma in Art, (Shantiniketan).
- (V) T.N. Vyas, B.Sc. Hons. (Lucknow); B.Sc. Hons. (London).
- (A) A.M. Ashraf, M.A. (Delhi), (on leave).
- (R) S.C. Roy, B.Sc. (Benares).
- (Ag) S.C. Agarwal, M.Sc. (Alld).
- (SS) Shanti Swarup, M.Sc. (Lucknow).
- (N) K.N.P. Nair, B.A.L.T. (Madras)
- (Ca) A.V. Caleb, B.A.B.T. (Punjab) (temporary)
- (An) C. Anand, B.A. Hons (Punjab).
- (P) Y.R. Puri, B.Sc. Hons (Punjab).
- (B) H.H. Bilgrami B.A. (Hons). M.A. (Alld). (temporary)

Music Master.

- (Sh) V. Shirodker, Diploma (Shantiniketan.)

Bursar.

- (Mr) R.L. Moore, B.Sc. (Hons), M.Sc. Tech (Manchester), A.I.P.

Secretary to the Headmaster.

Khwaja Abdur Rahim B.A.

Hospital Sister.

Sister V.M. Hardaker.

Matrons.

Miss P. King (Tata House).
Miss E. Baker. (Kashmir House).
Mrs. M. Wittenbaker, (Jaipur House).
Miss F. Flintoff, (Hyderabad House).

Woodwork Instructor.

(KK) Khalilullah Khan.

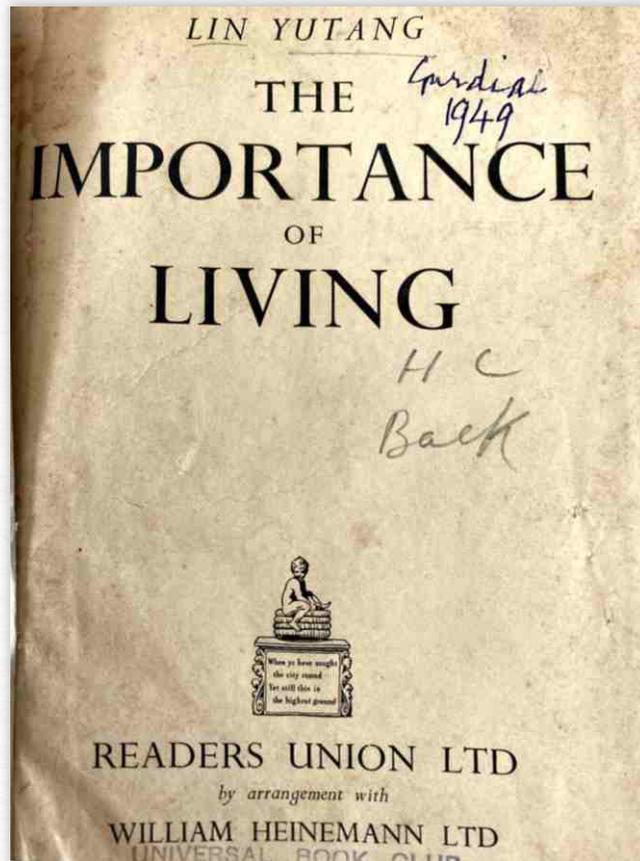
Boxing Instructor.

R.K. Niroola B.A. D.P.E. (Punjab).

*Masters in charge of Houses.

Mr Gurdial Singh joined The Doon School in 1945 when Mr AE Foot was the HM

Guru only taught at The Doon School, from the age of 21 between 1945 and 1978.



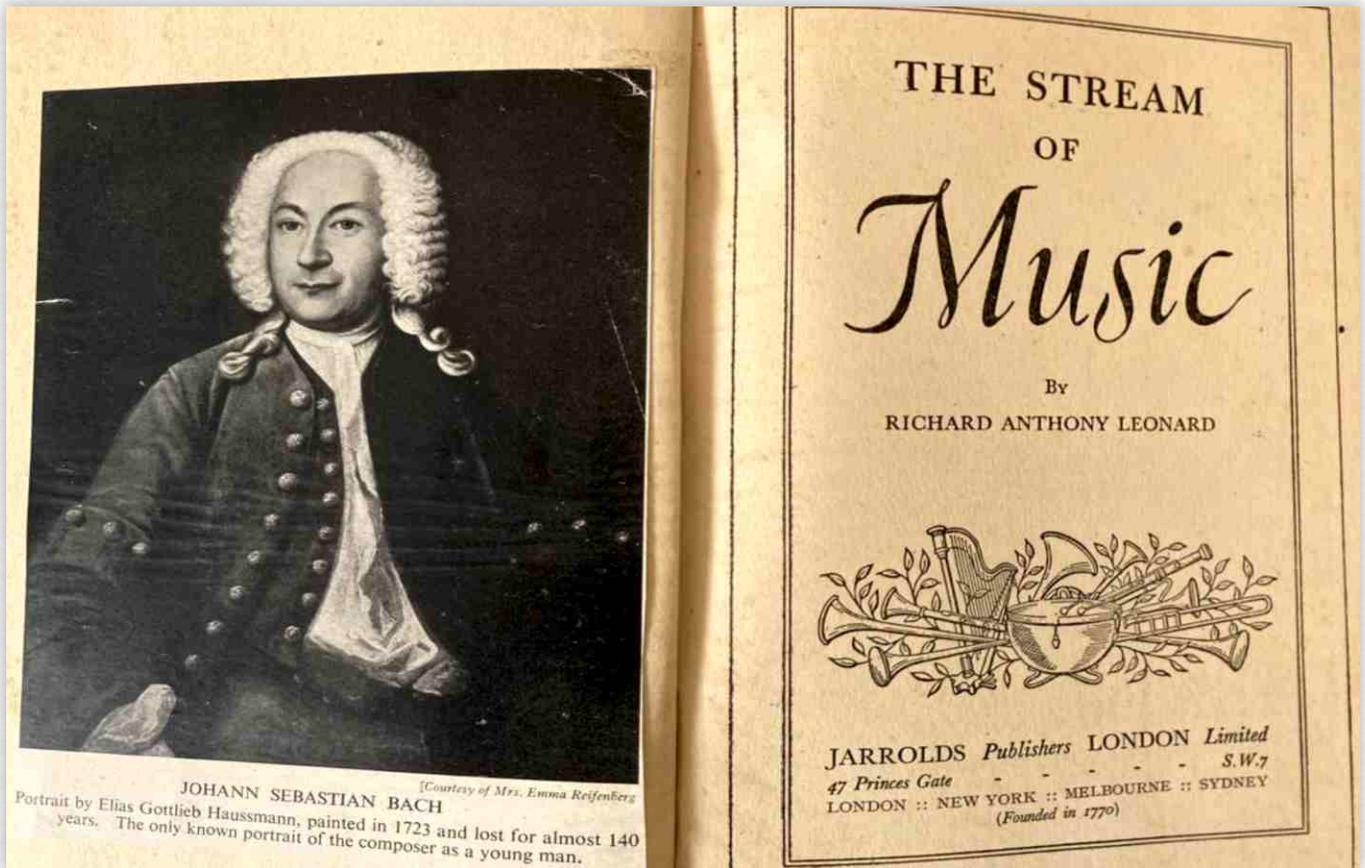
Guru was surrounded by books, including this one bought in 1949



Guru's writing table



Mr Sudhir Khastagir gifted this sculpture in plaster of Paris to Mr Gurdial Singh when he left The Doon School. It was Mr Gurdial Singh's favourite sculpture, placed in front of his bed



Guru's beloved classical music was always close at hand



A painting in Guru's cottage



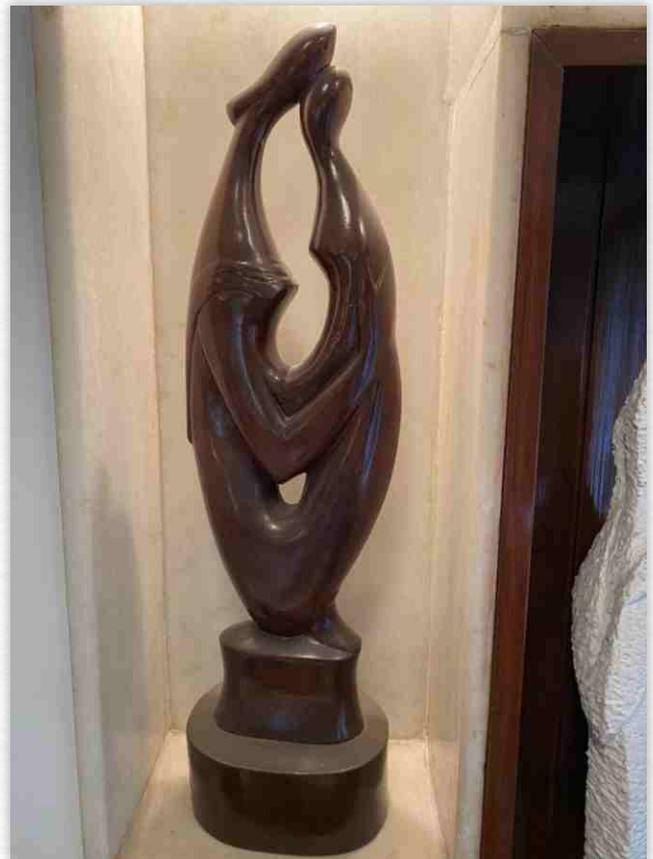
A painting in Guru's cottage



A pen and ink painting in Guru's cottage



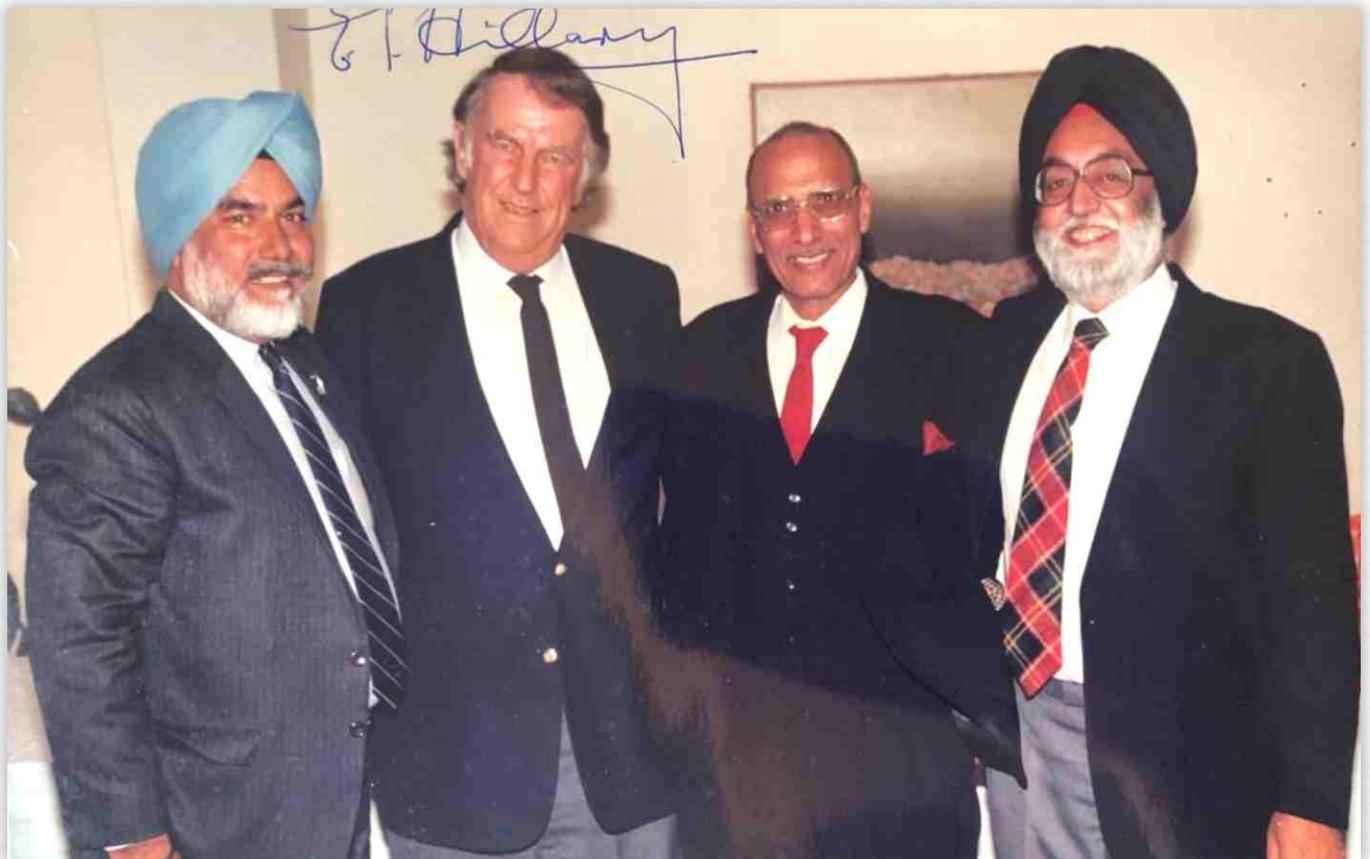
A sculpture in Guru's cottage



A sculpture in Guru's cottage



Indian Mountaineering Foundation Award to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the 1965 Everest Expedition



Mr Gurdial Singh, with Edmund Hillary, and Everesters Col Cheema and Mr MS Gill, 2003

W. H. Murray
Gandhi. v. 1

A. S. Chao

J. W. M. ...
...

W. B. ...

Blair ...

A. G. ...

H. H. ...

Y. ...

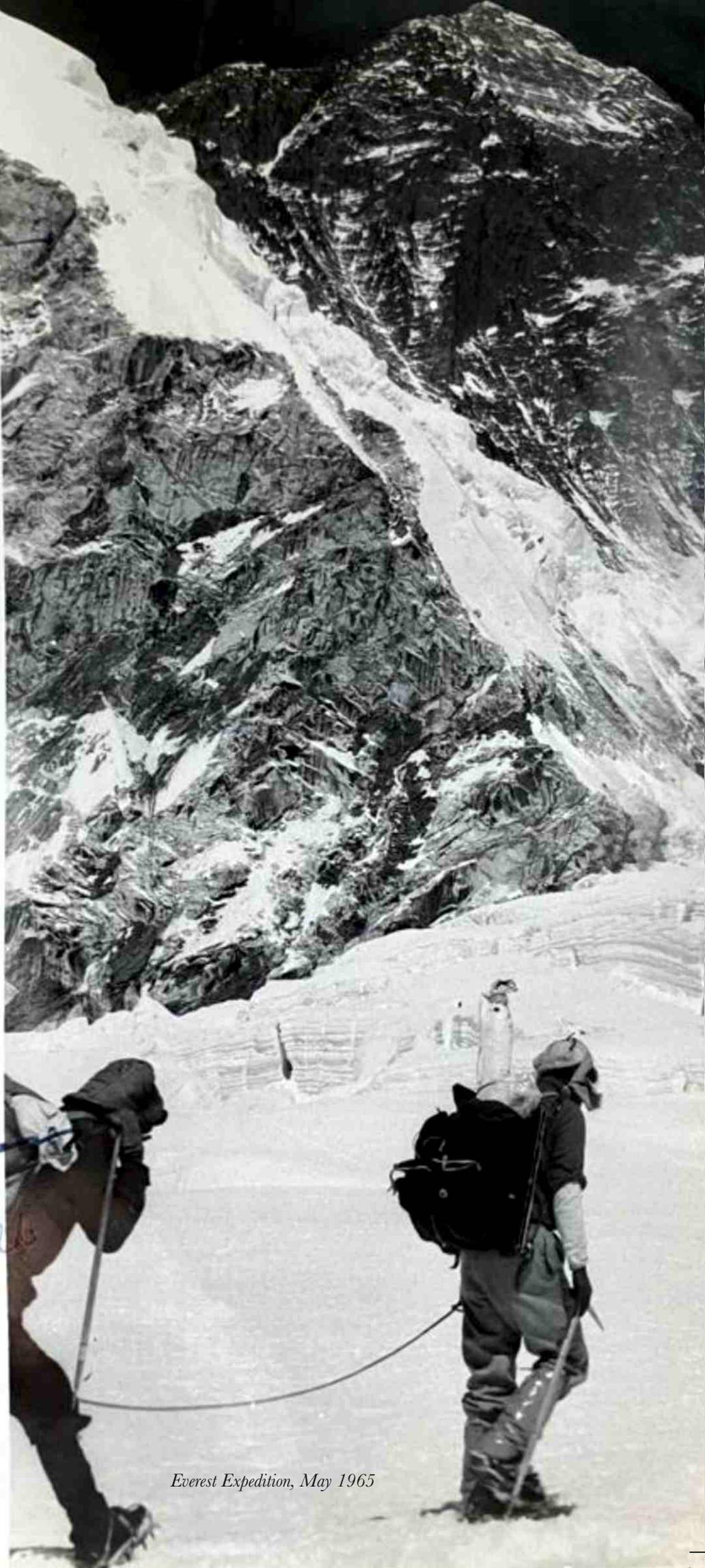
L. ...

Ang ...

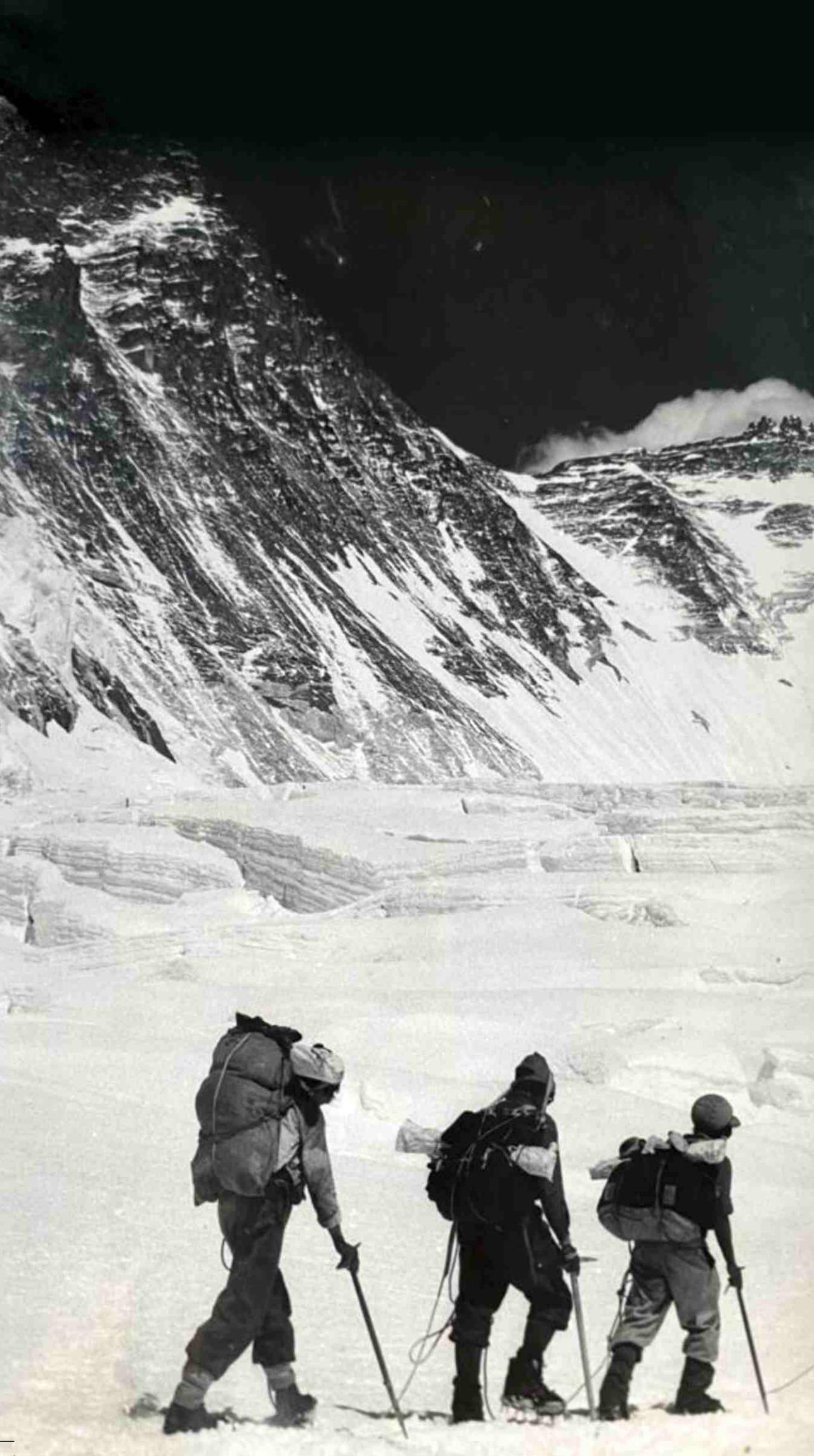
B. ...

A. ...

Lala ...



Everest Expedition, May 1965

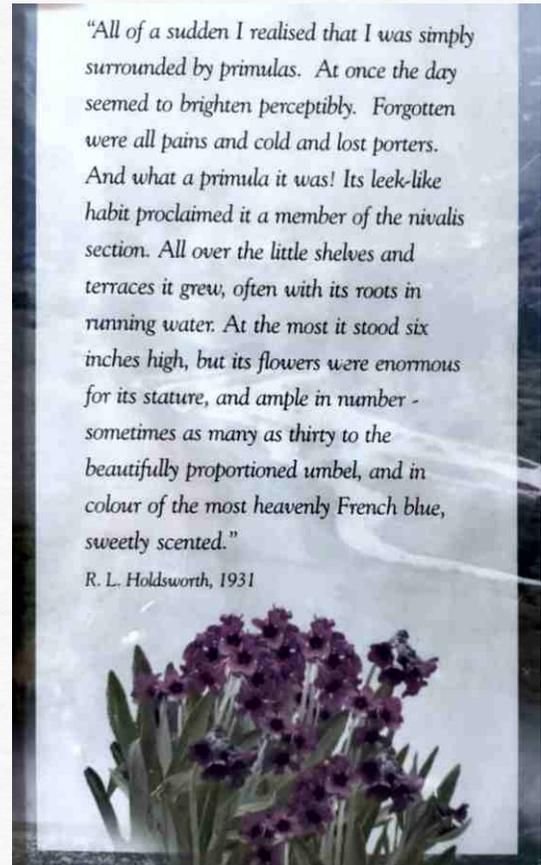




Mr Gurdial Singh receiving the IMF Gold Medal from PM Indira Gandhi, 1983



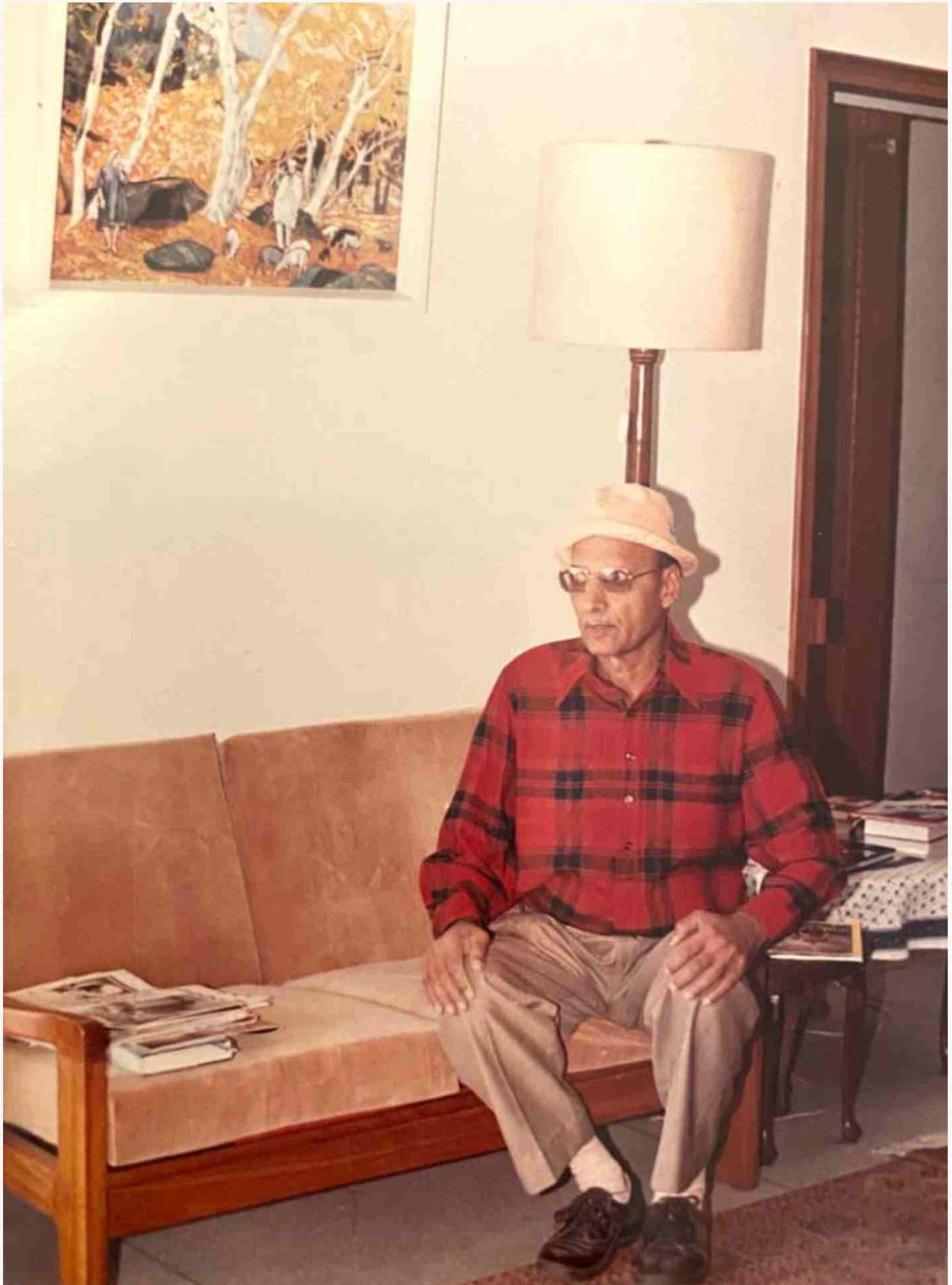
Mr Gurdial Singh's Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award Blazer pocket, 2006



Guru shared these lines by Holdy (Mr RL Holdsworth). After climbing Kamet with Frank Smythe in 1931, they visited the Valley of Flowers where they saw Primulas growing over several acres. This passage is in the book Kamet Conquered by Smythe from a chapter by Holdy on mountain flowers



Guru surrounded by his prized plants



Guru in his living room



Guru in his living room, everything kept spic and span



Guru surrounded by art and music

He greatly enjoyed his time at his home in Chandbagh, surrounded by music, art (from the likes of Rathin

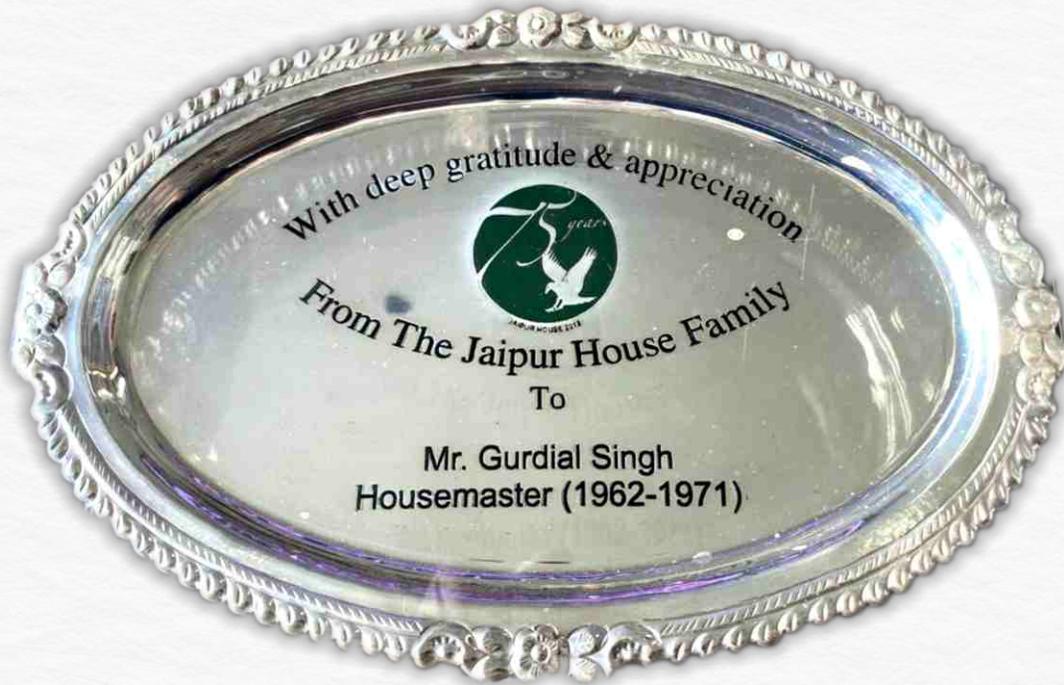
Mitra and Sudhir Khastgir), his beloved garden, friends, well-wishers, family, and most of all, his students.



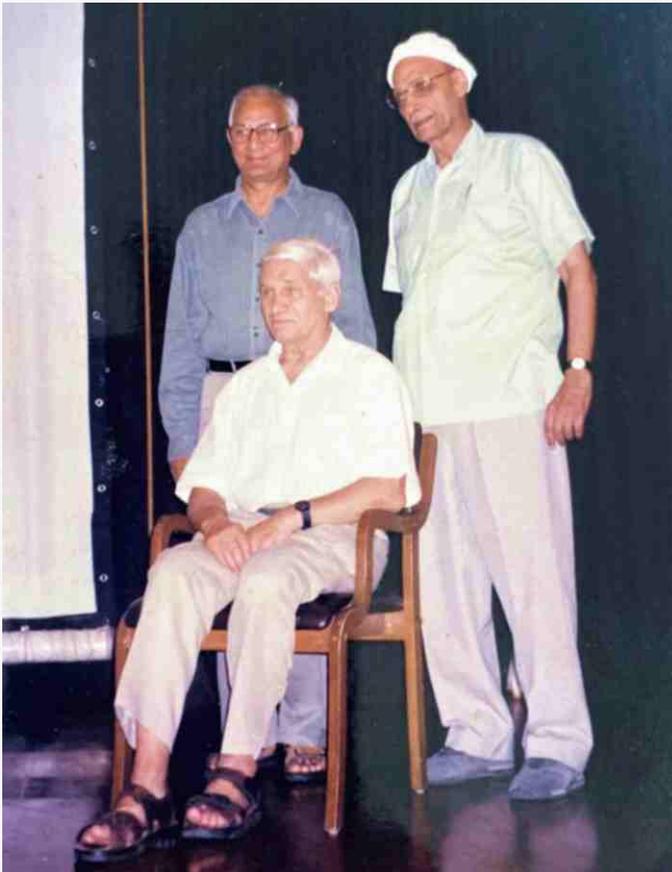
Guru with his two best friends, Nalni Dhar Jayal (100 T, 1943) and Aamir Ali (214 K, 1939)



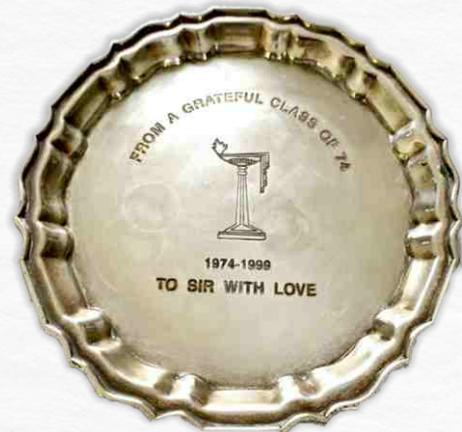
*Celebrating Mr Gurdial Singh's 90th, at Sujan Singh Park, New Delhi.
Standing From L-R: Prannoy Roy (66 J, 1966), Mantaj, Suman Dubey (167 J, 1958), Jeet, Kanwal and Harpal Singh (322 H, 1965)
Sitting From L-R: Guru, Nalni Dhar Jayal*



A thank you from Jaipur House



Guru with his two best friends, Nalni Dhar Jayal (100 T, 1943) and Amir Ali (214 K, 1939)



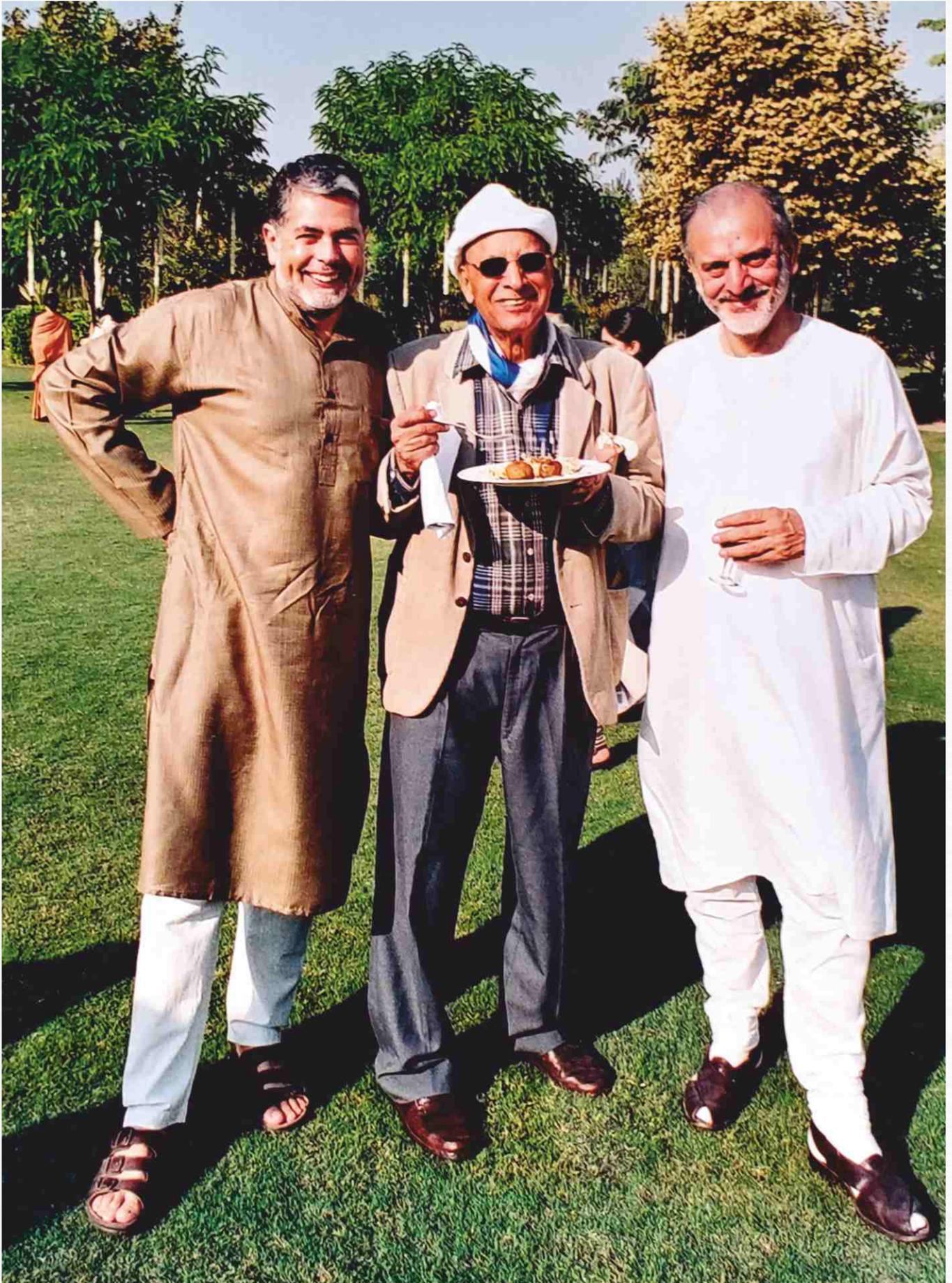
Appreciation from the Class of 1974



A memento from the Class of 1975



Guru at his cottage



Guru at his grand niece's wedding reception, celebrating with Suman Dubey



Guru at his home in Chandigarh with Dilsher Virk (140 K, 1959), 2019



Guru



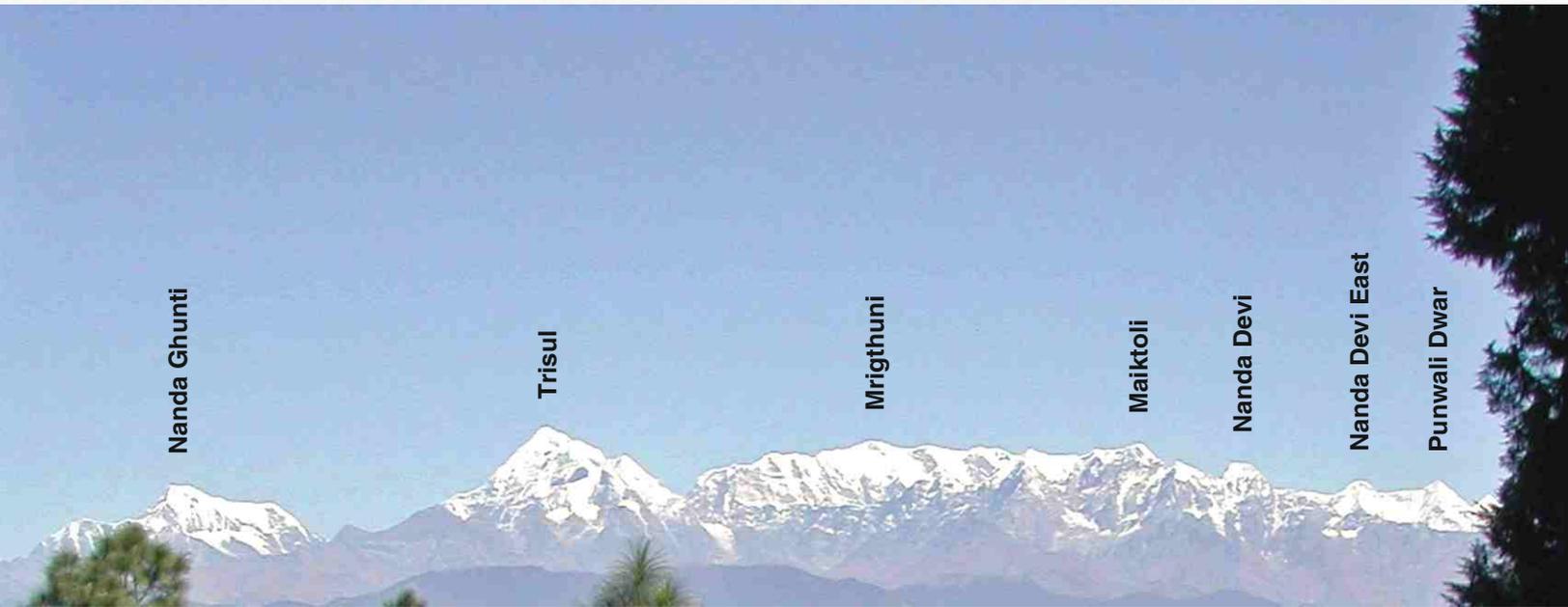


GURU'S PEAKS

SUMAN DUBEY 167 J, 1958



Mr Gurdial Singh walks in Kausani in October 2003, as three peaks he climbed loom large in the background: Trisul, Mrigthuni, and Maiktoli



Nanda Ghunti

Trisul

Mrigthuni

Maiktoli

Nanda Devi

Nanda Devi East

Punwali Dwar



Nanda Ghunti

Trisul, 7,120 metres, Guru ascent 1951

Mrigthuni, 6,855 metres, Guru ascent 1958

Maiktoli, 6,803 metres, Guru, Dang, Dubey ascent 1961

Nanda Devi, 7,816 metres, Attempt in 1961

Nanda Devi East

Punwali Dwar





The DSOBS

Store

DOSCOBILIA



Introducing the renovated DSOBS Memorabilia Store!

Nestled within the picturesque campus of The Doon School, the store offers a treasure trove for the School's esteemed alumni.

The store proudly showcases an extensive collection of merchandise, clothing and accessories, and an array of carefully curated memorabilia.

Each item embodies the essence of The Doon School, reflecting its values, traditions, and the spirit of lifelong learning that the institution instills in its students.

Visit the DSOBS Memorabilia Store today and embark on a journey through time, where the past converges with the present, and the threads of our shared experiences are woven into the fabric of each item, proudly representing the legacy of The Doon School.

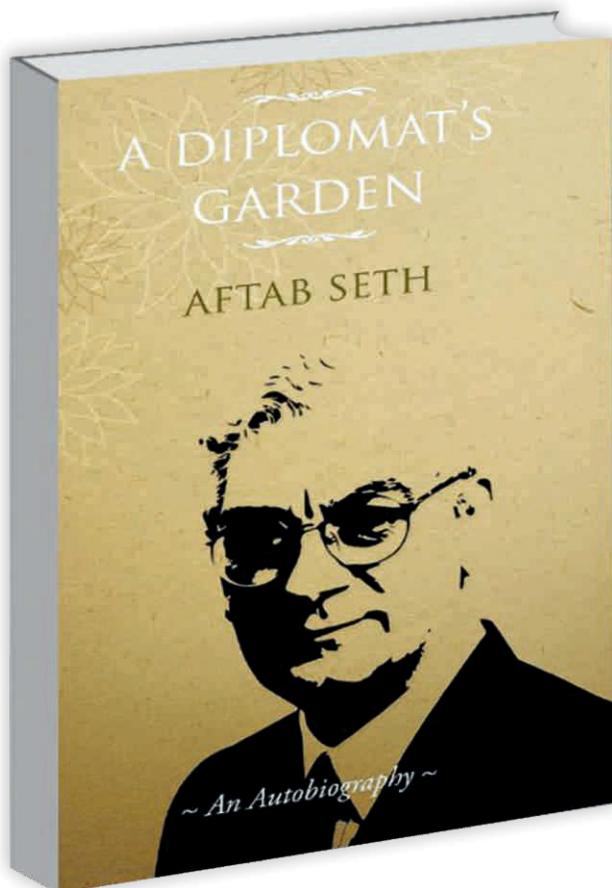


The Memoirs of Aftab Seth (189 J, 1959)

EDITOR'S NOTE: This has been reprinted from the August 27 issue of The Tribune.

Aftab Seth: Ambassador of Goodwill, Positivity

Dipankar Gupta



A Diplomat's Garden: An Autobiography by Aftab Seth

Aftab Seth's *A Diplomat's Garden* is aromatic, scenic and delightful; just as every garden should be. Once we set foot on Aftab's turf, we realise how cultivated the man is and how curated each of his passions is, from poetry, drama to diplomacy, and so much more in between. Probably his early years at The Doon School gave him the licence to skill. Aftab stood first in practically every subject, became a Rhodes Scholar and finally, a much-acclaimed Ambassador of India.

He has had luck on his side, like every gardener must, for he was born in a family where cultures mingled. Hindu, Islamic and Welsh Anglican genes flow happily in him and by choice, he, in turn, has done his bit to enlarge his family's gene pool. As if

all these blessings were not enough, he has had the superb luck of the draw in Pola, his talented and ever supportive wife.

It is refreshing to read an account of a life where there is no rancour, or resentment, at any point, but joy in receiving every little gift of friendship and goodwill that comes one's way. It is also uplifting to read how kind human nature can be when, on several occasions, at great personal risk to themselves, Aftab's friends and colleagues, in foreign locales, came unhesitatingly to his help. They often did this while bullets were flying and there was rioting on the streets at some of the places Aftab was posted at. It is because Aftab notes each such act with fondness that they appear magnified to the reader. Not one of these were taken as an entitlement, official courtesy, or systemic reciprocity, but as sheer abundant generosity.

These sections are the sweetest spot. Do friendships emerge out of chance or do people just get the friends they deserve? The latter is surely the case with Aftab and his family. In his days in Lebanon, Egypt and Pakistan, his colleagues and friends abroad, some of whom were even unfriendly to India's policies of the day, stood by his side. There were matters of medical emergencies and ill-health but Aftab and Pola pulled through each of them because their goodwill radiated outwards to embrace so many.

I have hardly any talent or taste for international relations and it is bad manners to be so ill-informed, but there is little I could do to correct the situation. This is why it was such a pleasure to read Aftab's book. Matters that were remote and impregnable suddenly appeared accessible. Now, the politics of post-Independence Indonesia, or post-revolution Vietnam, or the strange power-sharing arrangement in Lebanon have come alive. I am, as a result, sufficiently curious to know and

read more. The chapters on Pakistan perhaps reveal how adroitly Aftab managed to mingle hard diplomacy with soft touches of friendship.

As in every profession, there are rivalries, bickering and pettifogging, and it is clear that Aftab had his fair share of those, but when he relates these, there is always a happy ending. There are vignettes too that tell you, in a glimpse, so much about the host country. Such as Melina Mercouri's careless cavorting while in a rather formal setting. Or how Benazir's mother pulled up her staff for not attending to Aftab who, as a guest, deserved the most gracious courtesies. Or, at a grander level, how Japan's Imperial family treated Aftab and his wife with dignity and respect.

Of course, Japan is Aftab Seth's true love. It began as a teenage crush and grew into an adult romance. He brought Japan to India in a way no diplomat ever has. Aftab was also given a full Japanese name which tells one of the respect he earned while he was serving there.

Additionally, he is on the boards of several Japanese educational institutions and is a Visiting Professor at Keio University as well. His writings

have won him laudatory reviews from the highest Japanese quarters, including the monarchy. These are great achievements for any diplomat.

As a diplomat, he spent a lot of quality time and energy not only in sorting out political and economic matters, but in learning about the culture of the countries he was in. To this end, he successfully showcased Indian arts, dance, drama and philosophy wherever he was posted and, at the same time, brought to India the best of other cultures. It is here that his wife, Pola (aka Nilima), was an invaluable asset. A trained exponent of classical dance and a connoisseur of fine arts, she purveyed the best of Indian culture to whichever country Aftab was posted to.

Diplomats today are often so immersed in sorting out trade and arms deals that they lose sight of the essence of diplomacy, namely, bringing ordinary people across continents closer.

Hopefully, this book will inspire fresh foreign service recruits to change gears and press the pedal on the cultural and human dimensions, just as Aftab Seth did.

In Memoriam



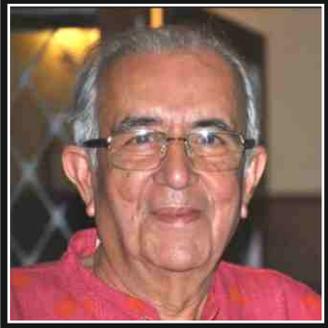
With deep regret and profound grief, we inform you of the passing of **Dr Surendra Dayal 'SD' Singh (SG)** (Affiliate Member), father of Ms Madhu Johri (235 H, 1967) and Praveen Singh (200 K, 1971), and grandfather of Nakul Johri (645 H, 1995), Kaustubh Johri (548 H, 2001), Vikram Singh (339 K, 2005), and Arjun Singh (532 H, 2007) on July 4th. Our heartfelt condolences to Madhu, Praveen, Nakul, Kaustubh, Vikram, Arjun, and all members of the family and to the Dosco fraternity at large.



We are saddened to inform you of the passing of **Lt Gen Bhupindar Singh, PVSM AVSM VSM (117 H, 1942)**, father of Ranjit Singh (115 J, 1968), grandfather of Karan Singh (449 H, 2000), and grandfather-in-law of Adrit Raha, (590 T, 2001) on September 14th. General Singh joined the School in the second term of 1935. He was School Tennis Captain and received his Colours in Swimming and Tennis. He was House Captain Hyderabad House, and was a distinguished scholar. He joined the Indian Army in 1947 and retired in 1985 as the Army Commander (General Officer Commanding-in-Chief Central Command). In addition to Ranjit, Karan, and Adrit, he is survived by Meera, his daughter-in-law, Ritu and Jas, his daughter and son-in-law, Kirat his granddaughter-in-law, Anandita, his granddaughter, Avi and Kim, his grandson and granddaughter-in-law, and his great grandchildren, Ayra, Kabir, Ayaan, and Kiara. Our heartfelt condolences to all members of the family.



Sadly, we inform you of the passing of **Mr Brajdharee Lall (209 K, 1943)**, brother of Late Rajdharee Lall (205 K, 1939) and Late Shaildharee Lall (238 K, 1943), on July 30th. Our thoughts are with his family at this time.



With grief, we inform you of the passing of **Govind Kumar Jauhar (159 H, 1950)**, the younger brother of Anand Kumar Jauhar (156 H, 1949) on June 12th. Our sincerest condolences to his wife, Promilla; his daughter, Radhika; his son-in-law, Ashok Batra (131 H, 1966); and all members of the family and his circle of friends.



Satbir ‘Sunny’ Singh of Jind (227 J, 1957) passed on August 18th. Our sincere condolences to all members of the family and his loved ones.

Tributes



Dr SD Singh (SG)

Dr SD Singh (SG)

Madhu Singh Johri 235 H, 1967

Praveen Singh 200 K, 1971

Our father, Dr SD Singh (Sg), passed on July 4th, 2023.

He taught at The Doon School from 1955 to 1978. He was Head of the English Department and Housemaster of Hyderabad (B) at the time of his leaving.

Dr Singh took over as Principal of the Scindia School in mid-1978 from Mr SP Sahi and retired in 1994.

While at the Scindia School, he was Chairman, Indian Public Schools' Conference (IPSC) (1986-88), Member, Governing Council CBSE (1990-94), and Treasurer, Round Square Conference (1990-94).

Dr Singh was conferred the Lifetime Achievement Award by the IPSC in 2004.

We want to thank the Doon fraternity for all the messages we have received. His impact on the School will be felt for generations to come.

Shomie Das (HM, SRD) 165 H, 1951

I was deeply saddened to learn of SD's passing. We worked very closely together in the IPSC, where he

succeeded me as Chairman. A great gentleman with a practical mind, I greatly valued his opinions and judgement. My sincerest condolences.

Pronobendra Deb 119 J, 1955



Dr SD Singh (SG)

I am talking of the time many decades ago, in early 1956, when I came back to School after SC to do my IA. And while I do not recall when Mr SD Singh (that was what we knew him as; he must have earned his PhD subsequently) joined School, it couldn't have been much earlier.

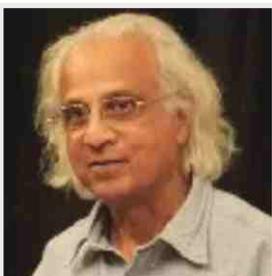
Now I need to digress a bit, as that "IA" which I came

back for, probably needs an explanation for those of more recent vintage – a majority of The Rose Bowl’s current readership I’d guess. In those days, you commonly finished school at Class X after passing your Matriculation. Thereafter, you joined a college and did a two-year Intermediate Arts/Science/Commerce course to earn your IA/ISc/ICom certificate. The normal academic year in India was from June to May, I think. So, while the normal school-leaving exam for Matriculation was held in April or May at the end of the academic year, our school leaving exam for SC was held at the end of the calendar year. Thus, there was a certain mismatch in the two academic years with an overlap of almost six months. But because the SC syllabus was a little more advanced than that of Matriculation, fortunately we were not required to do the full first year of the Intermediate course, and joined as it were in the middle of the first year. After Intermediate, a further two years, known as the Third and Fourth years, were needed to get your first degree qualification, BA/BSc/BCom, etc.

For my IA course I selected Economics, Civics (a precursor to Political Science), and Maths as my optional subjects. And most surprisingly, The Doon School permitted you to opt for these subjects but had no dedicated teachers for Economics and Civics! While Head Master, Mr Martyn started us off on Economics, saying he had attended some lectures in the subject at Cambridge, Mr SD Singh was deputed to teach Civics; I didn’t know then, and don’t know even now, what subject he taught in School.

It was a very informal kind of fun learning that we had with Mr Singh. Our relationship was typically that of senior boys and a new school teacher still finding his feet in a public school. We simply read the prescribed textbook together and if there was anything not quite straightforward he would explain it. In later years, we would fondly recall those days and laugh together in recollection. Incidentally, HM didn’t carry on teaching economics for long, and handed the baton to Mr V Deshpande, yes, our music teacher! Apparently, Mr Deshpande was a commerce graduate, or such was our impression.

Anubrotto ‘Dunu’ Roy 94 H, 1961



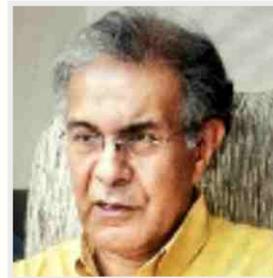
Dunu Roy

My deepest condolences to the family.

SD was not only an exciting teacher but an inspiring role model for adventure and making life more meaningful.

So many memories of a bygone era when gentlemen were actually gentle and wisdom meant not just information but experience.

Wajahat Habibullah, IAS 266 H, 1961



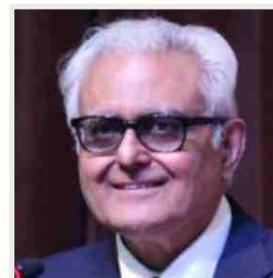
Wajahat Habibullah

He was one of my English teachers.

I was recently in touch with him researching my book on Rajiv Gandhi.

A gem of a man.

Darshan Singh 90 T, 1962



Darshan Singh

Those who studied in The Doon School during its third decade would have had their formative years deeply moulded by various stalwarts who taught at that time and built the foundation of a great School. Two such persons were Mr Gurdial Singh, who taught geography, and Dr SD Singh, english. Both also became Housemasters at Jaipur and Tata respectively.

Dr SD Singh was a well-built person that commanded a great presence in the classroom. He had immense knowledge of English idioms and text. I still remember that he pointed out that we could either use “unique” or “rather” but never the two together as “rather unique.” The lessons we learnt from him have taken us forward

TRIBUTES

in life. Many times, when we are travelling in Europe, people were surprised that we Indians spoke such “good” English and often speculated whether we studied in Europe. But with people like Dr SD Singh an European education was not necessary. We were simply well-taught Indians.

Dr SD Singh was later Housemaster at Tata House and, of course, he did an unforgettable stint for the Scindia School as its Principal. Many years later, he settled in Rajender Nagar in Dehradun before shifting to his son in the Alkapuri area of Vadodara, Gujarat.

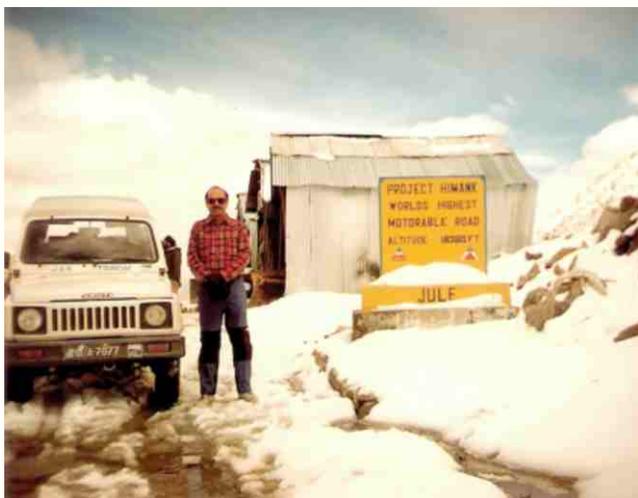
While in Dehradun, I requested him to join the Board of Governors of Welham Boys’ School. He did join, and his contributions were valuable to the Board. His advice was always sound and had a long term tinge of advantage to it.

To the above stalwart I pay my humble tribute and salute.

Sudhir Sahi 116 T, 1963

I was sorry to learn of Dr SD Singh’s passing. He was a fine person and wore some of the best ties in Chandbagh. I had the good fortune of knowing him and his gracious wife during my years in Tata House (1959-63). I also accompanied him on two Mid-Terms to his beloved Khara.

He was part of the reason for the epithet: “If you didn’t get into Tata House, you went to The Doon School!”



Sudhir, inspired by SG, at Khardung La (18,300 ft), the world's highest motorable road from Leh to Panamik (Siachen Glacier access)

Michael ‘Mike’ Dalvi 370 T, 1963



Mike Dalvi

He was a tutor in Tata House when Mr Nair and Mr Sahi were Housemasters. Besides teaching me English, he was one of Holdy’s (Mr RLH Holdsworth) favourite shooting companions... never shoot when he was not there.

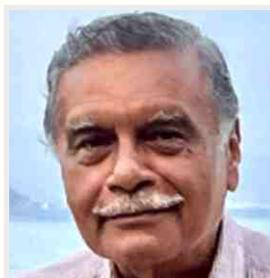
Such wonderful times, and always so much to learn by word and sight.

I remember him in Kaulagarh Estate and, briefly, when I went to pay respects in the Scindia School. For me, a revered role model and guru is no more. I shall pray for his soul.

This is a devastating time for me; Guru, and now Singh sahib, gone in a short while. I feel a vital part of my past has been wrenched from me.

Rest in peace, sir.

Rommel Varma 254 J, 1964



Rommel Varma

I was very saddened at the news of the passing of Dr Singh Sir. However, I take heart that he lived a long, fruitful, happy life as a teacher to many.

When I was School Captain at Doon in 1965, he advised me on things where complex decisions had to be taken. Looking back, I see his valuable guardianship truly like a family elder.

Om Shanti Sadgati.



Dr SD Singh (SG) with his student Rajiv Gandhi (203 K, 1960)

Bharat Garg 22 H, 1970



Bharat Garg

It is, indeed, with profound grief that I learnt about the sad demise of our beloved Sir, Dr SD Singh.

I not only had the honour of being his student, he was also my Housemaster in Hyderabad (B) at the time when I was the House Captain.

It was his first term as a Housemaster and my first experience as a House Captain. I recall the long discussions we used to have regarding the administration of the House. His deep knowledge of human psychology and administration left a great impression on me.

Moreover, much later, when he was Principal at the Scindia School, Gwalior, he convinced me to send my younger son to Scindia. I feel that was another blessing I received from him.

He was my mentor, my guide, and a great personality. My heartfelt condolences to the family he has left behind.



Dr SD Singh with Hyderabad (B), his first House Photo as Housemaster, 1970



Dr SD Singh with House Captain Bharat Garg and the SC Formers from Hyderabad (B), 1970

Rajbir Singh 38 J, 1971



Rajbir Singh

Dr Singh's memory will always be etched in my mind. He was a great teacher with a super sense of humour. Immaculately dressed, he always had the most charming, winning smile.

Whenever I think of him, I am always reminded of John Buchan's Prester John, the book he taught us. His command of the English language was outstanding, and he made the classes so interesting reading aloud in different tones. I shall always fondly cherish these memories.

Himmat Kalsia 114 T, 1971



Himmat Kalsia

I was sorry to hear that Dr SD Singh, my old guide at the

Weekly, left for the happy hunting grounds. He is, no doubt, in a better place but that does not in any way lessen the blow for those left behind. Only time can do that, and that, too, not particularly well, and the healing is never fully complete.

At our age, we all have to go through this rite of passage and unpleasant though it may be (he would have been proud of my construction and grammar) there is no escape.

I grieve with you.

Vinit Khanna 350 H, 1974

Author's Note: A version of this was spoken at the Scindia Old Boys Association (SOBA) remembrance of Dr SD Singh on July 15th, 2023.

Before talking about Dr Singh and Doon, I have to say I was overwhelmed with the level of appreciation and acknowledgement for Dr Singh shown by the Scindia Old Boys who had put together the remembrance. As I listened to Old Scindians speak about Dr Singh, my eyes welled with tears and I felt most blessed to have had such a close association with Dr Singh.

This missive is from the heart and is close to what I said that day.

Between my two brothers and myself, Dr Singh was connected to our family for more time than any other family in his role of Housemaster of Hyderabad (B) House.

The best reflection of his relationship with the family came out in 1974 when I was Dr Singh's choice of House Captain. In a classic in loco parentis position, Dr Singh made it clear, in no uncertain terms to my father, SK 'Tishi' Khanna (50 H, 1944) that Vinit, Dhruv Khanna (150 H, 1976), and Nalin Khanna (563 H, 1980) were his sons for eight months of the year; Dr Singh would let Tishi, our "biological" father have us for the other four! For the many of you who know my father, I trust you will smile while visualising this exchange that made 'Tishi' stop in his tracks. Not an easy, or everyday, occurrence.

Before going on to say more about Dr Singh, we would be remiss to not remember Mrs SD, his partner in life and mother to their children, while he was a father to the 60-odd of us 24-7 for eight months a year. Mrs SD would give litchi squash and snacks to the hungry boys who had the temerity to visit Dr Singh's home and who would, then, all come out feeling great and kicking themselves for being "funked" of "disturbing" Dr Singh. She was that quiet anchor, most unobtrusively making

sure her husband's energies could be focussed on us largely privileged brats, while she kept the home fires burning. She is equally honoured and missed.

Back now to Dr Singh, I want to share with you an incident that distinctly stands out in my memory as exemplifying the type of man Dr Singh was.

In August 1973, all the A Formers were planting trees on a hillside at Jharipani, above the old Toll Gate on the Dehradun-Mussoorie road. Shortly after we got there, the monsoon rains came down in buckets. While the fun-loving took it as an opportunity to throw mud at each other, many of us started to complain and wanted to slack off in a shelter. We looked around and saw Dr Singh standing by our sides, with his feet firmly planted. Tasked with supervising the boys and armed with nothing but his umbrella which provided scant protection as wind whipped rain on him, Dr Singh saw to it that we got the job done. He was there with us in the trenches – the type of man who, quite literally, was not afraid to get his hands dirty, fighting alongside his wards battling in the foxholes.

Now that I've notched a few years of parenthood under my belt myself, I cannot think it is by any means easy to be a boarding school Housemaster at Doon – the sole adult managing 60 (now 90) teenage boys with raging hormones as your wards! Dr Singh was clearly most definitely up to the task, commanding us with his quiet, and most dignified, presence. And while he taught us how to earn the respect of others, he certainly gave us room to grow, cutting slack when and as he thought best.

And I share a few personal experiences in this context that will surely reverberate well with those who knew him.

One evening, midway through Toye Time, Dr Singh came by the House to check on things. He happened upon my study to find me boiling water, which in this case was via a jury-rigged immersion rod made out of a shaving blade, a key, and wires in a metal beer mug. There was nothing more than an eraser between the blade, the key, and the beer mug to prevent me from blowing up the electrical circuits in the building. He looked at me, House Captain at the time, paused as we made eye contact, raised his eyebrows, and looked away. He didn't need to bring what he saw to my notice – he knew I had received the message. As House Captain, I received a Bad Chit from OPM (Mr OP Malhotra) for not performing well in a Maths test. I entered Dr Singh's study after all the other boys had left and presented my Bad Chit for him to view and sign. Before I could utter any of the dozen excuses at the tip of my tongue, he looked at me over his glasses, signed my Bad Chit, his expression making it quite clear that he did not expect me to ever

be in that situation again. And he was right – I never was.

Dr Singh placed his trust and responsibility on my shoulders when he made me House Captain over at least one other very qualified candidate. And it was this confidence that he bestowed on me that I have retained, unafraid of speaking up and speaking out if I think injustice is being done, and not being afraid to step away from the beaten path.

As I put pen to paper and reflect, I'm most struck by Dr Singh's ability to spot and, crucially, nurture potential – a most vital characteristic for a boarding school Housemaster.

Miss Jean Brodie's words paraphrased epitomise how Dr Singh looked upon us:

"Boys, I am in the business of putting old heads on young shoulders. All my pupils are the creme de la creme. Give me a boy at an impressionable age, and he is mine for life."

Dr Singh, I humbly remain yours... forever.

Gautam Sen Gupta 393 H, 1971

Author's Note: I'm reproducing below my tribute, spoken at the Scindia Old Boys' Association (SOBA) Remembrance Meeting for Dr SD Singh on July 15th, 2023.

First of all, my pranam to Dr Singh's family, including my classmate and friend Praveen; our deepest condolences on their loss.

I joined school in 1967, and had my first acquaintance with Sir as he taught us English. I remember him as a teacher, but not just English; he taught me many things. I used to marvel at his attire – always impeccably dressed, mostly in a suit, with a waistcoat when Dehradun turned viciously cold in the winter months, and always in shiny, polished shoes. He was a role model in more ways than one. One of them is surely that I, too, never leave my house in scuffed shoes, always polished. A mark of respect I learned from him towards all that I would meet in the course of the day. Many will say "that's a small thing" - but it's not, I believe it was an integral part of my character building.

Years later, Sir was my Housemaster in Hyderabad (B) House. And I was Second Head Prefect of the house in my SC year, 1971. Sir would come visiting post Lights Out, to see if all was in order with his boys in the House. Of course it wasn't! So, when his impending visit was given away by the sharp barks of his white pomeranian,

walking across the Main Field towards the House, I would often get into action, checking from room to room to ensure that the boys were in their beds, apparently asleep, signalling all's well with the world. One day he called me home, and said it was nice I was doing this, indicating he had seen me, and told me he would still keep coming as he enjoyed these after-dinner walks. He said that he appreciated the help in making sure that all was okay. It wasn't a firing that I imagined I would be getting!

My most important meeting with Sir was a few days before I left School, after the SC exams, shortly before Golden Night. Being called home by the Housemaster was never a pleasant prospect, and thoughts of what wrong I may have done flooded my mind. He greeted me, sat me down, offered me some coffee, and then said something like "You're growing up, you'll go to college now, one day you'll be part of our workforce. In that process you will begin to distinguish good from bad, right from wrong. Choose the path you must, but choose wisely." Those words have stayed with me. The words of a father to his son. That's what he was – like a father.

We always saw him as much more than a teacher. More than 50 years later, when we talk of him, it's always Master or Sir. That's the respect we continue to hold Sir in.

May Sir be in a better place. May he be at peace.

Shiv Dayal Srivastav 454 KB, 1974



Shiv Dayal Srivastav

May Sir's departed soul rest in eternal peace.

Sir taught me English in D and C Forms; Shakespeare's Macbeth, John Buchan's Prester John novel by, and probably Wuthering Heights' by Emily Brontë.

Sir's knowledge of Macbeth was phenomenal and I still remember his reciting Macbeth's famous soliloquy and the fright of Macbeth on seeing Banquo's ghost seated in his place at the dining table. Sir was excellent!

Yes, and a very fair Master. Once, some misunderstanding took place with a S Form Senior of his House, and that guy tried to threaten me.

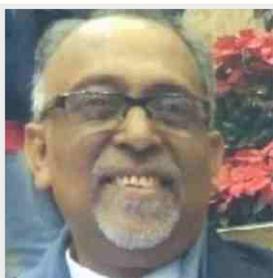
TRIBUTES

Without batting an eyelid, I went straight to his room in Hyderabad (B) where, as Housemaster, he was attending to office work. Since I was in Kashmir (B) House, he was surprised to see me in his office. I told him what had transpired. He listened to me patiently and asked me to meet him at the same time the next day.

Well, before I could meet him this guy walked up to me and apologised! The faith I had in Dr Singh's sense of fairplay was more than amply justified. When I next met him and thanked him profusely, he just shrugged it off. A man as "true as steel."

Another of the titans has left for his heavenly abode leaving fond memories of an unforgettable association.

Debapratim Roy 400 H, 1973



Debapratim Roy

I was deeply saddened to hear about the passing away of my dear Housemaster. I found him to be a kind man in School during the off-and-on interaction I had with him.

I still retain a simple end-of-school resume of mine which he wrote by hand. As my English teacher, he helped me hone my skills in written English during those formative years in School.

I wonder if they make such teachers anymore?

Let the kind human being's soul rest in peace.

Jyotsna Brar

Principal, Welham Girls' School (2000-2016)



Jyotsna Brar

I learnt of Dr Singh's passing and it was like the passing of the icon of an era, the like of which will never return. For us, he was a role model. I had immense respect for him. In later years, I could even dare to call it affection.

His going leaves a void. Yet, he lived a full life and touched many other lives. My respects to his spirit and prayers for his eternal peace. My personal memories of Dr Singh include meeting him unexpectedly a few days before I took over Welham Girls' School, and getting his blessings and advice. Later, he advised me about the IPSC when I was thrust into the role of Chairperson.

I went through the memorial service that was held for him. Listening to the words offered in memory of Dr Singh, I was transported to an era of personal and societal values embodied by him which are rare in current times. It is so good that a person like him became a school teacher, for isn't that the perfect way to impact the present and the future? And what a strong impact he left behind!

I add my pranam and offer my respects to his memory.

Manjitinder Singh Bedi

Former Headmaster, Punjab Public School, Nabha
Former Housemaster, Scindia School



Manjitinder Singh Bedi

A humble tribute to my mentor, guide, and an ever-loving father figure who has finally merged with the eternal bliss at the age of 98.

My initiation into the education field as a young man and my entire life achievements are absolutely dedicated to Dr SD Singh. His guidance, motivation, and constant encouragement have forever inspired me to achieve perfection in whatever I do.

Mrs Bedi and I have had all his blessings throughout. I had been in touch with the grand master throughout.

Sir, you have left an indelible impression in each one of us, and your memories are forever ingrained.

Into the Wilds of Corbett

Vikram 'Smiley' Batra 13 J, 1989



Himalayan Vulture



Asian Barred Owlet



Changeable Hawk Eagle



Long-tailed Shrike



Oriental Pied Hornbill



Velvet-fronted Nuthatch



Streak-throated Woodpecker



Rufous-bellied Niltava



Plum-headed Parakeet



Emerald Dove



Jungle Owlet



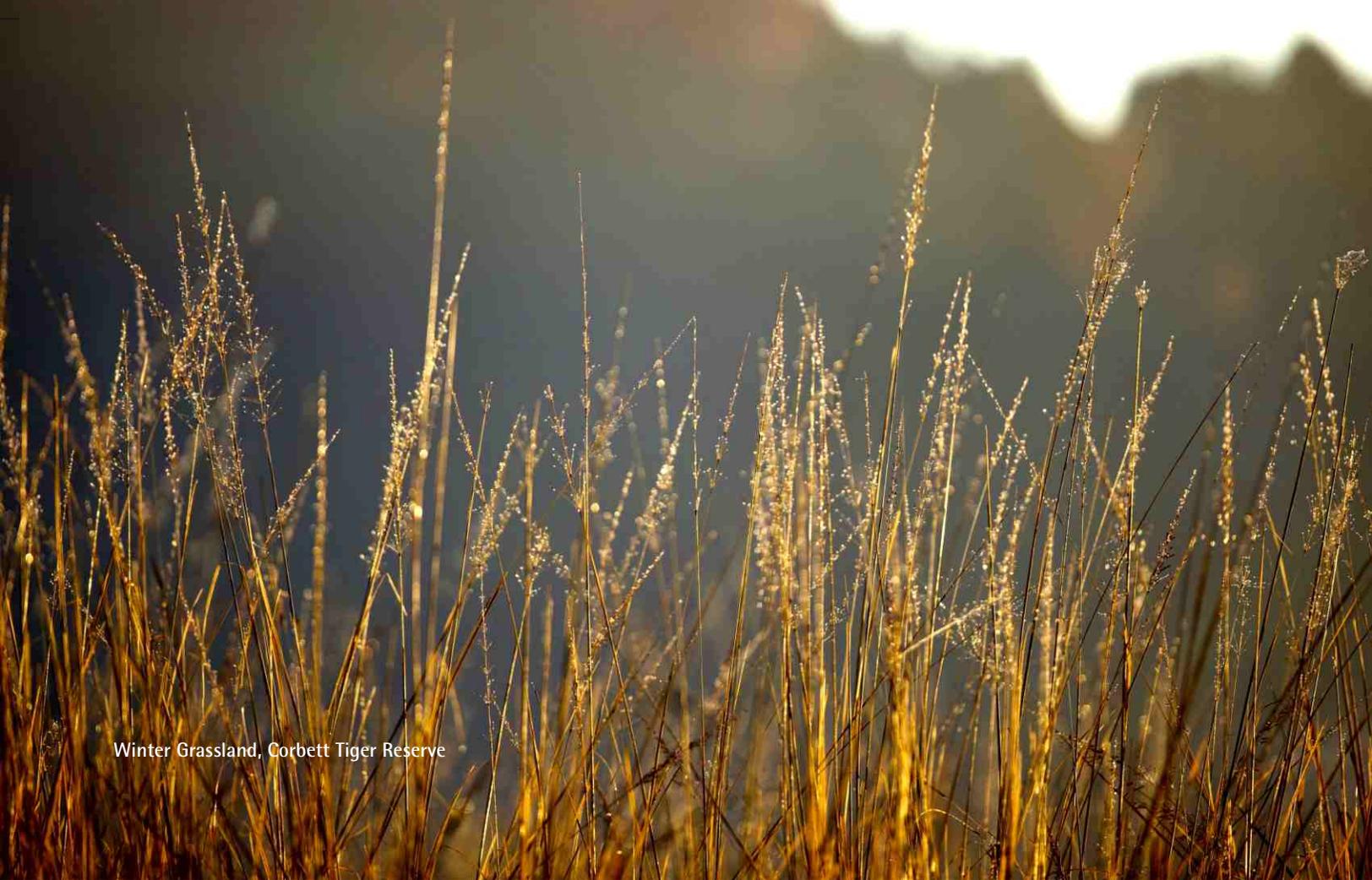
White-throated Fantail



Fulvous-breasted Woodpecker



Blyth's Leaf Warbler



Winter Grassland, Corbett Tiger Reserve



Changeable Hawk Eagle

THE DSOBS *Year-in-Review*

DOSCO Events

This is a selection of events hosted by The DSOBS in 2023.

If you are interested in joining in on any of their upcoming events please reach out to...

Ashutosh Goyal
Secretary, The DSOBS
at: secretary@dsobs.net



THE DSOBS GOA WEEKEND

DRINKS & DINNER
Friday, 13th January 2023 (7.00 pm onwards)
TEREZA BEACH HOUSE by **SLY GRANNY**
787 Nerul - Reis Margos Road, Nerul, Goa

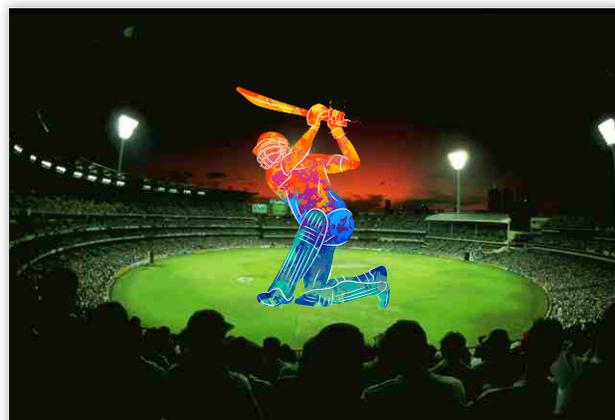
SUN DOWNER
Saturday, 14th January 2023 (5.00 pm onwards)



Sunset Point, St. Anthony Praise, Waddo
(Near Club Nyex) Anjuna, Goa
Kindly send your Confirmations & Contribution at the earliest

R S V P

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Manish 'Zulu' Shyam +91 96111 10757 manishshym@yahoo.com	
Rituraj Raizada +91 95388 55188 riturajraizada@gmail.com	



DSOBS
20th Edition
of
OBs Inter-House Cricket Tournament

Venue
The Ballpark Gurgaon
D/N Games on Sat 18 & Sun 19 February 2023

The DSOBS
Ashutosh Goyal
Secretary
+91 98116 52456
secretary@dsobs.net



The DSOBS UP (Central) Region

DINNER GET-TOGETHER

YU | The Landmark Hotel
Kanpur

Friday, 24th March 2023
7:30 pm onwards

RSVP

Kartikay Garg
+91 70808 25581

Yash Malhotra
+91 84000 61000

Regional Reps.

Jai Talwar
+91 96283 33522

Vidit Narain
+91 99994 02244

The DSOBS

Ashutosh Goyal
Secretary

+91 98116 52456
secretary@dsobs.net



The DSOBS Inter-House Hockey Tournament 2023



Sunday, 26th March 2023
2.00 pm onwards

Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium
(Entry from Gate No. 7)
India Gate, New Delhi

RSVP

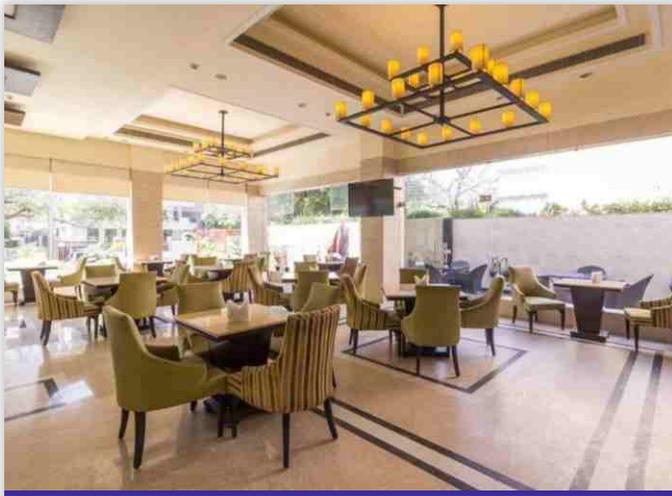
Kunal Sharma
473 J, 1993
+91 98113 33872
kunal473@gmail.com

House Hockey Captains

The DSOBS

Ashutosh Goyal
Secretary

+91 98116 52456
secretary@dsobs.net



**THE DSOBS
UTTARAKHAND REGION
GET-TOGETHER
AT DEHRA DUN**

Hotel Madhuban, Rajpur Road, Dehra Dun

**Saturday, 15th April 2023
8.00 pm onwards**

R S V P

Harish Suri
+91 98370 68708

Raghav Oberoi
+91 98370 09876

Manav Kochhar
+91 82184 02534

The DSOBS

Ashutosh Goyal
Secretary
+91 98116 52456
secretary@dsobs.net



Save the Date

**The DSOBS Delhi Region
Dinner Get-together**

Saturday, 29th April 2023

The DSOBS

Ashutosh Goyal
Secretary

+91 98116 52456
secretary@dsobs.net



The DSOBS UP (Central) Region

DINNER GET-TOGETHER

YU | The Landmark Hotel
Kanpur

Friday, 24th March 2023
7:30 pm onwards

RSVP

Kartikay Garg
+91 70808 25581

Yash Malhotra
+91 84000 61000

Regional Reps.

Jai Talwar
+91 96283 33522

Vidit Narain
+91 99994 02244

The DSOBS

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secretary@dsobs.net



Welham Girls Alumni Association

DOSCOS & WELHAMITES NEW YORK CITY GET-TOGETHER

Sunday, 4th June 2023

4.00 pm - 7.00 pm

Pera Soho, 54 Thompson Street, New York

DoscOS R S V P

Shubho Ghosh
+1 (213) 926-1862
shubhog@gmail.com

Welhamites R S V P

Neha Lamba Grover
+1 (203) 391-8575
grover.neha@gmail.com

Amit Sawhney

+1 (646) 431-7522
amit@woodbridgeny.com



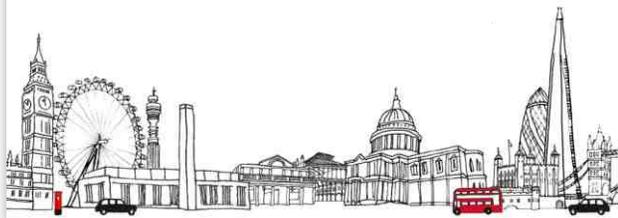
THE DSOBS UK REGION LONDON GET-TOGETHER

SUNDAY, 11TH JUNE 2023
6.30 PM

VENUE
CHOKHI DHANI
BATTERSEA, LONDON

REPS.
THE DSOBS
LONDON CHAPTER
Nimai Swaroop
44 7736 229632
Vivek Thadhani
44 7375 506097

THE DSOBS
Ashutosh Goyal
Secretary
+91 98116 52456
secretary@dsobs.net



DOSCO DRINKS The DSOBS Karnataka & Goa Region

Wednesday, 6th September 2023
7.00 pm

The Weekly - Brewhouse & Kitchen
Koramangala (Near Forum Mall)

RSVP

Bharat Mehra
+91 98860 40965

Manish Shyam
+91 96111 10757

Rituraj Raizada
+91 95388 55188

The DSOBS
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Secretary
+91 98116 52456
secretary@dsobs.net



The DSOBS INTER-HOUSE GOLF 2023

Friday, 6th October 2023
Jaypee Greens Golf Spa & Resort
Greater Noida

The DSOBS
Ashutosh Goyal
Secretary
+91 98116 52456
secretary@dsobs.net

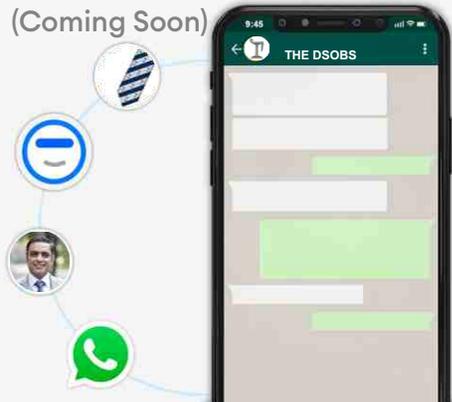


Leveraging Technology to Connect an Aristocracy of Service

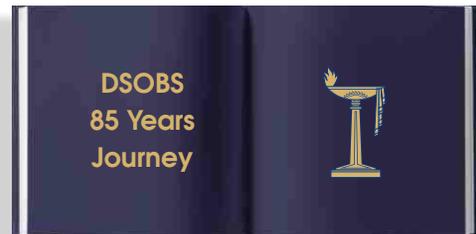
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send in your entries to coffeetable@dsobs.net

Sameer Dhingra
President

Syed Junaid Altaf
Vice-President



Webinar on Ecological Restoration of Degraded Landscapes



Vijay Dhasmana

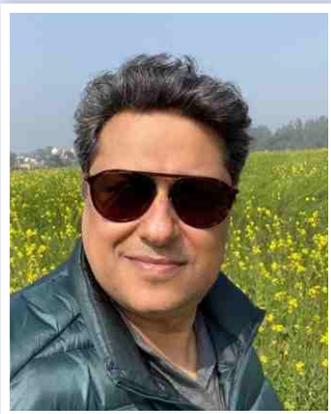
VIJAY DHASMANA

Member, Biodiversity Council of Delhi

For the last 17 years, Vijay has been actively restoring degraded landscapes. One of the important projects he has done is Aravali Biodiversity Park in Gurugram, where a mined land was converted into a biodiversity hotspot.

He has projects in Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Gujarat, and Haryana, ecologically restoring degraded/damaged lands.

He has been part of several task forces of MOEFCC on ecological restoration. He is also a member of the Biodiversity Council of Delhi.



Vikram Batra

VIKRAM BATRA

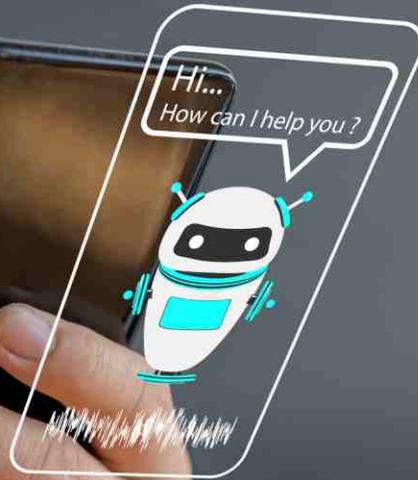
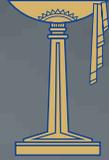
(013 J, 1989)

He takes keen interest in Nature & Conservation.

Sunday, 4th June @ 17.00 Hrs (IST)

To register for the webinar, please click on the link given below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6958620790>



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Letter from Chandbagh

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our regular feature where we receive updates and insights from the School, to get a sense of what's happening within Chandbagh. For this edition, we hear from the person in charge of setting up School for future generations, and to ensure they are able to benefit from this institution as we all did.

Linking the Past, Present, and Future: Fund Raising and Alumni Relations

Arjun Singh Bartwal (ARB) 501 K, 2000
Head Fund Raising & Alumni Relations, The Doon School



Arjun Singh Bartwal (ARB), Head Fund Raising & Alumni Relations

Where did you grow up? What are some of your early memories with your family?

My father was in the Army, so my brother and I were fortunate to grow up all around the country. My friends thought I gave incorrect addresses for the School list with places like the Red Fort and Rashtrapati Bhavan.

What were your feelings before entering School?

I was just as excited and proud as any one of us was to hear of an offer from Doon. A few of my elder cousins had studied here as well. One real reason, perhaps, was when I was 7 years old, my mum was diagnosed with a terminal illness. She somehow knew Doon would be a great family she could leave us with.



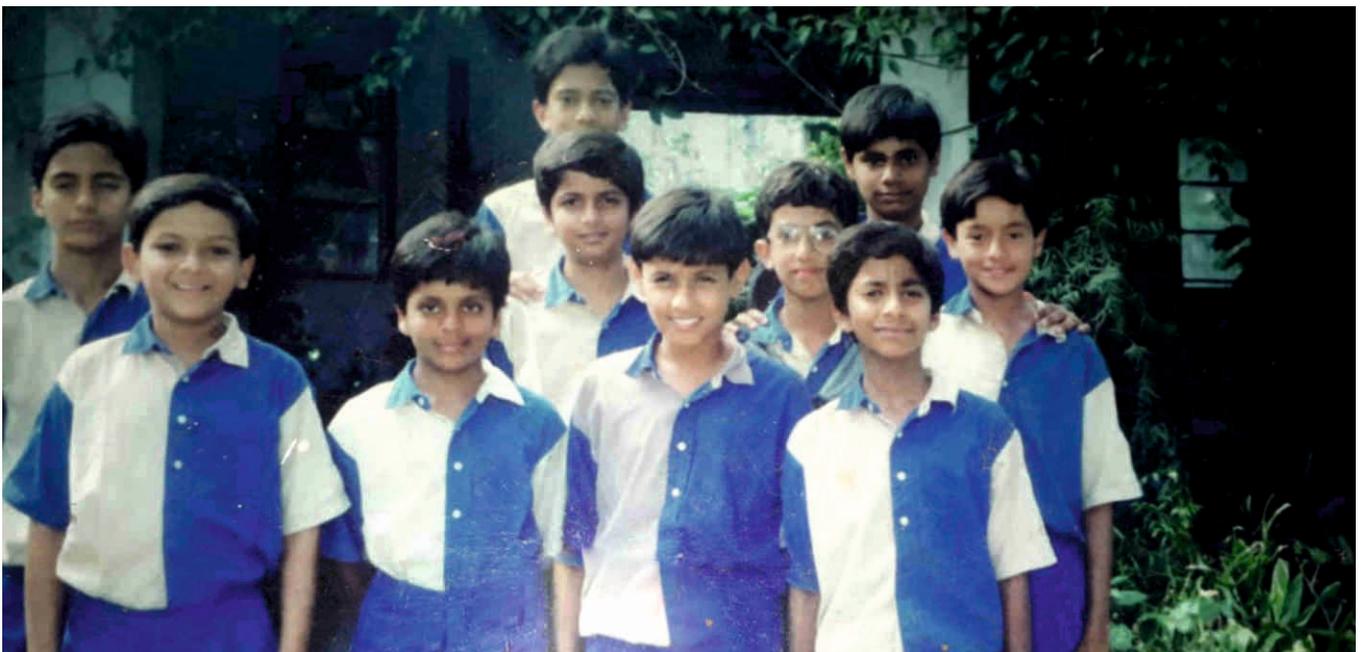
Arjun (fourth from right), in C Form within the confines of Kashmir House

How was your time at School?

Doon gave me a stable environment for me to grow up in. It became a home for my brother (Hanut Singh Bartwal, 43 K, 2002) and me very quickly. What I loved about Doon the most was how everyone gets a

chance to play sports and participate in so many different kinds of activities. The Doon School curriculum did wonders for me; it was a truly life-changing experience.

Mr Vohra (Sheel Vohra, SKV) clearly stands tall in my



Arjun (front row, second from right) during his school days

regard; I tried out as a bowler and he found a three-down batsman in me!

How did you end up in your current position?

After receiving my Computer Engineering degree from the University of Mumbai, I wanted to study Golf Course architecture and develop golf courses. This never happened, but I ended up managing ITC's Classic Golf Resort. I was fortunate to manage the team which reopened the golf course after a lockout, and then drove revenue to grow ten times in ten years to finally turn a profit. We also built the majestic ITC Grand Bharat Resort; to be a part of that project from planning to operation was very enriching.

However, as a teaching pro, I used to feel disappointed when DoscOs would show up for the occasional event at Classic and shoot 130-150 on the day. I hoped someday, someone might be able to teach them golf. Well, somebody was listening. And here I am.

This position did not exist before you came along, can you tell us about it?

Fundraising is not new to Doon. Mr SR Das, our Founder, was our first fundraiser. It was his vision and the monies he collected that helped establish our School.

The office I work for was set up by Mr Sati Puri (49 K,

1952) in 2004. My colleague Ms Anupama Rawat joined in 2005, and has worked since then with Mr Jayant Lal (JHH, 404 H, 1969), Mr Manish Bhargav, Ms Archana Singh, and Mr Rishabh Sharma (553 J, 1994) – all of whom have fundraised for the School.

As the Head of Fund Raising and Alumni Relations, my job is to support the Fund Raising Committee members every time they go to make targeted appeals to big donors. We have made a concerted effort to increase donor updates. We welcome our alumni and donors for campus visits and try to increase our engagements with the Old Boys to foster the culture of giving back to School with time or treasure. I feel very fortunate to be able to do what I am tasked to do for the School.

What are some of the things Old Boys and students may not know about your position?

Since 1935, The Doon School has developed into becoming one of India's finest and most comprehensive education systems. A school where experiential learning combines with an enriched curriculum that allows students to accomplish significantly more than they otherwise would.

The School was fortunate to get hold of the Chandbagh campus from the Forest Research Institute (FRI) which had the Main Building, the Kashmir and Hyderabad House buildings, and a few bungalows and small



Arjun with the School Golf Team at an inter-school tournament



Arjun with the School Golf Team

buildings (which would become laboratories and workshops). These could all be used for a school; and The Doon School was set up. Since then, many alterations and additions have been made, and the campus stands in all its glory better than ever.

So, for our School to be counted amongst the finest institutions in the world, we require a substantial financial corpus. The corpus is needed to sustain scholarships on a large scale to upgrade and to invest in our infrastructure.

In Mr John Martyn's words at the Silver Jubilee address in 1960:

"A school like this must depend on donations for buildings and other improvements. In England, the home of public schools, vast sums are collected. Recently Haileybury, Tonbridge, Malvern and Bradfield appealed for £150,000. Rugby has just raised £250,000, Charterhouse plans to raise £300,000 and Clifton £400,000. It is reported that Eton will be appealing soon for £800,000 in order to modernise the buildings. Fortunately, our buildings are not in the same need of modernization as Eton's probably are. And a young school naturally has fewer supporters than old schools have.

But I think that the Silver Jubilee is an occasion when parents and Old Boys must be reminded that schools like this can only exist if they are prepared to help them according to their varying capacities to do so. I should have liked to have collected enough money for an endowment fund that would have enabled us to keep down the fees. This seems to me especially desirable in a country in which government servants are paid so much



Connecting with the Old Boys of New York, USA



Arjun (kneeling, front row, right) during a visit to The Royal Academy, Paro, Bhutan

less well than people in business. If this is more than we can expect I should at least like to collect enough to cover the various building programmes of my time.”

Sixty three years after Mr Martyn’s address, I wonder why many still ask – Why does the

School need more money?

The answer is simple. Our School is a not-for-profit institution which receives no government funding or corporate sponsorship. The tuition fee from students only covers the operating costs. The cost of long-term



Visiting the CNBC Global Headquarters
 From L-R: Arjun, Nikhil Deogun (462 J, 1987), HM Mr Matthew Raggett, and Sameer Dhingra (452 T, 1987)

developments are not charged to the current students. The School offers needs-based scholarships to students. We are teeing up to create an endowment fund to support needs-blind admissions. Currently only 15% to 20% of the students receive financial aid, which ranges between 20%-120%. We need to accelerate our ability to provide financial aid through endowments and annuities to meet this goal.

Means-tested grants are awarded to needy students who qualify through the entrance exam and interview. Successful candidates' parents are asked to declare their income. The School conducts third-party verifications before awarding the scholarships. The process remains the same whether it's an Old Boy's son or a student from the Armed Forces or the Civil Services, or even a first-generation learner.

Donations also help in developing the campus. We were swiftly able to develop the Sports Complex and the BML Munjal Auditorium thanks to a prolonged absence of students from the campus during the Covid lockdown.

The School ensured that all staff and their salaries were retained all through the pandemic.

This is something very rare. During the lockdown, educational institutions around the world struggled to make ends meet, let alone be able to develop infrastructure. We at Doon were fortunate enough to be able to do what was needed due to the countless acts of generosity we have benefited from our Old Boys, trusts, foundations, family offices, and so on. People who believe they owe a major part of their success to their formative years in School express their gratitude by making generous contributions.

All this has not happened overnight. The School has evolved a structured mechanism in place to manage its needs. The School's Board of Governors have set up a number of committees that help us with governance and expertise. Here's what some of the committees do:

- **The Chandbagh Development Committee** is responsible for developing infrastructure projects.
- **The Diversity Committee and Scholarships Committee** work together to find the ways and means to enhance a healthy diversity amongst the student body, in order to create a microcosm of the diversity our country, and the world at large, has to offer.



A diversity visit to promote scholarships for the children of the Armed Forces

- **The Fund Raising Committee** is simply tasked with raising the requisite funds required to develop and advance the overall needs of the School.
- **The Finance committee** ensures we maintain tight fiscal discipline. With Grant Thornton as our Internal Auditors and Deloitte as Statutory Auditors,

the School has an **Investment Committee** which helps us get the most mileage from the donations that are endowed.

To conclude, I would like to say that endowments help link the past and the present with the future. It allows



Inaugurating the facilities donated by the Class of 1989

SCHOOL / UNIVERSITY ENDOWMENTS	
The Doon School	\$ 15 Million (₹ 125 Crore)
UK Schools	
Charterhouse	\$ 144 Million
Eton College	\$ 688 Million
US Schools	
Average Private School Endowment	\$ 121 Million
Phillips Academy – Andover	\$ 1.1 Billion
US Universities	
Harvard University	\$ 53.2 Billion
The University of Texas at Austin	\$ 43.7 Billion
Yale University	\$ 42.3 Billion

institutions to make commitments far into the future knowing that the resources to meet those commitments will continue to be available.

You can see how our endowments compare with some of the best schools in the UK and USA, and you would be delighted to see how effectively we have been able to use our endowments which pale in comparison to the scope of some of these other institutions.

On behalf of the School community, I would like to thank all of our donors. They allow the School to continue to be a paragon of virtue and excellence, and to transfer this security to future generations. Hopefully, the School can continue to seek your support with time and treasure to ensure we continue “To attract and develop exceptional boys and masters from all backgrounds... to serve a meritocratic India.”

Any words of advice to graduating students and parents?

The history of Doon is the history of giving. For Doon to continue to remain an educational institute of global eminence, the School needs your support. No gift is too small or large, it is the thought that truly matters.



Promoting scholarships for the children of the Armed Forces



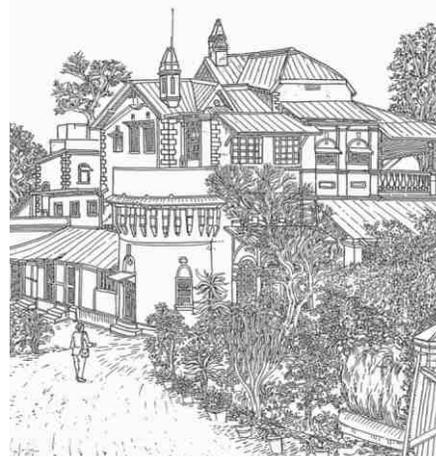
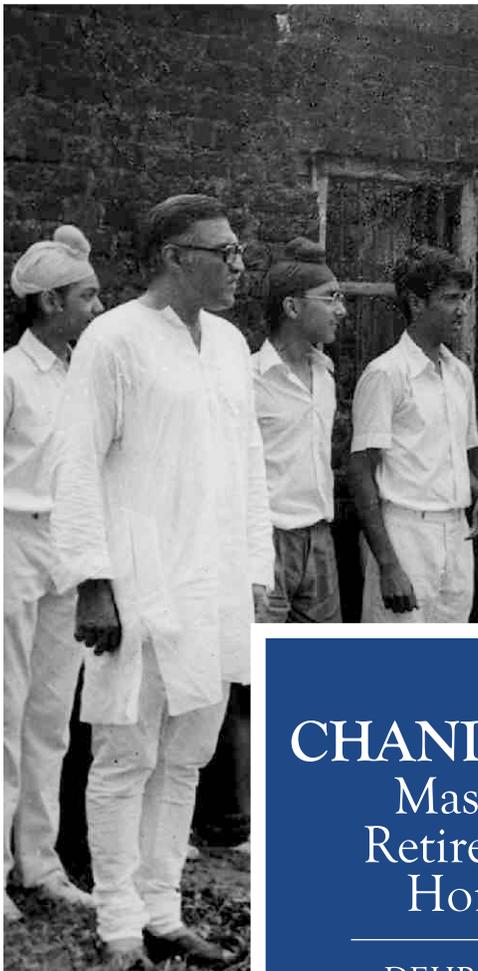
Arjun with members of The DSOBS leadership during the induction of School graduates as the newest members of The DSOBS
From L-R: Tarun Sawhney (234 K, 1991), Ashutosh Goyal (677 T, 2015), Sameer Dhingra (452 T, 1987), and Arjun



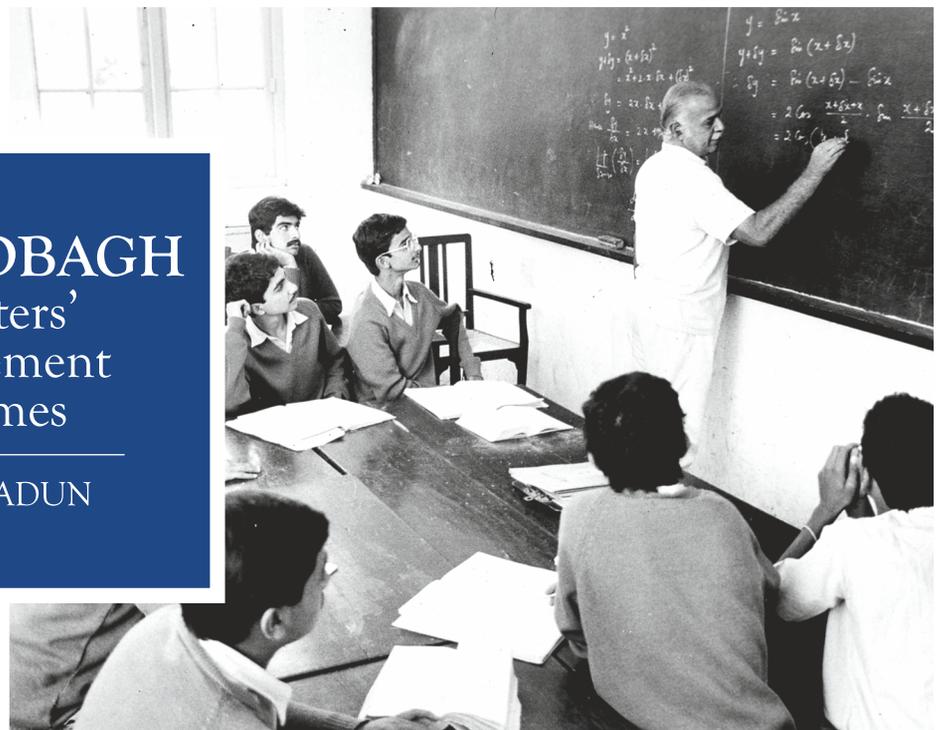
Arjun, enjoying his work

Arjun Singh Bartwal (ARB) moved all over India growing up as an Army brat. After his time at The Doon School, he graduated as a Computer Engineer from the University of Mumbai and studied management from IIM Lucknow. He spent the bulk of his subsequent corporate career

managing India's premier golf courses for ITC before joining School in his present role. When not at School, Arjun can either be seen on a motorcycle or encouraging Doscors to better their game; both on and off the course.



CHANDBAGH
Masters'
Retirement
Homes
DEHRADUN





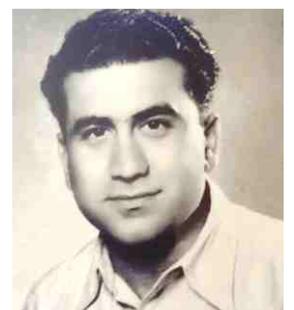
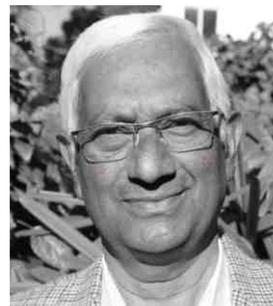
Those Unforgettable Masters

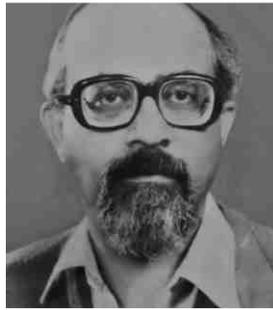


Life on Campus

A true blue Doon Master, who chooses to stay on at Doon for the greater part of his or her career, is personally invested in the welfare and wellbeing of each of his/her student. Taking pride in the smallest of the students' achievement, gently guiding them to make better choices and being there through those seven precious years, they perform their duties selflessly and compassionately. The community living on campus, allows for greater interaction and the formation of deeper bonds.

The magnetic attraction of such a life is so strong that a lot of Masters choose to live on in Dehradun even after retirement.





We were extremely fortunate to have been taught by a rare genre of Masters committed to their chosen profession. A few spent their entire professional lifetimes in Chandbagh, impacting the lives of hundreds of boys and shaping their young minds to prepare them well for the journey of life ahead.

For those who stayed on for years, the camaraderie and friendships they built with their colleagues was unparalleled. Retirement brought with it the dual uncertainty of losing their decades old support systems and what the future held for them in their old age.

To acknowledge the long service commitment of these inspirational Masters, The Doon School wishes to create The Chandbagh Masters' Retirement Homes in Dehradun - a gated residential complex that will provide them comfort and security in their golden years.

We need your support to fund this worthy cause.

CHANDBAGH
Masters'
Retirement
Homes

DEHRADUN



CHANDBAGH Masters' Retirement Homes

DEHRADUN

Q. Where will the Chandbagh Masters Retirement Homes be situated?

A. The School proposes to acquire a plot of land that is situated as close to the School Estate as possible depending on the funds collected and the options available.

Q. Who will be entitled to avail of this facility?

A. The School has listed the cut-off period of 25 years or more of exemplary service by a Master or a House Dame. Depending on their seniority, the size of the dwelling will be offered to the individual. The final allotment decision will be at the discretion of the School.

Q. How large will the dwellings be?

A. A two bedroom unit will be between 1000 to 1200 sqft, while a three bedroom flat will be between 1300 to 1400 sqft with both having a provision for a sit-out space. All units will have a single car parking slot.

Q. How many dwellings will be constructed?

A. The first priority is to acquire the land for the gated complex. The initial plan is to construct between 6-8 double storey units with a mix of 3BHK and 2BHK dwellings. If the layout of the land allows a central park, then the units will be spaced around it, otherwise built as row houses.



Q. Are spouses of Masters who completed 25 years of service and those whose spouses expired while they were faculty, be entitled to this option?

A. Yes. It will also depend on what the financial situation of the spouse is and the availability of flats.



Q. Who will pay the essential services and other bills?

There are no maintenance charges. These charges will be borne by the School. However, the occupants will have to bear the cost of electricity, water, internet or any service consumed, as well as for hired help and for their daily expenses.

The occupants can use the School's Wellness Centre for regular medical check-ups and ailments. In case of an emergency, they can call for the School's ambulance.



Q. How long can a person stay?

A. Masters and their respective spouses, Dames (or Master's spouses, in case the Master pre-deceases them) can occupy the premises until their demise.

Q. Is there a nominal rent the occupants have to pay to the School?

A. No rent is payable. The service provided by the School to the long serving masters/dames is a goodwill gesture to acknowledge their loyalty and commitment. They will have to sign an Occupancy/Leave License Agreement and the School reserves the right to cancel the Occupancy/Leave License Agreement at any time due to any untoward event. The occupants cannot sublet the premises and cannot exercise any claims on the ownership of the same, at any time of their stay or by their kin after their demise.

Please do support the Masters Housing initiative. It is a very noble thought, perhaps a first amongst schools in India. I wish such a thing existed when my father retired, he would have loved to spend time with some of his dearest colleagues. I hope this project is supported generously by the Old Boys and we are able to make something special for our Masters.

*Archana Singh, 187 HA, 1984
d/o Mr. Omender Singh, Tenure (1964 -1991)
Physics Master, initiated Aeromodelling,
AV Squad and Plastics
House Master – Martyn House*

The Doon School reserves the right to alter the terms of the offer.

Q. Will there be a common recreational area or a clubhouse for the residents?

A. Yes. A recreational area within the building complex is proposed with a sitting area, a kitchenette, and a TV lounge.

DONORS HONOURS BOARD

All donors will be acknowledged on an Honours Board placed in the clubhouse. Donors School nos. and batches will be mentioned against each name.

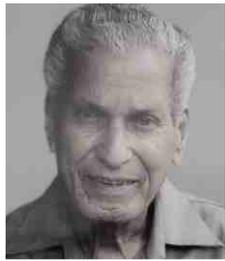
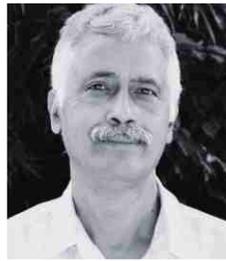


Artistic Impressions

CHANDBAGH
Masters'
Retirement
Homes
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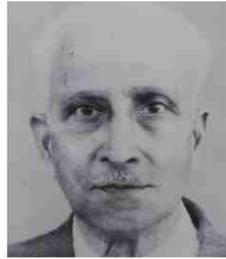
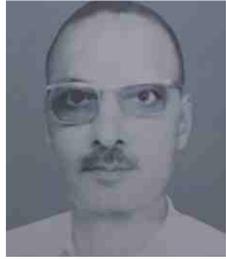
If a master joined school at the age of 25, then 25 years would mean most of his or her working life. To have given such dedicated service to one institution is admirable. When my father, Mr. CK Dikshit, was teaching at Doon [1968-1993], the salary was a pittance and there was no pension. My father was fortunate that he had some family property which he sold and bought a house in Dehradun, but quite a few of the excellent masters, whose work in moulding young minds helped define the ethos of the school, were left with no major savings when they left school. Some of them lived in rented accommodation for the rest of their lives. Therefore the move to provide housing for masters, after long years of service in the School, is certainly a welcome one.

Valentina Dikshit, 708 KA, 1981
d/o CK Dikshit, Tenure: (1968-1993)
Physics Master
Initiated HAM Radio in School
House Master – Foot House



Faculty with more than 25 years service

- Mr. V.N. Kapur
- Mr. J.A.K. Martyn
- Mr. K.N.P. Nair
- Mr. S.C. Roy
- Mr. Shanti Prakash Sahi
- Mr. Gurdial Singh
- Mr. K.B. Sinha
- Mr. B.P. Chandola
- Mr. S.L. Sharma
- Mr. V. Hensman
- Mr. R.N. Kunzru
- Mr. O.P. Malhotra
- Mr. Hari Datt Bhatt
- Mr. K.C. Gupta
- Mr. Surinder Kandhari
- Mr. S.K. Vohra
- Mr. A.N. Dar
- Mr. D.N. Verma
- Mr. Omender Singh
- Mr. U.C. Pande
- Mr. C.K. Dikshit
- Mr. R.P. Devgan
- Mr. Bhuvan Vaishnav
- Mr S.D. Bhatia
- Mr. Mohan Chandra Joshi
- Mr. Dinesh Chandra Bhatkoti
- Mr. Philip M. Burrett
- Mr. Deepak Sharma
- Mr. Karukath Prabhakaran Nair
- Mr. Piyush Malaviya
- Dr. Arvindananbha Shukla
- Mr. Ashad Qezilbash
- Mrs. Purnima Dutta





Chandbagh Masters' Retirement Homes

How can I contribute?

Please get in touch with Arjun S Bartwal, Head of Fund Raising & Alumni Relations, The Doon School (dar@doonschool.com)



Into the SCHOOL'S INDIAN Account (Currency: INR)

(Tax rebate under section 80G of the IT Act, 1961 - Indian Citizens only)

Please remember to state the purpose of the donation to dar@doonschool.com with your PAN details and Indian address.

Wire Transfer:

Name of Beneficiary: **Indian Public Schools Society**
 Address of Beneficiary: The Doon School, The Mall Road, Dehra Dun 248001, Uttarakhand (India)
 Beneficiary's Bank Name & Address: **HDFC Bank Ltd.**, 56, Rajpur Road, Dehra Dun 248001, Uttarakhand (India)
 Beneficiary A/c No.: **02251000070620**
 RTGS/NEFT IFSC (for National): **HDFC0000225**

Cheques/DD:

Kindly draw your Cheques / Bank Drafts in favour of the '**Indian Public Schools Society**' and payable in Dehra Dun. Cheques / Drafts may be posted/couriered to:
 Arjun S Bartwal
 Head of Fund Raising & Alumni Relations
 The Doon School, Mall Road,
 Dehra Dun 248001, Uttarakhand, India
 Tel: (o) +91.135.252 6555
 Mobile: +91 99533 99509



Indian Donors
QR Code

Into the DOSCENT UK Account (Currency: GBP)

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Before claiming Gift Aid, the donor must make a Gift Aid declaration giving permission to DOSCENT to claim back the 25%. The declaration confirms the donor has paid at least the amount that they intend to claim in Income or Capital Gains Tax that year, and also that they agree for DOSCENT to claim Gift Aid. If you have any questions on Gift Aid, please reach out to Sharad Rathke (Class of 1990, 180-KA), DOSCENT's Trustee in the UK.

Please remember to state the purpose of the donation to dar@doonschool.com and sharadrathke@gmail.com.

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Into the FODS USA Account (Currency: USD)

Into the school's FCRA account for international remittances (Tax rebate US IRS 501 C3)

Please remember to state the purpose of the donation to dar@doonschool.com and shiv@grewal.email.

Wire Transfer:

Beneficiary Name: **Friends of The Doon School**
 Beneficiary A/c No: **1199123369**
 Beneficiary's Bank: **First Bank**
 ABA Routing #: **081009428**
 Bank Address: **First Bank, Hazelwood, MO 63042, USA**

By Cheque:

Drawn in favour of "**Friends of The Doon School**"
 Addressed to: Shivbir Grewal, 1662 Kimberwick Drive, Santa Ana, CA 92705, USA

Into the School's FCRA Account (for international remittances)

Please remember to state the purpose of the donation to dar@doonschool.com with your OCI number or a copy of your Passport.

Wire Transfer:

Name of Beneficiary: **Indian Public Schools Society**
 Beneficiary A/c No.: **40101437460**
 IFSC CODE: **SBIN000691**
 Swift Code: **SBININBB104**
 Address of Beneficiary: The Doon School, The Mall Road, Dehra Dun 248001, Uttarakhand (India)
 Beneficiary's Bank Name & Address: **SBI Bank Ltd.**, FCRA Cell, 4th Floor, Main Branch, 11 Sansad Marg, New Delhi 110001

For more details please visit <https://www.doonschool.com/alumni/ways-of-giving>



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To register, please contact

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rakesh.kaushik83@gmail.com

Akash Puri
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THE ROSE BOWL | Founder's 2023 | Vol. XXXIX No. 3

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