



SIKKIM FORESTRY  
A  
**100 YEARS**  
OF SERVICE



**Department of Forest, Environment & Wildlife Management**  
Government of Sikkim, Deorali, Gangtok 737102

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## Editorial

This Centenary Souvenir has been compiled with contributions in various forms: informative articles of times spent in forest service by senior officials who have since retired, by in-service officials who have much to share about work ethics during their field lives in the past decades, dedication to the cause of forestry and conservation, by junior field staff and other field functionaries, old and new photographs, even poems inspired by their time in Sikkim's verdant landscapes. All these would be inspiring for this generation's foresters who now have a clue about working conditions, dedication, commitments, joys and sorrows at a time when there was no 'high-tech' instrumentation involved, arduous distances had to be covered on foot and adventurous life-threatening situations in snowy mountains undocumented in photographs.

Admittedly we could never satisfactorily cover all the segments of this vast department. Try as we did, we could not get information about Shri Dakman Lama and some other venerable fore-foresters. We have however tried to do justice by representing a kaleidoscope of events in the photo section where you will find photographs from a 100 years ago kindly donated by Rowena Cave of New Zealand, great-grand daughter of George Cave, famous botanist and author, right up to those donated by retired foresters, their kin and others; departmental programmes, an old football team, geo-textiling experiments, an article based on satellite imagery, GIS, Remote Sensing; recent photographs of wildlife caught in camera-traps, and other scientific studies in 2009. The department already has two websites, that of ENVIS Centre [www.sikennis.nic.in](http://www.sikennis.nic.in) and of the State Pollution Control Board [www.spcsikkim.org](http://www.spcsikkim.org). Among several new initiatives like the declaration of a Conservation Reserve for the rare Orchid *Paphiopedilum fairrieanum* and a hunt for the largest 'Heritage' tree, are also some new records; a rare butterfly the Scarce Jester *Symbrenthia silana* has been sighted after a 100 years at Namprikdang, North Sikkim, a pure crystal white Cherry *Prunus cerasoides* has just been reported in South Sikkim.

We have attempted to showcase the Department in three phases: the last century, recent works and the future trends in forestry and biodiversity conservation, with peoples' participation.

We sincerely acknowledge the following for their contributions in various forms in this documentation: K. C. Pradhan, P. O. Pazo, P. K. Basnett, N. C. Shenga, M. M. and (daughter) Sangeeta Rasaily, S. T. Lachungpa, Manjit Singh, N. T. Bhutia, Anil Mainra, Sudhi Zong Luksom, Bejoy and (daughter) Jasmine Gurung, B. K. Tiwari, Pradeep Kumar, S. B. S. Bhadauria, Thomas Chandu, M. L. Arrawatia, Sandeep Tambe, Dinesh Chandra Nepal, J. B. Subba, B. B. Gurung, Udai Gurung, Sonam Choden, K. B. Gurung, Karma Legshey, Nombi Tshering Bhutia, Kusum Gurung, Dechen Lachungpa, Gopal Pradhan, B. S. Tamang, Pranay Dewan, Namgyal Sherpa, T. B. Subba, Ongden Lepcha, Mohan Sharma, Bishnu Kumari and Bishnu Kumar Sharma, Rowena Cave, Thinley Gyatso, Peter Strömngren, Pema Wangchuk, K. N. Sharma, Ambika Sharma, Dilliram Dhakal, Brijendra Swaroop, Anjan Kumar Mohanti, Ravi Kumar, Rajen Pradhan, Laxuman Darnal, Ramesh Chettri, Anna Balikci-Denjongpa, Phurpu, Tshering Wangdi Penchung, Ganden Lachungpa, B. P. Thapa, Sanjit Nandi.

Design and printed at:

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Sevoke Road, Siliguri - 734 001

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Photograph: Dechen Lachungpa



**Pawan Chamling**  
(Honoris Causa)  
Chief Minister of Sikkim

# MESSAGE



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It is indeed a matter of great pride that we have completed one hundredth year of organized forestry in Sikkim. I take this opportunity to greet the members of forest fraternity in the State taking care of our forest resources on the occasion of the Centenary Celebration which is being observed this year.

In the terminal decade and a half years of the Centenary, Sikkim has witnessed a paradigm shift in policy, planning and implementation of Forest, Wildlife and Environment protection and management practices from one of custodial policing of the resource to a people's programme in owning, augmenting and safeguarding it. In doing so, we have achieved significant milestones manifesting itself in impressive increase in forest cover by over 2% over the decade, and introduction of established and more innovative practices of nature conservation. These include ban on grazing the forest floor, the Harit Kranti Dashak, propagation and implementation of the concept of Smriti Vans, the Green Decade and the State Green Mission and our unique 10 Minutes to Earth program. I feel, some of the pioneering initiatives that our Government has contributed to the making of forests are ideal for protection of Himalayan eco-system.

Forests are the anchor sheet of our survival. They serve us in multifarious ways to ensure that mankind enjoys a healthy, harmonious and holistic living on this Mother Earth. Regrettably much of the forest cover in the world has disappeared leading to imbalance in climate and environment. While we observe the Centenary Celebration, we will have to increasingly disseminate Sikkim's successful experience Nature Conservation measures that we have adopted over the decades.

On this special occasion, I also pay my deep regards and respects to all the forest functionaries, serving and retired, from the lowest rung to the highest office for their commitment, dedication and spirit of service that have made us so proud today and my profound tributes also go to those souls who unfortunately are no longer with us to share the joy of their gift to us for our sustenance.

(Pawan Chamling)  
CHIEF MINISTER



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MESSAGE

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It gives me immense pleasure to learn that the Department of Forests, Environment and Wildlife Management is bringing out a special issue to commemorate the “100 years of Forestry Service” on the occasion of Forest Centenary Celebration.

The Department has been providing incessant service to the people and society of Sikkim. During these hundred years of service to Sikkim, the forestry in Sikkim has evolved and stood the test of time. A hundred years is a long time in the history of management of an organization. The year 1909 A.D. benchmarks the beginning of forestry organization in Sikkim. We should be indebted and thankful to our forefathers of forestry who toiled hard for years to keep the greenery in Sikkim smiling. Our old foresters braved it all, from fighting forest fires to planting saplings in the torrential rains. The years of white water flowing in Teesta and Rangit bears testimony to the fact. Credit must go to the forefathers of forestry for their vision and farsightedness in understanding the importance of forest and environment and also for their painstaking efforts and endeavors to set up the foundation of this great forestry edifice. More so, to the then Maharaja of Sikkim, the tenth Chogyal Sidkeong Tulku of Sikkim, for his dynamism, prudence, sagacity and farsightedness and contributions for bringing the management of forests of Sikkim under an organized Government organ and on a scientific line through survey and demarcation of forests and adopting a Forest Manual which serves as a statute book compiled way back in 1914 and supplemented from time to time as per need.

The performance of the department has not always been an easy task in an atmosphere of competition and demand for infrastructure development. However, our conservation paradigm has always remained imaginative. We never reduced the whole issue to an emotional debate of growth-versus-green. Forestry in Sikkim has traveled as companion of development. We have always been aware that no attempt of conservation of our natural heritage will work unless it is backed by scientific decisions and economic incentives. The process of writing scientific, democratic working plan has been initiated and we are in the final process of framing up a very comprehensive working plan for our forest management based on scientific lines. The forestry in these hundred years has come a long way, from using chain and compass to the use of GPS, remote sensing and GIS. The Department is regularly procuring satellite imageries for doing image interpretations. We have attempted to make forests as a vehicle of sustainable livelihoods through non consumptive uses like eco-tourism. The forestry in Sikkim adapted itself with time from providing the basic need like firewood and fodder to ecosystem services.



We must not lose sight of or fail to highlight the conservation efforts of the present government in the last one and half decades under the dynamic leadership of our Hon'ble Chief Minister, Dr. Pawan Chamling. Under his leadership and guidance management of forestry resource as mainstay activity duly formulating a series of policies, administrative and legal measures have reinforced this base. The declaration of Wild Life Sanctuaries, ban on use of non biodegradable materials like plastics, poly bags etc., implementation of environmental cess, conceptualization of Smriti Vans (Memorial Forests), creation of the Rabdentse Bird Park and dedicating it as the Chogyal Sidkeong Tulku Bird Park, the exemplary launch of Green Mission etc., are few initiatives of the present government. Dr. Pawan Chamling, Chief Minister of Sikkim adjudged as the Greenest Chief Minister of India by Delhi based Centre for Science & Environment itself is a testimony of his sincere efforts.

The accolades we are getting today from all the corners are the results of the gigantic efforts of our old foresters and the green governance of the current government.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the Officers from PCCF cum Secretary to Forest Guard of the Department of Forests, Environment and Wildlife Management for their sincere effort, dedication and endeavors on this occasion and wish more golden years ahead for forestry.



(Bhim Dhungel)  
Minister



## FOREWORD

It is my privilege to place on record the views of some of serving as well as retired forest officers in this Souvenir, which is being brought out on the occasion of celebrations of completion of 100 years of establishment of Sikkim Forest Department in the State.

The seeds of protection and conservation of forest resources were sown in Sikkim a hundred years ago when the 10th Chogyal of Sikkim, Sidkeong Tulku introduced the concepts of scientific management of forest resources all over the state by establishing the Department of Forests. Policies of the present Government in recent years have reinforced the conservation philosophy and have clearly demonstrated that development being an inevitable need, should not be at the cost of our future generations. Sustainable development goals are being achieved by maintaining a perfect balance between development needs and ecological security.

The Department has undergone several institutional and cultural changes to meet the current demands and challenges of the future. We are fully aware of the mutual relationship between the Sikkimese community and our rich biodiversity, as the local people depend substantially on forest resources. Considering the need for enhancing the livelihood options of the people living in and around forests, and rejuvenating degraded forests, the State Government has launched several

innovative programs in the last 15 years.

I would like to compliment the Editorial Board for this initiative and I am confident that this publication will help us develop better understanding of new systems and operational methods of conservation and further reaffirm our commitment to preserve for posterity the magnificent diversity of flora and fauna in the small area that we have.

(S. T. Lachungpa)  
PCCF cum Secretary

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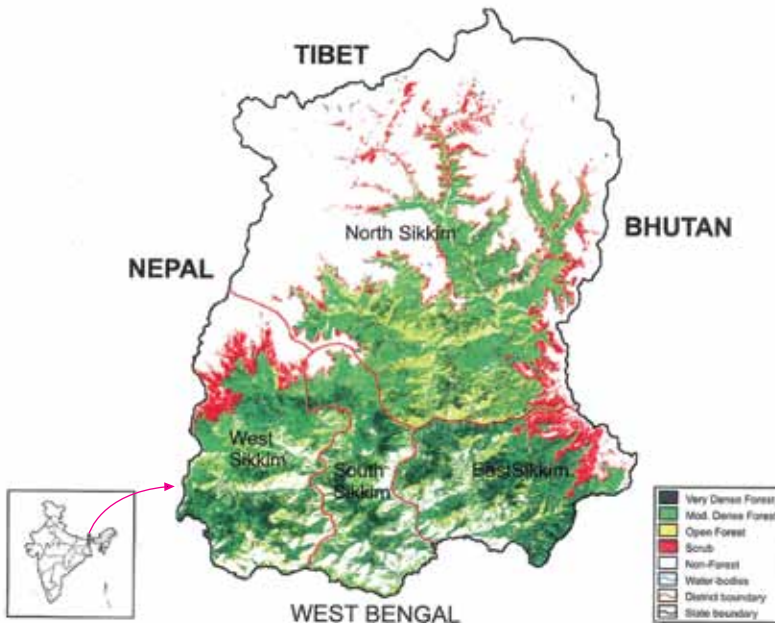
Rediscovered after 100 years Scarce Jester *Symbrenthia silana* by K Kunte

# SIKKIM FORESTRY

# A

# 100 YEARS

# OF SERVICE



A hundred years is a long time in the history of management of an organization. The second Five Year Plan document of the Government of Sikkim covering the period 1961-'66 mentions, inter alia, "The Reserve Forests and Goucharan were surveyed and demarcated in 1909; the Khasmahal forests have not been surveyed or demarcated. There is a Forest Manual which serves as a statute book compiled in 1909 and supplemented from time to time. No rights and concessions exist as far as Reserve Forests are concerned. In Goucharan the local people have the right of free grazing and collection of deadwood and fodder. They have similar rights in Khasmahal forests to a free supply of their requirement of timber and firewood but this can be availed of only after obtaining formal permission of the Forest Department."





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1909 therefore, benchmarks the beginning of forestry organization in Sikkim. Thanks to the then ruler, the 10th Chogyal of Sikkim who is being honoured by naming the historical Rabdentse forest as the Sidkeong Tulku Bird Park and whose dynamism, prudence, sagacity and farsightedness brought management of forests of Sikkim under an organized Government organ and on a scientific line. Dillu Singh Ghaley, the Bengal forester, deputed to serve the Darbar was entrusted the responsibility of laying down the foundation of this great forestry edifice.

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**M**uch water has flown down the Teesta and the Rangit rivers since this futuristic move was adopted by Chogyal Sidkeong Tulku. We owe our present forest wealth to this great soul and to that community of committed foresters who meandered down the green line working indefatigably under successive regimes and governments to protect this heritage. Together they have bequeathed us in as unalloyed character and composition, the forest-crop as best they could have envisaged.

As we step further into the second centenary of forestry in Sikkim we must not lose sight of or fail to highlight the last one and a half decades when the present government took up the management of this resource as a mainstay activity duly formulating a series of policy, administrative and legal measures to reinforce this base. It has now become a people-centric programme rather than a government-christened populist paradigm.

The colour, cast and criteria; the tools, techniques and technology; the aim, objective and utility of forests and forestry have undergone metamorphic changes as the world adopts newer and technologically sharper methods and measures to fight such deadly and disastrous adversaries as the scourge of pollution, climate change and global warming. Appropriately, the department now has been rechristened as the Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management Department.

The initial years of the last century witnessed a plethora of felling, foraging and free play of human activities that dented and denuded a substantial percentage of

forest resource particularly in the foothills for purpose of settlement and agriculture and above all to augment the meager revenue base of the Darbar. The mode and method of forest usage however, was strictly restricted and regulated by the newly constituted Forest Department; so much so that one of the illustrious forest officers went ahead with imposing a fine on his wife for collecting a bundle of firewood without obtaining prior permission from his Department! Such stories of trials, tribulations and triumphs; hazards, hostilities and horror; myth, mystery and musings and of adventure and adversaries have indelibly bedecked the lives and times of our great forefathers of forestry.

While it is not possible to telescope all the events and information, measures and milestones, contributions and cornerstones that went into the making of this great institution of forestry and the toils and turmoil that formed part of the struggle to protect this open wealth, it would be sufficient for the present to highlight landmark policy, administrative and managerial inputs that strengthened the base and bastion of forestry practices in Sikkim.



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## MILESTONES

**1909:** Forest Department set up. Reserve and Goucharan forests surveyed and demarcated; Forest Manual, a statute book for department adopted for operationalisation; Sidkeong Tulku, the then Crown Prince of Sikkim pioneered the step ably aided by Dillu Singh Ghale, the Bengal Forest Officer on deputation to Sikkim.

**1919:** Rai Sahab Bhim Bahadur Pradhan joins Forest Department and becomes Forest Manager after five years of service.

**1930:** German scientist Ernst Schaefer expedition to Sikkim and identification of SHAPI or Himalayan Tahr at Phimphu, North Sikkim as distinct variety; advocacy for its total protection.

**1945-46:** Forests vested to the Darbar from under the ownership of landlords in different districts, a task ably implemented by Atal Singh Dewan, Range Officer.

**1952:** First Cadastral survey to demarcate Revenue and Forest Lands.

**1972:** Indian Peafowl introduced into lowland Sal forests, South Sikkim.

**1976:** Extension of Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 to Sikkim

**1977:** Khangchendzonga National Park (KNP) of area 850 sq. km. declared.

**1984:** Kyongnosla Alpine Sanctuary and Fambong Lho Wildlife Sanctuary, East Sikkim; Shingba Rhododendron Sanctuary, North Sikkim declared.

**1987:** Maenam Wildlife Sanctuary, South Sikkim, declared.

**1988:** State formulates and adopts Sikkim Forests, Water Courses and Road Reserve (Preservation and Protection) Act, 1988.

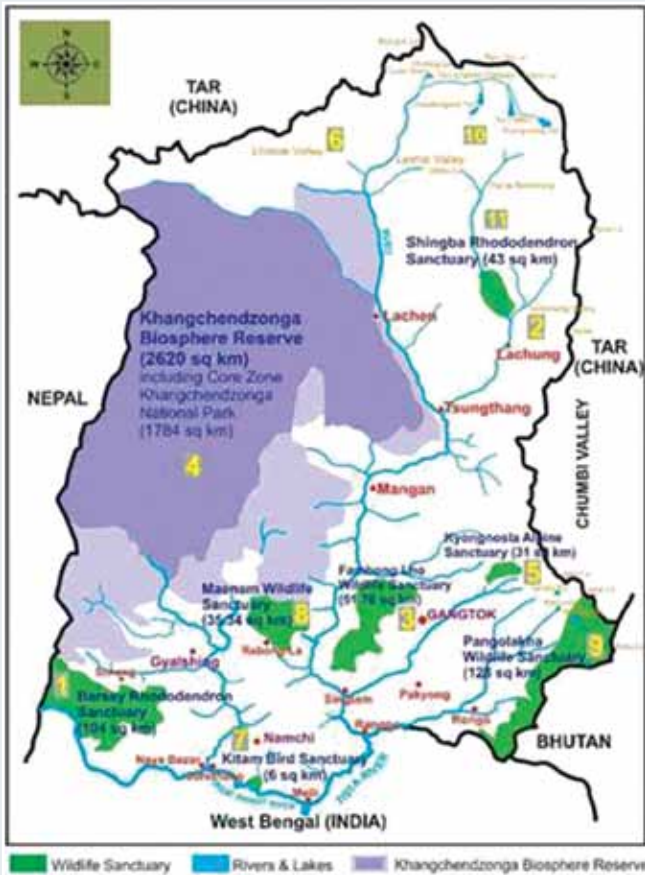
**1988-'89:** Forest Survey of India completes Forest Resource Survey of all districts.

**1995:**

❖ Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) Government announces and adopts "Harit Kranti Dashak" for greener Sikkim through people's participation.

❖ Cattle grazing in Reserve Forests, an age-old practice that had led to depletion of forest wealth, banned.





**1997:**

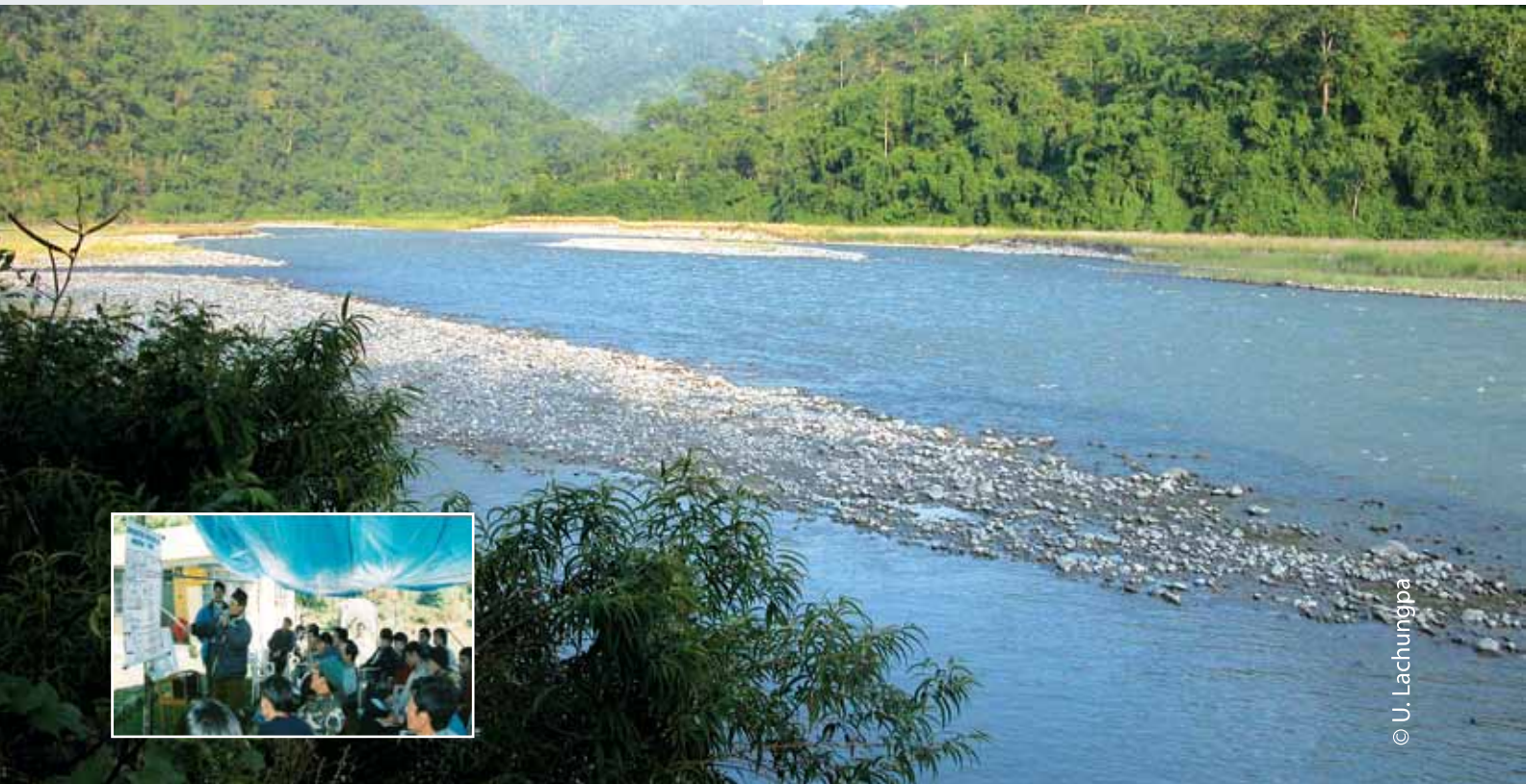
- ❖ Ban on use of non-biodegradable materials like plastics, polybags etc.
- ❖ KNP extended from 850 to 1784 sq. km. (25.10% of total geographical area).

**1998:**

- ❖ State award “Rajya Van Samrakshan Evam Paryavaran Puraskar” constituted.
- ❖ Rathong Chu hydro-electric project and 170 sq. km. proposed firing range in North Sikkim, abandoned.
- ❖ Barsey Rhododendron Sanctuary, West Sikkim declared.
- ❖ Introduction of participatory forest management involving active peoples’ participation through Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) (26 June 1998).
- ❖ Subsequent notification issued for Eco-Development Committees (EDCs).

**1999:**

- ❖ Dr. Pawan Chamling, Chief Minister of Sikkim adjudged Greenest Chief Minister of India by Delhi- based Centre for Science and Environment.
- ❖ Government adopts new nomenclature ‘Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management Department’ in tune with changing focus and shift in approach and objective.



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❖ Smriti Van (Memorial Forests) concept by Hon. Chief Minister at Bulbuley above Gangtok to take forestry programmes to people's level. All strata of people, individuals, institutions, clubs, societies and non-governmental organizations participate by planting trees in memory of children, marriage, death etc. at a common venue and care, own and nurture trees to maturity. Smriti Vans now at each Panchayat Unit.

❖ Government formulates, adopts State Forest, Environment and Land Use Policy in view of growing concern for protection of forests, environment and wildlife vis-a-vis increased developmental tempo.



**2000:**

- ❖ Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve with area 2619.92 sq. km. declared.
- ❖ Total wildlife protected area 30.77% of total geographical area which is the highest in the country.
- ❖ Eco Clubs and Green fund for Schools and Colleges.

**2001:**

- ❖ Sacred peaks, caves, rocks, lakes, 'chhortens' and hot springs notified.
- ❖ Scaling of important peaks including the Mount Khangchendzonga banned.
- ❖ Network of JFMC/EDCs and Watershed Development

Committees (WDCs) created.

❖ State Biodiversity Park at Tendong, South Sikkim established.

**2002:**

❖ Environmental Education introduced in Schools from Nursery to Class-8.

❖ State Medicinal Plant Board (SMPB) set up to concretize action plan on medicinal plants in the State with Hon. Chief Minister as Chairman.

❖ Herbal Gardens created in different Panchayats; care and management with technical inputs from the forest department.

❖ Sikkim to go organic; ban on chemical fertilizers, pesticides to save our fields from the scourge of pollution.

❖ Pangolakha Wildlife Sanctuary, East Sikkim declared.

**2003:**

❖ Eleven Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in Sikkim identified and recognized by government.

❖ Government of India, through its scientific wing, the Forest Survey of India records increase of forest cover in the state by 2% between the period 1994-2003, the result of department's relentless regeneration efforts and the Government's intense policy focus.

**2004:**

❖ Green Indicators, 2004 a report developed by Noida – based group finds the Forest Protection Index of Sikkim to be the highest in the country (0.903).

❖ First state in Himalayas to use Global Positioning System (GPS) to survey and demarcate Reserve Forest boundaries.





**2005:**

- ❖ Sikkim Ecology Fund and Environment Cess Act, 2005 framed. This Act provides for levy of cess on industries, traders and consumers for articles which pollute environment.

- ❖ Ban on killing of wildlife strengthened.

**2006:**

- ❖ Regulation of Trekking Rules, 2006 notified.
- ❖ Kitam Bird Sanctuary, South Sikkim declared.
- ❖ State Green Mission, one of the most innovative and effective policy articulations by State Government to realign people to the giant task of protecting, managing and regenerating the greenery in the state on their own with the Department guiding and supervising various operations.
- ❖ Constitution of State Biodiversity Board to oversee and manage the rich biodiversity of the State.
- ❖ State Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (SBSAP) documented.
- ❖ Wetland Conservation Programme formulated and six wetland complexes included in National Wetland Conservation Programme.

**2007:**

- ❖ State Glacial Commission formulated.
- ❖ National Bamboo Mission launched.



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**2008:**

- ❖ Eco-Tourism Directorate created.
- ❖ Hamro Van media venture on local cable TV launched for awareness.
- ❖ Chogyal Palden Thendup Namgyal Park, Gangtok, created.
- ❖ Sikkim Forests, Water Courses and Road Reserve (Preservation and Protection) Act 1988 got assent from President of India (16 May 2008).

**2009:**

- ❖ Awarded following appreciation from Centre for



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Development Finance, a prominent NGO:

- ★ First in Natural Resource Management
- ★ First in performance in Land Use and setting up of State Council for Climate Change.
- ★ Second best ranking in Environmental Sustainability Index;
- ❖ Sling Dong Tinkitam *Fairrieanum* Conservation Reserve, South Sikkim for the protection of orchid *Paphiopedilum fairrieanum* and its environment declared.



- ❖ Working Plan under completion; Wildlife Management Plans under implementation.
- ❖ Terms of Reference (TOR) signed between department and Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) funded externally aided project with focus to promote ecotourism and natural resource conservation.
- ❖ Forest Centenary 1909-2009
- ❖ Ten minutes to Greenery.



This gist indicates that most of the policy, legal and administrative milestones for sound and sustainable forestry and environment have been achieved. Programmes and projects implemented during the last 15 years or so show that the long term goal of maintaining a balance between environment and development is visibly met with. We aim to not only achieve desired goals but surpass national level targets under the able guidance of the greenest Chief Minister in the country.

Our endeavours in all fields of forest, environment, land-use and wildlife management and conservation, have excelled that of most other states, a fact concurred by independent research institutes and other scientific bodies.

A department which performed most functions of other Departments such as Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Land Revenue, Tea Gardens, Fishery and Sericulture; a Department born 100 years ago nourished by successive bands of eminent foresters from Dillu Singh Ghale, Rai Saheb Bhim Bahadur Pradhan, Dak Man Lama, Arjun Singh, M. M. Rasaily, KC Pradhan, P O Pazo, P S Moktan, N. C. Shenga, P. K. Basnett, T. R. Sharma, T. R. Poudyal, D. B. Shrestha and down to S. T. Lachungpa, the present Head of the department, without in any way forgetting the contribution of the innumerable forest family members from the Forest Guards up, it has in its journey from a primitive past to the Information Technology age metamorphosed into a modern, apparatus teeming with some sophisticated technical hands in the care and custody of an eminently pro-environment Government.



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As we prepare to enter the second century of forestry practice and environment management in Sikkim it would not be out of place to touch upon salient policy, legal and administrative enunciations of the present

Government under Dr. Pawan Chamling, Hon. Chief Minister, that have given this Department a new direction, dimension and destination.

The State Green Mission is one such arm which reaches out to envelope a wide cross section of society to the task of greening and beautifying Sikkim, through them, with them. This pioneering step is a bold departure from the traditional method of resource management in which the Department had a policing and a custodial role and responsibility which virtually delinked the people from the mainstay management practice. The overwhelming response and mass participation by the people to this programme has strengthened the hands of the foresters and developers. Thus there is a visible paradigm shift in the policy towards conservation of our forest wealth.

That true forestry and conservation of natural resources should be placed in the hands of the people to whom this resource primarily belongs both as a life support system and incremental accrual of it for their household needs is now an established government arrangement. The apparatus through which this goal is achieved is the constitution and adoption of Joint Forest Management Committees in all the villages and that of Eco-



Development Committees in the fringes of Wildlife Protected Area Network. People, obviously being prime stakeholders, in the devolved structure, will plant, nurture and harvest the forest crop, availing of as much as one-fourth of the produce as their share. The State is proud to present today as many as 158 Joint Forest Management Committees and 57 Eco-Development Committees successfully working hand in hand with the forest officials, implementing programmes, operating funds independent of Government intervention.

Such decentralization and devolution of powers and functions have revolutionized the forestry format and conservation agenda. This augurs well for the next century of forest management and protection.

On the auspicious occasion of the Centenary Celebration 2009 the forest fraternity is deeply obliged to all members of the civil society, farmers, non-governmental organizations, self-help groups, forest management committees, various individuals, institutions, scientific bodies, traders, hawkers, teachers, student community, politicians, planners and policy framers, press and media, judiciary, tourists and tour operators: as a matter of fact, all people we perceive as stakeholders of this vast reservoir of renewable resource who have extended their hand to its protection, propagation and management over these years constituting an inalienable link with the foresters. We solemnly subserve ourselves to them for the holy task of protecting this asset, our irreplaceable natural heritage.



# Remembering

## Sidkeong Tulku (1879-1914)

FATHER OF MODERN FORESTRY IN SIKKIM

T R Poudyal, IFS (Retd)



**Sidkeong Tulku**  
(1879-1914)

**S**idkeong Tulku, the familiar foresters' household name remains cherished in the annals of Forest Department's centenary long organized history. At a time when nature tended the wilderness areas in their primitive form and pristine glory, envisaging them for organized management marked a distinct watershed in the history of forestry organization. He pioneered and fathered the Forest Department and placed it under core sector management. The period for such landmark vision roughly coincides between 1905 and 1914.

'The Tulku was an extraordinary man', so has he been described. His attributes were a high intelligence, forceful personality, staunch enemy of the landlords, and was of independent and assertive nature.

He was born in 1879. On his completing two years education at Oxford in 1905, he plunged headlong into active administration of his kingdom duly assuming charges of forests, schools and monasteries. Fired by intense zeal and the spirit to serve, he launched a number of reforms and development measures.

Tulku was a practical king and an impatient one in as much as the governance of his kingdom was concerned. Through his down-to-earth approach to speed up the pace of modernizing the kingdom he is reported to have developed staunch animosity with the landlords of those days. Forests might

have been the potent conflicting ground between the two as they were mostly vested with the landlords. Though the actual recovery process got underway only in the fifties, it was the Chogyal Sidkeong Tulku that laid the foundation of such a move as early as the beginning of this century.

The administration of the 10th Chogyal of Sikkim was relatively short-lived, yet if we piece together a few records available here and there they reveal an astoundingly lively spirit of the Tulku who within a very short span of administration laid a highly scientific, sound and stable forestry foundation.

It was during the short span of his administration that the forests were divided and demarcated into three distinct categories in order of their functions: the Reserve Forests, Khasmahal and the Gorucharan. Where Reserve Forests were designed to be sacrosanct by virtue of the classification, the other two categories were public utility forests for fodder, firewood and grazing to be regulated by the newly constituted Forest Department. Forests therefore, hitherto considered as no man's property came to be recognized as a viable resource needing proper care and planned management. The Forest Department was further strengthened and a Forest Manual was prepared around 1914 to classify functions of the Department with a view to administering the forests.

The constitution of the Forest Department and demarcation of forests setting out goals of



management through a written Manual during those initial primitive years when the tiny Himalayan kingdom was struggling to consolidate administratively are achievements deservingly worth recording. This assumes to be true because the forestry foundation laid down by the then Chogyal on sound footing remains strong and stable and has proved to increasingly meet the imperatives of the present day forestry concepts of conservation, biodiversity protection, joint forest management, community forestry, ecological security and environmental conservation. At a time when natural forests elsewhere in the world are either decimated or fast disappearing, Sikkim's pristine natural forests are the legacy of this diminutive, down-to-earth monarch who left a distinguished mark in the field of forestry.

The forest fraternity cherishes his name with unbound love and respect. We call him 'Father of Forestry' for as much to have set up the forestry department as to have it organized in a most scientific and conservation oriented manner such that after a hundred years of its formation, this Department is resilient enough to meet the requirements of the present day shift in forestry concept – from one of economic and commercial resource to ecological and environmental support base, from production forestry to bio-diversity conservation, or more simply put from revenue – earning wealth to life support systems.

In the fast changing political, economic and technological scenario unfolding regionally, nationally and on international level, the contribution made by such eminent personalities who saw the future of the forests in the context



of ecological and environmental parameters, 100 years ahead deserve a place not only in history but in the hearts of the present generation.

In the Centenary Year, 2009, the Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management Department celebrated a part of the inaugural function on 21<sup>st</sup> Feb 2009 at the relics of the historic old palace site at Rabdentse. His name, contribution and commitment to the dear cause of forestry was pegged here with the sprawling forested highland being consecrated to his memory by the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Dr Pawan Chamling who is spearheading a green movement in Sikkim ever since he assumed office in 1995. It is the State's fittest mark of respect to the Forester-Monarch during the Centenary Year of the Forest Department's foundation and that of the scientific forestry base in Sikkim. The 'Sidkeong Tulku Bird Park' in West Sikkim will, we assume, carry the spirit of conservation of the green endowment into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century that the Chogyal so benignly envisioned for us.

The forest fraternity of Sikkim is deeply indebted to the king for his noble and visionary step that he took during his short tenure of administration.

# SHRI DILLE SINGH GHALE

## (1872-1937)

The first decade of this century marks the beginning of the forestry organization in Sikkim. It was during this decade that the foundation of the present Forest Department was laid by, now little known but a strong character nevertheless,



Shri Dilu Singh Ghale. Very little is known about this personality who organized the Forest Department from scratch and gave it a strong and stable foundation both organizationally as well as technically.

We were able to trace out a brief career profile of this forester including his and his wife's photographs. As a matter of fact, our meager information about his service career is made good by these two beautiful photographs, which give us an insight into this forefather's personality. They look as lively today as they were about 70 years back. The pair represents God's best creation on earth.

A man of strong physical build, Mr. Ghale was born in 1872 in Darjeeling and had his forestry training in Dehradun. After successful training he joined the Bengal Government. In 1905 he was deputed to serve the Sikkim Darbar which he did till 1925.

During this period Mr. Ghale under the regime of the then Chogyal Sidkeong Tulku organized the Forest Department in Sikkim which was hitherto non-existent. His foresight and planning skills contributed to the forestry base being laid on a firm footing. During his tenure as the first Forest Manager of the Himalayan Kingdom of Sikkim, classification and demarcation of



forest land into three categories of Reserve Forest, Khasmal and Gorucharan were done and notified during 1908 to 1912. The basis of scientific forest management was thus initiated by him. His other outstanding contribution was the publication of

the first Forest Manual in 1914 which is available till today. At a time when forests were considered as being beyond the scope of man-management, to foresee and plan for forestry sector on scientific footing brings out the true dimension of his pioneering effort. He can truly be called the foundation Father of this prestigious organization.

No other point better illustrates his firm commitment to the profession and his integrity and dedication to the service than the one which relates to imposing a fine of rupees five on his wife when she brought a headload of firewood from the forest area illegally. She is reported to have refused to pay and sought the assistance of Darbar to waive off the proposed fine but Mr. Ghale remained firm inspite of intervention from Darbar and eventually realized the fine.

This is a great eye-opener to the modern band of hi-tech foresters. Such was the care and attention given to forest wealth when it was being initially organized for bequeathing to the present generation. We all owe our deep sense of gratitude and a profound appreciation for his outstanding contribution to the cause of forestry whereby he has made us feel proud at this juncture. He is truly the father of modern forestry in Sikkim along with his ruler Chogyal Sidkeong Tulku.

# RAI SAHEB BHIM BAHADUR PRADHAN

## (1895 – 1975)

Late Rai Saheb Bhim Bahadur Pradhan was one of the many illustrious sons of late Taksari Chandrabir Pradhan. Born on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1895 at Pacheykhani, East Sikkim and educated at the Nepal Boarding School, Gangtok, he started his career as a Headmaster of that School. Later, after completing a three year training at Dehradun School of Forestry between 1916-1919, he joined Government service. In 1925, after six years of hard work, he was promoted as Head of the Department of Forest, a position he occupied for 31 years, till his retirement in November 1956. He continued as Honorary Advisor on Floriculture to the Government of Sikkim for several more years. His services were recognized both by Government of India and Government of Sikkim and he was honoured by the title of Rai Saheb in 1943 and conferred the “Pema Dorjee” in 1965.

His dedication and concern for the welfare of the State was uppermost in his thoughts and actions throughout his long career. He pursued it with utmost zeal and enthusiasm, ably supported by a fine band of Forest Officers and staff like Atal Singh Dewan, Dakman Lama, Dhopbin Dewan, Kulbir Pradhan, Ganga Prasad Pradhan, Bhuwan Prasad Sharma and others. He was a great advocate of Road Reserves, Medical Herbs cultivation, River Transportation of Timber, leasing out of forests for Cardamom both from the point of view of revenue augmentation and preservation of forests in fragile watersheds, Soil conservation with ‘Amliso’ and Kikiyu’ grass as soil binders, ‘Utis’ and bamboo plantation in individual holdings to meet the basic household needs and of establishment of plantation through Taungya system. The Walnut plantation at Sadam and Teak of Melli stand as some of the monuments of his success in developing forests. Introduction of Trout fish, development of *Ipecac* and other medicinal plants in Sikkim were also a result of his foresight and planning.

He was the first to highlight the importance of Horticulture in Sikkim and gave Sikkim the privileged place as producer and exporter of orchids. The flower nurseries in and around Kalimpong and Rhenock owe their existence to his guidance and patronage. His exposition of riches of Sikkim in its flora and fauna attracted a number of expeditions to this part of the world, the most important among these being Schaefer



Expedition led by leading German scientists in 1930.

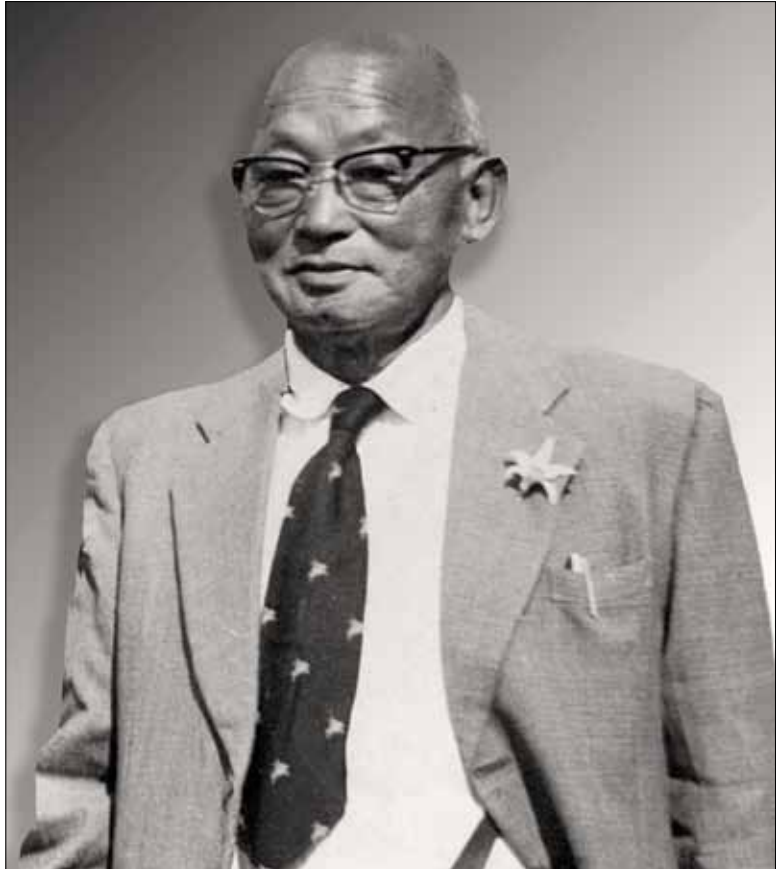
He was a man with a mission to develop Sikkim through Agriculture, Floriculture and Horticulture and the Forests of Sikkim to which he devoted his entire career are the living monuments to his long and dedicated work. He pursued it with a great measure of success inspite of meager resources. Sikkim Forest Department owes a great deal to this great Forester who held the reins of Sikkim Forests for almost four decades and put Forestry on the rail. The multifarious forestry notifications which are relevant even today speak volumes of his foresightness.

The Department wishes to pay its deepest homage to this great soul who laid the foundation of a stable forestry base in Sikkim.



# SHRI ATAL SINGH DEWAN

(1894-1966)



This is the story of one of the old sons of Sikkim, namely, that of Shri Atal Singh Dewan who held a humble post of a Forest Ranger in the Department but rose on to become one of the ablest administrators in the then regime of the Chogyal.

Shri A. S. Dewan, like many of the then appointees in the Forest Department, hailed from Railing Estate, Darjeeling District.

Born in September 1894, he passed his matriculation in 1918 from Calcutta University and joined the Sikkim Darbar Service as a school teacher in 1918. Mr. Dewan seems to be an ambitious and career

conscious personality as he kept on looking for appropriate channels to prove his mantle. In this pursuit, he joined the Forest Department as a Cashier. Not satisfied, he requested the Darbar for Ranger's training which the Darbar acceded. He underwent training in 1921-22 and joined as Range Officer at Namchi where he served for 15 years with occasional transfers to other Ranges.

Recognizing his talent and ability he was called upon by the Darbar to handle higher responsibilities and in the year 1943 joined the Rationing Department as Assistant

Rationing Officer subsequently to be promoted as Rationing Officer and then as Textile Commissioner.

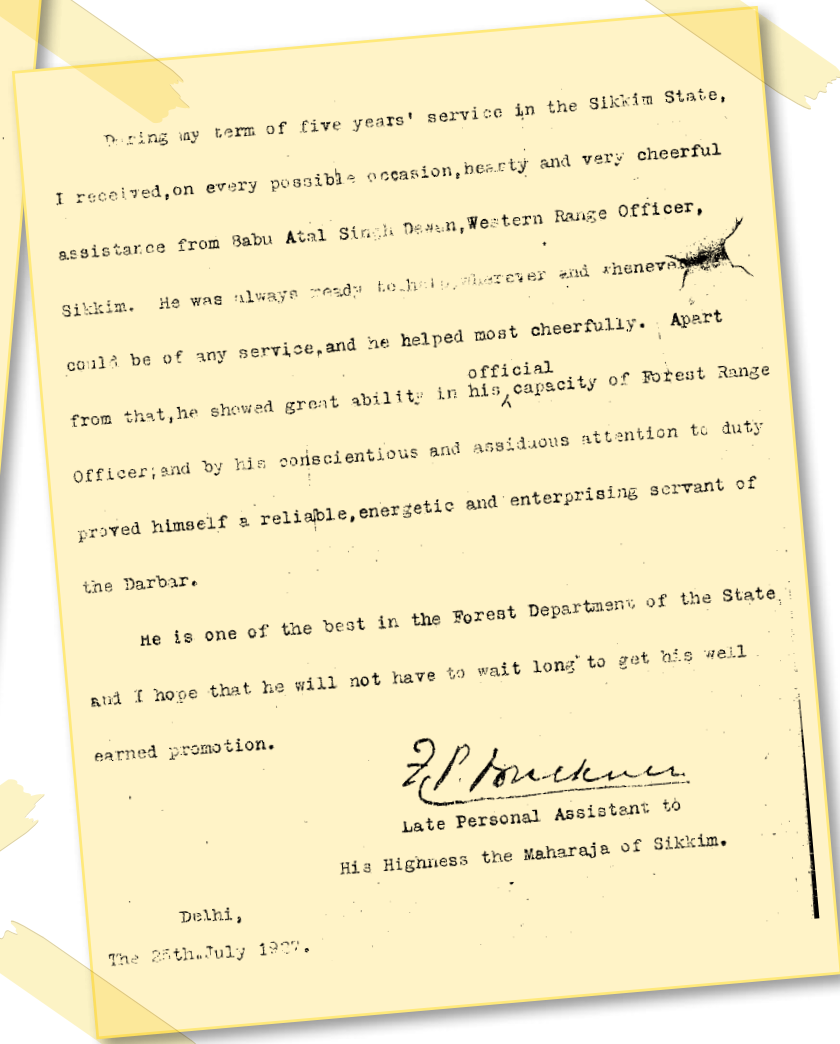
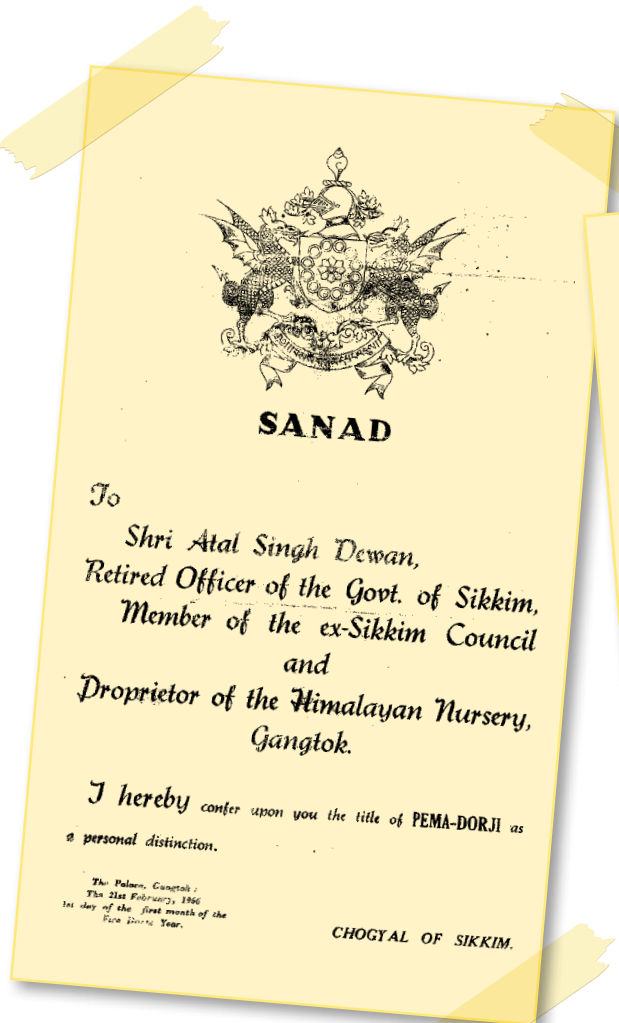
During those politically turbulent years Mr. Dewan had once again to change his garb and became a Tahsildar in West District, a job which he did for a very short stint. In 1943-44, he was taken back again in the Forest Department as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) and assigned the important task of recovering the forests from Landlord Estates which he completed successfully. In 1951 he was appointed Panchayat Officer. His career got a further fillip in the year 1952 when he was

appointed as Executive Officer holding the Department of Education, Excise, Bazaar and Press and Publicity. He held these departments till 1957, the year of his formal retirement. However he was given two years' extension on account of as much to his extremely satisfactory service record as to the recognition of his great dynamism and resourcefulness.

Recognizing his talent and long and meritorious service the Sikkim Darbar in 1956 awarded him 'PEMA DORJEE', the Kingdom's highest honour. Mr. Atal Singh Dewan after retirement was nominated as a Councillor in the Sikkim Council which was equivalent to the present day Legislative Assembly.

The career profile of Mr. Atal Singh Dewan is a

classic example of what administrative qualities and excellence even a humble forester can profess. His immense versatility and caliber to handle with ease and confidence many other Government departments apart from contributing immensely to the cause of forestry particularly 'Operation resumption' of forests from Landlord Estates in the then regime earned him the title of 'Pema Dorjee and subsequently on retirement becoming a member of the Sikkim Legislative Council. These are great honours bestowed not only on a Government functionary but also on a Forest Officer. Life like that of Shri Atal Singh Dewan will always inspire us to achieve great heights of glory not only in chosen fields but for a genuinely dedicated person the scope to career promotion is vast and unlimited.





Late Shri Balbhadra Rai, Late Atal Singh Dewan and Late Shri Rashmi Alley with Police and Forest Security Personnel at Akar Bridge, Naya bazar, Jorethang, South Sikkim



## M.M. RASAILY

-Sangeeta Madan Rasaily (Daughter)

**B**orn on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1928, the fourth son of Sh. Manbir Singh Rasaily, Financial Secretary to His Highness, the Maharaja of Sikkim, Sir Tashi Namgyal, Mr. M.M. Rasaily studied upto Class IV at Sir Tashi Namgyal High School and went to join Mt. Hermon School, Darjeeling as a boarder, from where he completed his Senior Cambridge in 1943. He pursued his B.Sc. at St. Xaviers College, Calcutta and later shifted to the Government College, Darjeeling, when they introduced the subject Botany. Before going for his higher studies he taught Science and Geography at Sir Tashi Namgyal High School for sometime as there was no subject teacher available at that time.

From the year 1955-58 he underwent Higher Forestry training at Indian Forest College, Dehradun. After successful completion of his training he came back and joined the Sikkim Forest Department as Assistant Conservator of Forest on 1<sup>st</sup> of March 1960. He became DFO, East when Sh. Arjan Singh was the Conservator of Forest on deputation from Punjab. He took the charge as Head of Forest Department as Conservator of Forest after the tenure of Shri Dakman Lama.

He served as a bureaucrat for 35 years. Working in tandem with the vision of the 12<sup>th</sup> Chogyal of Sikkim, His Highness, Palden Thondup Namgyal, he helped to set up the State Trading Corporation of Sikkim, the State Lottery (for aiding Development Plans), the Sikkim Jewels, the Sikkim Time Corporation and the Sikkim Supreme Factory at Singtam. At the time of Chinese invasion in 1964 he was entrusted with the work of Civil Defence Commissioner. He was also the Auditor General of Sikkim till 1974. Overall, during his tenure he held the responsibilities of Auditor General as well as Secretaries of different Departments like Trade, Industries and Commerce, Tourism, Education, Motor Vehicle, Home and also as Director Vigilance. He retired from the service in 1988 when he was posted as Home Secretary.

Apart from the committed service to Sikkim, he was also involved in other activities. He was one of the founding members of the Rotary Club in Sikkim. He was an avid footballer and played for the school team, college team and also the town team which consisted of officers serving the Chogyal of Sikkim.

He accompanied the Chogyal Palden Thondup Namgyal in his visits to Switzerland, UK and also

during the wedding ceremony of His Highness King Birendra of Nepal. He also helped strengthen the Sri Satya Sai organization of Sikkim as its President and also helped in designing and completion of the Sai Mandir at Baluwakhani, Gangtok.

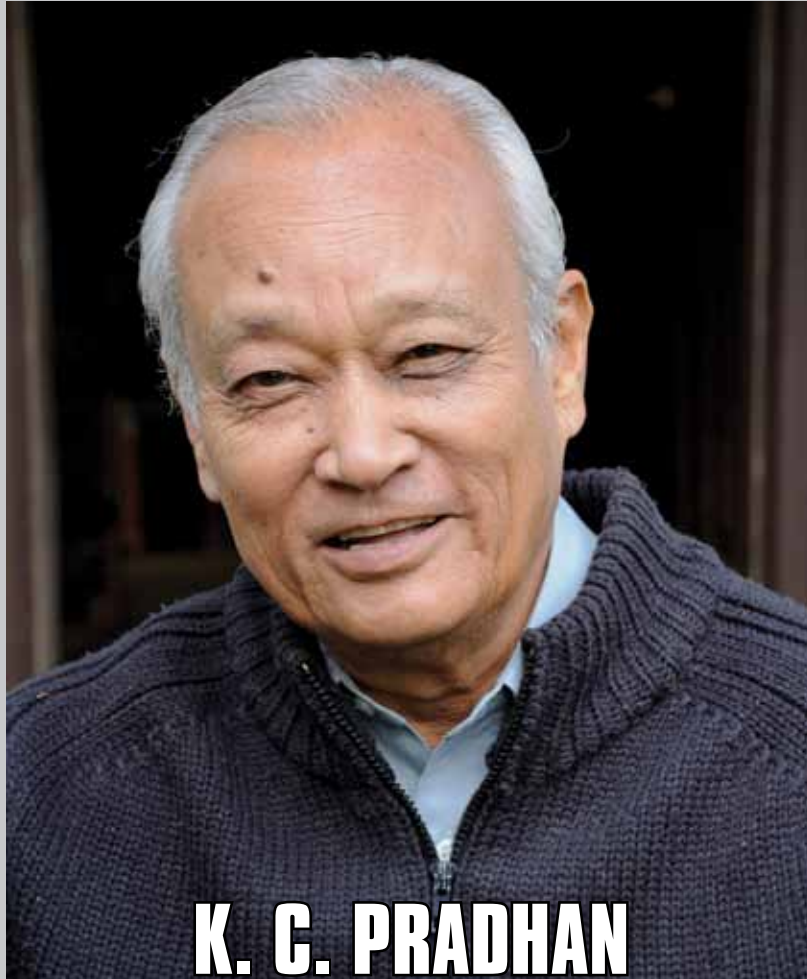
He was conferred the Denzong Thu ki Norbu (The Jewel of Sikkim), the highest civilian award of the then

Kingdom of Sikkim. He received this award in the year 1974 from His Highness, the Chogyal Palden Thondup Namgyal. He also conferred the Pema Dorjee medal, for his dedicated service.

He retired from Government service in 1988 when he was Additional Chief Secretary cum Home Secretary. He now leads a quiet life reading and writing.







T. R. Poudyal IFS (Retd)

**A**s a member of the forest fraternity and one groomed by him, I had a long association with this eminent forester as subordinate Officer and had the occasion and opportunity to know him, to learn from him and to appreciate the greatness in him. Forest education and training basically prepares personnel to equip to act as field functionaries rather than academicians and writers; imparts knowledge and skill to protect forests, manage resources and enforce laws.

Shri Keshab C Pradhan is a doyen of Sikkim's forestry and needs no introduction either in the State, nationally or internationally. That he is an authority on the flora and fauna of the Himalayas goes without saying and is well recognized and acknowledged through out the world. His recent book "The Life and Times of a Plantsman in

the Sikkim Himalayas" not only narrates the story of his life and events alone but is a reservoir of references and records, ideas and informations, facts and factors, views and that might govern and shape the thoughts and outlook of the present-day administrators and managers of forest resources. Shri Pradhan deserves appreciation and an accolade for this outstanding book.

A tall and towering bureaucrat, a dedicated forester, a benign administrator, a warm and affable personality, a great social being indeed! Were it not for him perhaps we would have been deprived of such a wealth of knowledge on Sikkim's plants that the Americans, the Europeans, the Australians, New Zealanders and the Japanese do enviably hold and greatly appreciate. Keshab C. Pradhan to that extent has really acted as an ambassador to further reinforce this and popularize Sikkim as a

paradise of richness, variety and diversity of vegetation within such a small amphitheatre. While delving deep into the past to unfold the treasury of Sikkim's flora and fauna extensively and the management practices as existed then, he does not forget to quickly connect himself to the present day conservation movement and pays glowing tribute to the efforts and initiatives of the of the present Government, routinely lauds and landmarks people and personalities who mattered in the making of Sikkim from then on to now and profiles elaborately his trials and tribulations in administration.

His hand excelled in every Department that he handled, brought changes and improvements, simplified the delivery of services to the poor and the downtrodden. If Rai Saheb Bhim Bahadur Pradhan, his father, laid the foundation of Sikkim's forestry organization in Sikkim, his son modernized it and gave it a scientific and technical base. Nari K Rustomji once scribbled down in an autograph of one of our junior friends in the School when he visited **'Brighten the corner wherever you are'**. This truly holds true for Shri Pradhan.

During the Agri-Expo Fair in New Delhi in 1977 it was he who along with the less remembered late Shri Naren Rai, the reputed landscape architect of the Department who were able to project Sikkim to the nation for the first time in terms of its floral richness and natural wealth. Agri-horti items, handicrafts, artifacts that were introduced and displayed were richly connoisseured by the visitors resulting in Sikkim bagging the Gold Medal. Ever since, the nation's eyes have lovingly fallen on this small state and Sikkim on its part has religiously followed the path to development and prosperity. The Wood Working Centre at Bordang that used to flourish during the 1975-77 period and catered the growing furniture and timber demand of the market had its beginning made by him. A relatively less known but faunally so vital fact that has escaped the notice of many in Sikkim is the introduction of peacocks in the Sal forests along Melli Jorethang belt which we are so proud of these days and for which protecting and sustaining from the annual fires has become a nightmare for the foresters was Shri Pradhan's vision and initiative The peacock chicks were carted all the way from Pinjore in Haryana by our Departmental truck in 1972 by me along with driver Mani Kumar Pradhan who breathed his last only

last month and FG Naku Lepcha. He loved introduction of exotics whether it is Kikuyu grass or *Cryptomeria japonica* as long as they were useful and served the forestry needs better than the native species for Sikkim.

From the olden days of nature conservation which he often used to emphasize to us to the present era of environmentalism Shri Pradhan has had a long and eventful career He has outshone every other member in the service by virtue of sheer and dogged commitment to work and nothing else. As I know of him, he was a neutral bureaucrat committed to his profession alone and with the colleagues and juniors he spoke nothing else except how to be better in the Department. The love, warmth and respect that he enjoys unabatedly to this day and the fact he continues to aid and advise the present Government in some form or the other is a testimony to his professional excellence and scholastic high ground. Looking back to his "life and times" I must say he deserves to be felicitated in the Forest Centenary Year by the Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management Department. Shri Pradhan is known for his balanced views and non-committal approach to any 'isms'. Notwithstanding his love, affiliation and appreciation for the late Chogyal he has successfully embedded into the new political scenario with equal ease and comfort. He advises: "have abiding faith in democracy and people's power".

“  
His hand excelled in every Department that he handled, brought changes and improvements, simplified the delivery of services to the poor and the downtrodden.  
”

On his retirement now over a decade ago, he has gifted us with his book that telescopes his life and times no doubt but in equal measure paints and portrays the myriad events and circumstances, movements and situations, tours and travelogues that have a strong appeal to the present day planners and administrators. Others that preceded this edition are Topdhan Rai's 'Trees of The Sikkim Himalayas', Bejoy Gurung's 'Medicinal Plants of The Sikkim Himalayas' and Sudhizong Lucksom's 'Orchids of The Sikkim and North East Himalayas', all of them eminent local foresters. Written and published at a time when the Government has very high priority on matters related to environmental conservation, forest protection and wildlife management and Sikkim acclaimed as a forerunner on green movement these books will further add to the projection of Sikkim as an epitome of natural wealth to the readers. We owe a lot to Shri K. C. Pradhan's visionary and missionary zeal.

# THE CENTENARY MUSINGS: SOME MORE SENIOR FORESTERS



L-R: N.C. Shenga, P.S. Moktan, M.M.Rasaily, K.C. Pradhan and P.O. Pazo.

**W**hen, after nearly four decades of very active and exhilarating Forest Service, I hung up my boots for retirement rest and retreat, my mind is flooded with reminiscences, recollections and remembrances. But the mind empties out every event, experience and situation and pushes each of them out of the realm of memory by and by, with the passage of time, towards the periphery of oblivion and leaves the mortal body completely hollow. The process of infilling is definitely thoroughly recharging. Reading is the only way the mind can be recharged. Recording through writing paves the way for reading.

The year 2009 is a milestone to achieving full hundred years of organized forestry in Sikkim. Out of the ten decades that make up a century, I shared the pitch for nearly four decades; working with a great many illustrious foresters of very high caliber, ability and competence. Each one of them had had

a profound influence in shaping the module of the mind towards the profession.

I worked under as many as seven Heads of the Department beginning with Shri M. M. Rasaily to Shri T. R. Sharma. In between were Shri K. C. Pradhan, Shri P. O. Pazo, Shri P. S. Moktan, Shri N. C. Shenga and Shri P. K. Basnett. For more than 60 years these personalities were the *dramatis personae* of the forestry theatre. I deeply adore the seven coloured rainbow that pervaded and protected the ambience of my career throughout. While Shri Rasaily found me the worthiest amongst the four interviewees for induction into service way back in 1967, Shri K. C. Pradhan was the architect of my career in subsequent years. All others, then on, lovingly fostered, fertilized and led me to fructify and to become worthy of the highest chair in the Department.

#### Shri M M Rasaily:

It was he whom I saw no sooner than I was born in the

Department. He recruited me in the service after intense examination – both written and endurance. The four of us viz. Shri Buddha Bir Lama, Shri S. T. Bhutia and Shri S. C. Cintury and I entered the service together in 1967.

Shri Rasaily was then a mammoth personality. Loved, respected and equally feared for his strong administration, obedience to rule, discipline and regimentation, the Department acted in complete tandem, not wavering, and on very strong footing during his era. He enjoyed great degree of authority to enforce order and discipline. He was equally an ace and articulate forester having deep knowledge, confidence and profound commitment to the profession. His versatility in terms of ability, competence and experience was successfully harvested by the Darbar when he was called upon to handle various other Departments in the later stint of his career. The one Department that I remember him taking charge of soon after his shift from Forest Department was the then Food and Civil Supplies Department. He retired from the service as Home Secretary to the Government of Sikkim.

He used to resort to swift and decisive action to any derelict and erring official if come across in the course of discharge of duties. He never compromised on personnel deviating, diluting or indulging in any malpractices while in the performance of duties and functions but to the sincere and honest worker, he was benign and compassionate. But the former trait of his was most feared and talked about in the then departmental milieu. So much aura did he exude that the field officials, sometimes used to tender 'Salam' to an empty moving transport car that he was attached with fearing that he might be sitting right there. If a telephone call is to be received from him some forest employees used to immediately get up from the seat while talking to him notwithstanding the fact that he was hundred of miles away.

A fatherly figure, widely respected as a fine forester and a committed bureaucrat, he never lowered his head in front of anybody during the time he served both the Darbar and the Government. He stood firm, infallible and upright, through thick and thin, through cloud and sunshine; a proud son of the Sikkimese soil.

#### Shri P O Pazo

A very old timer, he was a product of the Imperial Forest College, Dehradun somewhere during 1946-47. A warm, affable and ideal human being he was an embodiment of honesty and simplicity. Hailing from a Lepcha community, he understood the intricacies of nature conservation in Sikkim more than anybody else. He exemplified how simplicity can be such a strong tool to enable delivery of goods and services for the people, how it can be a stable enveloping factor to his colleagues and subordinates and other members



of the organization to emulate and fall in line. His greatest strength and formidable weapons were his in-born traits of being down-to-earth, adopting practical approach to vexing and difficult situations and he was so unassuming in spite of being a very intelligent, agile and dynamic head of the department. To my mind, the wildlife heritage was more dear and near to his heart than any other forestry sector.

He regaled us with a great many folklores connected with the Lepcha community such as that of the Tendong and the Mainam hills rising high to save the tribe from depredation during the deluge thousands of years in the past, of the beauty and the mystery of the meeting of the twin rivers of Teesta and the Rangit and that of the Alnus and the Rhodo trees.

Talking of his interest in wildlife, he was, at one time, very seriously pursuing the search for the abominable Yeti in the high hills of Sikkim. As a proof to its near- encounter he showed us the hairs from Yeti's body which were strangely not akin to any other animal. What conclusion did he reach afterwards we never knew but his inclination to revive the search was highly interesting to all of us.

#### Shri P S Moktan

Shri Moktan, as every one knows, was a man of few words. He only spoke when needed, otherwise reserved and reticent. Always immaculately dressed, flawless in fitting and dressing, choosing the right colour combination of clothes; the haircut, the shoes and the posture and the presentation – everything in order, in style. It was delightful to see him so well dressed and decorated, always.



So was he perfect in his work. He always demanded a perfect, complete and well done work – whether it is the field plantation or office project preparation, whether sub-ordinate dress- discipline or work out-put and commitment to the daily duties and functions. A successful and satisfactory field accomplishment would have been his menu for psychological fulfillment.

He not only enquired about the quality and the extent of result achieved by field officials but made frequent field visits to verify for himself the truth. A dedicated Officer who saw plenty of hard work during the Chogyal regime in North Sikkim, he also used to narrate to us his personal gratitude to the former ruler for selecting him to acquire higher forestry education at FRI & Colleges, Dehradun after being impressed by his assigned task of building a particular stretch of difficult hill road in north Sikkim before the target time.

Married to the daughter of yet another illustrious forester, Shri Dakman Lama who also headed the Forest Department of Sikkim, Shri Moktan gave, during his tenure as Head of the

Department, the required strength, stability and sustainability to the Department.

### **Shri N C Shenga**

Shri Shenga used to tell me that he wished to take up law as a vocation. However, landed in the forestry profession which he relished immensely. A very intelligent and candid officer, he was of easy going manner but when it came to work culture he was non-compromising. He used to neither waver nor dither. A serious forester who took his job literally, text book like.

He used to be at ease in the company of common people and exhorted all of us to work for them, with them. He opined that not only did traditional knowledge originate from the rural people but it is essential that the conservation and protection aspects of forestry must have the hand of the people to be successful and sustainable.

He loved poetry, was deeply religious and used to often lay stress on one's culture and beliefs as something which cemented the bonds of the society. One statement that he used to often emphasise impressed me deeply which was his aversion to sudden and swift changes that were being brought into the forestry system by a plethora of projects and programmes without giving adequate gestation for its acceptance, applicability, or long term utility.

He upheld conservative and traditional dimensions of management as being strong pillars to stability in forestry rather than chartering in untested water.

### **P K Basnett**

A colourful personality, 'flamboyant', tall and towering, cheerful and smiling, active and agile, dashing and dynamic, Shri P K Basnett characterises all of these

and many more. Warm-hearted, helpful and friendly to specially lower category of personnel, his very appearance is enough to drive your despondency miles away on a day to day basis. He adores the delicacy of life as no other human being perhaps does. In spite of busy schedule, heavy pressure of work and any other adverse situation that he might come across he used to find time to mitigate by escaping for a few minutes to fresh outdoor air or visit a quiet corner of a restaurant to sip hot tea or take a round of the Ridge and back to Office. Nobody can deny that these traits are essential ingredients in the kind of dealings and deliveries a Forest Officer has to handle.

Through his left hand he used to write the right notes for the Government, for the people he served and in the ACRs of his juniors and sub-ordinates. He was so much loved and respected that I can assure you such sublime souls will have no enemies whatsoever.

He shook hands with a difficult and challenging assignment in the formative years of his service, led almost a life of a recluse in the remote contours of a place called Tongay in East Sikkim for more than two months. I was a junior official under him. The supply of wooden poles, called ballies, to the Border Road Organisation for landslide treatment at Que Khola amazingly later on proved to be a strong nursery lesson for future career of both of us as we emerged from the field.

Shri Basnett is a popular socialite. He enjoys the taste of retired life in his beautiful Tadong residence.

### **Shri T R Sharma**

Highly qualified and a Gold Medallist, he served the Department for more than seven years as the PCCF-cum-Secretary in the newly restructured Forest,



Environment and Wildlife Management Department. He was responsible for bringing about important forest and environment legislations, initiating a number of new projects and programmes and helping devolve and decentralize power base to the people in conformity to the Government policy.

Shri Sharma was a product of modern day concept of forest and environment education, familiar with the latest trends and shifts in forest policy. He was backed by team of Officers who had a similar technical background and training base to help achieve the goal of bringing about fundamental changes as enumerated above backed by a Government which was/is the strongest proponent of conservation ethics. Total shift towards conservation and protection as opposed to felling and selling were the hall marks of his tenure. This was achieved through a plethora of legal, administrative and executive reorientations that visibly strengthened the sustainability of Sikkim's forest and environmental base.

**The Centenary Year belongs not only to the present incumbents of foresters but also to all of those who either retired or retreated into oblivion; not only to the higher-ups but to the low level functionaries such as the Guards and Chowkidars of the Dak bungalows, up to the level of nursery labourers and taungyadars; the Panchayats and the NGOs who have guarded and safeguarded the precious forest wealth for a whole century. All need to be remembered, respected and paid huge tributes on this historic occasion.**



# MY DAYS IN THE FOREST DEPARTMENT, A RECOLLECTION



**N.C. SHENGA,**

I.F.S. (Retired)  
P.C.C.F. cum Secretary, Forests

At New Forest we had a packed programme for the whole year. Early rising then PT, bath, breakfast and thereafter class lectures till 4 pm with lunch break for an hour. After lecture hours, we had tea with biscuits and then compulsory games for an hour. The importance of keeping fit physically was felt when we went for Chakrata Forest Division tour where we had the famous “Thadian March” after listening to a lecture on forest fire. I remember we had a day’s rest at Katian camp when we heard the passing away of India’s first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Two years training period at I.F.C. was really tough and made you worthy of a Forest Officer particularly the PT, games and equestrian training for a month with Indian Military Academy. The field works in camps in forest having halts at forest barracks and in tents with cots and lanterns and writing down the day’s practical works, etc.; I think no one realizes the importance of this type of physical strain put on the probationers at that time but its importance is felt later when you pass out from the college.

I joined the then Sikkim Darbar’s Forest Service as an Assistant

I was selected for undergoing Higher Forestry training course at the Indian Forest College, New Forest, Dehra Dun in 1964 in 1964-66 batch by the then Sikkim Darbar after passing my graduation from Darjeeling Government College in 1963. I left Gangtok in the last week of April 1964. For the first time in my life I had to travel in a train from Siliguri to Lucknow and thereafter board another train the Howrah Dun Express. I remember vividly that my late father came along with

me upto Siliguri Station to see me off. I was alone with other fellow passengers and boarded the train at midnight. I was given some tips by my then boss Shri M.M. Rasaily as to how I should reach New Forest in a taxi and how I should act with seniors in the Indian Forest College. I was fortunate that I had my senior in Late P. S. Moktan. I straight away went to see him and he introduced me to his batchmates from Nepal. This I did to avoid ragging by other seniors.

Conservator of Forests on 9.4.1966 attached to the office of the Conservator of Forests. I remember Mr. K. C. Pradhan then Conservator of Forests wanted me to be attached with either D.F.O. Darjeeling or Kalimpong for practical training for at least three months for which he wrote to his counterpart in West Bengal. The West Bengal Government must have shown their inability as I was not deputed; and I was given the charge of DFO (East) on 20.6.1966. As DFO I carried out the usual duties as per guidelines of the department touring different parts of the Division, learning from experienced Range Officers, Block Officers and Beat Guards and giving them instructions whatever I had learnt in my two years stay in I.F.C. as a Forest Officer probationer. I had the opportunity to get advice from men like Rai Bahadur, Late Lobzang Topden better known as B.T.A. Kazi (British Trade Agent) who used to visit my office which was close to his residence. I don't know what prompted him to come to my office and have long talks on Sikkim's administration and demarcation of forest into Reserve Forests, Gaucharan, Khasland etc. by the then Late Chogyal Sidkyong Tulku.

During my tenure as DFO (East), I tried and completed afforestation programme at Bhusuk Reserve Forest in the clear-felled areas and departmental cardamom plantations initiated by my predecessor. The afforestation work programme was carried out by way of "Taungya System" of plantation wherein the department had to give six acres of land to a family for plantation of 2 acres each in a year retaining two acres for the families homestead and in the third year, the family would have to complete 6 acres and shift to other clear-felled areas. While making on the spot visit I found that this was good on paper

only. In many cases the department failed to provide the required area for plantation by the Taungyadhars who then stayed back in the midst of RF as private individual holders simply maintaining nurseries for other departmental plantations in degraded and barren forest land near to village settlements. The Taungyadhars were paid Rs.200/- as Taungya subsidy for the year of plantation which was latter raised to Rs.500/-. They were engaged on daily wage system in all departmental forest operations such as plantation, logging, sawing timbers, stacking firewood for sale, etc. Most of the afforestation works throughout the state then were taken up by "Taungyadhars" as we used to get very meager plan funds. Clear-felling in RF areas wherever it was possible for marketing timber and logs were the go of the day. These clear-felling areas were demarcated and individual trees were numbered and marked and then put to auction to fetch some revenue to the state exchequer. This system was prevalent till the early 1970.

From East Division, I was posted

to North division in 1968 and took charge of North Division from my senior Mr. P.O. Pazo. We were asked to make tours at least 15 to 20 days in a month by the department. This I believe was the instruction that the senior level officers of the Royal Sikkim Administration should visit the border regions of the state which were then manned poorly by few police officers in the rank of S.I. with two or three constables. Sikkim's revenue resources then could not afford to put requisite numbers in checkpoint pockets. After the Chinese aggression in 1962, people had started doing all sorts of illegal dealings for which such poor checkpoints were to be increased, but how? The dominance of the Indian Army then and the Border Roads Organisation work force etc. has done havoc on all sorts of forest resources. Felling of beautiful Rhododendrons and Conifers in Lachen and Lachung valley for extension of roads and making and sheltering of labour camps all along the roadside should have to be seen to believe. With poor number of Forest Beat Guards, Block Officers we had tough time to fight with GREF people who with hundreds of manpower and machinery go



ahead without least botheration of the authorities of the state Government. Who then thought of what we foresters were talking about environment, ecology etc. today. Nobody cared for the voice of the forest people. We fought many a time the losing battle and the consequences are to be seen now. Regular plantation around Mangan, some soil conservation works along Rafong khola and soil working in coniferous forests of Lachung valley for regeneration was the routine divisional work. We used to maintain varieties of apple orchard at Kewsey RF which was later given up due to lack of maintenance fund and disease spread both at Lachung and Lachen. During my stay as DFO (North), I happened to visit Cholhamu, Guru Dongmar with my friend Mr.P. Namgyal then the DDO (North). In the districts we often make joint tours as far as possible so that minor cases or grievances of the public or private individuals were settled on the spot. The tours used to be on foot and on pony as most of the areas then were not motorable.

My next posting was West Sikkim. I took charge of West Division in 1970 from Mr. P.O. Pazo who was then transferred and posted at head quarters. During my stay in Gyalshing, I toured both the districts of South and West as both were under one Territorial division. In Melli range, we continued our clear felling of the matured Sal forest and reforested by Tongya system. Melli Range used to feed charcoal and firewood etc. to Gangtok township then. The timbers used to be exported to Siliguri as there used to be poor market within Sikkim. According to the prevailing marking order system then for whosoever constructs shop houses within demarcated bazaar areas, they used to get commercial rate marking order after getting



silvicultural availability report from the concerned Range officer. The busywallas used to get free of royalty timber from Khasmahal areas of a particular village. The RO and BO along with some beat guards used to visit their respective range and blocks to give marking of trees for each family in the village either from their own private holding or from Khas land free of royalty for domestic use. They generally visit their respective range or block village sometime in April every year. The commercial marking order was particularly meant for Sikkimese people but then later it was misused in some cases. This was operative till my leaving the department. I am not aware as to what system is presently being followed in the department as they say that complete ban is the order of the day. But I always find truck loads of timbers being unloaded at various places in and around Gangtok. Besides Melli Range we had clear felling coupes in Rayong, Rabong and Kewsing RF. All of these areas were re-greened during my stay as DFO (West). At all these three places, I moved all the Tongyadhars near to the roadside leaving the forested areas completely free of

their encumbrances. The same thing was being carried out at Kerabari, Kitam in South district of Melli Range. Here and there people might have still in possession of certain areas despite my endeavour to evict them from such areas duly giving them subsidy and in latter cases some GCI sheets etc. While in West, I happened to visit Utterey, Chayabanzang, Phalut trijunction of Sikkim and Darjeeling district and Nepal. At Bharang plantation again by Taungya system was completed. A good chunk of Hilley R.F. was given to Agriculture department for growing seed potatoes. The Agriculture department was then growing good potato seeds, I was told. One Mr. L.B. Lama was in charge and he was always there with his family and was very helpful to all the visitors. As usual departmental works like plantation beautification, creation of parks were taken up at different areas of both the districts of South and West of the forest division. At Namchi, I took and successfully raised the plantation at Alley ground near the school complex above old district office where one old Range Office used to run. Shri Sarman Rai from whom I took charge of DFO (East) in 1966 was the Range Officer



Namchi then. The old man took great pain in raising that plantation in the barren area. It was for the first time we had to use chemical fertilizers to raise that plantation. I very well remember what Late Rai Bahadur T.D. Densapa then retired Chief Secretary and Advisor to Royal Government of Bhutan told me about Sikkim's Khas Mahal forest on the night of our stay at Bermoik Khoti. He told me to find out encroachments of Khas land within the vicinity of village instead near to R.F. as most of the cultivatable land was left by certain class of people which were then recorded as Khas Mahal.

As DFO (West), I had many a time to take either the Palace guest or members of the Royal family in the interiors. Once I had to accompany the Late Crown Prince Tenzing Namgyal and party to Yuksom, Dzongri, Basecamp, Yangshap, Nambhu and back. I had very tough time in keeping pace with the late Crown Prince who was then about 18 or 19 years old. It must be in 1971-72 June when we made halt at Yuksom. From there a limited number of officers and porters were to follow as per the order of the Crown Prince. We made halt at Bakhim and then at Dzongri. From Dzongri we were supposed to come down and cross Rathong on tree logs to reach Yangshap camp, but unfortunately it was raining and the tree logs were being washed away a number of times as reported to me by my beat guard Birkhaman Subba. Now there was no other alternative for us then to take the long route passing through base camp, Khankerten, Tigyapla and finally Yangshap. Making a night's halt we proceeded to another camp where we made halt in yak sheds. I had to be always close to the Crown Prince as he now and then put some questions on history, geography

and stories on oriental studies. At this very camp the accompanying friends of the Crown Prince must have been discussing something and in the midst the Crown Prince asked me whether "Karna" was Kunti's son or not as his other friends were not agreeing to what he had said. Now I was put in an awkward position as I myself did not know who Karna was as I had heard only of Paanch Pandavs. I had to confirm through wireless from my good friend L.B. Chettri at Gyalshing and he confirmed that Kama was Kunti's first son. Accordingly I conveyed this to the Crown Prince.

At Nambhu, we reached earlier than our cook and lunch carriers. The Crown Prince asked for lunch and I told him that the group was far behind and asked whether he would like to have maize and tea. He said okay. I then asked a village family for preparation of tea and maize and thus we had lunch of the day. Another instance was of K.S. Bajpai the then Political Officer in Sikkim. He intended to visit Yuksom, Tashiding with the hope that he could avail pony services. At Pemayangtse bungalow we chalked out our programme and I conveyed

to him that pony is out of question as we are to cross bamboo suspension bridge over Ramam Khola. So he decided to give up going to Yuksom and then we programmed only for Tashiding. We took Sakyong Tashiding route, arranged a pony belonging to one Tashiding Yappo for our esteemed guest to ride after crossing a bridge point over Rathong Chu. The P.O. was accompanied by his two young sons. We made halt at our Rest house at Seneck (Tashiding). Next we took him round Tashiding monastery explaining about the monastery and the stupas (chortens) and made halt. While coming back via Legship we came across a big snake right in front of the P.O. near Legship who was walking just behind two police escorts and I was behind him. Nobody seemed to have seen the snake. It was only me who saw the snake going down crossing the footpath and I happened to shout and run giving a push to the P.O. who then fell down on the footpath. I remember he happened to ask me whether the snake was poisonous or not. I told him how am I to know whether the snake was poisonous or not. It was really a big snake; it should either be a python or a King Cobra. I didn't



get any communication of his falling down due to my push either from the Darbar or from P.O. office.

I also had the occasion to visit Karzi Mangnam with the late Crown Prince Tenzing Namgyal. We spent three nights in his cardamom field making halt near cardamom bhathi shed. My good friend L.B. Chettri, then DE (West) too accompanied us. We had good time talking and playing cards in the evening. The Crown Prince was really a good soul. I found him visiting the kitchen and asking the cook and bearers about their well being before himself going to bed.

It was at Gyalshing I had to face the people's uprising against the Chogyal's administration in 1973. On 4th April 1973, while we were celebrating the Chogyal's birthday, people from different directions came to the Gyalshing ground and stopped us from conducting the programmed events. We in the districts were cut off from Gangtok. In the evening all the district level officers met at DO's residence as to what we were supposed to go ahead with. It was decided that we should not confront the people rather we the "Bhutia Officers" should evade the mob who were openly shouting against the community. So I, Mr Mingma then DO, Mr Tsewang Rinzing then Munsif Magistrate along with Mr. Roka then O.C. had to go in Rabdentse Forest that very night. We spent two nights in Rabdentse Forest. On the third night we were asked to come out from the forest area by the people and accordingly we surrendered to them. We were asked to join them in the protest march. There was no other alternative than to obey the people's diktat.

With my request for transfer, I got transferred from West Division in 1974 to East Division. I continued as DFO (East) till 1976 and for a year I was put as DFO (Administration). In 1977, I got promotion as CF(T) and the office was established at Range office at Balwakhani, Forest Colony. The Head Office then was at the Raj Bhawan complex. By then the Forest establishment was being expanded and separate Soil Conservation Circle and Wild Life Wing were created and manned by senior officers. The present Forest Secretariat as we see today was the outcome of the compensation money which we got from Army for Bhusuk cardamom fields and plantation. As CF (T) I initiated and got approval of creating Bulbulay Himalayan Zoological Park, Rongli Range, Ranipool Range and number of blocks etc. in different divisions. From Territorial circle I was shifted to Soil Conservation and Forest Utilisation circles on promotion as Addl.CCF in 1981, carrying out normal administrative and field works as per the policy of the then Government. In 1983, I was given charge of separate Directorate of Land Use and Environment with two joint Directors from Forest and Agriculture under me. I was given the charge of the Directorate with full powers as Head of Department as Director (LU & Env.) in the rank of CCF and also acted as Member Secretary of the Land Use and Environment Board. The post was later redesignated as CCF cum Director and I headed it till its merger with Forest department in October 1988 changing my designation to CCF (Lu & Env.) and continuing in the post till April '89. Later I was posted as CCF-1 in charge of Wildlife, Utilization, Working Plan in 1989 and continued till I got my last promotion as Principal CCF cum Secretary (Forests) on 1st June' 1992. During my tenure as PCCF

cum Secretary (Forests) I initiated extension of the Secretariat for Remote Sensing, Forest Research Laboratory for Tissue Culture, etc.; established Himalayan Zoological Park at Bulbulay; initiated growing high altitude medicinal plants at Kyongsnosla and places beyond Yume Samdong in North. However, I had my own reservation on growing high altitude medicinal plants which were mostly destroyed by biotic interferences by way of road construction for security reason in early 1960. We talk about growing high value medicinal plants in the altitudes but we never thought of the area limitations for commercialization. I think we can preserve whatever we have in the wild as gene pool, instead of going for growing it for commercialization as we do not have sufficient area which is economically viable. This the present generation officers of the department are to think. I had my wonderful days in the department for about thirty years excluding the two years at New Forest Dehra Dun. During all these years I learnt a lot but kept little in my know how. We are to learn much more about Forest and its Environment as Swami Vivekananda has said "Nature is ready to give its secret but men should know where to knock and how to knock".

With all these, I congratulate the department for the Centenary Celebrations of Forestry in the state. Whatever destruction has been done to our forest in the process of development we must try to restore it for our coming generation. I am sure the department with all its qualified man power will stand and take care of preserving the beautiful hill state clothed with green cover. Let there be great success in all the schemes taken by the department so that our coming generation will have sound environment all around.

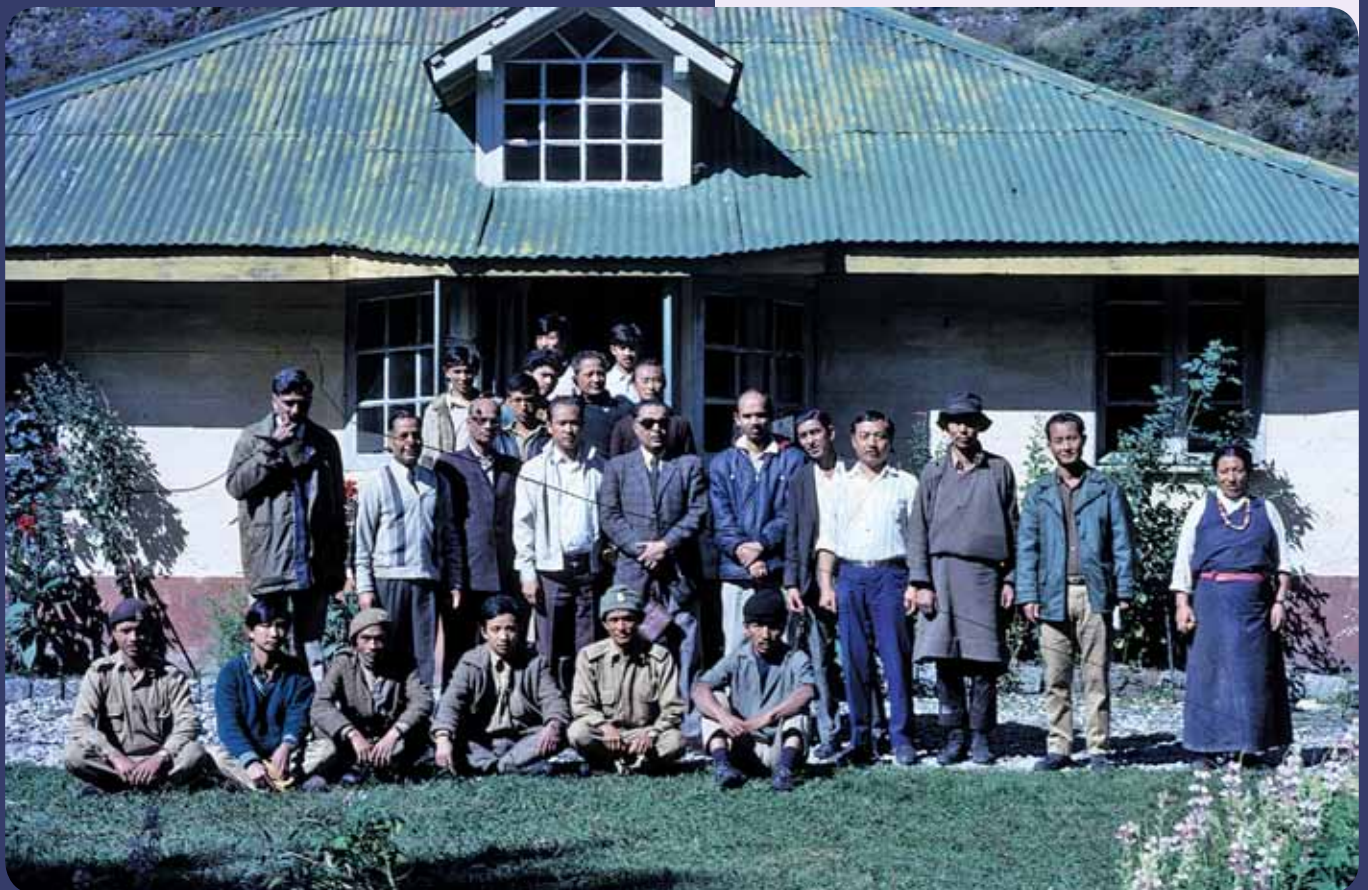
## PROFILE

- N. C. Shenga A.I.F.C., IFS (Retired)
- Date of Birth 2nd March'1938.
- School Final examination 1957.
- Intermediate of Arts 1959. Joined B.A.(Hons) in History for a year. Left college and worked as teacher at Enchey School for a year 1960. Again joined college and took pass course only with Economics and Philosophy in B.A. in 1961 and graduated with Distinction in 1963.
- Selected for higher forestry training course by then Royal Sikkim Government in 1964-66 batch. Successfully completed the course and obtained post graduate diploma, A.I.F.C. (Associate of Indian Forest College). After merger of the state with Indian Union, got inducted in the Indian Forest Service (1969).

## Service lines and Postings

Joined Royal Sikkim Forest Service as ACF on 9th April 1966 in the scale of Rs.250/- Got promotion as DFO (E) on 20th June 1966-68.

- 1968-69 : Posted as DFO (North) at Mangan.
- 1970-1973 : Posted as DFO (West) Gyalshing.
- 1974-1976-77 : Posted as DFO (East) & (Admn) in Gangtok.
- 1977-1981 : Promoted and posted as C.F.(T).
- 1981-1983 : Promoted as Addl. CCF (Soil Conservation & Util.)
- 1983-1989 : Director LU&Env. in the rank of CCF till April'1989
- 1989-1992 : Posted as C.C.F (WP, FU & WL).
- 1992-1996 : Promoted on 1st June 1992 as P.C.C.F. cum Secretary Forests and retired on 31st March 1996.



# The Phadamchen Experience

--- P K Basnett, IFS (Retd.)  
Former PCCF-Secretary



I feel honoured to contribute an article on the occasion of the hundred anniversary of Sikkim forestry. Hundred anniversary is an occasion to celebrate. While the celebration should cover achievement, it should also try and look into the deficiencies and difficulties faced during the course and probe causes for analysis and rectification.

The founding fathers proceeded with logical steps to give Sikkim forestry a firm stand under conditions then prevailing. That the fruits of their hard works, sacrifice, sincerity and farsightedness have brought the Department to the present glory is highly praiseworthy.

The generations of Forest Officers and their field staff worked in difficult terrain and inhospitable living conditions closely providing protection and preserving the forest resources of the state. They raised beautiful plantations on the hills and valleys. These plantations have become the important landmark of our state. The Forest Officers and the field level functionary of the yesteryear have thus secured highly respected place in the history of the Forest Department by virtue of their hard work, sincerity, efficiency and dedication. I feel humble when I recollect

the services of the illustrious predecessors who contributed so much for the development, preservation and welfare of the state. I salute to all the living and departed soul and their family members. Now I would like to narrate about the ballies (poles) supply works undertaken in the field forty years ago.

**Place --- Phadamchen**

**Division ---East**

**Range ---Pakyong**

**Year --- 1969**

Department had taken the decision to supply 60,000 nos of ballies of miscellaneous species viz. Kharane, Asare (Viburnum species), Kholme, Phaledo (Erythrina species) etc to the Border Roads Organisation

(BRO) for Phadamchen landslide stabilization within a period of two months. The landslide was extensive and active. It had endangered the Phadamchen Bazaar, BRO Establishment and other private and government property. Therefore, the BRO wanted immediate treatment of the landslide to save the above assets on war footing.

I was assigned the job along with T R Poudyal, RO, Glor Tsering Lepcha, BO, MR Rijal, BO and Nim Tsering Lepcha, FG. At the beginning we camped at Phadamchen bazaar and surveyed the availability of labourers in and around Phadamchen and Zeluk areas but could not succeed much. Next day we went upto Gnathang with Shri Akal Bahadur Katwal of Phadamchen. This mission



was also not encouraging. Then from the following day we surveyed the nearby Phadamchen Reserved Forests and Khasmahal areas and roughly assessed the availability but it was far too short of the required quantity. Next day as we entered the fringe of Phadamchen forests to go to Tongey forests from north-eastern side but could not succeed due to inclement weather condition. The area was profusely infested with the leeches and we used to face their attack from different sides. D P Rai, who was an experienced Range Officer advised not to proceed further as there was no suitable path to enter Tongey forests. Accordingly, we came back to Phadamchen and chalked out details for future course of action. The work assignment to four of us was as follows:

1. P K Basnett, Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF) – overall controlling authority.
2. T R Poudyal, Range Officer, Assist the ACF in decision making, maintenance of cash- book and act on behalf of the ACF when he is out from the field.
3. Glor Tshering, BO, Coordinator. Coordinate with the BRO site-in-charge, hand over ballies, obtain receipt and forward to RO/ACF, keep record of ballies supplied by petty contractors.
4. D P Rai, RO,- overall-in charge of gravity ropeway installation, procurement of ropeway materials, keeping in safe custody and assist Kundup Lachungpa, ropeway specialist as and when required.
5. M R Rizal, BO, in-charge, store, camp, kitchen and water supply.
6. Kundup Lachungpa, Forester, assist D P Rai and Akal Singh as and when his service required.

Next day we shifted our camp to

Phadamchen Khas about 3 km from Phadamchen Bazaar. Petty contractors, some local people and labourers also accompanied us. It was a procession of 20-30 people. It was nice to see them in such harmony.

D P Rai left for Gangtok to bring ropeway materials and Akal Singh Mukhia ( gravity ropeway specialist). In the evening we convened a meeting with the petty contractors and finalized the term and condition, the deal with them for cutting, collection and roadside delivery of ballies.

Following day work orders to the individual contractors were issued under the signature of Range Officer for extraction of ballies size - 6'-8' in length and 3" to 4" in diameter under bark. Numerous contractors approached us for enlistment and issue of work order. Amongst them D K Khati from Gangtok and Phadamchen Kazi were prominent. At later date M B Bagdas from Rorathang, Hari Khatiwada from Biring and N P Bhandari and C L Luintel from Pakyong enlisted their names as petty contractors. Within

a period of a fortnight the number of petty contractors rose from 10 to 20 numbers. The extraction works started without any loss of time and ballies were delivered at a convenient site on Phadamchen-Zeluk Road. Within a week's time the stacking yard became insufficient for further dumping and we decided to slowdown the carriage from extraction side to motorable side for 2-3 days. This action was unacceptable to some contractors and they even threatened to gherao us. We ignored their threat and they calmed down and apologised. The transportation of headload resumed and everybody welcomed it.

From Phadamchen RF and Khas we could procure 40% of the total quantity. K C Pradhan visited and stayed overnight at our camp. He expressed his satisfaction at the progress of work and appreciated the effort put forth by field staff.

After two days we shifted our camp with all paraphernalia to Tongey village near the RF. It took us 2-2.5 hrs to ascend the steep hill slope to reach the camp site. On arrival we made friend with Tongey mondal.





He was a colourful personality and always enthusiastic to extend necessary help to us. He used to visit us almost every alternate day with milk, potatoes and cheese and narrate stories about the exchange of butter, cheese and eggs with petty Bhutanese traders with salt and other food items from this side.

Sometimes while telling stories, he used to stand up jump on high pitch of his voice to make his story more interesting. Poudyal used to tease him saying: "Mondal bajay if you fall from this bhir (precipitice) then we have to face serious consequences." Thank God nothing untoward happened.

It was now mid-June and South-East monsoon had spread all over the state. From our camp we could hardly see the surrounding areas. This phenomenon was hardly of any meaning to us as we were fully engaged into fulfilling our assigned task. Works on all fronts went on the same spirit and speed.

Information about the visit if K C Sahab was communicated to us through Police Wireless message and Poudyal and I went

to Phadamchen to receive and escort him to Tongey camp. He inspected the ballies dumping site and ropeway unloading station. We reached the camp after arduous trekking. He had brought biscuits, juice and bottled pickles which we heartily accepted and enjoyed. By now the gravity ropeway had become operational with sincere effort of D P Rai, Kundup Babu and Akal Singh. A trial run was done with full load of ballies and successfully landed at the other end. The trio used stay in the tarpaulin shed sharing the joy and happiness of the past. Akal Singh used to enjoy his favourite drink Chang or any other brand right from the morning itself but he never lost his balance and did never neglected his duties. D P and Kundu were both teetotaler

Sometime Atal Singh wanted to show his authority and strictness to his labourers in our presence even for minor lapses. Later on he used to tell us that unless he shouts boys will not shown progress as timely completion of works was his top priority irrespective of inclement weather condition.

Fortnightly I used to visit Gangtok Head Office with progress report for collection of labour payment, salary and reconciliation of account. On one occasion rupees three thousand was wrongly debited in my name and after thorough examination C D Lama, R O traced the discrepancy in the accounting and Account Section corrected their mistake and also settled the issue. Sangey Babu, veteran in charge, Account Section regretted for this. On my return from Gangtok we decided to shift our camp on Phadamchen – Rongli Road in an abandoned house of a Sherpa family as the supply of over 75% of ballies had been completed by mid- July. This place was advantageous to us for better supervision and monitoring in winding up the entire operation. Bansal was the site in charge of the BRO. We had made good rapport with him. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of July morning, Glor Tsering informed me that entire quantity of ballies has been supplied and receipt also have been obtained from BRO. We all rejoiced and greeted each other.

The mission was completed inspite of inhospitable terrain, inclement weather condition and road blockages at Kopchey, Lingtam and Que Khola. The hard work and team's effort paid to make the mission successful. We returned to Gangtok on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1969 after spending almost two months in Phadamchen, Tongey and surrounding areas. All the concerned officials were handsomely rewarded with cash prizes and grant of advance annual increment.

Most of the members of ballies supply team viz. Glor Tsering Lepcha, D P Rai, Mr. Rizal, Kundup Lachungpa and Akal Singh Mukhia are no longer with us, in this world but their dedication, sincerity and hard work are still alive.

# SOME SALIENT FEATURES OF MY LIFE AS A FORESTER OF SIKKIM

1. Entered Forest service in 1969 after successfully completing a two-year forestry course from Northern Forest Rangers College, Dehradun recognized as being equivalent to B.Sc. Forestry.
2. Completed a two-year post graduate forestry course in the Indian Forest College (now Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy), Dehradun in 1975-'77 leading to AIFC, M. Sc. in Forestry; and four-month Foundational Course at Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussorie.
3. Served in various capacities in the Forest Department (now redesignated as Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management Department) from 1969 to 2006, nearly 40 years from the post in the Range to Head of Department as Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) cum Secretary, Forests for a period of two years 2005 and 2006.
4. During the long span of forestry career, gained rich experience of handling issues and problems at state level in the sphere of environment management, forest protection and conservation, pollution control, etc. scientifically and technically; fully conversant with both State and Central laws and policies.
5. Over the years as Head of Department was responsible for formulation and implementation of programmes such as the elimination of grazing from the Reserve forest floor, accelerated and implemented programme of *Smriti Vans* in the State was responsible for the initiation and implementation of State Green Mission which entailed decentralization and diversification of forestry activities at grassroot level; was member of State Hydro Power Projects committee for two years, a body which is responsible for evaluating the proposed hydro power projects in the state in terms of their environmental impact, feasibility, social and economic parameters, etc.
6. Was Member-Secretary of the State Biodiversity Board (SBB) and the State Medicinal Plant Board (SMPB). As Secretary Environment was directly connected with the activities of State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) in terms of examining issues and references and there after according clearances to the various industrial units in the state.



*T. R. Poudyal IFS (Retd.)*

7. The tenet of sustainable development and community based natural resource management were areas where Sikkim has excelled were given acceleration, drive and momentum as also an assimilation of scientific inputs into the management practices of forestry were first attempted to be brought into operation by making use of the Sikkim-based scientific institutes and organizations such as the G B Pant Institute for Himalayan Environment and Development, the ICAR, the Botanical Survey of India, the Regional Research Center, Ayurveda.
8. Widely traveled in India and abroad; attended a four months course on Project Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation at Bradford, UK in 1983; underwent a four weeks course on Good Governance in South Africa in 2005. Attended various training and management courses sponsored by the Government of India and the State Government; traveled to about half-a-dozen countries in Europe learning forestry and conservation programmes in these countries.
9. Retired as PCCF cum Secretary, Forests in Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006. Fresh from retirement, am capable in all respects, physically, mentally and technically to handle and shoulder responsibilities of any kind for another 5 years with ease, comfort and confidence.



T. R. Poudyal, S. C. Cintury, B. B. Lama, S. T. Bhutia  
in their heydays

# A Profile



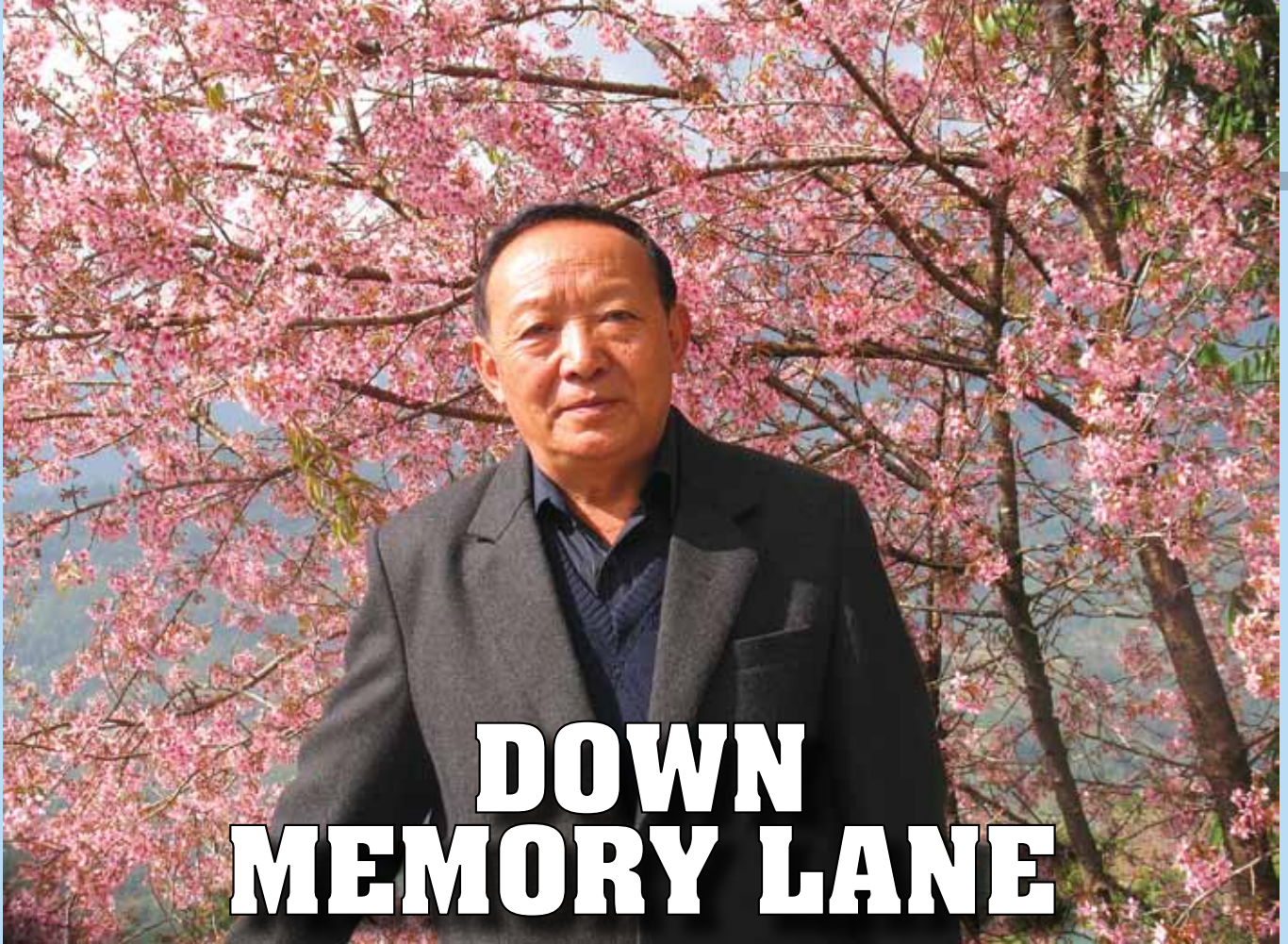
**SHRI D. B. SHRESTHA,  
IFS (Retd.)**

**B**orn on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1947 at Hee-Yangthang, West Sikkim, Shri D. B. Shrestha, son of Shri Luxmi Prasad and Smt Ranamaya Shrestha, a science graduate from North Bengal University, joined the Forest Department on 4<sup>th</sup> March 1975 and was deputed for two years Post Graduate Diploma course in Forestry at the Indian Forest College, Dehradun. On return after the successful completion of the two year course along with four months Foundational Course at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussorie, he joined the department as Assistant Conservator of Forests (Soil Conservation) in July 1977. He was inducted to the Indian Forest Service w.e.f 1<sup>st</sup> January 1976. In June 1978 he was promoted and posted as Divisional Forest Officer (Territorial) North Division, Mangan. He served there till December 1981, when he was transferred to the Head Office as Divisional Forest Officer Planning and Technical Assistant to the Chief Conservator of Forests and Divisional Forest Officer (Utilization) till March 1984. He was then elevated to the post of Conservator of Forests (Utilization) and transferred to look after the Working Plan Circle in March 1985. His tenure as Conservator can be said to be crucial in his career. It was during his tenure that the Forest Conservation Cell was out to a firm footing for the conservation of natural resources of the state. The Remote Sensing Unit, Tissue Culture Laboratory and the Minor Forest Produce Division were created during his tenure as Conservator of Forests (Working Plan). During his tenure as Conservator (Territorial) from March 1993 to March 1995, the present system of awarding quarry licenses and marking orders and felling of trees were streamlined.

Shri Shrestha was elevated to the post of Additional Chief Conservator of Forests on 6<sup>th</sup> January 1995 where he served till January 1996. He was then promoted to the post of Chief Conservator of Forests on 6<sup>th</sup> January 1996. As Chief Conservator of Forests, he held charges of Working Plan, Wild Life, Territorial Environment and Utilization till April 2003 and was then promoted to the post of Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2003. During the above tenure of Shri Shrestha, the Department saw many new initiatives, the most important of which are the JBIC (presently JICA) project, the State Ecology Fund and Environment Cess Act. These were initiated and drafted under his guidance.

Shri Shrestha took over the charge of the Department on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 as Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and retired on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2007. Shri Shrestha was a practical forester and an able administrator. He was an honest, and a straightforward person.





**S. T. Lachungpa, IFS**  
PCCF cum Secretary

I am a proud 3rd generation Forester from my family of North Sikkim's Lachungpas, a tribe of Bhutias of Bhutanese origin. My grandfather Karma Yougyal who retired in 1958 was the first forester in the family. In 1952 he was in charge of the first road alignment from Tsunghang to Dongkiala. Today this road is the only and vital road link for the defence forces as well as the general public of Lachung and the enormous numbers of seasonal tourists visiting North Sikkim's famous Yumthang meadows beyond the Shingba Rhododendron Sanctuary and the Yumesamdong hot springs further north.

Grandfather Karma Yougyal popularly called Forest Chota Bau retired as a Forester during the reign of the Maharaja or Chogyal Tashi Namgyal, and his consort the Gyalmo of Sikkim, both of whom he had the opportunity to serve. It was in his time in the '50s too that the first experiments of timber floating were attempted by the Department. It was also then that both Deodar and Chir Pine from Himachal Pradesh in Western Himalayas were introduced into Lachung Valley and it was found that they did not do well there. Similarly thin-shelled Walnut from England was also introduced to Lachung Valley through the Finnish Missionaries and it proved

successful. However the thin-shelled walnut from Himachal Pradesh and Kashmir was unsuccessful due to the provincial effect. Our native walnut is the hard-shelled variety which is known for its excellent timber.

Ajo Karma Yougyal's son, my father Kundup Lachungpa in his turn joined the forest service as Block Officer and retired in 1975 as Range Officer. He was the local expert in constructing Cable ropeway for timber extraction and was considered one of the best foresters in silvicultural operations in conifer forests.





I followed in his footsteps and with schooling at Tashi Namgyal Higher Secondary School, Gangtok, and graduation from Saint Edmund's College in 1974. I grew up under guidance of great naturalists of that time like Tseten Tashi, K. C. Pradhan and N K Rustomjee then Dewan (like PM) of Sikkim. Having joined the forest service in 1976 as an Assistant Conservator of Forest or ACF, I completed Higher Forestry two years later in 1978 and worked under various dynamic sectors like Territorial, Working Plan, Soil Conservation, Wildlife and virtually all sectors of this great government department over these years, with the able support of my senior and junior staff in various parts of the State including some really remote and difficult areas. Together we were able to experience many adventurous sojourns including high altitude areas like Zemu Glacier and Sebo Valley, doing strenuous and soul-satisfying field work, traversing over much of the state, often on foot.

**Thus together we managed to achieve a lot, a gist of which is the following:**

1. **Area extension of most existing wildlife protected areas (WLPAs) (Sanctuaries, Khangchendzonga National Park and Biosphere Reserve)**
2. **Forest Research Sector initiated; Silviculture and Biodiversity Cells created**
3. **Number of Parks and Gardens created e.g. Namprikdang, Saramsa, Namchi Rock Garden**
4. **Successful plantations in all districts that can be seen today, some already being harvested**
5. **Developed many methods for propagation of medicinal plants and herbs**

6. **Modernization of Forestry initiated**
  - a. **Forestry Working Plans for all four districts**
  - b. **Wildlife Management Plans for all WLPAs**
  - c. **Phasing out of artificial / exotic plantations and replacement with native species**
  - d. **State Green Mission initiated in tune with Chief Minister's conservation priorities like**
    - i. **10 minutes to greenery/10 minutes to Earth programme conducted successfully on 15 July 2009**
    - ii. **Green Roads**
    - iii. **Modernizing of nurseries / high-tech nurseries**
7. **Developed/initiated system of combination of plantation species like 30% wild fruit bearing trees, 10% fodder trees, rest native/indigenous species**
8. **Bamboo Mission started with emphasis on local species and next alternative to failing Large Cardamom agro-forestry system,**
9. **Emphasis on conservation of native Rhododendron species; (International Rhododendron Festival finalized at Barsey and Shingba Rhododendron Sanctuaries in May 2010)**
10. **International Florishow at Saramsa Gardens in**



collaboration with Horticulture Department in March 2008; annual Flower Shows at White Hall.

11. Rs. 357 crore Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) project initiated in Department
12. Forest Training Institute proposed
13. Eco-tourism Directorate established
14. Natural History Museum at Saramsa, site selected
15. Walk-in Aviary project at Sidkeong Tulku Bird Park inaugurated in February 2009 through Hon'ble CM to launch the Forest Centenary at Rabdentse, West Sikkim.
16. Walk-through Butterfly Park presently under construction at Rangrang, North Sikkim
17. Chogyal Palden Thendup Namgyal Memorial Park declared at Deorali, Gangtok
18. State-wide Heritage Tree search and identification launched (with preliminary surveys revealing a 42' girth Juniper in Lachung Valley itself)
19. Virgin forest areas under identification for declaration as Biodiversity Heritage Sites
20. Eco-Highway for Damthang to Namchi underway; all native species to be planted and protected
21. Climate change Cell formed in Working Plan Circle of Department
22. Biodiversity Cell formed in Research, Education and Extension Circle of Department
23. Two new Rhododendron discoveries in 1995, viz. Rhododendron sikkimensis and Rhododendron dalhousie var. tashii
24. Created Tissue Culture Centre in Department in

'90s which is since with Department of Science & Technology

25. Invited to USA for 50th / Golden Jubilee of American Rhododendron Society as guest from India
26. Training/Exposure visit/Study tours to European countries (UK, Switzerland, Kew Gardens, Oxford University, Edinburgh University, Tropical Forest Research Institute-UK); Town Planning exposure visits to Singapore for Walk-in Aviary, Butterfly Park, etc.
27. Initiated steps for conserving the endangered Orchid Paphiopedilum fairrieanum conservation at Tinkitam in South Sikkim
28. Managing Flower Festival at White Hall throughout the year with support of Madam Tika Maya Chamling.

Most recently on 21st November 2009, we discovered a unique crystal white Cherry Prunus cerasoides in South Sikkim, which needs immediate recognition, coupled with preservation, conservation and propagation. This rare find could be considered a feather in Sikkim's Forest cap and a request has already been made to Madam Tika Maya Chamling for its conservation.

Besides, the following initiatives are proposed to be made permanent annual features:





1. Green Mission
2. Rhododendron Festival
3. Cherry Festival
4. Flower Festival
5. 10 Minutes to Earth, 10 Minutes to Greenery

On my personal front I have always been extremely interested to enhance my knowledge about Orchids, Primulas and Rhododendrons of Sikkim and was the first to start tissue culture especially for threatened orchids as well as work on breeding of ornamentals like Orchids and Azaleas. Love of flowering plants has now become a family passion with all household members engaged in this indulgence which in turn has become the cornerstone of our lives. I am happy that with Udai Chandra Pradhan, there is a book on the Rhododendrons

of Sikkim to my credit. Under the constant but gentle guidance of Mr. Keshab Chandra Pradhan, we have been finally able to declare Sikkim's first Conservation Reserve at Tinkitam for our endangered Lady's Slipper Orchid, encourage Sikkim's first bird conservation NGO Sikkim Ornithological Society and look towards a new era of scientific forest management in the next century. I am encouraged by my young generation of foresters who are professionals in various fields.

It is my proud pleasure that I along with my wife and life companion Yangchen, leave behind me our family's 4th generation forester in my daughter Dechen recently inducted into this noble service, another daughter Kesang devoted to the family passion of floriculture and tissue culture and yet another committed to the practice of medicine.

#### Four Generations of Foresters: Karma Yougyal, Kundup, Sonam Topden and Dechen Lachungpa



