



Portrait of Nepal

A Country
Through it's
People

By Alex W Milne

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Alex W. Milne

Dedicated to Tschering and BD.

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Preface

A Portrait of Nepal was shot in 2009. A long time ago now. Since then Nepal has

had a very hard time indeed. Then I trekked to Everest from the road head at Jiri to Gokyo and on to Gorak Shep. In a month long wander, initially through the foothills, and then into the high mountains and passes. I took my time with my three accomplices going from tea house to tea house. The chance encounters along the way were rich and varied, as expected and form the bedrock of “Portrait of Nepal”. Jostling along the paths with porters and going in and out of houses meeting families, allowed me to chat with people and engage in a way that is difficult or impossible in other countries. But then Nepal is no ordinary country. The people greet you with a smiling embrace that is evident in the images; with an optimism for the future, despite the past.

I have produced this book nine years after my visit because I wanted to convey a sense of what Nepal is, through it's people. I feel that the collection of portraits transcend the value of the individual images. Back in 2009 when I presented them to groups of people they said they preferred them to my mountain images. That they had a special quality.

In the photographic world there is a tendency to undervalue portraits, which prevented me from publishing then. But things have changed in many respects and I now see them differently; as a whole and as an entry into this fascinating, beguiling country.

I hope you find that too.

Alex Milne July 2018.

Introduction

I have separated my portraits into loose categories in an attempt to give them greater meaning and to compliment them. Some of the subgroups, like the Everest Summiteers, were a natural fit, that evolved as I trekked around the Khumbu. There was an interesting correlation between the young men who owned a large tea house or hotel and having multiple summits of Everest, some more than eight. Also there is an image of Ang Phurba who achieved fame as the first Nepali to climb Kanchenjunga with Doug Scott. Then there are the school kids who universally want their portrait taken. I cherish memories of the young girls who sidled up to me in the middle of nowhere, with their pigtails and runny noses, smiling and asking to have their picture taken.

Porters





























Everest Summiteers

















Mothers























Kahan Bhetiyeh

क्षेत्रपाटी रु
मःमःसे







Traders and Avia Club























Farmers and Herders









Trekkers







Teachers
and
Pupils
and the Japanese Geology
Professor













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BR · CST, JPN

Sadhu







Buddhists









































Sherpas









Children

































































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DINING ROOM.



Families









Everybody Else
Maoists
Nurses
Tuq Tuq Driver
Michael Jackson























Philosophy and Technical Commentary

There are many ways to take a portrait and categorise it. There are broadly two

types here. There is the spontaneous, which is mainly children, but often porters who are shot with a 24mm wide angled lens, in an instant, otherwise the opportunity is lost. What results is an environmental portrait. It is a portrait, as Gainsburgh defined it, in the landscape. It has context and that context gives it a power all of its own. Then there is the more meditated portrait, taken after consulting with the subject. It more often than not will be in close, with a 50mm lens, and delves deeper into the person. It searches for the soul of the personality.

As I look at them I reflect on where these people are nine years later? Certainly I think the Icefall Dr perished in the Khumbu icefall shortly after this was taken. He was very proud of his years of setting up the ladders through the icefall. Likewise the Russian power glider pilot may well have been one of the pilots who perished in one of the frequent Avia Club accidents.

On a brighter side there is Sarita the go-to Pharmacist in Kathmandu. There is the receptionist at Avia Club, who posed for me wondering what this was all about? Finally one of my favourites is the owner of the Cho Oyu View Lodge in Gokyo, posing in the highest chocolate shop in the world. It was a huge compliment when he handed me a complimentary bar of chocolate, as I was leaving.

Technical

The images were shot with a Nikon D700 and mainly either 24 or 50mm

lenses using almost exclusively available light. I was assisted by my two Sherpa friends Tschering and BD, both of whom feature in the portraits, who were supplied by Doug Scott's Sherpa Cooperative, Community Action Nepal.

Other Books By Alex

Everest Here Continents Collided

The Shrinking Glacier Conundrum

India On the Move

Ethiopia; Addis Omo Lalibela

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