In 1971 a photo of a snow-covered chorten near a Buddhist Monastery inspired me to spend three months making a documentary of village life in the world's highest mountains.

You can see the film on YouTube .

I was 21 at the time, idealistic, somewhat fearless, and a film student at UCLA. My friends Ward Sellers and Alan Wald were traveling toward India, so I proposed to meet them there and go north to shoot the film. My UCLA advisor, Lou Stoumen, helped with approvals and 16mm film

equipment.

To prepare, I worked three jobs and alternated between daily jogging and swimming. Loaded with 66 lbs of gear, I set out alone, counting on snail mail to find my friends. The war between India and Pakistan was on, which led to missing flights and a scary air raid experience, but I managed to connect with Ward and Alan in New Delhi. Tibet was closed to all travelers, so we limited our plans to Nepal. When we arrived the Nepali people were warm and welcoming.

A few days later we flew from noisy Katmandu 80 miles west to Pokhara, a sleepy agricultural village. Asking around, we located an ex-pat English author whom we had contacted by letter. He helped us find two porters and a young Tibetan, Tom Ting, to translate. With gear loaded, the five of us trekked for a month in the western mountains of Nepal. I immediately got a bad GI bug for two days; this was in the middle of a drenching storm with leeches appearing everywhere. Our tent weathered it better than I did. When the clouds cleared we could see around us the incredibly green, verdant village of Biratante. We started filming at once.