Saudi Aramco world

July/August 2002

Saudi Aramco world

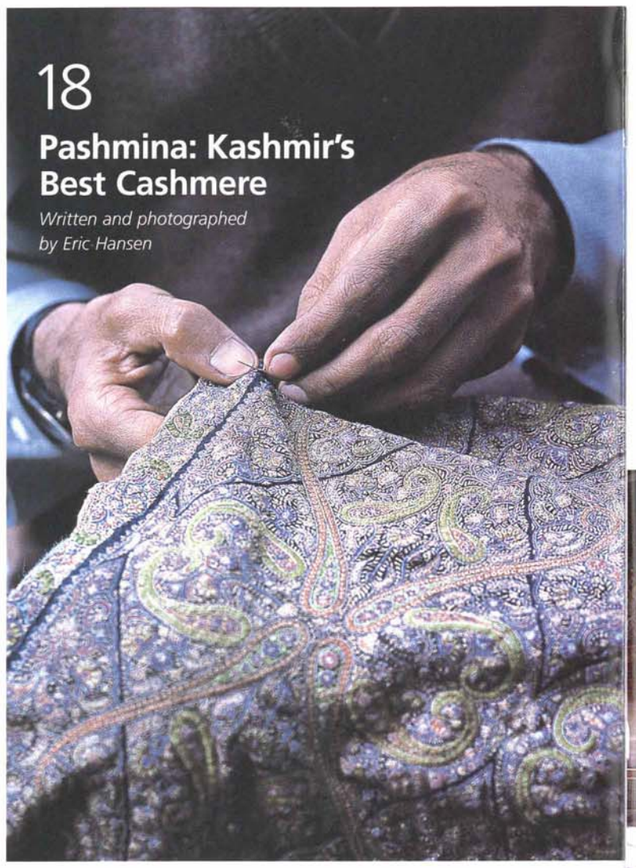
WATER'S OTHER NAME IS LIFE

Saudi Aramco
world

July/August 2002

Published Bimonthly
Vol. 53, No. 4

It's a common proverb in Bangladesh—"*panir opor nam jibon*"—and it points to the resourcefulness and optimism of the nation of 130 million people, nearly all of whom live in the overlapping deltas of three great rivers. For one week last year, Bangladeshi photojournalists took part in a workshop called "Water: A Positive View," a theme they chose to redress their country's flood-weary media reputation. The workshop was held at Pathshala, the South Asian School of Photography, and for this article, 29 images were selected. The one below is by Hasib Zakaria, who comments: "Water carries these fish through their short lives and then delivers them to market. Dhaka receives most fish through this market, called Shuari Ghat, where every day more than 10,000 fishermen and merchants meet. Fishing provides some or all income for about 12 million people, and fish is the major source of protein for most Bangladeshis."



The raw material comes only from the neck and belly of a single species of goat raised on Himalayan plateaus higher than the tallest peaks of North America. It can take weeks to weave and years to embroider a single pashmina shawl. The results, products of one of the world's most sophisticated textile arts, are arguably its most wonderfully wearable ones.

As the population pressures of a sprawling modern city threaten to efface entirely the once-renowned royal gardens and the timeless legacy of arbor-shaded streets, a new effort is under way to reclaim a green heritage for the heart of one of Morocco's most historic cities.

Unobtrusively tucked into the Chinese capital's second-largest Muslim neighborhood, the Niujie ("Oxen Street") Mosque is an architectural gem dating from 997, and the oldest of the city's 68 mosques. It survived the Cultural Revolution relatively unscathed, and its recent refurbishing, with government assistance, is the latest chapter in a remarkable history.

Cover:

"In the early morning, people were waiting for the boat to start, to take them to their work places. The boat is the only way across the river. The man piloting the boat has painted it colorfully to express his life. In winter, everywhere in Bangladesh the rivers are still and reflect like glass. I was longing to be on the water too, longing to be like the boatman, in the quiet." Photo and caption by Muhammad Aminuzzaman.

Back Cover:

Brilliant color and pattern wrap the carved and hewn wooden structure of the Niujie Mosque in Beijing. The architecture, the color schemes and the floral paintings are typically Chinese, while the depictions of what are likely earthenware vessels hint at Central Asian influences—the lands from which Islam first came to China in the late seventh century. Photo by Peter Sanders.

Publisher
Aramco Services Company
9009 West Loop South
Houston, Texas 77096
USA

President and Chief Executive Officer
Ahmed K. Al-Arnaout

Director Public Affairs
Jamil F. Dandany

ISSN
1530-5821

Editor
Robert Arndt

Assistant Editor
Dick Doughty

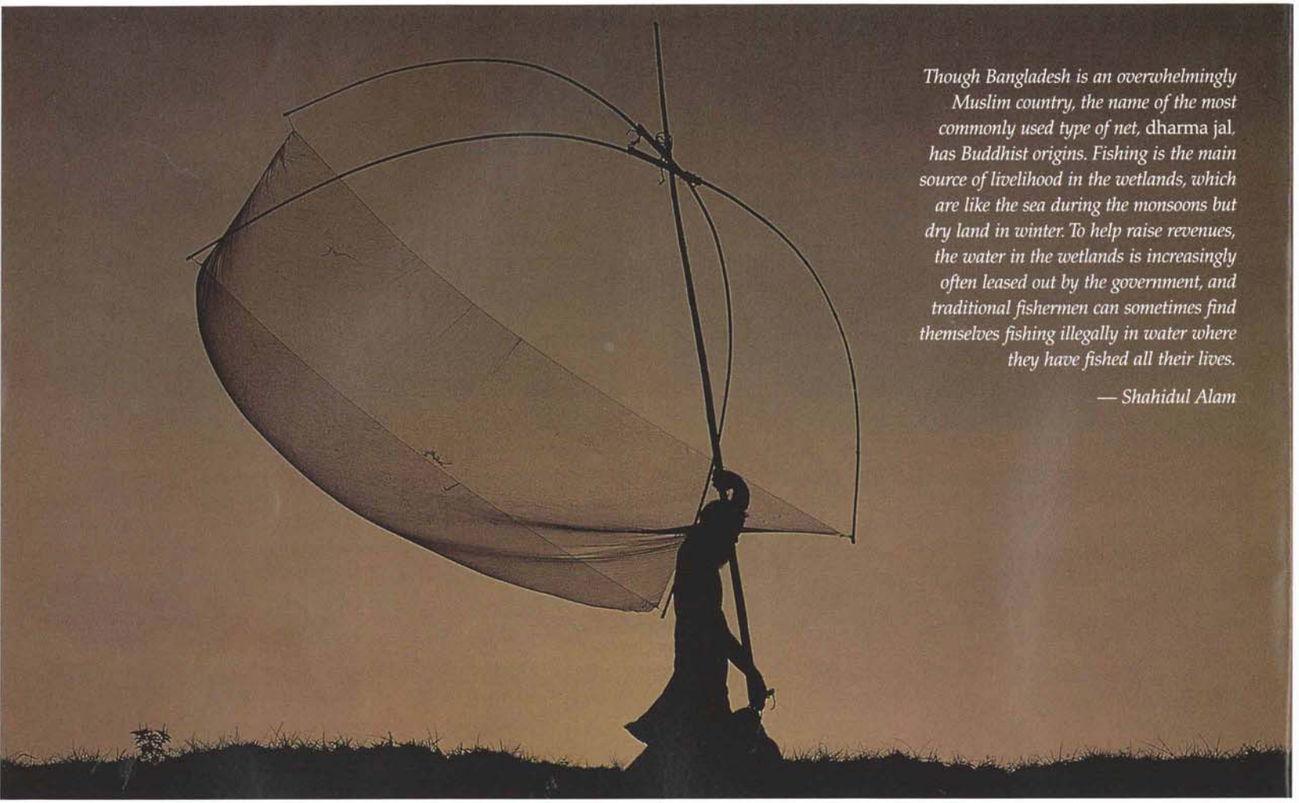
Design and Production
Herring Design

Printed in the USA
Wallace Wetmore

Address editorial correspondence to:
The Editor
Saudi Aramco World
Post Office Box 2106
Houston, Texas
77252-2106 USA

Saudi Aramco, the oil company born as an international enterprise more than half a century ago, distributes *Saudi Aramco World* to increase cross-cultural understanding. The magazine's goal is to broaden knowledge of the culture of the Arab and Muslim worlds and the history, geography and economy of Saudi Arabia. *Saudi Aramco World* is distributed without charge, upon request, to a limited number of interested readers.

Printed on recycled paper



Though Bangladesh is an overwhelmingly Muslim country, the name of the most commonly used type of net, dharma jal, *has Buddhist origins. Fishing is the main source of livelihood in the wetlands, which are like the sea during the monsoons but dry land in winter. To help raise revenues, the water in the wetlands is increasingly often leased out by the government, and traditional fishermen can sometimes find themselves fishing illegally in water where they have fished all their lives.*

— Shahidul Alam

Rice grows on the plains between small hills in Chittagong. As in the neighboring regions of Nepal and Sri Lanka, rice here is planted in terraces. It is fertile land, and there are few dangers, except for occasional rampages by wild elephants, which love the cool water of a rice paddy. I remember a farmer in Chittagong, who had had his paddy destroyed, excitedly telling me how he had seen two parent elephants cradling a baby on their trunks to carry it across the ridge.

— Shahidul Alam

The Buriganga River flows beside Dhaka. History says that it is because of this river that Dhaka became the capital of Bangladesh. It has always made communication and business easy. The vegetables at this market came by this river. From here they go to other places by roadways and also to other countries. Big and small businessmen are connected by this business, and by the river.

—Monirul Alam

PANIR OPOR NAM JIBON

WATER'S OTHER NAME IS LIFE

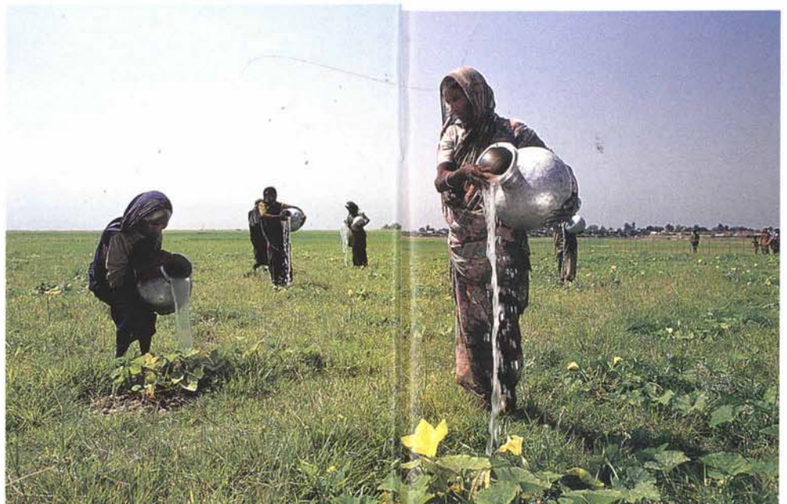
By the photographers of Pathshala/Drik

Nestled into the top of the shallow Bay of Bengal, bordered by India on the west, north and east and Myanmar (Burma) on the southeast, Bangladesh is the home of an ancient culture that had its beginnings on the banks of three great rivers about 6000 years ago.

Most of our Illinois-sized country's 148,393 square kilometers (57,295 sq mi) are part of the great combined delta of the Padma, Meghna and Jamuna Rivers, and more than 200 other rivers criss-cross Bangladesh's plains. Only the Chittagong Hills in the southeast rise higher than 90 meters (290 ft) above sea level.

In Bangladesh, people depend on what we call "the three *R*'s": rain, rivers and rice. Farmers rely on rain and rivers to cultivate paddy fields, and the rice that grows in those fields is our main crop. People depend on the land and the rivers, and water is a blessing for both.

Continued on page 6

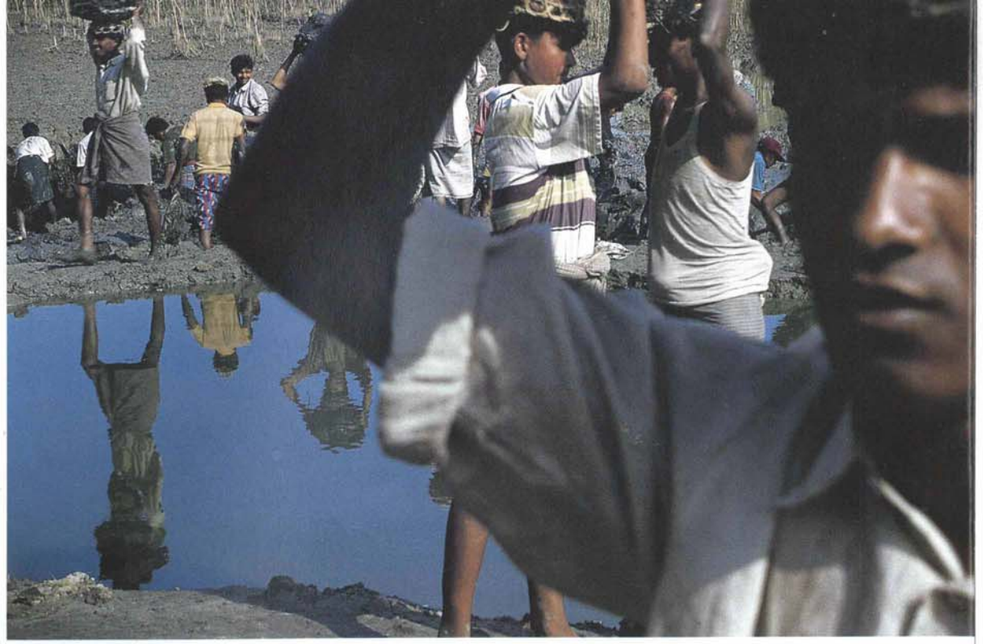


Almost like a sea in the monsoons, the wetlands are planted in winter. Traditionally farmers only used to get one crop a year, but nowadays sweet pumpkin and other vegetables that grow in dry sandy soil are also planted. But this means that water has to be carried long distances to keep the plants alive, in effect irrigating the wetlands.

—Shahidul Alam

This is a project of the S.S. Construction Company of Dhaka, to build a barrage, and it will take approximately a month. It will protect some of the buildings on the hills around it. These are construction day workers. They earn 80 to 120 taka a day ($1.40–$2) for work from dawn to dusk, with a short break for lunch.

—Wahidur Rahman Khandkar Czhoton

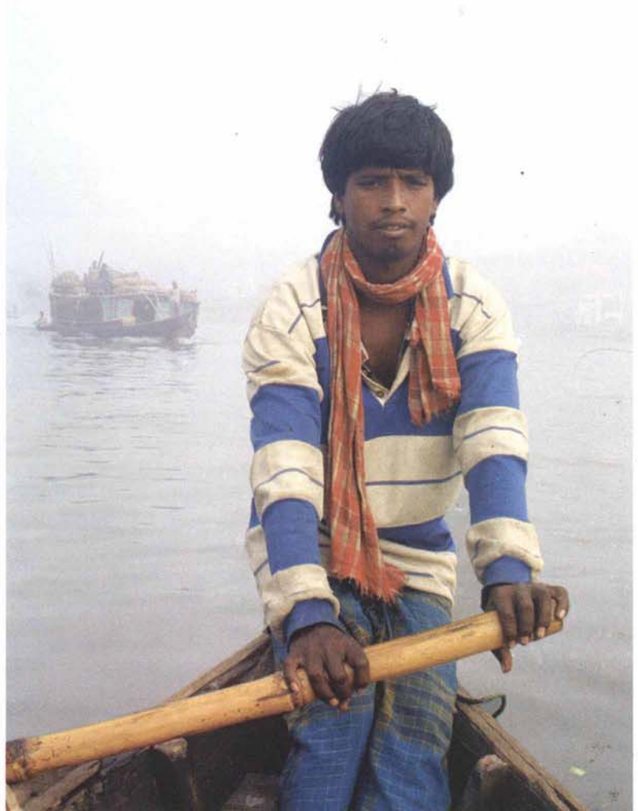


Along this river that runs from Assam Pradesh in India to Sylhet in the northeast corner of Bangladesh, the process of collecting the stones and boulders goes on round the year except in the monsoon season. The workers dig the bed of the river and heat up the big boulders with fire, and by hammering they make small pieces and carry it so that it can come to Dhaka and other places, by water and road, to be used in construction. Most of the workers are migrant workers, and they come from nearby areas.

—Wahidur Rahman Khandkar Czhoton

He told me his name is Nuruddin. He is 26. He works from dawn to dusk and earns about five dollars a day. He hires this boat from its owner, and he has to give him a dollar a day. His hometown is Faridpur, 300 kilometers (180 mi) away from Dhaka. He is newly married. He is saving his money, so that one day he can start a small business.

—Mohammed Alamgir Hossain



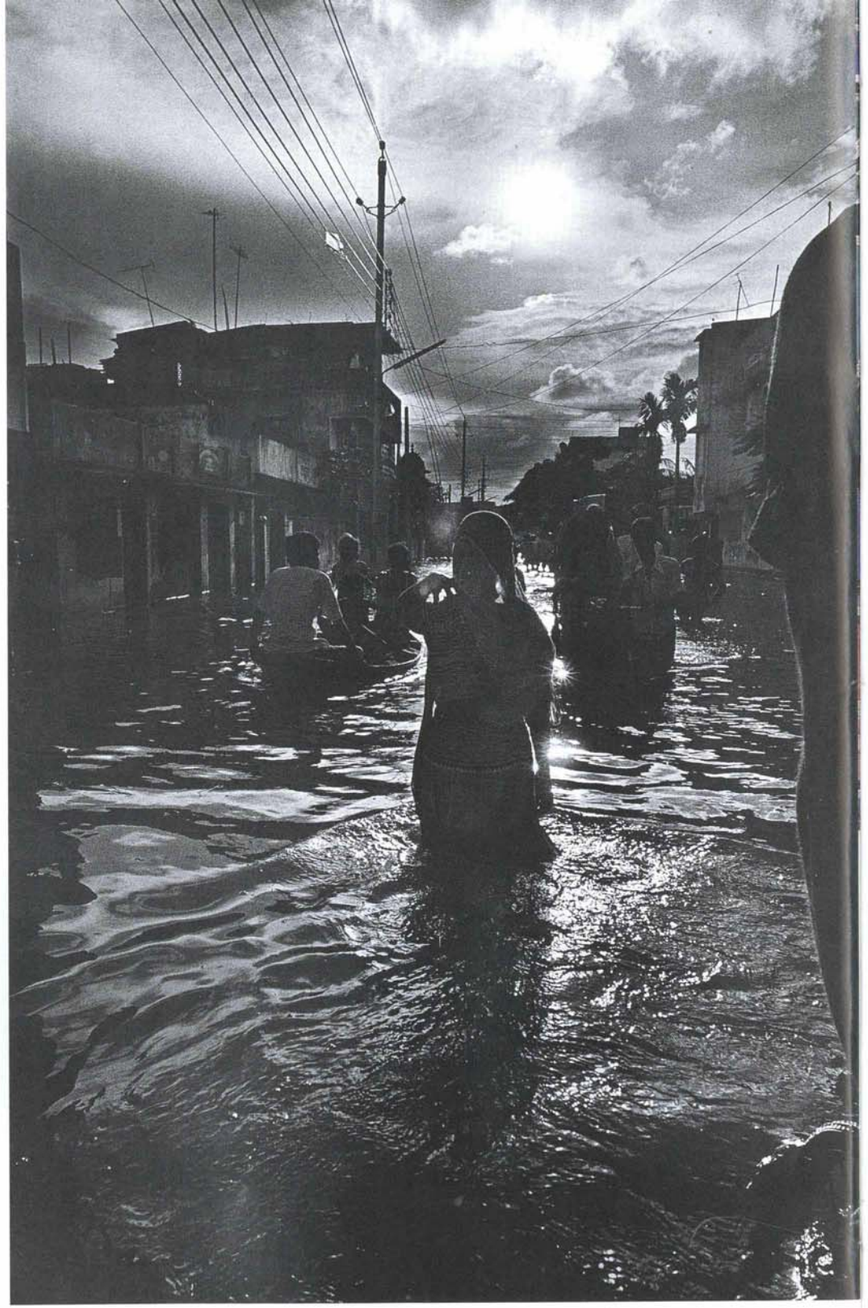
Adjacent to the Sadarghat passenger boat terminal, on the bank of the river Buriganga, Dhaka's main waterway, there are floating hotels for the traveling poor and residents of the city who can't afford to live on the land because of the high rent. Comparatively, the floating hotels are cheaper than land-based hotels. In the morning, a hotel guest, who is a fruit seller, is brushing his teeth. He tries to talk with the neighboring hotel's lady cook to ask her about the menu of that hotel. The cook is cutting fish that will be cooked for lunch. The average wage for such a worker is about 200 taka ($3.50) including her food and lodging. There are five hotels here, and they can accommodate 400 hotel guests in 250 single and double rooms. There is another, cheaper system for lodging that is called "flooring," where the guests sleep side by side on the open floor, and this costs only 10 taka (17¢) per night. A lot of people stay here from all over the country who come to Dhaka for medical treatments, looking for jobs, legal procedures and family business.

—Mohammed Alamgir Hossain

But sometimes water is not a blessing. Most of our worst natural disasters—floods, erosion, cyclones, tidal waves—are born of the destructive power of water. Each year people struggle against these forces, losing their homes and sometimes their lives in a few short months, or even days. The only things they never lose are their resilience, their resourcefulness and their will to survive.

The media rightly make people in the West aware of the damage, destruction and human tragedy of these events in Bangladesh, but this reporting so often fails to present our view of a beautiful country and a resilient and proud nation. Water causes natural disasters but it also gives us so much that is good: There are unlimited positive aspects of water in this country.

Continued on page 11

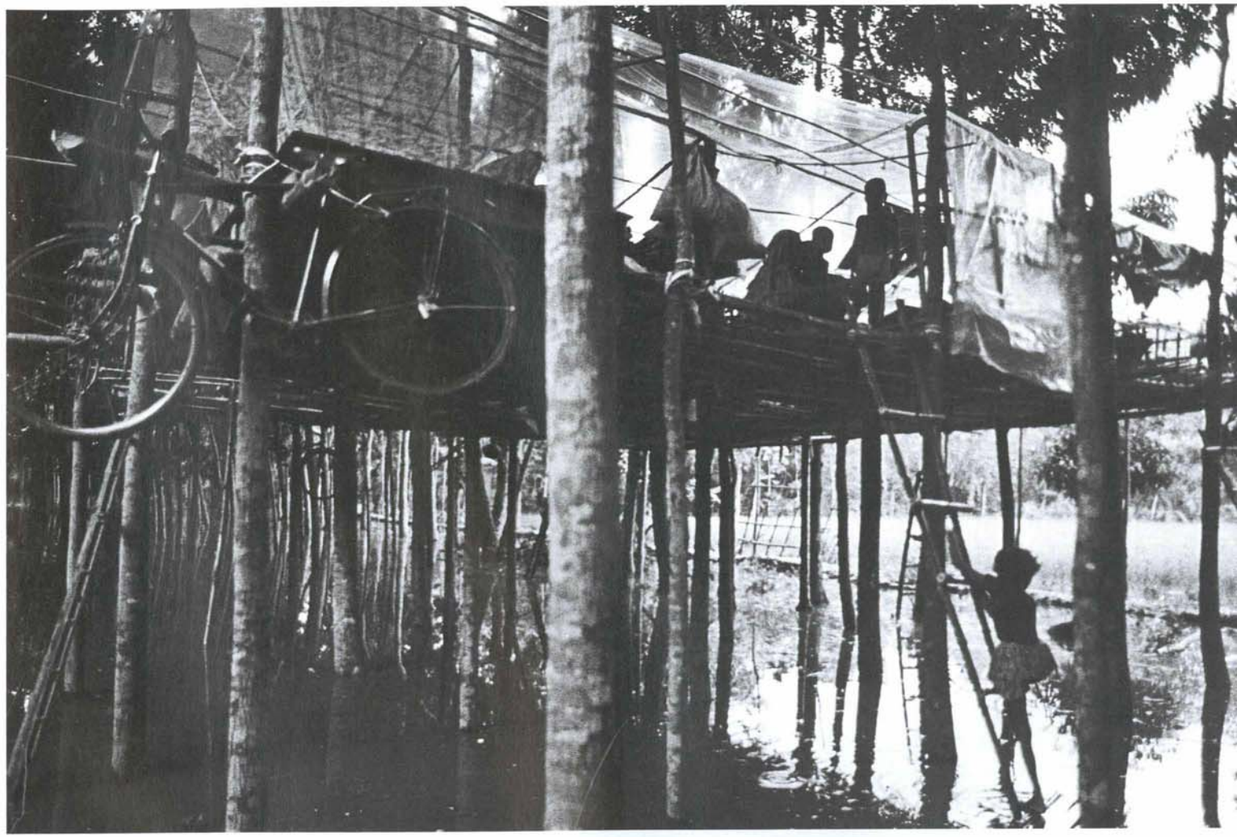


A woman wades across a street near Kamlapur Railway Station in Dhaka. To me the photograph talks of the tenacity of a people. In any other place, a flood of such proportions would bring things to a standstill. Here people were going about their work, accepting that things were different. I remember tea stalls by the roadside, which had been raised on stilts, serving tea to passing boats. A photographic studio in the street which was still open was called "Dreamland Studio." The government generally turns off the power in situations like these, as electric lines are often submerged in the water. This was in September, and the water was warm. Of course people were worried about being sick, but they also have more immediate concerns, and they go through it when they have to.

—Shahidul Alam

A young girl climbs down from a temporary house that her family has made of bamboo and polyethylene after the September 2000 flood in the Shatkhira district of southern Bangladesh, a region that had not experienced flooding for 70 years. "We haven't seen flood in our life," said one of the family members. "We could not protect our houses as we didn't have any experience of floodwater." The waters came from the neighboring Indian state of West Bengal. The family stayed 15 days in this house until the water receded. Typical houses in this part of the country are made largely of mud, so floodwaters affect them badly. Families got some relief assistance from the government, like tin and bamboo to rebuild their houses. As a photographer, I had problems going there, as we went by rickshaw for 15 kilometers and then found this house beside the street. The family had suffered for lack of food, drinking water and, of course, shelter.

—Abir Abdullah



This is a photo from the flood of 1988. I approached the area by boat, and then went from roof to roof where everyone was, the whole community, on the rooftops. Earlier I had photographed a woman with a newborn baby, and the entire family was living in their bed, which had been raised on stilts. But they had managed to salvage from the floodwaters a family photograph. It was stuck above the surface of the water, trying to create a semblance of a home. That was when I realized how important photography was, quite apart from its news value, for the people I was photographing. Every time there was a flood, people were amazingly generous. I know many families that fed up to 30 or 40 people regularly until the waters receded. Hospitals, schools, community centers had all been turned into shelters. Volunteers would go from door to door collecting money, food and clothing. This woman had lost what little she had, but unless she had cholera or something, she and her family certainly will have survived.

—Shahidul Alam

Dhaka social activist Shama Kabir pauses for a drink while writing an article from her home. "I must boil all of the water I drink because the local water supply is filled with sediments and contaminants," she says. "Roughly 80 percent of the water supply in Dhaka is contaminated. I take a lot of water every day, at least 12 glasses, because our summers are hot, and the water keeps me hydrated. I have to go out every day to help destitute women. In Dhaka, when it's really hot and dusty in the summer, I take two or three baths a day to keep clean and cool."

—Syeda Farhana

Just as water is a prime need for a paddy field, so it is for cooking rice. Rice is the staple food and major source of carbohydrate for all Bangladeshis. Most of the middle-class families take rice three times a day. They do not prefer a rice cooker, as they feel that it makes the rice dry. For many people, a day without the warm smell of perfectly boiled rice might lead to a sleepless night.

—Hasib Zakaria

Every year there are several traditional boat races in the rural areas, and some in the major cities. The large crowds attending show that the people enjoy it very much. Carpenters in villages specially make the boats, and they are beautifully decorated with colors and patterns from Bangla culture. There are different sizes of boats for different races. These race boats are longer than the normal transport boats, and they have more than 50 boatmen paddling. Often one person inspires the boatmen with music and drums, playing traditional Bangla songs with chants. This particular boat race was organized in a village called Faridpur in southwest Bangladesh. The winning crews earned televisions and radios as prizes.

—Abir Abdullah

There are 10 families in Kagojy Para, a small village outside Dhaka, who make terra-cotta. Fishing, rivers, boats and things like that are often the scenes they make, because that is what people like to look at. It relaxes people. "Because we have more than 300 rivers, some of them purify your soul, and also some are monsters," potter Gobindo Chandra Pal told me. Seven years ago, the families made mostly household items such as cooking utensils and water jugs, but now that market is captured by metalwork, so the demand for terra-cotta is for decorations for the middle class and upper class. The potters do not sell directly, but there is some middle person who buys from them, and then they sell to big shops in the city. So most of the money goes to the middle person. Although the potters' income is increasing these days, they are cautious, because they know their market can collapse again at any time.

—Syeda Farhana

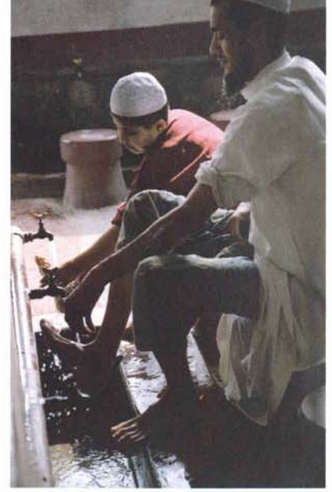
The Bangla New Year, generally held on April 14, coincides with the beginning of the harvest season. It is a season of celebration all over this agrarian country. In the Chittagong Hills, the customs are different from the plainlands: Here in the town of Rangamati, the people hold a water festival, and in one part of it, single women throw water at the men they would like to marry.

—Rashid Talukder

Water has given Bangladesh a rich cultural history and plays a part in influencing everyday life, for example with waterways that are our most important means of transport, and with harvests of fish so rich that in rural areas nearly every man, woman and child fishes at some time, be it with nets, hand-lines or by hand. The Padma (Ganges) and the Meghna River control our lives and create a landscape of lush colors like a beautiful painted canvas. This beauty enriches us: Painters, singers and poets are emotional about rain.

As photojournalists in this country, we have a responsibility to convey the truth to those who have the wrong idea or incomplete information about Bangladesh. Here, we focus on and portray the positive aspects of water, this fundamental element of life, to change the way people see our nation. Through our work on this theme, we wish to show not only the use of water, but also its beauty and power.

—Sameera Huque



Water cleans the body and the mind in the ritual ablution before one of the day's five prayers. Abdur Razzaq is teaching his seven-year-old son Al-Amin about ablutions before their dhuhur *(midday) prayer at Rayer Bazaar Mosque in Dhaka.*

—Mizanur Rahman Khoka

On the eve of her wedding, Shahana, 19, was massaged with a mask of raw turmeric, as per Bangla and Muslim custom, to give a warm glow to her skin on the next day. After wearing the mask all night, she is bathed the next day by her mother and aunts as a sign of their blessings for the new life ahead of her.

—Muhammad Aminuzzaman

The water bottle is a status symbol, and here one is being reused in Dhaka to fill an automobile radiator with tap water, which can be unsafe to drink. The upper classes buy bottled water that costs as much as the petrol they buy for the cars they use to go out for long drives on the weekend. Those who have enough time and money usually go outside noisy, polluted Dhaka to tourist spots for a good breath of fresh air in green, serene places. Those who can afford private vehicles are often the owners of factories, service companies and jewelry shops, foreign aid officers, high government officials and so on—anyone with a monthly income of at least 85,000 taka ($1500) or more. Some middle-class people, such as university teachers, social workers, computer professionals, television and film performers and musicians, might own a private vehicle too, but these are often low-cost, reconditioned ones that they are careful not to use too much. By contrast, a common worker's monthly wage is about 3000 or 5000 taka ($50–85).

—Mohammed Alamgir Hossain

Ayesha pours water to soften and smooth the mud walls of a new house in her village in Ukhiya, at the southern tip of Bangladesh. Mud houses are typical of certain areas in Bangladesh where the earth is sticky and contains more clay. Even though brick and corrugated iron have replaced many such houses in the coastal villages, the cheaper mud houses have interiors that are soothing and cool during humid tropical summers. Ayesha and four other women have been hired to finish off the outside walls after men have done the heavier, structural work. Shamsul Alam, the owner of the house, in common with thousands of migrant workers from the Chittagong region, has been living and working in Saudi Arabia for the last few years. The new house will be home to his wife and children, who are still living in the village.

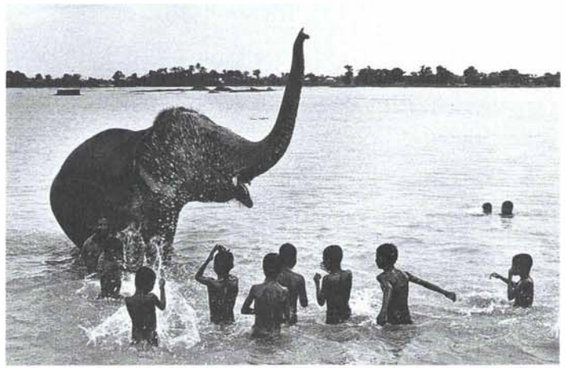
—Sameera Huque

One taka for one glass of water. Rabeya, 10 years old, works at the Ramna Park. She is one of many children in central Dhaka who sell water mostly to workers who cannot afford to buy bottled water. Her father died recently. She can earn 40 to 50 taka in a day (about 85¢) if she works morning to evening. She contributes the money to support the house she shares with her mother, who works as a maid. To get the water she sells, she collects it from a well that is made for watering a garden. She is busiest on the hot days of summer, which peaks from March to May. She is occasionally robbed. Most people, however, are kind, and she enjoys seeing regular customers, including other children, when they come by.

—Golam Mostafa Bhuiya Akash

As in many of the countries that we now prefer to call "the majority world," the water supply system is full of flaws and, as a result, not everyone gets a fair or adequate share of water. As supplies remain erratic, people have to stand for long times with jugs and pitchers of different sizes and shapes. Here some women are standing guard at a government tap so that no one can break into the line.

—Azizur Rahim Peu

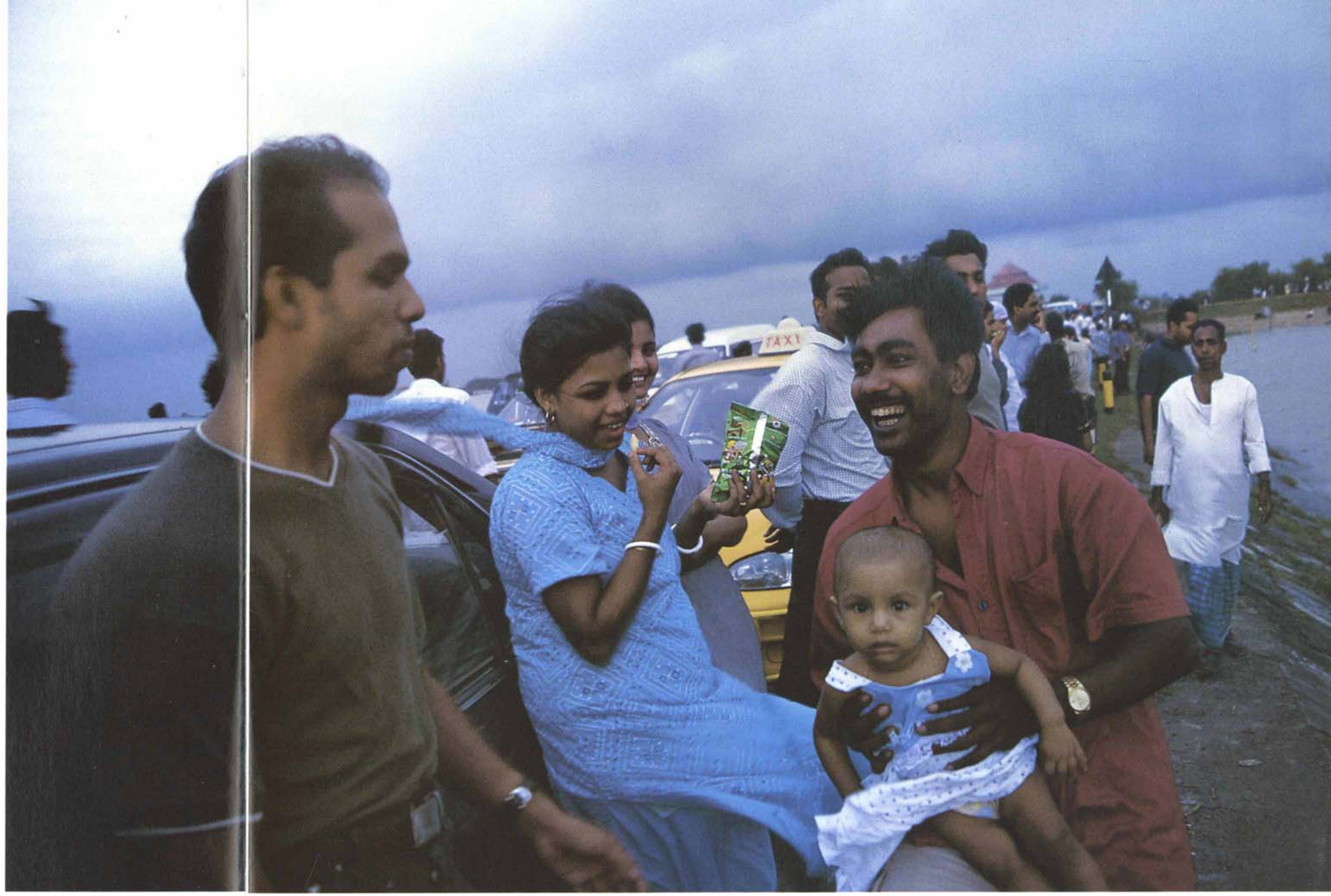


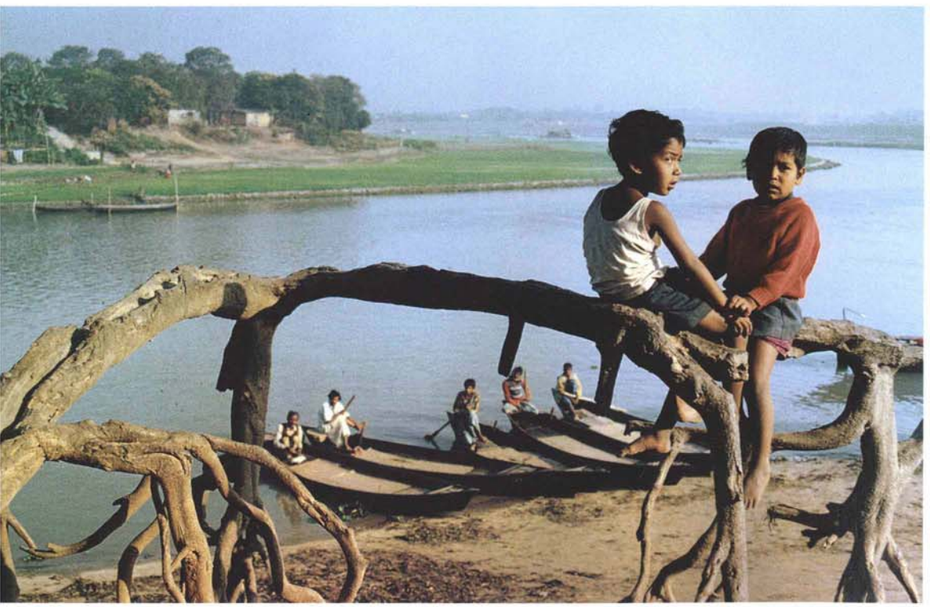
Though wild elephants are still found in Bangladesh, most elephants are domestic beasts of burden. People form strong bonds with elephants, and given their longevity, elephants often form lifelong partnerships with their keepers, or mahouts. *Many stories tell of the friendship between elephant and* mahout*—with children, too. Bathing in a river in the hot summer is a pleasure both for children and for elephants, which make a most fantastic playmate.*

—Rashid Talukder

The weekly holiday on Friday is the only time for this family to get away from the grind of household work and managing a business. For Dhaka's middle-class families with access to cars, Ashulia, 20 kilometers away from Dhaka, is a popular waterside recreational spot. The strip of road, with water on both sides, runs over the dam that protects Dhaka from seasonal floods. The road connects Dhaka with Sava, a fast-developing industrial area 40 kilometers away. Ever since this road was built in the mid-1990's, affluent Dhakanis eager to get away from the hustle and pollution have made it one of their favorite places to go for a drive and relax with families and friends.

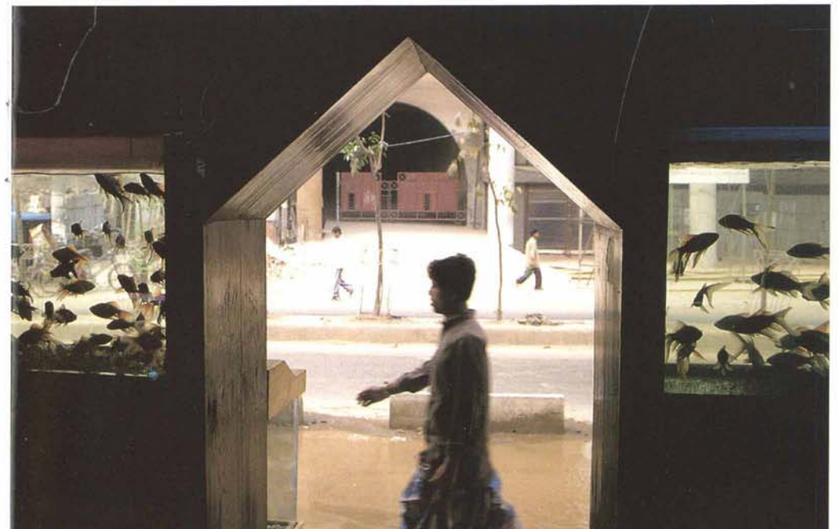
—Wahidur Rahman Khandkar Czhoton





This is the story of a misty morning in Mirpur, outside Dhaka, where there is an old banyan tree on the bank of the river. The two kids are friends, and they are sitting on the roots. They have come there with their fathers, who are ferrymen. They are talking, enjoying the fresh air of river, wind and green trees. Some ferrymen are waiting behind them for passengers, as people from the other side commute into Dhaka this way. The banyan trees play a significant role in Bangla culture. People enjoy the cool breeze under its shadow in summer, and also people will hold village festival events, prayers and family occasions under banyan trees.

—Abdul Malek Babul



Ocean World is one of the aquarium stores that line Katabon Street in Dhaka, and it is filled with ornamental fish imported from Thailand and Singapore. Started almost nine years ago, it is one of the oldest shops, and it has a wholesale business alongside the retail shop. Fish in aquariums can be seen displayed in some businesses and in almost all of Dhaka's Chinese restaurants. Among the country's middle and upper classes, which are 20 percent of the country's population, or 26 out of 130 million, children often keep fish as pets. Mohammad Harun, an employee of Ocean World from the beginning, says that the market is not as good as five years ago. "Now there are too many shops, in every affluent neighborhood, and we make just enough to get by."

—Sameera Huque

There are so many big and small rivers crisscrossing our country. Spanning them are thousands of these bamboo bridges, especially in the rural areas. This one is situated at the National Folk Art Museum in Sonargaon, a small town 40 kilometers from Dhaka. The bridge is decorated in the local style of the southern parts of the country. Bridges such as these hark back to the rural landscape, and they evoke nostalgia for village life in people like me who are more used to the brick and concrete of the city.

—Sayed Badrul Karim

The photographers and staff:

1. Munira Morshed Munni
2. Syeda Farhana
3. Sameera Huque
4. Abdullah Al-Faruque (archivist)
5. Muhammad Aminuzzaman
6. Golam Mostafa Bhuiya Akash
7. Mizanur Rahman Khoka
8. Azizur Rahim Peu
9. Wahidur Rahman Khandkar Czhoton
10. Hasib Zakaria
11. Snigdha Zaman
12. Ashfaque Ahmed Khair
13. Mohammed Alamgir Hossain
14. Moteair Rahman (assistant)
15. Monirul Alam
16. David H. Wells (faculty)
17. Shahidul Alam (faculty)
18. Justin Guariglia (faculty)

Photo by Abir Abdullah

Not shown:
Abir Abdullah
Abdul Malek Babul
Sayed Badrul Karim
Rashid Talukder

The workshop "Water: A Positive View" took place in Dhaka during February 2001. It was led by US photographer and regular *Saudi Aramco World* contributor David H. Wells, under the direction of Drik's founder, Shahidul Alam. Photo selection and caption writing were coached from Houston via e-mail by *Saudi Aramco World* assistant editor Dick Doughty. For more information on Pathshala and Drik, visit **www.drik.net**.

Capra hircus graze in Changtang, western Tibet.

PASHMINA

Kashmir's Best Cashmere

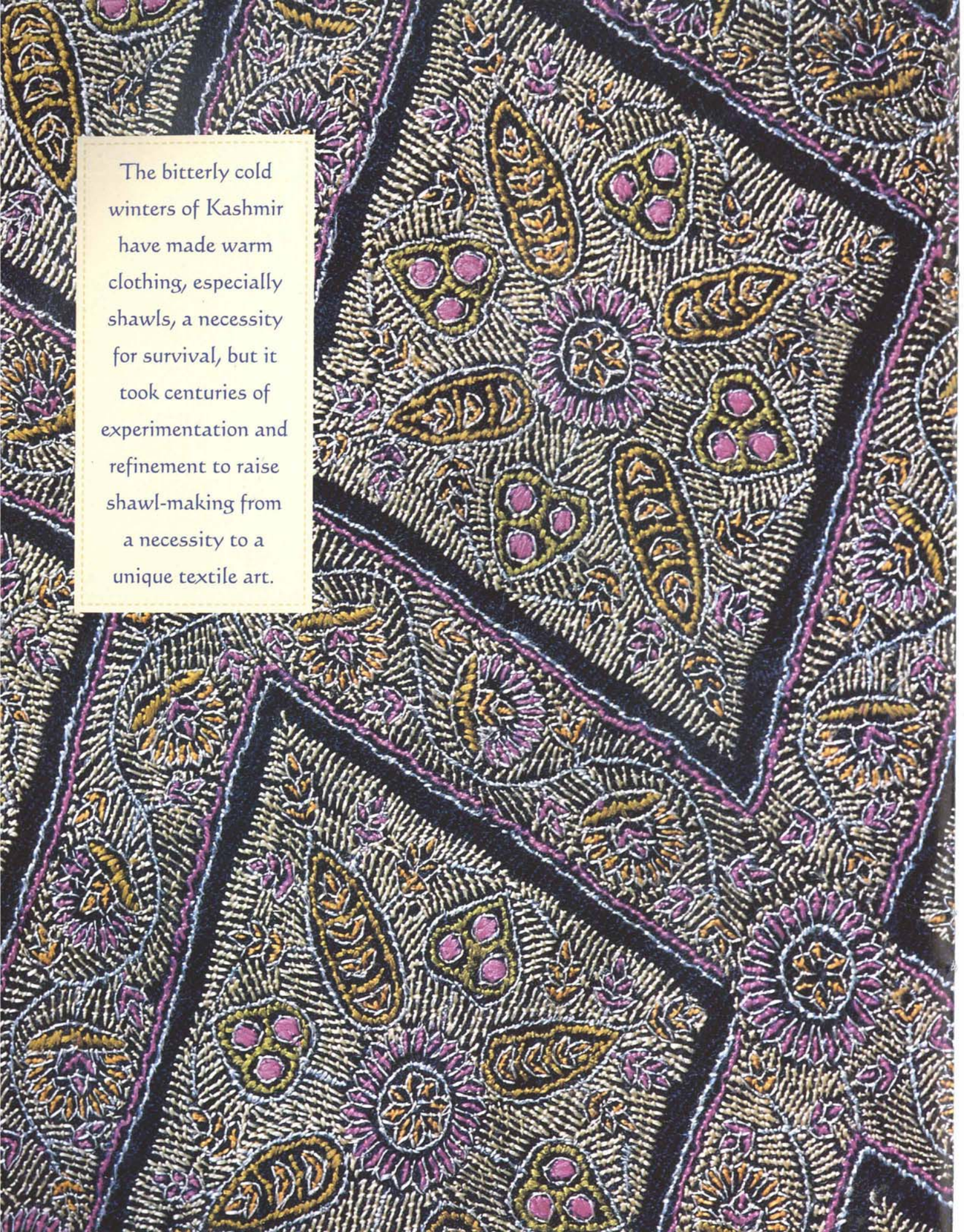
Written and photographed by Eric Hansen

WITHIN THE WALLED FAMILY COMPOUND OF MUHAMAD YUSUF KHAN, I woke to the fragrance of fresh bread and the cooing of pigeons. Children chattered quietly to one another in the flower and vegetable garden below my bedroom window, and the sounds of myna birds and women's voices mingled with the twittering of house sparrows. The bumping of cooking pots and the distant sound of running water announced that the household was coming to life. A short while later, a soft knock on the door let me know that a pot of saffron-scented tea, with milk and sugar, had been left outside on a tray in the hall, and that breakfast would soon be ready downstairs.

I was in Srinigar, the capital of Kashmir, where I had come with Harpal Brar, a shawl dealer from London, so that I could learn about the art of Kashmiri shawls, a trade that, directly or indirectly, engages nearly everyone in the city and many on its outskirts. Muhamad Yusuf Khan's family has been in the business for more than 150 years, and I was staying at his family compound—a safe haven amid the political turmoil and violent conflict that plague this beautiful land.

Opposite: There are three major styles of shawl ornamentation. Open embroidery, as in the top four swatches, is called *jali*. The tighter, often solid, embroidery shown in the fifth and sixth swatches is called *jamawar*. A pattern woven into the shawl on the loom, as in the bottom example, is called *kani*.

TOP: HUGH SWIFT / ERIC HANSEN; FAR LEFT: TREHEARNE AND BRAR / ERIC HANSEN



The bitterly cold winters of Kashmir have made warm clothing, especially shawls, a necessity for survival, but it took centuries of experimentation and refinement to raise shawl-making from a necessity to a unique textile art.

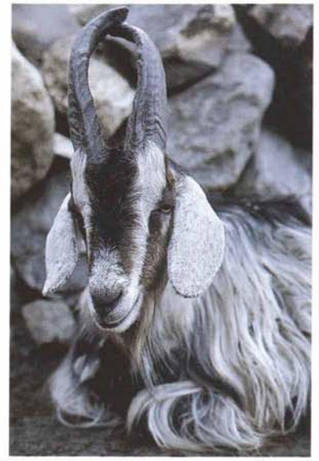
The bitterly cold winters of Kashmir have made warm clothing, especially shawls, a necessity for survival, but it took centuries of experimentation and refinement to raise shawl-making from a necessity to a unique textile art. The best Kashmiri shawls produced today are made from the soft, downy undercoat that grows primarily on the neck and belly of the Himalayan mountain goat, *Capra hircus*. Although fine wool of various grades is commonly marketed in the West as "cashmere," the name that Kashmiris themselves give to the fiber from *Capra hircus* is *pashm*, which is the Persian word for "wool." "Pashmina" is *pashm* in its woven form, the highest quality of cashmere, and *Capra hircus* is often referred to as the "pashmina goat."

Pashm has a special luster due to its long, fine fibers, which are as thin as 12 microns; by contrast, the fibers from premium sheep's wool, such as Merino Extrafine, are 23 microns thick, and human hair ranges up to 200 microns thickness. Thus pashmina is exceptionally light, soft and warm, and feels luxurious against the skin. The natural colors of the fleece range from white to gray, red, brown and black.

At breakfast that morning, Muhamad explained that although the pashmina goats are capable of surviving in lowland areas, it is only the animals living above 4500 meters (14,500') that produce the finest wool. There, the growth of the fine, warm *pashm* is an adaptive response to the harshly windswept terrain and winter temperatures that fall as low as minus 30 degrees Centigrade (-22° F). In the early 19th century, William Moorcroft, a veterinary surgeon employed by the British East India Company and bent on breaking Srinigar's pashmina monopoly, entered Tibet from Kashmir in disguise to take pashmina goats to Scotland. Of the 50-odd goats he spirited away, only four survived the journey. They did not thrive in their new home, and the wool they produced was inferior.

Harpal pointed out to me that the very best *pashm* comes from one remote area in western Tibet known as the Changtang, where nomadic pastoralists known as Drokba tend flocks on the high plains. They collect the fleece by combing the goats in the late spring, just before they molt. Each goat produces approximately 100 grams (3½ oz) of uncleaned fleece, which is a mix of *pashm* and coarser hairs. In summer, Ladakhi traders come to the Changtang to exchange the raw fleece for grain, tea and manufactured goods. They transport the fleece to Leh, the capital of Ladakh, where the Kashmiri dealers make their purchases and then forward the wool to Srinigar. There, the coarse outer hair is pulled away, by hand, from the fine, soft *pashm*.

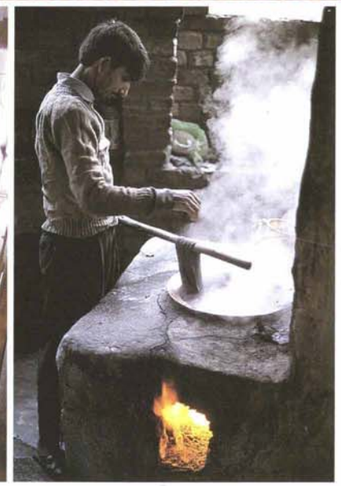
When Muhamad's family first started dealing in *pashm*, they used animal caravans to bring the fleece over the mountain passes from Leh, but today it comes in by air. The cleaning is still done by hand, after which the wool is carded and spun, again by hand, into two-ply yarn. Both the cleaning and the spinning are done by women in private homes. It can take nearly a week to turn the *pashm* from one goat into yarn, and it takes about three goats to produce the wool for one standard-size shawl measuring two meters by one meter (78 x 39"). What makes the Kashmiri shawls superior is not only the fineness of the individual *pashm* fibers, but also meticulous cleaning, sorting, dehairing and hand spinning. These are all manual skills, perfected by Kashmiri women and passed down through generations since the late 16th century, the time when the Mughal emperors began to encourage the shawl industry.



Elaborate 18th- and 19th-century Kashmiri shawls, known as *kanikar,* have tapestry-like designs worked into the fabric with a series of small bobbins, known individually as *kani*. Using a twill tapestry weave with interlocking wefts,

Top: **The Himalayan mountain goat (*Capra hircus*) is uniquely adapted to the climate above 4500 meters (14,500'). Its *pashm* lies beneath the outer fleece, and it works much like the insulating down that lies between a bird's feathers and its body.** Above, left: **Each goat produces only about 100 grams (3½ oz) of *pashm* each spring; here a small flock's combings are bundled for trade.** Right: **Prominent in the *pashm* trade are members of the Drokba tribe.** Opposite: **A *jamawar* shawl.**

HUGH SWIFT / ERIC HANSEN (3)



Top: ***Jamawar* embroidery on a red shawl.** Left: **In Srinigar, a Kashmiri woman cards raw *pashm*, carefully removing all coarser outer hair and other impurities, before hand spinning and plying it into two-ply yarn. It often takes about three weeks to produce enough yarn to weave a shawl.** Center: **The pashmina yarn is so fine that it can be woven only on a hand loom. Most shawls today are made in a twill weave.** Right: **Dyeing is done after the shawl is woven, with repeated hand dipping until the desired color shade is reached.**

Eleventh-century wall paintings in Ladakh clearly depict finely embroidered shawls. Masterpiece *kani* shawls from the 18th and 19th centuries are among the most complex, sophisticated textiles ever produced.

these exquisitely made *kani* shawls, as they are commonly referred to, are renowned for their unique softness, rich colors and astonishingly intricate designs. According to Frank Ames, author of *The Kashmir Shawl*, the definitive book on the subject, and John Irwin, former assistant keeper at the Indian Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, *kani* shawls from this period are among the most complex, sophisticated textiles ever produced in the world. In 1853, one *kani* shawl ordered by the Empress of France took 30 men approximately nine months to complete.

Because of the fragile and ultimately perishable nature of textiles, it is impossible to determine the origins of either woven or embroidered designs in the region, but 11th-century wall paintings at the Alchi monastery in Ladakh clearly depict finely embroidered shawls. The earliest written account of pashmina shawls comes from the *Rajatarangiru* of Srivara, a 15th-century Kashmiri text that discusses woolen fabric with fine woven designs. The *Ain-i Akbari*, an account from the Mughal period in Kashmir (1586–1752) states that the Emperor Akbar was a keen collector of *kani* shawls.

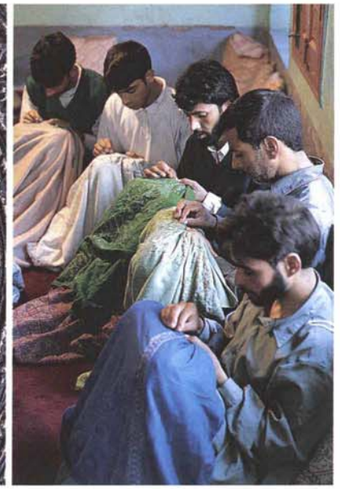
By the late 16th century, the shawl industry was well established in Kashmir. One of the first Europeans to notice these shawls was François Bernier, who lived in Kashmir from 1656 until 1668 as the private physician of the Mughal ruler Aurangzeb. Bernier provided some of the first, tantalizing descriptions of the designs and the soft, delicate texture of pashmina shawls, and the shawls themselves eventually began to find their way to France and England.

By the beginning of the 1800's, *kani* shawls were extremely popular with the fashionable women of Paris and London. Napoleon's wife, Josephine, was said to have collected nearly 1000 of them, and by the mid-19th century the shawl export business to Europe was huge. To guarantee that the styles and colors were in accordance with European fashion of the time, French textile designers set up shop in Srinigar.

By the end of the 19th century, Jacquard power looms, which used punched cards to reproduce textile patterns, allowed weavers in Paris, Lyon, Vienna and Paisley to produce

attractive and affordable domestically made shawls for the emerging middle class. But the delicate pure-pashmina yarn could not be worked on a power loom, and therefore the newer and less expensive shawls, made with similar designs but with lower-quality materials, eventually undercut the market for the high-priced *kani* shawls. The market collapsed finally with the 1879 defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War and the ensuing general depression. Women's fashions had also changed, and as a result, the shawl industry in Kashmir declined rapidly; a famine in 1887–1888 decimated it. In 1860 there had been 25,000 weavers in Kashmir; by 1911 their numbers had dropped to 148.

However, the late 19th century also witnessed the growing popularity of plain-woven pashmina shawls decorated with fine embroidery. According to local legend, this came about as a result of a visit to Srinigar by an Armenian trader and shawl dealer from Constantinople named Khwaja Yusuf. He realized that, though the high prices of the *kani* shawls and the exorbitant tax on them prevented him from reselling them at a decent profit, the less expensive embroidered shawls, known as *amlikar*, were made from the same fine materials, were also esthetically pleasing and, most significantly, were exempt from taxation. His decision to create a wholesale export market for embroidered pashmina shawls set the scene for today's embroidered-shawl industry.



Before embroidery begins, a pattern is stamped onto the fabric with water-soluable ink using combinations of any of thousands of wood-block stamps. Working with silk thread, embroidery is usually village-based, off-season work for men otherwise employed as farmers. Opposite: A shawl embroidered only around its perimeter might take a few weeks or months to complete, but a fully embroidered *jamawar* shawl, such as this one, can take as long as seven years to complete, depending on the density of the design and the craftsman's farming obligations.

The popularity of embroidered Kashmiri shawls has continued to the present day, especially over the last decade as some of the very highest-quality work has been brought to market by fashion-conscious designers such as London's Madeleine Trehearne and her partner Harpal Brar. I discovered these two shawl merchants by chance, through a magazine advertisement, but before long, we were deep in conversation about thread counts, fiber thicknesses and insulating qualities, the enduring mysteries of the parallel darn stitch, and what it takes to design and produce high-quality traditional handmade shawls that are both fashionable and timeless.

Before flying to Kashmir, I visited Madeleine and Harpal at their studio and shop on New End Square in Hampstead. The size, variety and quality of their collection made it obvious why they have become the premier dealers of high-end pashmina shawls in London and the world. The colorful stacks of neatly folded shawls lined the walls to the ceiling and filled the room with a wonderful scent of fine wool. We discussed their approach to creating shawls for a market largely influenced by western fashion trends. They had decided early on to have the shawls dyed to a western palette, if only because the range of people's skin colors is different in the West. Prior to 1993, shawl colors were limited to black, maroon, dark green, natural, bright pink and white—color combinations too limited for the export market.

"The Americans, Japanese and Arabs are all very good customers with a highly developed sense of individual style," Madeleine said. "They recognized the pashmina shawl as a luxury garment, but we needed to be more flexible in terms of color and design in order to attract different tastes."

For centuries, wealthy families in Kashmir, India and Nepal have included fine pashmina shawls as part of a daughter's dowry. Prosperous families in northern India are regularly visited by a pashmina-shawl *wallah* (vendor), and as Harpal pointed out, "A reputable shawl-*wallah* protects his livelihood by selling only good-quality shawls. It is a door-to-door business, and a stylish and well-dressed Indian woman from a good family will buy at least one or two new shawls each winter." In Kashmir, shawls are not for young girls; rather, they are for women to wear at weddings and social occasions. A Kashmiri woman will start acquiring shawls at about the age of 16 or 17, and five to eight shawls is average for a woman's collection.

Harpal explained also that some western customers buy their first shawl out of fashionable desire but, with exposure to quality work, that desire can become a need. Once a person is hooked, he said, he can end up talking about pashmina as though it were a controlled substance. There is, he said, simply nothing that feels quite like it: The touch of pashmina on the skin creates a uniquely luxurious feeling of understated, gently sensual warmth.

Madeleine and Harpal's business in high-end shawls has helped create a renaissance of fine work in Kashmir, and this has contributed to the prosperity of local people and the families who work for them in Srinigar. Most of their plain pashmina shawls are woven in twill, a basic weave distinguished by minuscule diagonal lines, or ribs. Other shawls use a diamond-patterned weave known as *chesm-e bulbul*, "nightingale's eye." Either fabric can be embroidered.

Difficulties come in marketing, mostly because there is no agreed-upon naming standard for fabric types. Retailers can apply the words "pashmina" and "cashmere" loosely. So-called "pashmina shawls" are presently being sold for as little as $89 in airport shops worldwide, but at that price they contain only a very small percentage of low-quality pashmina —if any. The genuine article is considerably more expensive: Without embroidery, a shawl might start at around $500; a *jali* shawl, with an allover, open embroidered design, sells for approximately $1800; the solid-embroidered shawls known as *jamawar* sell for $3000 to $7000 or more, depending on the fineness of the stitching. Museum- or collector-quality shawls from the 18th or 19th century often command prices in excess of $100,000.

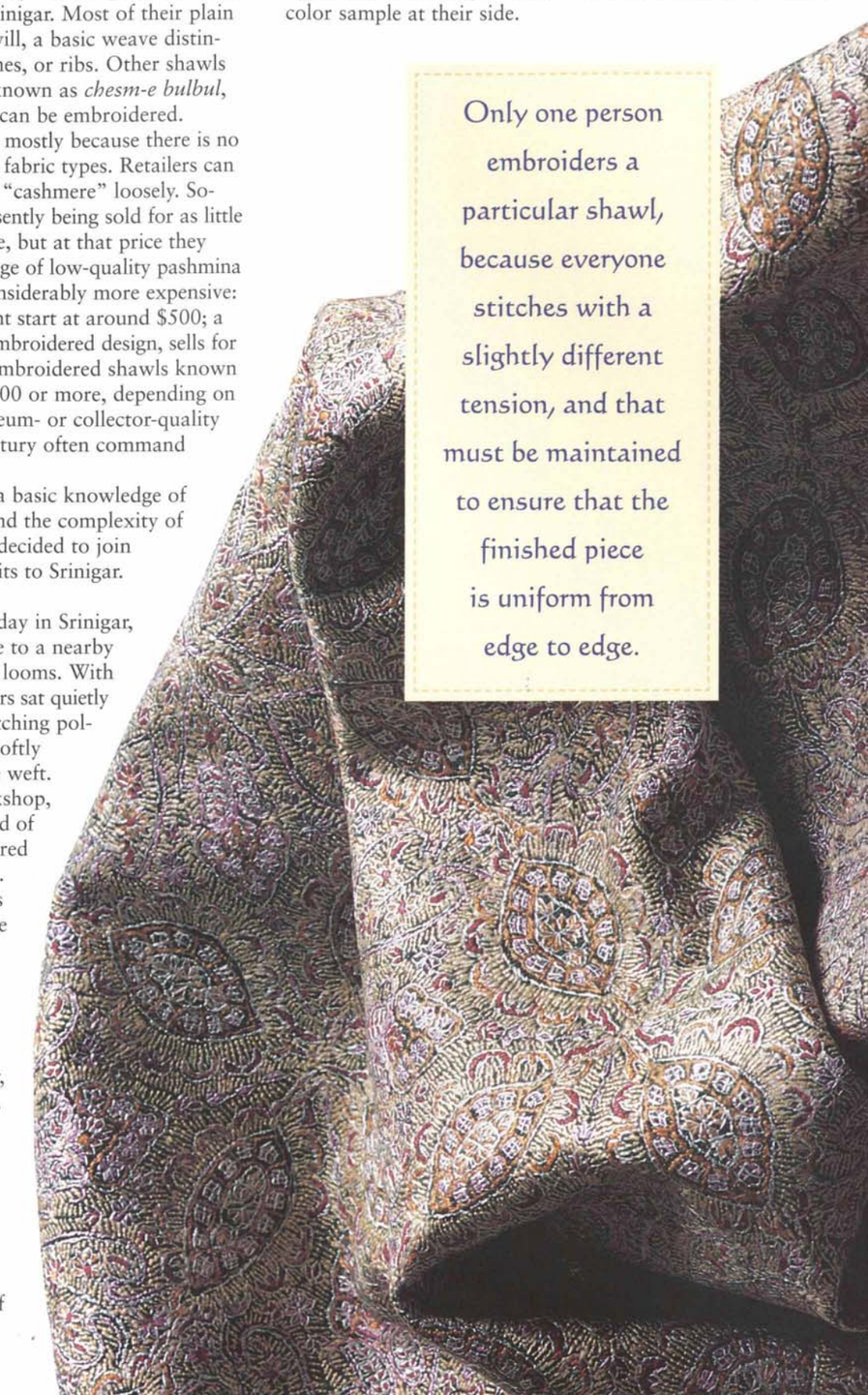
It was only after I had gained a basic knowledge of the history of pashmina shawls and the complexity of the manufacturing process that I decided to join Harpal on one of his seasonal visits to Srinigar.

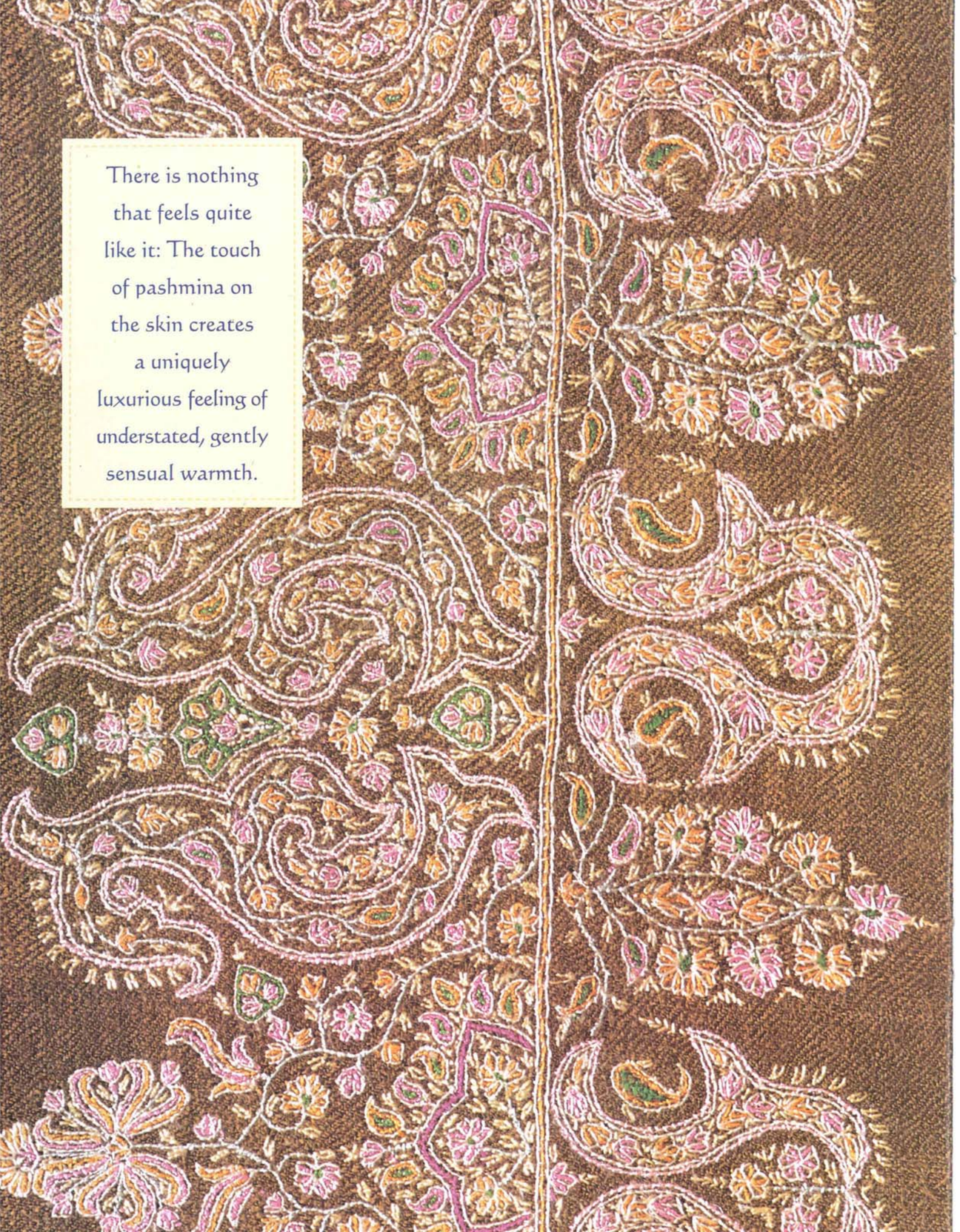
Just after breakfast on my first day in Srinigar, Harpal and Muhamad took me to a nearby weaving workshop of 10 hand looms. With windows on three sides, the weavers sat quietly at their benches, throwing and catching polished hardwood shuttles as they softly tapped the wide comb against the weft. A light breeze ventilated the workshop, and apart from the snipping sound of scissors and the occasional whispered conversation, the room was silent. Power looms of the same width as these could produce seven or more utilitarian shawls per day, but the delicacy of pashmina yarn still requires the use of hand looms, and it can take nearly a week to weave one shawl.

Holding a shawl to the window, Muhamad showed the fine weave. "Real pashmina glows," he said. "And you should be able easily to see through the shawl when backlit. It has a distinctive, irregular weave due to the hand loom."

On another day we watched teams of men wash shawls on the wide concrete steps on the edge of the Jhelum River, and then we drove to a workshop where the shawls were dyed in a fantastic setting filled with color and heat. Amid leaping flames, billowing clouds of smoke and rising steam, the workers labored over bubbling cauldrons as they dipped the shawls with large wooden paddles, repeatedly immersing them in the dye until they matched the color sample at their side.

> Only one person embroiders a particular shawl, because everyone stitches with a slightly different tension, and that must be maintained to ensure that the finished piece is uniform from edge to edge.





There is nothing that feels quite like it: The touch of pashmina on the skin creates a uniquely luxurious feeling of understated, gently sensual warmth.

The following day we traveled by car to the village of Bakura, where we visited the workshop of Ali Muhamad Wusta, who supervises nearly two dozen embroiderers. The men sat around the perimeter of a single room with their backs to tall windows that cast an even, diffuse light on their work. Embroidery is a daytime activity because the best work cannot be achieved under artificial light. Ali Muhamad explained that shawls may be embroidered with a narrow or a wide border, or all over, and that the stitching is always done with silk thread. Only one person embroiders a particular shawl, he said, because everyone stitches with a slightly different tension, and that must be maintained to ensure that the finished piece is uniform from edge to edge.

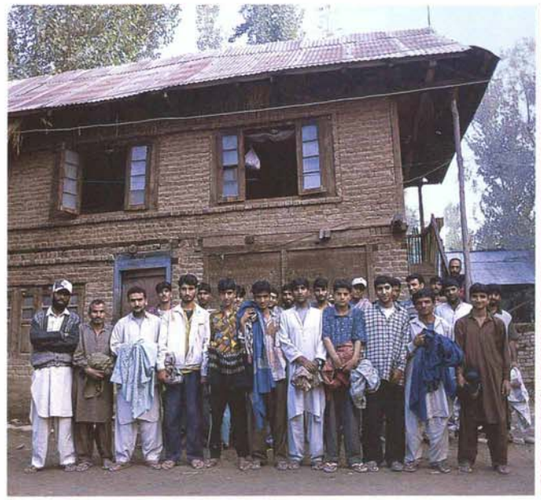
The embroiderers start work when they are approximately 18 years old, and most stop at about 50, or whenever their eyesight begins to weaken. Because most are also farmers, it is seasonal work. In their colors and designs, the embroiderers often depict the flowers and trees of Kashmir. There are common motifs, such as the leaf of the *chinar* tree—a variety of plane or sycamore that has characterized Kashmir since Mughal times—but Muhamad's embroiderers work from more than 10,000 designs that have been developed over the last 150 years by his family and carved into woodblock stamps. Using water-soluble ink, these are used to print the embroiderer's guide on the plain shawl. A design master and an embroidery supervisor then select initial color combinations. A small sample section is completed and, if it looks good, the embroiderer begins his long task. A top embroiderer can earn about 400 rupees ($8) a day.

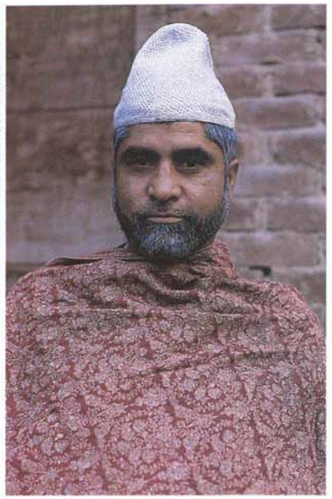
"Each shawl is a unique piece," said Muhamad. "Our craftsmen follow the traditional designs, but good handwork reveals the individual style of the embroiderer. This is why there are never two shawls exactly the same."

"When the shawls are done," Harpal said, "they are so filthy you wouldn't recognize them. Only after a finished shawl has been washed in the river does it reveal its beauty."

At the second village, called Busarbu, we were greeted warmly by headman Hajj Samad Mir. In his workshop, the embroiderers quietly hummed tunes while stitching. They passed a bubbling waterpipe from man to man, and the room was filled with a haze of sweet-smelling tobacco smoke. Several of the men were working on solidly embroidered *jamawar* shawls. If a man works diligently, and takes time off only for the farming season, he might complete this type of shawl in three years, but more often a top-quality *jamawar* shawl takes an embroiderer six or seven years. In part this is because the *jamawar* stitching takes so much concentration that, for relief, the men will often work on less complex shawls. The *jamawar* shawls, Hajj Samad said, are usually worn by women; men prefer a plain, light brown shawl, with a minimum of embroidery.

On the final day of my visit, Muhamad laid out a number of his very best embroidered shawls for me to photograph. When I asked him about the secret of his success, he told me that it was really just a combination of honesty, hard work and luck. "You must be a reputable dealer," he said, "because the shawl trade is based on trust. From raw fiber to finished shawl, we must guard our reputation by controlling all aspects of production."





Embroiderers in the village of Busarbu stand in front of their workshop, and supervisor Hajj Samad Mir (right) **displays a *jali* shawl.** Opposite: **A *jamawar* shawl commands a retail price in the thousands of dollars.**

Before Harpal and I flew back to New Delhi, I asked Muhamad what he thought was so special about pashmina shawls.

"What is the special purpose of the shawl?" Muhamad said. "Well, just between you and me, I wear a shawl because it keeps me warm in the winter. It is beautiful, but it is really just the Kashmiri jacket."

Eric Hansen (ekhansen@ix.netcom.net) is a writer and photographer living in San Francisco. He specializes in the traditional cultures of Southeast Asia and the Middle East. His most recent book, *Orchid Fever* (Vintage Books), is about the international trade in rare and endangered orchids.

Related articles have appeared in these past issues of *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World*:

Leh: J/A 93
Kashmir: S/O 74

www.trehearneandbrar.com

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY TOR EIGELAND

Re-Greening Marrakech

In Marrakech, first impressions turn out to be accurate. As I was driving from the airport into the heart of the city, the nearly 1000-year-old *madinah*, my senses were overwhelmed. The buzz of life and the rush of traffic made an indelible impression, along with the intensely blue sky, the green of the date palms, the ochre of the city walls and houses, and the blue, red, black, white, purple and yellow dresses of the women.

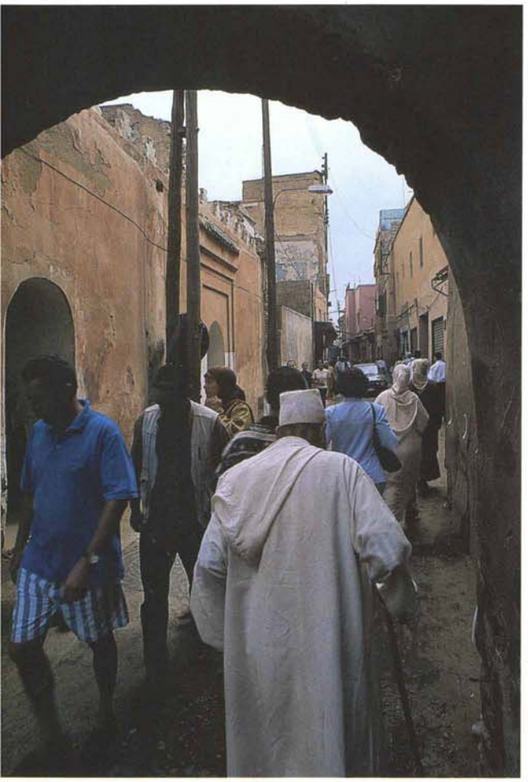
We zipped past well-kept, ample homes, and above the walls of the gardens I could see hints of interior splendor: the tops of citrus and fig trees, date palms and bougainvillea. A cobalt-blue wall reminded me of Mexico, and the pale yellow, elegantly squared minaret of the Kutubiyya Mosque, the 12th-century landmark of Marrakech, lent an Andalusian flavor.

There were a few parks, and a few green islands too small to be called parks, but as we approached the heart of the *madinah*, the traffic got heavier. Narrowing lanes became choked with cars, delivery trucks, horse-drawn buggies and carts, bicycles and unmuffled, smoky motorbikes—not to mention brave pedestrians, who seemed to spend as much time dodging into doorways or narrower lanes to avoid being run over as they spent in getting wherever they were going.

Here in the *madinah*, the colors had faded almost to disappearing. The gardens and greensward had given way to concrete and mud-brick walls, dust and the gray haze of exhaust fumes. My trip from the airport into the *madinah*, where nary a tree or a plant now seems to grow, was a metaphor for what has happened to Marrakech itself over time.

Founded in 1070 by an Almoravid chieftain from the Sahara named Abou Bekr, who set up a permanent camp and created agricultural fields here at the foot of the High Atlas mountains, Marrakech became the city of North Africa most renowned for its greenness. During the 12th and 13th centuries, the Almohads created two great gardens on the city's outskirts; though badly in need of maintenance and restoration, they still exist today: the 445-hectare Agdal Gardens (1100 acres) and the 88-hectare Menara Gardens (220 acres). Mohamed el Faïz, author of *The Historical Gardens of Marrakech: Ecological Memoir of an Imperial City*, writes that these were centers of fruit and vegetable production as well as sites for the introduction, testing and acclimatization of new plant species. They also served ceremonially as venues for swimming and other sports, receptions, royal festivals and military training exercises.

A few trees survive in market squares.



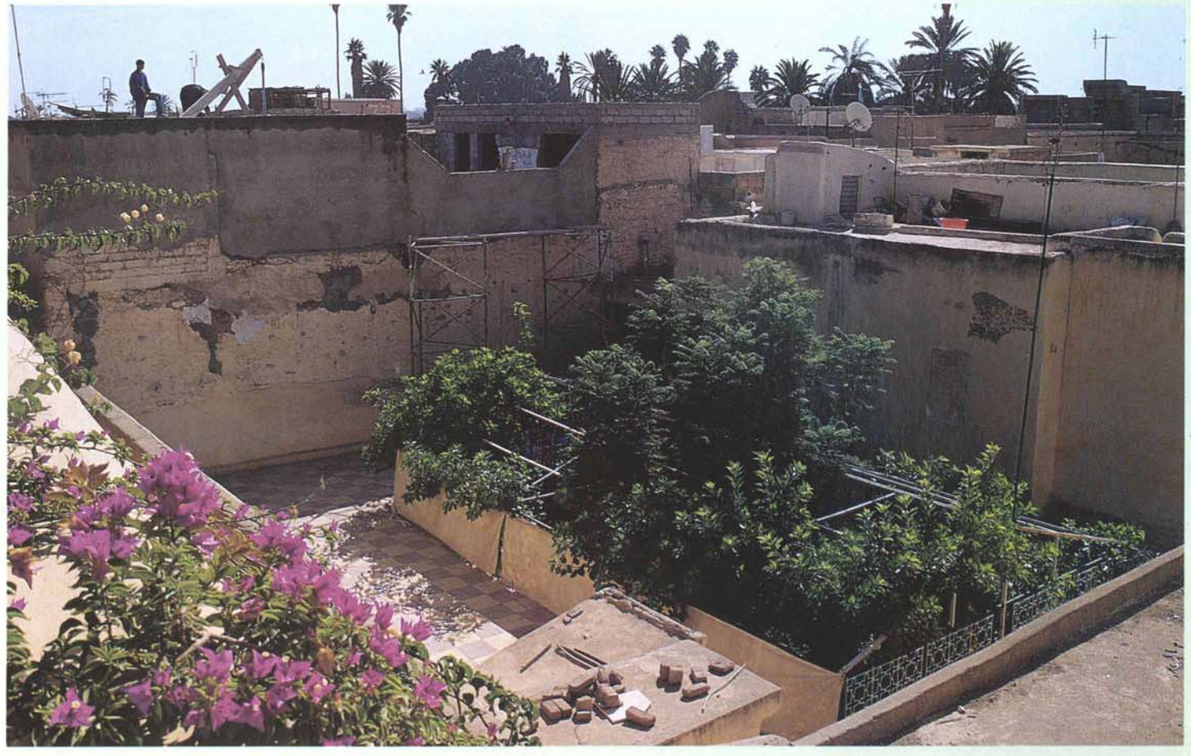
The walls are no longer covered with flowering jasmine and the fruit groves are far away. The city that Moroccan historian Mohamed el Faïz described as once a shady oasis is dominated today by modern bustle amid stone and concrete. Previous spread: A caretaker stands reflected in a mirror together with young plants that are part of the restoration of the 12th-century Mouassine Mosque.

By el Faïz's account, Marrakech must have seemed a paradise to visitors of earlier times. Here was a bustling center where one strolled among vegetable and aromatic herb gardens, fruit orchards, date palms, orange groves, grapevines and olive and carob trees. Fragrant flowers and jasmine climbed on the walls. Shade from the North African sun could be found under trees and *daliya*s, or grape arbors. Water came via underground canals from the Haouz plain, whose water table is fed by rain and snow in the High Atlas.

All this changed over the last century as Marrakech became also an industrial city and—like many other cities in the world—a magnet for rural migrants. Between 1900 and 1950 the city's population doubled to 200,000, and from 1960 to 1982 the number of inhabitants more than doubled again. There is no more recent census, but common wisdom holds that as of 2000, about one million people live in Marrakech. In the *madinah* itself, which accounts for about 40 percent of the city's total area, the population has quadrupled in the past century from 60,000 to around 235,000. The tourism industry has lately played an important part in that growth.

As a result, the Marrakech *madinah* is overbuilt, and its green spaces have been largely sacrificed in the process. In addition, walls and foundations, many of which date back to the 12th century, are deteriorating, and scores of lovely old buildings, arches and monuments are crumbling, mostly due to wear and tear and lack of maintenance. The smell of jasmine blossoms is a thing of the past.

All this presents a challenge to those who seek to balance the city's continuing growth with the enhancement of those factors that make it lively, vibrant and fascinating. In 1985, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared the *madinah* a World Cultural Heritage Site. Since then, among the most urgent of the challenges has been the re-greening of the *madinah* in a way that integrates the new and the old. Among the regional and international organizations that are assisting in this restoration—mostly of buildings but also of the famous Kutubiyya *minbar*, or pulpit—a lead role is held by the 10-year-old Austrian-based ARCH (Art Restoration and Cultural Heritage) Foundation. With more than a dozen projects running in seven countries, the organization is overseen by its founder, archduchess Francesca von Habsburg. In Marrakech, the day-to-day work is principally in the hands of ARCH's conservation director, Lori Anglin.



A garden fills the courtyard of a private home under restoration. Re-greening the city, explains ethnobotanist Gary Martin, means adding plant life in a large number of very small places.

Another driving force in the greening of the city is American ethnobotanist Gary Martin, founder of the UK-based Global Diversity Foundation (GDF), who moved to Marrakech in 1996. He hopes to learn from Marrakech's success to assist similar projects in Fiji, Mexico and Malaysia. Up until very recently, he says, greenery in the *madinah* was more often uprooted than cultivated.

During his survey of existing plants in the *madinah*, Martin says, "We got talking to Ould Bouya Ahmed, a traditional healer and circumciser who has a shop next to the famous Mouassine Fountain. He told us there used to be two beautiful *daliya*s here which were planted by his father, a man of the same profession. The *daliya*s came up from a corner and made a two-level horizontal arbor here, one with a white fruit variety, and another with red grapes. It gave shade to the fountain and a lot of allure to the whole place. Then, when Marrakech hosted a conference of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in 1994, the city embarked on a beautification campaign, and a great number of plants were destroyed so that paving tiles could be laid down. This *daliya* suffered the fate of the others. Talk about the impact of globalization on the *madinah*!"

Gary Martin, founder of the Global Diversity Foundation, and Meryanne Loum-Martin.

Thus re-greening the *madinah* is, he explains, often a matter of adding plant life in a large number of very small places. "We come back and reverse that process. We take the cement up in places, plant grapevines, let them grow, let them give cover. It is ecologically sustainable, culturally appropriate, and it's even economically useful, in that people harvest the grapes. It gives shade where tourists and the local people walk through, where people sell rugs and pots. And when you start talking to people about this, they notice and say, 'Hey, where *have* all the green spaces gone, why *have* we turned this into a city of concrete and mortar?'"

At the newly restored Suq Laghzel, or Wool Market, Marrakech's Mayor Omar Jazouli plants a future grape arbor.

Backed by members of the Moroccan royal family and with the support of local authorities, ARCH and the GDF have spent nearly two years documenting and beginning to reestablish the vegetation of the Marrakech *madinah*, as well as restoring arcades, fountains, public baths and marketplaces. As a consultant for ARCH, it was el Faïz who drew up the first re-greening plan in September 2000. Five months later, a Moroccan-facilitated workshop drew up an action plan to be "carried out with the residents of the *madinah*… to maintain and replant bitter oranges, dates, figs, grapes, mulberries, olives and other traditional species that produce fragrant or showy flowers, fresh fruit or shade…. Newcomers and longtime residents are encouraged to recreate gardens in privately owned courtyard houses (*riyads*) and former caravan hotels (*fondouks*)."

After their surveys and an inventory of remaining cultivated plants, the teams tilled the collective memory of *madinah* residents to make sure the plans would fit the city's heritage. Already, some *daliya*s have been restored and a *Regreening the Madinah* manual is in preparation to aid anyone who wants to participate in restoring a garden.

With the support of students, parents and the Maghrebio Association, as well as GDF and ARCH, Morocco's Ministry of Education has overseen a one-hectare (2 ½-acre) pilot project at the Ibn Abi Sofra school, one of the *madinah*'s poorest. Jalil Belkamel, professor of science and technology at the University of Marrakech and a founder of the Maghrebio Association, says the garden space was "a wasteland" abutting the school, many of whose 615 students, because of poverty, suffer from diets that are both insufficient and unbalanced.

In response, says Belkamel, "We are creating a vegetable garden and fruit orchard there that will help feed a lot more of the children, at least 100 in the first year. The garden will help them understand about plants and it will give more greenery to the *madinah*. There will also be peach and orange trees and aromatic plants used in Moroccan 'mint' tea. What is very important is that this will be entirely an organic garden—no chemical fertilizers or pesticides. We have to teach the local people that there is no need to use these things. Plants will be very carefully selected and I will furnish all the aromatic plants. There will also be some animals, like goats, rabbits and chickens, which will feed the children as well as give them contact with animals."

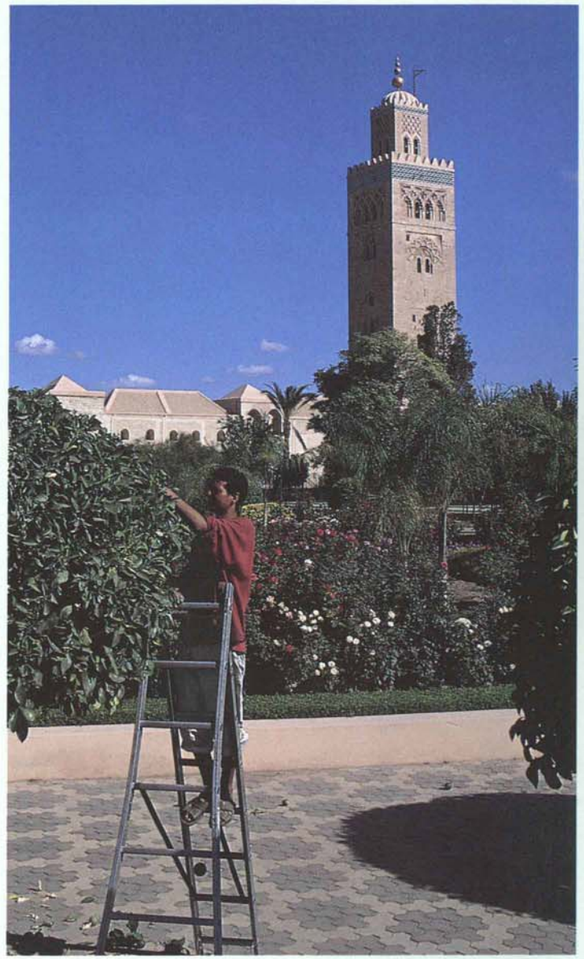
Mohamed Bouchaab, who assisted in the renovations, sits near one of the few remaining old *daliyas*.

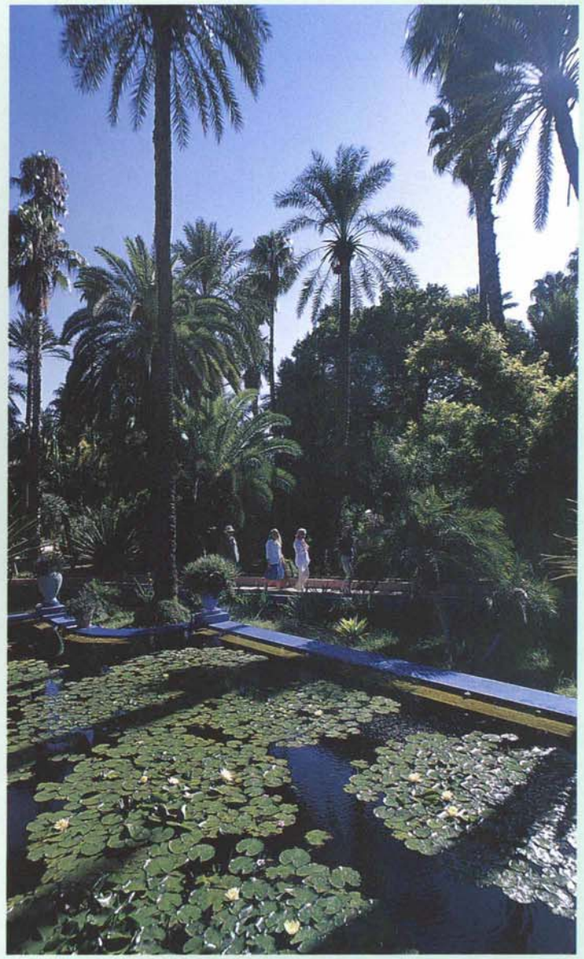
This spring, the first plants went into the ground.

Of the 10 micro-projects proposed so far by ARCH, three are already complete. I was present for the inauguration of the newly restored Wool Market, or Suq Laghzel, the only area in the *madinah* where the retail trade is run by women.

Having fallen into disrepair, the earthen brown buildings around the small covered market square were crumbling. Participants in the three-month effort were the local government, the merchants themselves, the ARCH building conservation team and the GDF, with funding assistance from the Olympus Europe Foundation. The joy that evening was unrestrained, and the stars, without a doubt, were the archduchess Francesca von Habsburg and the women merchants, in a happy meeting of the Arab and European worlds. All dressed the part, the archduchess in white and the ladies of the *suq* in their multicolored finest. There was a ribbon-cutting, speeches and an art exhibit by a girls' school. Grapevines, the start of new *daliya*s, were planted and ceremonially watered by visiting dignitaries. When the archduchess made a round of the market, hugs and kisses were spontaneously exchanged, and when the merchants started dancing around her, she gamely danced right along.

Francesca von Habsburg, founder of ARCH, accepts flowers at the opening of the newly restored Suq Laghzel. The foundation's 10 small projects are among the numerous Moroccan and international efforts in the city.





Two of the city's largest remaining garden areas include, at left, those surrounding the Kutubiyya Mosque, built in 1162, and, at right, the garden of the villa once owned by French painter Jacques Majorelle, which dates from the early 20th century.

"This renovation was a huge disruption of their lives, which could have created a lot of enemies and animosity," said von Habsburg. "But the women of the market got into it from the word go. They have been working, rolling up their sleeves, participating, and they're so proud of their space now! And all the other shop owners in the *suq*—how they've improved their stores, inside and out!" Indeed, the men of the shops along the periphery of the Wool Market undertook façade repairs, painted or replaced doors, and fixed or replaced awnings, too.

"More people are visiting the *suq*, and many locals come to check it out," says ARCH's Lori Anglin, who has tracked the success of the project since its opening. "Every night it is cleaned, and a few women who were formerly of the *suq* have returned and have been assigned a place to trade."

It's this kind of collaboration, she says, among the merchants and the assisting agencies, that is the real seed of Marrakech's re-greening. "When people get together to define the qualities they value in a community and then plan the conservation of those values, that's urban conservation."

Tor Eigeland (www.toreigeland.com) is a free-lance photographer and writer living in Garganvillar, France. He has contributed regularly to *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World* since 1965.

Related articles have appeared in these past issues of *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World:*

Minarets: M/A 02
Kutubiyya Mosque *minbar*: M/J 98
Conservation in Fez: M/J 93

www.arch.at
www.globaldiversity.org.uk

BEIJING'S MILLENNIAL MOSQUE

Whether in the crisp dry cold of Beijing's winter or in the mild warmth of its summer, the idea of escaping the metropolis for a ride out across the surrounding plain or the Northern Hills is very attractive. Within the memory of old people alive today, horses were a common sight in this city, as were camel caravans, driven in from the Central Asian steppe. Along with the horses and the camels, long ago, came soldiers and traders from the West, and with them came their faith, which was Islam. Some of these Muslims settled in Beijing and other cities of China as long ago as the late seventh century. Over time, they were joined by their co-religionists—Tartars, Mongols, Kyrgyz and Uighurs, as well as the local converts known as the Hui—until today the Muslim community in the capital city numbers about 200,000.

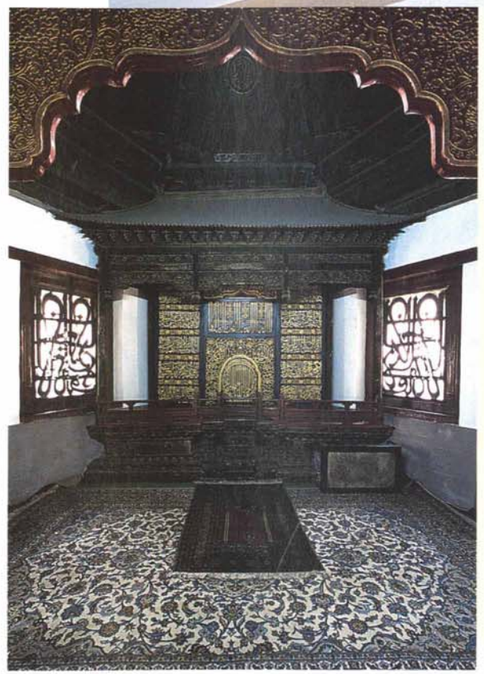
WRITTEN BY CAROLINE STONE
PHOTOGRAPHED BY PETER SANDERS

From the outside, the Niujie Mosque ("nee-OO djee-eh") is architecturally an entirely Chinese building that does little to announce itself. The sign at left **is hung in a small passageway.** Opposite: **Friday prayers draw a moderately full house these days, and congregants are largely in their thirties and forties. The style of the interior is also consistent with Islam's historic practice of adapting to local styles.**

The traditional areas of the city, rapidly vanishing under the pressure of high-rise buildings and multi-lane highways, are known as the *hutong*, or "alleys." The word comes from the Mongol term for a water-well, but its meaning has expanded to mean the lanes, housing compounds and ultimately the neighborhood that once centered on the well. These are clusters of low-lying, mostly gray and modest houses, and their names often tell us something about their original inhabitants: Muslim Camp, Westerners Camp, Mongol Camp and others.

On the edge of one of these *hutong*, in the southern sector of the city, stands Beijing's oldest mosque, the Niujie, whose name means "Oxen Street." By the beginning of the Qing Dynasty in 1644, Oxen Street was already an important market for *halal* beef and mutton—that is, meat that had been slaughtered according to Islamic law. The mosque itself was founded in 997, according to tradition, and its survival to the present day seems almost a miracle in view of all that has happened in Beijing over the past millennium, especially in the last century.

At first, the Niujie district appears similar to others in Beijing—until one begins to notice details. The entrance arch, a feature common in many Beijing neighborhoods, has small domes at each end and its inscription is in Arabic as well as in Chinese. Some of the shops, too, have Arabic signs: "*halal* meat," "only licit food served" or the characters *huimin fandian*, "Muslim people's eating place." The little stationer's shop has Arabic calligraphy texts for sale alongside the jars of writing brushes and office supplies. The butchers' shops have beef and mutton but no pork, in contrast with the rest of the city, where pork is often the preferred meat. All this is very discreet, and it would be possible to walk through the area and not notice that it is different.



When one enters the neighborhood along its main street, where some 12,000 of Beijing's Muslim community live, the atmosphere changes subtly. The older men wear fur caps and long, fur-edged jackets. Their trousers are tucked into boots, something that ordinary Chinese almost never do. Some of the younger women have their heads covered with scarves, also a practice uniquely Muslim in China. All this is both very old and very new:

Top: **Mats laid in lines on the floor help congregants position themselves for prayer.** Left: **With decoration dating from the 14th or 15th century, the Niujie Mosque's *mihrab*, or prayer niche, is a walk-in room, in contrast to Middle Eastern mosques, in which a *mihrab* is generally just a decorated indentation in a wall, indicating the direction of prayer.** Below: **A view up to one of the main prayer hall's several grids of painted ceiling coffers.** Opposite: **A sexton waters some of the mosque's potted shrubs and trees. Behind him is the minaret that, like the rest of the mosque, follows Chinese architectural tradition.**

Under the previous regime, during the Cultural Revolution, all religious activity was forbidden, and many places of worship, of all religions, were damaged or taken over for use as warehouses or factories. The faithful, naturally, hid their treasures, put aside their distinguishing dress and continued to pray and teach in secret. Over the past 20 years, however, mosques and other places of worship have been refurbished, now actually with the help of government subsidies. Qur'an schools have been recognized, and at Beijing's second-largest mosque, the 15th-century Dongsi Mosque, there are facilities for high-level training in Islamic tradition and law.

Nonetheless, if one does not read Chinese, it would be possible to walk past the Niujie Mosque itself without realizing what it is, for the curling roofs and the hexagonal "tower for watching the moon" are all fine examples of traditional Chinese architecture. Historically, this is not surprising, for throughout the Islamic world, local styles of architecture have long been used for mosques. In part this was because these were the building techniques to which the local people were accustomed, and in part because it avoided the imposition of a foreign style that would have stressed the separateness of a minority. In this way also the esthetic unity of the city was shown to be important, something not lightly to be broken. It is also true that, then as now, many Chinese Muslims felt strongly Chinese in their heritage, and saw no reason why Islam, as an international religion, should be limited to the architecture of one particular area of the globe.

So, from the outside, the Niujie Mosque is a fine example of Chinese noble architecture, with its elaborate eaves and glazed tiles. Beneath the eaves hang two signs with gold characters on a blue background. The higher one identifies the mosque; the lower one reads "the good path to heaven." One enters the mosque compound by an unobtrusive lane on the right-hand side where, most days, a blind man sits to indicate the way and give visitors both information and the opportunity to practice the virtue of charity. The main courtyard opens off to the left, silent and immaculate. To the right stands the "tower for watching the moon"—used to look over the neighboring roofs to sight the new moon of Ramadan—and beyond it, the main prayer hall, where on weekday afternoons a number of older men customarily gather for prayer. Although smaller than the beautiful "Great East Mosque" in the old T'ang capital of Xiaṅ, whose compound measures 12,000 square meters (3 acres), this mosque is of a good size, and it can be used by a congregation of several hundred.

Inside, the style is a pleasing mixture. The decoration is both carved and painted. The *mihrab*, or prayer niche, is said to date from the 14th- and 15th-century Ming Dynasty, and at first it seems purely Chinese with flowers and scrolls, but a second glance reveals that these are only the background for the traditional texts done in a style of calligraphy that has clearly been influenced by the local manner. Again, trees are often planted in the courtyards of mosques, but the large, carefully tended *bonsai* in pots are of Chinese inspiration, as are the stone lanterns. A large, handsome bronze vessel, inscribed in Chinese, is something which has its counterpart in many Indian mosques, for preparing food for the feasts or for distribution of charitable goods to the poor.

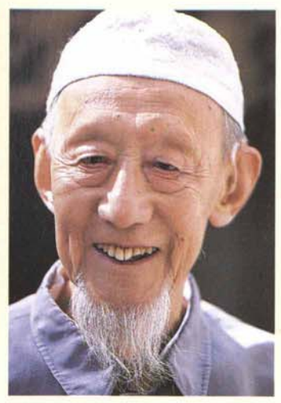
Chinese again is the small building with stone steles commemorating the founding of the mosque and its restoration on several occasions, notably in 1442 and again in 1692 under the Emperor Kangxi. The inscription on one of the stone tablets reads:

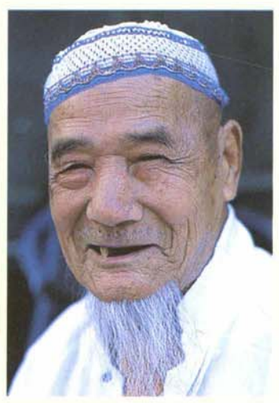
> *Tell the provinces of the country that the governor will have anyone who spreads false tales about the Muslims executed, and then bring a report to me. All the Hui shall follow Islam and may not disobey my commands.*

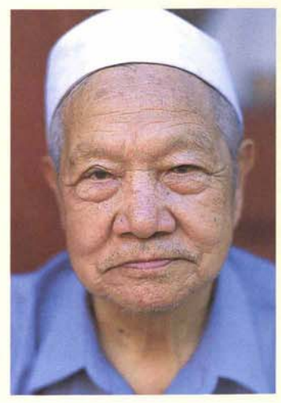
The story runs that when the emperor's spies brought him news that the Muslim community was planning to rebel under cover of the gatherings for one of their major feasts, he himself went to visit the mosque and, on finding the rumor untrue, made the proclamation above. Another factor was that the services of the emperor's excellent Muslim troops were of great importance to the stability of the country, and he may have wished to conciliate them.

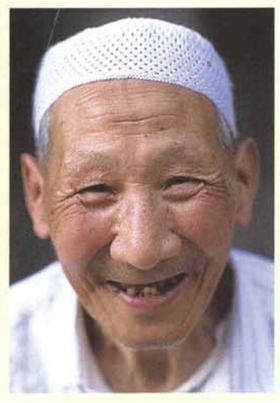
Structure is itself made decorative in the mosque's elaborate, interlocking system of columns, capitals, lintels, rafters and friezes. Some are inscribed: at left **is the Muslim creed, "There is no god but God; Muhammad is the Prophet of God"; other elements,** below, **are painted with a mix of pattern and still-life.**

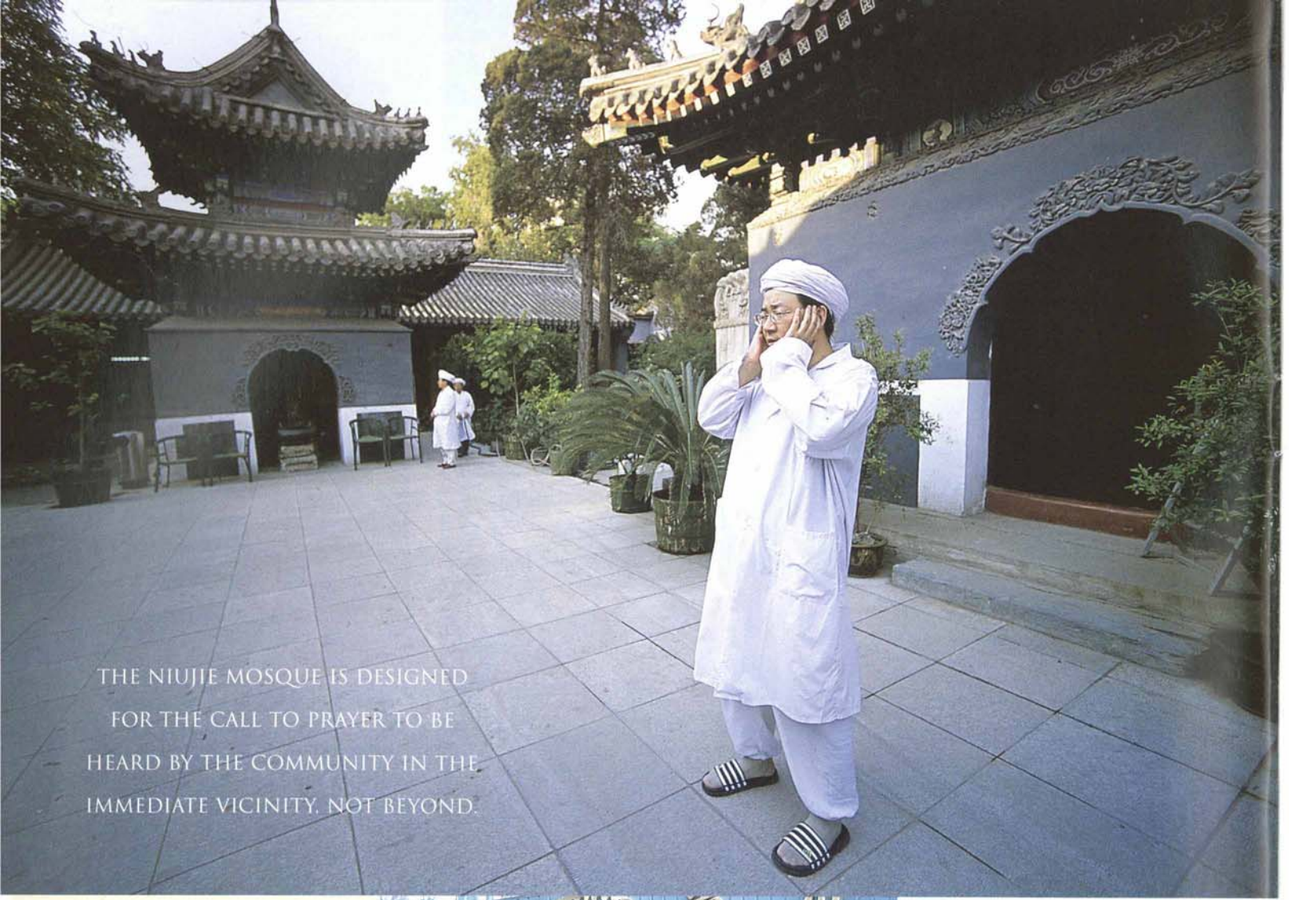
For the elders of the district, the Niujie Mosque is a center of both social and spiritual life during the week. Ibrahim Xue Tianli (first photo at right) **is *imam* of the mosque.**



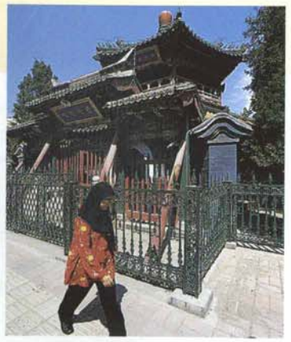








A muezzin sounds the *adhan*, or call to prayer, from one of the mosque's immaculately kept courtyards. Right: **Signs in Chinese and Arabic distinguish the shops in the Niujie Mosque neighborhood.** Below: **The higher sign outside one gate names the mosque; the other translates "the good path to heaven."**



The minaret of the Niujie Mosque is square, not tall, and is clearly designed for the call to prayer to be heard by the community in the immediate vicinity of the mosque, not beyond. The general orientation of the mosque, its *qibla*, is of course westward toward Makkah. To the east, there is a courtyard garden with a cypress tree and the tomb of the founder of the mosque, said to be an Arab scholar named Nasruddin, as well as the tombs of two shaykhs from Central Asia and Persia who visited Beijing in the 13th century, presumably having traveled the Silk Roads about the same time as Marco Polo. The tomb inscriptions are carved in a curiously local Arabic script, a Chinese-looking *thuluth* style. Unfortunately, the dates have been erased, apparently a very long time ago.

This and the Dongsi Mosque are not, of course, the only ones in Beijing. There are said to be 68 of them scattered about the city—there are some 40,000 mosques in all of China—and there must have been more in the old Tartar quarter that is now largely destroyed. A Muslim element in the population of a *hutong* is generally indicated by a little cluster of restaurants, food shops and stalls bearing signs in Arabic, and near them may well be a small mosque that is not immediately evident. Certainly this is true of the villages around Beijing, where only some of the mosques announce themselves to the stranger, and in most cases the architecture is purely traditional and thus inconspicuous. This is also true of the Chinese characters over the entrance of the arch to each mosque, which translate, "Temple of the Pure and True Doctrine." This is the Mandarin term for a mosque, with the result that casual visitors could easily be forgiven for not knowing what they were looking at.

The Cultural Revolution was hard on all religions in China, but the Niujie Mosque does not show evidence of extensive damage. Although it is still not a subject to be discussed openly, the community must have worked hard to protect its treasures, hiding or burying them, as did the Christians and Buddhists, "until the storm passed." In any case, the damage inflicted and the effects of enforced neglect have now been lovingly repaired with some financial aid from the present government. Contact with the outer world has been resumed. The library is being reorganized, and added to it are many donated books from Saudi Arabia.

On our way out, we visited the little shop by the mosque gate that was selling objects commemorating the mosque's millennial anniversary, which took place officially in 1997. Appropriately, the souvenirs were a mixture of East and West: handkerchiefs and headscarves, teapots and tea bowls, hanging scrolls in Arabic, calendars for the *hijri* year in both Arabic and Chinese. Altogether, it looked as though it had been a truly happy anniversary for the Niujie Mosque, and as we took our leave, we returned the sentiments with "Peace and good wishes for another 1000 years." ⊕

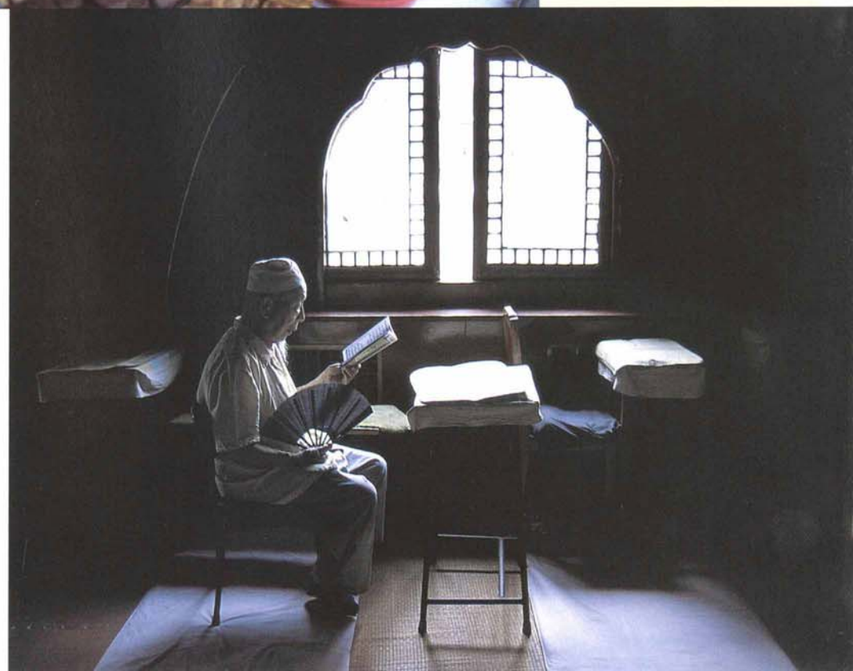
Caroline Stone lives in Seville and Cambridge, where she is working on a website dedicated to travelers and cross-cultural exchange, with special reference to the Muslim world, and aimed at students of world history at all levels. She and Paul Lunde are just completing a volume of translations: *Travellers from the Arab World to the Lands of the North.*

Peter Sanders (www.petersanders.com) has photographed throughout the Islamic world for more than three decades. He lives near London.

Related articles have appeared in these past issues of *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World:*

Islam in China: J/A 85; J/A 88; N/D 91
Minarets: M/A 02

Top: **A *halal* meat shop sells beef and mutton slaughtered according to religious requirements.** Left: **A fast-food shop.** Below: **A quiet moment on the sunlit side of the main prayer room. The mosque is open daily for prayer, reflection and reading.**



Events&Exhibitions

COMPILED BY KYLE PAKKA

Breaking the Veil: Women Painters from the Islamic World presents the work of 52 artists. The exhibit aims to break stereotypes about Muslim women and includes 63 paintings and etchings in a variety of genres. The artists themselves reflect the mixed faiths and cultures found within the Islamic countries represented in the show: Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, the UAE and Yemen. Co-organized by the Royal Society of Fine Arts, Jordan, and FAM (Femme-Art-Méditerranée), the exhibit opens September 19 on the occasion of the Second International Forum for Women Creators of the Mediterranean at the Palace of the Grand Knights in **Rhodes** and runs through October 15. Thereafter, the exhibit moves to Athens and on to venues in the United States and Europe.

< ***Untitled*, Rabab Nimer, Egypt**

Scenes from Libya: Photographs by Rosalind Waddams is a three-part exploration of Libya: traditional crafts and *suqs*; Tripoli, Jabal Nefusah, the coast and the Roman cities of Leptis Magna and Sabratha; and Fezzan and the southwestern interior, especially the Awbari Sand Sea and Akakus Mountains. Brunei Gallery, **London**, July 17 through September 20 and October 14 through December 13.

Glory and Prosperity: Metalwork of the Islamic World showcases the range of Islamic metalwork with objects from the sixth through the 19th century, many never before displayed. "Glory and prosperity" are usually the first in a series of good wishes often inscribed on medieval Islamic metalwork, and are also characteristics of a civilization that could afford to lavish precious materials and high levels of workmanship on vessels and utensils for use in daily life. Sackler Museum, **Boston**, through July 21.

Islam: The Fundamentals is a seminar offered to teachers by the Illinois Humanities Council. Participants will consider Islam's historical context, the "Five Pillars" of the faith, the Qur'an and the diversity of the global community of Muslims in the 21st century. Information: 312-422-5580. **Utica, Illinois**, July 21 through 26.

Empire of the Sultans: Ottoman Art from the Khalili Collection explores the influence of the Ottoman sultans over affairs of state and religion with displays of calligraphy, Qur'anic and other manuscripts, arms and armor, metalwork, ceramics, textiles and scientific instruments from the Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art. Catalog. **North Carolina** Museum of Art, **Raleigh**, through July 28; Museum of Art, Brigham Young University, **Provo, Utah**, August 17 through January 26.

Golden Warrior: Treasures of Saka Barrows displays golden items from an opulent burial unearthed in Kazakhstan and tentatively dated to the fifth or fourth century BC. The Scythian and Saka cultures—the two basic tribal groups from the Eurasian steppes—blended together in the seventh and eighth centuries BC, and the resultant artwork was the so-called "animal style," featuring plates, straps and pendants with stylized figures of animals such as eagles, horses, wild rams, elk and tigers. Among the highlights of the current exhibit are a gold costume composed of more than 4000 elements, gold trefoil and tiger-head plates, and jewelry featuring snow leopards, horned and winged horses, and tigers. Hermitage, **St. Petersburg, Russia**, through July 28.

Discovery and Myth: The Burial Chamber of Tutankhamun tells the story of the tomb's discovery and presents a full-scale replica of the tomb with its artifacts and wall paintings. The exhibition also examines the "Tutmania" of the 1970's and 80's. Museum Schloss Hohentübingen, **Tübingen, Germany**, through July 31.

The Ancient Egyptians displays objects on loan from the British Museum, including mummified crocodiles and hawks, and offers a full slate of children's activities. Epping Forest District Museum, Waltham Abbey, **Essex, England**, August 3 through October 29.

The Best Workmanship, the Finest Materials: Prayer Carpets from the Islamic World considers one of the most recognizable and popular forms of weaving in Muslim lands from two perspectives: the structural design, dictated by the weaver's technique, and the decorative design, governed by iconographic and esthetic traditions. Drawn mainly from the Harvard University Art Museums' collection, the rugs date from the 18th and 19th centuries and represent a fine range of both technique and design. Sackler Museum, **Boston**, August 3 through December 15.

The Spiritual Edifices of Islam features 33 original graphite drawings by internationally acclaimed Arab-American artist Wahbi Al-Hariri-Rifai (1914–1994) depicting some of the world's most significant mosques. Also included in the exhibit are earlier works by the artist in watercolor and pastel. Islamic Arts Museum, **Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**, through August 3.

The Grandeur of Viceregal Mexico: Treasures From the Museo Franz Mayer includes a number of pieces that reflect the Islamic influence that—along with pre-Columbian, Spanish and Chinese—is part of colonial Mexico's artistic heritage. **Houston** Museum of Fine Arts, through August 4.

Al-Quds al-Sharif [Jerusalem the Noble]: Muslim Heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem: Photographs 1890–1925 from the collection of the École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem. Institut du Monde Arabe, **Paris**, through August 4.

Pharaoh's Artists: Deir el-Madinah and the Valley of the Kings uses 300 objects from the museum's collection to present the private, daily and imaginative lives of the artists, craftsmen and workers who lived at Deir el-Madinah in the New Kingdom period and worked to create the royal tombs of the Valley of the Kings. The ruins of, and objects from, this simple worker's village offer a unique glimpse into the lives of ordinary ancient Egyptians. Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, through August 5; Royal Museum of Art and History, **Brussels**, September 11 through January 12.

The Eternal Image: Egyptian Art from the British Museum is the first loan ever of some 150 pieces that span 3000 years of Egyptian history, from a tiny royal portrait of carved ivory to the colossal granite statue of Seti II. Included also are wooden sculptures and papyrus paintings, neither of which survived the passage of years in great numbers. Fine Arts Museums of **San Francisco**, August 10 through November 11; **Minneapolis** Institute of Arts, December 22 through March 16.

The Pyramid: House for Eternity uses more than 150 artifacts, including specially fabricated models, to present the architectural history and religious significance of Egypt's 16 most important pyramids, along with the story of their discovery and the responses they evoked among Europeans. Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, **Hamburg**, through August 11.

The Quest for Immortality: Treasures of Ancient Egypt displays coffins, masks, jewelry, papyri, sarcophagi and sculpture drawn from Cairo's Egyptian Museum. National Gallery of Art, **Washington, D.C.**, through August 11; Museum of Science, **Boston**, November 20 through March 30. A **Quest for Immortality** seminar will explore the spiritual development of ancient Egyptians and how their philosophy of life, death and the afterlife influenced the development of many of the world's great religions. $350 for both days. Information: 708-383-8739 or e-mail: journeys@earthlink.net. Museum of Science, **Boston**, December 7 and 8.

In the Land of the Pharaohs: Egypt in Historical Photographs presents photographs—some never before exhibited—by Rudolf Lehnert and Ernst Landrock, who ran a photo studio and publishing house in Cairo and Tunis between 1904 and 1939. The images cover not only pyramids, temples and excavations but also villages, mosques, landscapes and daily life. Schloss Corvey, **Höxter, Germany**, August 12 through November 1.

Bright Stones, Dark Images: Magical Gems. Precious and semiprecious stones engraved with images and inscriptions were often used as amulets in Roman Egypt, especially in the second century. The small gems were worn as medallions, set in rings or sewn into pouches worn on the body, and their inscriptions, which correspond to those in magical papyri, were believed to have power in regard to the afterlife, healing and love. The exhibition includes some 150 stones. Winckelmann Museum, **Stendal, Germany**, through August 25; Lübke Museum, **Hamm, Germany**, August 29 through October 8; Schloss Wilhelmshöhe, **Kassel, Germany**, October 12 through December 15; Kestner Museum, **Hannover, Germany**, Spring 2003.

Mosaic Techniques. This workshop will cover the history of mosaic techniques, different tendencies in the art and the most frequently encountered themes. Participants will make a copy of a detail of a mosaic using Roman techniques. Four 1½-hour sessions. Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, August 26 and 29 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Script, Speech, Image and Sound: The Development of Writing from Antiquity to Modern Times explains the principles of the invention and development of writing and also of musical notation. Catalog. Wagner Museum, Maximilians-Universität, **Würzburg, Germany**, through August 31.

Best of British Islam brings together 160 of Britain's finest artists, writers, intellectuals, performers and musicians who have made their mark on British society and helped to enhance Muslim-western dialogue and understanding. The festival includes lectures, workshops, art exhibitions, theatrical performances, jazz, Rumi poetry readings, comedy and film screenings—all on a variety of themes. Information: www.arrum.co.uk. **London**, through August 31.

In the Fullness of Time: Masterpieces of Egyptian Art from American Collections displays 48 objects on loan from some of the most distinguished Egyptian collections in the United States, including examples of painting, relief, sculpture and the personal arts ranging from the predynastic era to the Roman period. Lectures and a film series are also scheduled. Catalog. Ford Museum of Art, **Salem, Oregon**, August 31 through January 4.

First International Conference on Kyrgyz Carpets features a joint exhibition of Kyrgyz carpets, felts, reed screens and textiles along with traditional entertainment, speakers and trips to museums and the Osh bazaar. Information: www.kyrgyzstan.com. **Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan**, August 31 through September 7.

Languages of the Middle East and the Print Revolution: An Intercultural Encounter. After Gutenberg's first publications, printing spread throughout Europe with remarkable speed. South and east of the Mediterranean, however, the displacement of handwritten text by the printed word was slower and more complicated, varying considerably with religion, nationality and local political, social and practical circumstances. This exhibition, presented in conjunction with the First World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies, explores and documents the spread of printing in the Middle East and adjacent lands, presenting printed materials in seven languages. Its historical section explores the transfer of printing technology, and the culture it carried, across continents and among peoples; the modern section presents the latest advances in digital typesetting of Middle Eastern languages. Catalog. Gutenberg-Museum, **Mainz, Germany**, August 31 through November 3.

A Passage to India is the new annual exhibition at the World Awareness Children's Museum. Children's art, interactive installations and activities such as role-playing, music and storytelling are used to raise awareness of the traditions and customs of India, Nepal and Bangladesh. **Glens Falls, New York**, through August.

Masterworks from the Age of the Pyramids showcases items that epitomize the lasting achievements of Egypt's Old Kingdom period, including monumental royal sculpture, stone vessels, jewelry, tools and weapons. **Cincinnati** Art Museum, through September 1.

Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur presents 150 extraordinary objects revealing traditions of royal life and death, excavated in the 1920's by Sir Leonard Woolley. They include the famous "Ram in the Thicket"—a statuette of a goat nibbling the leaves of a tree—jewelry, a comb, a wooden lyre decorated with a gold-and-lapis bull's head, games, furniture, and seals and vessels of gold, silver and alabaster, many found in the intact tomb of a queen or high priestess named Pu-abi who died between 2600 and 2500 BC, a high point of Sumerian culture. Catalog $50/$35. Fogg Art Museum, **Boston**, through September 1; Carlos Museum, **Atlanta**, October 26 through January 19.

Syria, Land of Civilizations assembles more than 400 cultural treasures—some never before seen abroad—to present one of the world's oldest cultural centers and explore some of the seminal events that took place there. Mesopotamia, the palace of Mari, the most ancient forms of writing and the earliest evidence of farming, Queen Zenobia and her oasis city of Palmyra, the first great Islamic dynasty in Damascus—all are parts of Syria's legacy. The exhibition also highlights the West's intellectual and scientific ties to Syria. Catalog. Fernbank Museum of Natural History, **Atlanta**, through September 2.

Arms and Armor for the Permanent Collection: Acquisitions Since 1991 celebrates more than a decade of acquisitions made since the reinstallation of the Arms and Armor Galleries in 1991. A number of important gifts have significantly enriched the museum's collection, including examples of Islamic arms. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, September 4 through June 29.

The Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt illustrates the multifaceted nature of the Egyptian sovereign (priest, warrior, son of the gods) and sheds light on court life—the palace, family, court functionaries and the artistic expressions dedicated to royalty in life and death. Palazzo Grassi, **Venice**, September 10 through May.

Charles Masson: Collections in Afghanistan presents archeological finds collected by Charles Masson (1800–1853), the first explorer and recorder of ancient sites in the region of Kabul and Jalalabad from the Greek to the Islamic period (third century BC to 16th century). British Museum, **London**, September 12 through January 9.

Arabian Fest celebrates the culture and traditions of the Arab world with exhibits of calligraphy, photography, crafts, fashion, furniture, food and music, including a performance by Cheb Khaled. **Milwaukee**, September 13, 14 and 15.

The Classical Tradition in Anatolian Carpets presents more than 50 carpets dating from the 15th to the 19th century and constituting a body of art immensely varied in technique, design, symbolism and function. The exhibition looks at ways in which current artistic traditions in Anatolia develop from roots in a classical period of carpet design whose masterpieces have exerted compelling influence on many generations of weavers, and includes exploration of the design influence of Syria and Egypt to the south of Anatolia and Tabriz to the east, as well as the export of Anatolian carpets to the West. The carpets are displayed in pairs, trios and quartets that share the same design, emphasizing both continuity and change. Catalog. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, September 13 through February 16.

7000 Years of Persian Art: Treasures From the Iranian National Museum in Tehran provides a panoramic overview of one of the world's great cultures through approximately 180 objects that illustrate the most important phases of development. The emergence of agriculture—the so-called "Neolithic revolution"—is represented by two earthenware figures from the seventh and sixth century BC. The Bronze and Iron Ages are illustrated by chloride vessels from Shahdad, pottery from Marlik Tepe, bronze objects from Luristan and metal and ivory finds from Ziqiye and Hasanlu. The Classical period features examples of silver and gold royal artwork from Persepolis, Susa and Parsagadae. The exhibit closes with objects from the early Islamic era, including silver, ceramic and glass items, and an elaborately decorated copy of the Qur'an from the ninth/tenth century. Kunsthal St. Peter's Abbey, **Ghent, Belgium**, September 13 through January 5.

Faras: A Cathedral in the Desert displays over 70 wall-paintings, stone friezes, stelae and funerary goods from the eighth-century cathedral at Faras that was salvaged as part of the UNESCO project to save antiquities from the Aswan Dam project. Once an important artistic center in the north of what was then known as the kingdom of Nobatia in modern-day Sudan, the cathedral was buried in the sand for centuries, preserving over 120 wall-paintings, many from the eighth to the 12th century, that reveal an artistic style independent of Byzantine influences. Kunsthistorisches Museum, **Vienna**, through September 15.

Serapis: The Creation of a God tracks the evolution of Serapis—a late fourth-century BC fusion of Egyptian and Greek beliefs—through 29 small sculptures, gems and coins. Serapis served as the dynastic deity of the Ptolemaic rulers of Egypt; the Romans adopted his cult, which spread widely throughout the empire. Walters Art Museum, **Baltimore**, through September 15.

Through Afghan Eyes: A Culture in Conflict, 1987 to 1992 is an exhibition of videos and photographs made by Afghans documenting the last days of the Soviet invasion, the resulting civil war and the post–Cold War era. The works provide intimate views of average people carrying out their daily lives against the backdrop of war. Asia Society, **New York**, through September 15.

Tomb Treasures from Ancient Egypt marks the first time that findings from excavations supported by the Ny Carlsberg Foundation from 1908 through 1933 are displayed together. Items on display include mummy cases, *shabtis* and weapons. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, **Copenhagen**, September 18 through December 31.

Imperial Portraits From the Mughal Courts complements the **Treasury of the World** exhibition, bringing together portraits from the reigns of five Mughal emperors on 13 pages from imperial albums, lent by the Sackler Gallery in Washington. The portraits illustrate how successfully Mughal court painters employed European illusionistic elements in the service of Persian artistic ideals. **Houston** Museum of Fine Arts, through September 22.

Trading Places: The East India Company and Asia marks the 400th anniversary of the first English trading post in Asia and covers the history of the company from 1602 until the loss of its monopoly in 1834. Trade with India, China, Indonesia, Japan, Persia and other Asian countries wrought long-lasting commercial and cultural changes for all those countries and helped establish Hong Kong, Singapore, Calcutta and London as international business centers. Goods such as tea, coffee, pepper, silk, porcelain, lacquer, textiles, gemstones, carpets, flowers, dyestuffs, scented woods, rare gums and essences became readily available in Europe, ushering in profound changes in people's lives at both ends of the trade route. The exhibit examines these changes and also features lectures, films and musical events, and a book of the same title. British Library, **London**, through September 22.

Teaching About the Arab World and Islam is the theme of teacher workshops co-sponsored by the Middle East Policy Council in Washington, D.C. and conducted by Arab World and Islamic Resources and School Services (AWAIR) of Berkeley, California. The program is fully funded and workshops can be requested by any school, district office of education or university. Scheduled sites and dates include: **Asilomar, California**, September 27 and 29; **San Francisco**, October 5; **San Antonio, Texas**, November 8–9; **Phoenix**, November 14 and 17; **Atlanta**, November 25. Information: 202-296-6767 or 510-704-0517; awair@igc.apc.org.

The Adventures of Hamza (the *Hamzanama*) is a fantastic traditional adventure story based very loosely on the travels of Hamza, an uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, who traveled the world spreading Islam. The narrative tells of his encounters with giants, demons and dragons; of abductions, chases and escapes; of those who believed and those who resisted the truth. The tale was told in coffeehouses from Iran to northern India and was

ROYAL SOCIETY OF FINE ARTS, JORDAN

Continued from previous page

also a favorite story for illustration. The greatest manuscript of the *Hamzanama* was made for the 16th-century Mughal emperor Akbar and originally included 1400 oversize illustrations, of which only a fraction survive. Sixty of them are presented, alongside new translations of the related text passages, in this exhibition, the first to examine narrative aspects of the text in such depth. A catalog and additional works displayed explore the pivotal role of this manuscript in the development of Mughal painting. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, through September 29; Brooklyn Museum, **New York**, November 1 through January 26.

Gustave Le Gray: Photographer features more than 100 works, spanning the period from the 1850's to 1867, by the artist who spent the last 23 years of his life in Egypt, teaching drawing to the sons of the khedive and photographing ancient sites. Getty Museum, **Los Angeles**, through September 29.

October >>

Nomadic Art of the Eastern Eurasian Steppes presents over 200 bronze, gold and silver works such as horse tack and harness fittings, chariot fittings, belt ornaments, garment plaques, weapons and vessels that reflect the cultural exchange between China and the West in the first millennium BC. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, October 1 through January 5.

The Arab Heritage in the Culture and Welfare of the West is an international symposium organized by the foundation La Huella Árabe and the Polytechnic University of Valencia to explore aspects of "the West's forgotten debt to Arab culture." Speakers will discuss water power, water legislation, ceramics, paper, silk and a range of agricultural crops in relation to Europe and the Americas. Information: huella-arabe@terra.es, +34-91-579-6268, fax +34-91-570-2476. **Bancaja, Valencia, Spain**, October 1–3.

Red Sea Trade and Travel: Study Day includes illustrated lectures on the aromatics trade, the links between Sheba and Axum, the Greco-Roman influence at the end of antiquity, Arab merchants of the Middle Ages, navigation and commerce from Aden, the Ottomans, the coffee boom and an 18th-century shipwreck. Workshop on second day open to registered participants. £25 per day. Information: nbadcott@british-museum.ac.uk. British Museum, **London**, October 5–6.

The Queen of Sheba: Treasures from Ancient Yemen examines the early history of the ancient Arabian kingdom of Saba through rarely seen paintings, drawings, clothing, jewelry, funerary busts, religious iconography and architecture. British Museum, **London**, through October 13.

Earthen Architecture: Constructive Cultures and Sustainable Development is the theme of six separate, intensive courses in project design and building and conservation techniques, many of which are drawn from traditional construction methods of the Middle East. Course lengths vary from four days to four weeks; all instruction is in French. Information: www.craterre.archi.fr. CRATerre-EAG, **Grenoble, France**. Courses: October 14 through 31.

Origins and Influence: Six Centuries of Design in Anatolian Carpets is the theme of the 25th annual rug convention, whose programs expand on the museum's exhibition **The Classical Tradition in Anatolian Carpets**. Events include lectures, gallery walk-throughs and receptions. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, October 18 through 20.

In the Shadow of Your Wings: Animals in the Bible and the Ancient Middle East includes exhibits from pharaonic Egypt in its exploration of human-animal relations. Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst, **Munich**, through October 20.

Discovering Egypt examines the lives, beliefs and possessions of the people of ancient Egypt. Items in the exhibition include a painted mummy coffin, gravestones and paintings of ancient sites made by the excavators themselves. **St. Albans, Hertfordshire, England**, through October 20.

Glass of Imperial Rome from the John F. Fort Collection. Imperial glass, dating from the first century BC to the mid-sixth century of our era, was introduced during the *Pax Romana*, when political stability allowed craftsmanship and commerce to flourish across the extent of the Roman Empire. The innovative glassblowing technology thus spread rapidly, and was taken up and later elaborated in the Islamic lands of the Mediterranean and beyond. **Houston** Museum of Fine Arts, through October 20.

From the Nile to Rome: Ancient Architecture, a Virtual Reality is an invitation to travel from the Temple of Amenophis IV at Karnak to the Circus Maximus in Rome and to discover how today's archeologists use the iconography of the past to create three-dimensional models of major monuments. Musée Archéologique, **Dijon, France**, through October 21.

The Myth of Tutankhamun features a 24-square-meter walk-in replica of the 20-year-old pharaoh's burial chamber along with artifacts that illuminate his life and relationships, especially with Echnaton and Nofretete. The history of the burial chamber itself is also documented. Badisches Landesmuseum, **Karlsruhe, Germany**, October 25 through February 23.

Desert is an extensive exhibition about the natural and cultural history of the North African desert realm and its fascination for humans in past and present. Produced in cooperation with the national parks service of Tunisia, Desert presents sections on life in the desert, exploration, geology and paleontology, the changing desert, the desert as laboratory, the oasis, deserts of the Earth, people of the desert and the desert artwork of Richard Long. Catalog: €19. Information: www.wueste-wueste.de. Hessisches Landesmuseum **Darmstadt, Germany**, though October 27.

Sudan: Arabia and Black Africa on the Nile shows the immense cultural variety in what, politically, is one country. There are some 600 different tribes; the north is Arab and Muslim, and the south is African of many differing religions. The Kingdom of Kush flourished here, leaving temples, pyramids and remarkable art objects. The exhibition includes living spaces, utilitarian objects, artwork, weapons and clothing. Schloss Schallaburg, **Loosdorf, Austria**, through October 27.

Silver Speaks: Traditional Jewelry from the Middle East reveals the myriad roles ornamentation plays in Middle Eastern women's lives, from asserting personal identity and proclaiming status, to warding off misfortune and providing financial security. Bracelets, anklets, finger and toe rings, headdresses and hair ornaments, earrings, necklaces, buckles, belts, chains, charms and amulets from Oman, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria and Kurdistan will be on display, along with selected costumes from the region. The Bead Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, October 27 through May 31.

Hatshepsut: Queen of Egypt, the only female pharaoh, was one of the most significant figures of Egypt's 3000-year history. Following her husband's death, she displaced her minor stepson to rule for 20 years; she built the temple at Deir el-Bahri. The exhibition focuses on Hatshepsut's political influence but, in displaying artifacts from the Berlin Egyptian Museum and Papyrus Collection, also reveals the high standard of Egyptian art in her time. Historisches Museum der Pfalz, **Speyer, Germany**, through October 27.

Treasury of the World: The Jeweled Arts of India in the Age of the Mughals shows some 300 pieces dating from the mid-16th to the early 18th century from the al-Sabah Collection of Kuwait. In addition to earrings, pendants and bracelets, the show also features a superb collection of daggers with jewel-encrusted scabbards and hilts (including the famous Ruby Dagger), as well as jeweled boxes, cups and gaming pieces. Catalog $30. **Houston** Museum of Fine Arts, through October 27.

The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353 focuses on the period of Ilkhanid rule when contact with Far Eastern art of the Yüan period transformed local artistic traditions, especially the arts of the book. Some 200 objects are on display, including illustrated manuscripts and architectural decoration. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, November 5 through February 16.

Modern Mongolia: Reclaiming Genghis Khan challenges the traditional view of the great conqueror by inviting the visitor to see Mongolia through the eyes of his modern descendants. Three life-size dioramas of *gers* (the Mongolian word for "yurt") incorporate many of the exhibition's 192 costumes and artifacts, shown in America for the first time. The three *gers* chart the impact of Mongolia's three-stage political evolution—feudal, communist and democratic systems—on the lives of both nomads and city-dwellers. Rare archival photographs reconstruct 20th-century nomadic life; four films made especially for the exhibition provide historic background and help illuminate Genghis Khan's relationship to contemporary Mongolians' democratic ideals. Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, **Washington, D.C.**, through October 25.

^ A *ger* with Mercedes-Benz, Tuv Aimag

November >>

At the Beginning of Time: Egypt in the Fourth and Third Millennium BC. Kestner Museum, **Hannover, Germany**, from November 14.

Up the Nile: Egypt in 19th-Century Photographs showcases approximately 45 photographs of Egypt and includes some of the earliest camera images of the country's dramatic landscapes, inhabitants and imposing monuments. The pyramids of Giza, the temples of Karnak, Luxor and Abu Simbel, the mosques of Cairo, and the cataracts of the Nile are depicted in exceptionally fine prints by the first generation of photographers working in Egypt, including Maxime Du Camp, Félix Teynard, John Beasley Greene, Ernest Benecke, Gustave Le Gray, Francis Firth, Felice Beato and W. Hammerschmidt. **Minneapolis** Institute of Arts, November 16 through April 13.

The Arab Horse in Islamic culture and civilization, and its expansion into the West, are covered in five thematic and chronological sections: pre-Islamic Turco-Mongolian, Iranian and Arab horsemanship; Muslim Arab horsemanship; the horse as symbol of power and authority; the horse as "hero" of religious and profane literature; and the diffusion of the Arab horse in the West, along with its mythology. The exhibits include trappings; horse-themed ceramics, metalwork, textiles and enamel works of art; illustrations from *furusiyya* manuals and literary manuscripts; and orientalist paintings and sculpture. Institut du Monde Arabe, **Paris**, November 25 through March 30.

Later >>

The Battle of Qadesh: Ramses II Versus the Hittites for the Conquest of Syria, took place at the end of the 13th century BC as the culmination of a long rivalry for control of the region between Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean—and the extensive trade that passed through that territory. The battle ended without a clear victory for either side, but Ramses portrayed it as a great victory for him, and it is from his archives that we learned of the battle. Using a broader range of sources, this exhibition attempts to answer the most important question about this first recorded battle: Who won? Museo Nazionale Archeologico, **Florence, Italy**, through December 8.

Egyptian Odyssey: Fact and Fantasy examines the development of Egyptology and the phenomena of "Egyptomania" in 19th- and early 20th-century European and American literature, music, decorative arts and architecture. Berman Museum of World History, **Anniston, Alabama**, through December 29.

Herzfeld in Samarra displays the notebooks, sketchbooks, travel journals, watercolors and ink drawings, site maps, architectural plans and photographs—most focusing on Samarra, the temporary capital of the Abbasid caliphs (836–892)—of Ernst Emile Herzfeld, one of the most prominent archeologists and scholars of Islamic art in the first half of the 20th century. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, through January 5.

Kenro Izu: Sacred Sites Along the Silk Road displays approximately 27 large-format platinum prints of sacred sites in western China, Ladakh and Tibet. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, through January 5.

Secrets of Silk traces the life cycle of the silkworm and examines how generations of weavers and embroiderers have exploited silk's unique properties to create splendid textiles. Items on display include a 16th-century Ottoman cope, a sarong from the Malaysian court, an Afghan turban, a Turkmen *kapunuk* (a textile "welcome," hung around doors) and elegant Persian silks. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, through January 5.

Under Foreign Influence: Eastern and Western Enamel illustrates the various enameling techniques of Islamic, European and East Asian traditions through the presentation of religious and secular objects ranging from the 12th to the 21st century. MAK Museum, **Vienna**, through January 12.

Ancient Egypt is an elaborate recreation of the interior of an Egyptian temple complex, including the actual mummy of Padihershef, a 26th-dynasty Theban stonecutter, along with his decorated coffins, plus tools, baskets and other objects from everyday Egyptian life. Smith Art Museum, **Springfield, Massachusetts**, January 15 through January 6, 2004.

A Century of Collecting marks the 100th anniversary of the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology and offers nearly 700 objects drawn from a diversity of world cultures and civilizations. The collection includes items dating back to 4000 BC and features the funeral stela made for the Egyptian prince Wepemnofret, a diorite statue of the goddess Sekhmet and a papyrus-stuffed crocodile created in homage to Tebtunis during the Ptolemaic period. Also on display are field notes, photos and maps from the various expeditions sponsored by the museum. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, **Berkeley, California**, through March 1.

Nomads Between the Nile and the Red Sea presents the everyday life of the Abada tribes in southern Egypt and northern Sudan. Photographs, objects of everyday use and drawings by Abada schoolchildren reveal a nomadic culture in the course of change. Wereldmuseum, **Rotterdam**, through March 9.

Demonstrations of Ancient Egyptian Craftwork and Technology is part of a newly established exhibition featuring live demonstrations—using replica tools from the predynastic and dynastic periods—of drilling holes in stone vessels and beads and cutting reliefs into soft and igneous stones. Pharaonic Village, **Cairo**, permanent.

The Saudi Aramco Exhibit, newly renovated, relates the heritage of Arab-Islamic scientists and scholars of the past to the technology of today's petroleum exploration, production and transportation, set against the background of the natural history of Saudi Arabia. **Dhahran, Saudi Arabia**, permanent.

Information is correct at press time, but please reconfirm dates and times before traveling. Most institutions listed have further information available on the World Wide Web. Readers are welcome to submit information for possible inclusion in this listing.

Editors' note: Thanks to William LaRue for generous research that led to the map of the US Army Camel Corps' westward route published in "Camels West" (M/J 02, page 4).

While reporting two upcoming *Saudi Aramco World* stories in West Africa, contributor Louis Werner in March paid a return visit to the village of Aït Benhaddou in southern Morocco, where he had passed through while tracing caravan routes for the story "Across the High Atlas" (M/A 93). In that village, photographer David Melody made the cover photo of Malika ("Queen")—the only name she goes by—whom Werner found still spinning and helping to greet visitors outside her home. Her woolen yarn is used elsewhere in the town to make handwoven Berber blankets. Her city is one of the more than 600 towns, cities and neighborhoods listed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as World Heritage Sites. Blanket sales, and demand for her own craft, she says, are good these days, due to a tourist trade that continues to grow.

SAUDI ARAMCO WORLD
(ISSN 1530-5821)
is published bimonthly by
Aramco Services Company
9009 West Loop South
Houston, Texas 77096-1799, USA

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
Saudi Aramco World
Box 469008
Escondido, CA 92046

Subscriptions to *Saudi Aramco World* are available without charge to a limited number of readers interested in the cultures of the Arab and Muslim worlds, the history, geography and economy of Saudi Arabia, and their connections with the West. We can also provide multiple-copy subscriptions for seminars or classrooms. From Saudi Arabia, please send subscription requests to Public Relations, Saudi Aramco, Box 5000, Dhahran 31311, Saudi Arabia. From all other countries, send subscription requests to *Saudi Aramco World*, Box 469008, Escondido, California 92046-9008, USA.

Change of address notices should be sent to the addresses above. Please include an address label from a recent issue.

Back issues of *Saudi Aramco World* and *Aramco World*, where in print, are available without charge. (Very few issues published before 1980 remain in print.) Refer to indexes to determine which issues you require; please do not request more than 20 individual issues at a time. We can also provide bulk quantities of specific in-print back issues for use by classes, travel groups, museums and others. Write to Special Requests, *Saudi Aramco World*, Box 2106, Houston, Texas 77252-2106, USA.

Indexes: *Saudi Aramco World* publishes a cumulative index approximately every five years as a supplement to the magazine, and an annual index for the previous year appears in each January/February issue. The most recent cumulative index covers issues through 1994. Current index sets are available from Special Requests, *Saudi Aramco World*, Box 2106, Houston, Texas 77252-2106, USA.

Binders specially made to hold 12 issues of *Saudi Aramco World* are available at $35 a pair (including US shipping and handling) from AWAIR, 2137 Rose Street, Berkeley, California 94709. California orders must add sales tax; foreign orders must add $10 per pair. Make checks payable to "Binders" and allow eight weeks for delivery.