

TROPENTEST

MIT

SIMSON

Tropics Trial with
Simson Mokicks
through East Asia

✿ MOKICK'S ✿

DURCH OSTASIEN







MOKICK
STAW



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Engine:	blower-cooled 1-cylinder two-stroke engine
Capacity:	49.6 cc
Performance:	3.4 H.P. at 6,500 r.p.m.
Clutch:	four-plate multi-disc clutch in oil bath
Gearbox:	foot-operated 3-speed gearbox in engine block
Electrical system:	flywheel magneto 6 V, 33 W spark plug SM 14-280 lead storage battery 6 V, 4.5 AH headlamp 15/15, dia. 136 mm 2 flashing trafficators on handle bars, 18 W each stop light 18 W tail light 5 W parking light 2 W horn 6 V
Frame:	drop-forged, tubular
Spring Suspension:	front wheel: telescopic front fork, spring elongation 105 mm rear wheel: telescopic forks, spring elongation 85 mm
Fuel tank:	capacity: 8.5 litres, mixture 1:33
Tyres:	20 x 2.75
Brakes:	full hub brakes dia. 125 mm, width of lining 25 mm
Weight empty:	73 kg (full)
Permissible total weight:	230 kg
Fuel consumption according to TGL 39-852:	2.6 litres per 100 km
Maximum speed:	60 km/h

We reserve the right to make alterations!

“He who takes a journey can tell about it . . .”

Now, Wolfgang Schrader, a certificated engineer, and Heinz Langer, M.D., toured East Asia for one year and they can certainly be expected to tell a fine tale that hangs thereby. They covered about 15,500 miles, riding their two Simson mokicks, and their almost inexhaustible stock of experiences is of equal interest to both the non-expert, who just wants to get better acquainted with land and people in the regions visited by the two globetrotters, and the automotive engineering expert.

Results of this out-size trial trip are just as impressive as their experiences: Simson “Star” mokicks proved staunch and reliable travelling companions. Their design engineers and the dependable staff of skilled workers of VEB Fahrzeug- und Gerätewerk Simson Suhl can be justly proud. The exceptionally high quality of their work has once more been clearly demonstrated. Presenting this booklet to you, we invite you to join us in this conviction.

VEB Fahrzeug- und Gerätewerk
Simson Suhl





BOMBAY -

MOKICK RIDERS PLEASE DISEMBARK!

There we are, full of expectations, looking over at the "Gateway of India", the landmark of Bombay. A voyage of nearly 6 weeks on board the "Schwerin", India-bound cargo-motorship, is coming to an end for us. The 10,000-ton ship of the "Deutsche Seereederei Rostock" is carefully berthed by two tugs in the port's Alexandria Dock. The gangway is swung out, and immediately the dockers rush on board. The time has come for us to say farewell, and the test drive that would take us through various South East Asian countries is about to begin. There are many questions waiting to be answered. How will the engines stand the strain of the test? Which routes should we select for touring India? And above all, when will the rainy season start? The threatening dark clouds if nothing else serve to

❁ **INDIEN** ❁



remind us that the rains are imminent. The immediate problems, however, that we face are different. Our luggage has to be stowed away. Films, tape recorder and tapes, tent, water flasks and clothes are tucked into wallets mounted on both sides of the rear wheel. Medicines, first-aid supplies, spares and tools are readily available from sheet steel cases fitted between tank and seat. The cameras are placed in tank-mounted holdalls made of water-proof cloth. And on top of all this there are still 10 spare tubes, the tow-rope, four petrol cans, and the spare tyres to be stowed away. The "Stars" are charged to their limits, with the additional load amounting to about 70 kg.

The mokicks can now be brought ashore, which is immediately done by the ship's crane. A crowd gathers, since it is a strange type of cargo to be unloaded even in the Port of Bombay. The engines start at once, and our honour as mokick riders has been vindicated. Through heavy port traffic we roll down the first few yards on Indian soil to the custom's house. Custom-house authorities in India have their own ceremonial. Indian etiquette begins with a cup of tea offered to us. The amicability of this gesture does not seem to customs officers to be at variance with the severity of import regulations and their determination to apply them. Amicability remains the dominant note for three full days while the formalities are being unravelled.

We are in India. We can at least venture into the roaring traffic of Bombay. "Keep left - life is so sweet!" is the appropriate slogan. However great the temptation to use the right-hand traffic lane, we do not waver. Tightly wedged in between buses, lorries, rickshas and taxis we are carried along by the maelstrom of traffic to Marine Drive, the impressive Bombay seashore avenue. We are safe from unwelcome surprises only when we drive with maximum concentration. A taxi driver tells us that he has never even seen the traffic regulations. We get a first impression of things to come in the next weeks.

START IN TROPICAL RAIN

Menacing clouds black as lead cover the sky over Bombay, but the steady downpour has just stopped for a few moments. Experts have advised us against setting out for the interior of the country. We are not, however, particularly discouraged by the bad weather, since one of our main objectives consists especially in testing the series-produced engines from Suhl under the conditions of tropical rains. The cloud-bursts of the last days have flooded the streets of Bombay. Buses stand in knee-deep water in the main street of Sion, a suburb of Bombay, abandoned by passengers and drivers. Lorries struggle wearily to force their way through the water, and we have not a dry stitch left on us even before we reach the two-land highway leading to Agra. The rain begins again with unabated fury, penetrates the water-proof wind-cheaters and collects in our shoes. The deeper sections of the highway form small lakes. The water splashes up to the engines and keeps attacking us from above and below. We have soon found out that the mokicks will readily stand a water depth of 35 cm provided we keep up a corresponding speed. The front wheel must deflect the water at handle bar level. Only once a passing lorry showers us with an amount of water in excess of what the engines can take. They begin to sputter and stop at last with an agonized sigh. The necessary cleaning of spark-plug and air filter proves rather wearisome and difficult, since there is neither a dry handkerchief nor a dry cleaning rag available. It takes us half an hour to restart the engines. Due to the left-hand traffic in India the air filter ordinarily mounted on the right-hand engine side is particularly affected by splash-water, but a simple reversal of the air intake silencer location brings quick remedy. Our trip continues for several days in the steady downpour before the clouded sky relents and only occasional thunderous showers cross our way. And then travelling along the track at an unabated speed of 60 km/h. (appr. 37 m.p.h.) we skid suddenly, and the two of us land softly in the roadside ditch. The clay dust deposited in some places on the road by the great number of cattle and vehicles has been turned into a treacherous mud by the rain, and we find a certain comfort in the fact that even our four-wheeled traffic partners have some difficulties in tackling it. Cars and lorries slow down to walking speed, and when they have to give way to approaching traffic they slide off the asphalt carpet and skid to a standstill with the engine screaming and the wheels racing helplessly. After some days, however, we have acquired a certain driving routine and can average 250-300 km (155-186 miles) per day. For proper evaluation of the performance of our "Star" mokicks let us state that we did not meet any two-wheel vehicle far and wide during the monsoon period.

BULLS CONTRA "STARS"

We had got used to Bombay traffic, but on the highway we have to relearn our lessons. Even the official travel guide to India points out the irregular behaviour of ox-cart drivers. "Traffic regulations," it says, "do not mean anything to peasants; they are used to thinking in terms of years and not of minutes". We can only confirm this statement. Stubbornly these high-wheeled carts keep to the centre of the roadway and are rather hesitant to let an approaching vehicle pass. Only prolonged hooting will induce them to give way.

There are herds of zebus and water-buffalo roaming the roads of India, animals apparently not claimed by anybody, and the number of cows and oxen all over the country amounts to more than 230 million. Peaceful herds of cattle squat on village streets, and you have to be awfully carefully driving at night. We realise that we will have to be extremely cautious. There is no saying what direction the animals will take running away when being passed, and we cannot avoid crashing now and then. More than once we have to turn to the first-aid kit to dress our bruised elbows. Another lesson we learn is to be careful when dealing with oxen. The Indian



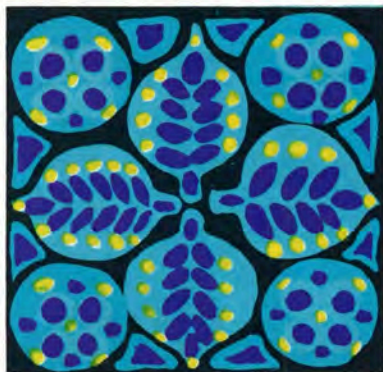
ox is usually tame and lazy, but one day we become acquainted with one of the unpleasant variety. Like many times before we wind our way through a herd of cattle, obviously too fast, when one of the young bulls lowering its horns charged Wolfgang's mokick. We may have enraged it shattering the herd's serenity, or excited its fancy by the red colour of our mokicks. We accelerate slightly, and the danger of being speared from behind has passed. This has been quite a surprise for us since usually the bulls and cows will not let anything disturb their equanimity and will remain unimpressed by lorry or car, the drivers' obscenities or even the herdsman's whips. According to Hindu teachings they are sacrosanct, are respected in even heaviest traffic and are seen to rest in supreme indifference on road junctions of big cities. Most highways in the world are used by the same types of vehicles, more or less loud and emanating penetrant smells when powered by an engine, while the power of those that are energized on vegetable fuel rarely exceeds 1 h.p., and all are afflicted with disadvantages. Here in



India, however, we meet a different and far better type of transport – riding elephants. No need to worry about missing bridges, no spares problem, and a serene silence on board. Staff expenditures, of course, are somewhat larger than for the mokick. Besides the actual rider enthroned on the animal's back, there is the driver indicating the direction with a sharpened stick, and the arrangement calls also for a lamp-carrier looking out for the way at night or illuminating the elephant's rear for the benefit of approaching vehicles, just as required. And there is no problem of an elephant being pushed aside onto the summer road by a lorry, while we, on the other side, are frequently forced off the asphalt by oncoming traffic. On one of these occasions there comes a lorry driven by a bearded Sikh and makes Heinz, who is ahead, retreat to the extreme fringe of the road, when there is a loud report and the air we have carried all the way from Dresden leaves the rear wheel tyre. A jagged knife has cut the tyre right across. What is to be done? The spare tyres are deposited in Bombay, a distance of more than 600 miles. A strong trunk strap serves as a remedy. We change the tube, bandage the tyre, screw the ends of the strap together and continue our trip. In the next large settlement we manage to locate a vulcanizer. Hats off to Indian craftsmen; we are immediately served. The cut is elaborately stitched together, and a hand-sized rubber patch is then attached by vulcanization. We can carry on with our trip and travel another 3,000 miles with that particular tyre.

GREEN LEAVES - RED TEETH

Every day we have got to face the problem of food though there is actually no choice left to us. We have to get used to Indian fare, i.e. massalah, rice and chapatti. In addition there are bananas and mango fruit available which are particularly fresh and juicy in the country. Massalah, or curry as we call the spicy, pungent sauce, is prepared anew every day by the Indian housewife in a kind of sacred ritual and according to an individual receipt, quite different from the curry powder available at home and manufactured in factories. Various spices are crushed on a grinding stone and mixed into a pulp with water. Further



❁ KASCHMIR ❁

constituents are saffron, caraway-seeds, cardamom, pepper, fennel, mustard-seed, coriander, mace, ginger, garlic, onions and, above all, chilli, that small terribly pungent bean-type pod pricking the tongue like fire. Even hardened Hungarians accustomed to Cayenne pepper are said to have shed tears eating massalah. In the town of Mathura a teacher invites us to dinner.

We accept gladly since besides carrying out our test programme we are keen on learning more about the way of life of the Indian people. Our host places small bowls made of leaves on a clean mat on the floor and indicates with his hand that we are welcome. In vain we look for spoon or fork and, still undecided, stir the rice and curry holding a piece of chapatti, flat maize cakes baked in a clay oven. Quite astonished, our host watches us. At last he forms little balls of rice and massalah and offers us the leave-bowls with a radiant smile. We swallow desperately and then experience the delayed action of the massalah, whose exceptional pungency forces tears into our eyes. Betel is served for dessert. With experienced hands our friend moistens the leaves of the betel pepper, limes them and spreads them with gatha, a boiled resin compound of the gatha-tree, then he scatters crushed betel-nut over them and rolls the leaves. Our host becomes aware that we are not particularly eager to partake of the "dessert", to simplify matters he just pushes the little rolls into our mouths. We start chewing and experience a tanninlike, not unpleasant taste, but the promised refreshment stays away. The gatha makes our teeth look red as if they were bleeding. In the days to come we get used to the pungent Indian food, but we are certainly quite free of any temptation to turn into betel addicts.

MOKICKS CUTTING A DASH IN NEW DELHI

We arrive at New Delhi, the Indian capital. We have travelled more than 2,300 km (appr. 1,500 miles), and the vehicles have stood their first test well, despite monsoon rain and mud-covered roads. Even the heavy strain they were subjected to did not prevent the 50 cc. engines from giving us the 60 km/h (appr. 37 m.p.h.) on level roads stated by the manufacturers. Sometimes when we were in a particular hurry the speedometer went even up to 70 km/h. (appr. 43.5 m.p.h.) while we were overtaking, a speed constituting the actual limit for Indian road conditions. The manoeuvrability of our vehicles and the fact that we were superior in avoiding road holes allow us to travel faster than long-distance buses and lorries. Our vehicles did not require any repairs apart from the tyre puncture mentioned. Holding a press conference for Indian dailies in New Delhi we inform them of the successful test carried out during the rains, and we have to answer a wide range of questions. Interest is usually centred on technical details, but we are also asked about our impressions of the Indian people. It is no exaggeration to say that we have been deeply impressed by the hospitality of the Indian peasants. An interview with "All India Radio" provides an opportunity of thanking all those who contributed to the success of the first leg of our trip through India. The next day the Indian dailies inform their readers of our tour and find words of praise and enthusiasm for our venture.

ENDURANCE TEST IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYA MOUNTAINS

Travelling on the highway between New Delhi and Chandigarh, the ultra-modern Punjab capital, we make good progress. The road is wide enough, and ox-cart drivers seem exceptionally willing to observe traffic regulations. Then friends in New Delhi wanted to dissuade us from going into the Western Himalaya Mountains. "Disastrous weather in Cashmere! Connection to Srinagar interrupted by landslide!" were the reports in the papers. But we intended to test our vehicles under extreme stress, anyway, and the rainy season had, in addition, ceased days before. Again the sky is dominated by the sun burning mercilessly down upon us. After the town of Jammu the road leads in serpentine up to an

altitude of 2,000 m, then down again into deeply incised valleys. The unique beauty of the country situated at the foot of the Himalaya is fascinating, but soon we have to devote our undivided attention to the road. The splendid asphalt covered highway seems to have been swallowed up by the ground. The slope of the mountain shows the wide gully of a landslide. Broken trees and large rocks obstruct the way, and we can only proceed step by step. Mile-long traffic jams are held up by a road-construction site, where the entire road had been swept down into the abyss. Thanks to the manoeuvrability of our "Stars" we can pick our way among the waiting lorries, the Indian road construction workers lend a hand, and the obstacle is soon surmounted. Again the road leads uphill. Oncoming lorries keep us for minutes submerged in dense dust clouds reducing visibility almost to nil. The road is everywhere devastated, frequently torn up to half of its width, and the dangerous damaged spots poorly marked by stones are traffic traps that have already consumed their first victims. We notice a lorry smashed up among the rocks on a slope and are not surprised to hear that the regular bus service Jammu - Srinagar is up to 20 hours behind schedule. We make relatively good progress, but the dust covers the sunglasses, closes our eyes and invades our hold-alls, while the sun burns mercilessly and heats the plate parts up to boiling temperature. We dread the possibility of a breakdown occurring on this punishing course, but our reliable companions do not forsake us. At last we reach Banihal, a village situated on the mountain slope that bounds the world-famous Cashmere Valley on the South. For the third time on this route we dip into our purses and pay the road levy. Ahead of us is the 2,200 m high Banihal mountain pass still to be conquered before we arrive in Cashmere. Once again we subject our mokicks to an excessive strain, until a poster announces the Jawahir tunnel: "Tunnel ahead, drive slowly! Taking photographs strictly forbidden!" We stop and join the queue of vehicles waiting at the tunnel entrance for the green light. The last oncoming vehicles leave the tunnel, and the lights switch to green. The initial tunnel lighting is as bright as day, then the light is gradually diminished until the eyes have adapted themselves to minimum lighting. It is icy-cold here, but the coolness is welcome. Halfway through the tunnel, however, the lining covering the tunnel ceiling ceases and we are drenched by real torrents. The road becomes slippery. Heinz skids and can just regain his balance at the last moment. The noise of the engines grows into a terrifying roar. Lorries are closely behind us, with their drivers continuously sounding their horns. We are obviously too slow but we prefer safety to a few seconds to be won, particularly in that dark tube of a tunnel. A thunderstorm is waiting for us at the exit. Automatically we reach for our wind-cheaters since the sight of the huge natural spectacle over the Cashmere Valley has made us forget that we are already completely drenched. This is Cashmere, a land acclaimed by the Great Moguls: "If there's a paradise on earth, it's here, here, and nowhere else." Set in snow-covered mountains in all their majesty the Cashmere Valley stretches below us.

The road leads downward in steep serpentine. Tall poplars reminding us of home line both sides, and the rice fields show the young plants in their tender green. The climate is similar to that prevailing in our own latitudes. There is deep snow in winter, spring sees daffodils, carnations and almond-trees blooming, in summer there are crowds of people relaxing at Lake Dal, and autumn changes the green of the leaves into the gayest colours.

It is evening when we reach Srinagar, capital of Cashmere and Jammu, the Indian state. We stop at a street crossing and are immediately surrounded by a crowd talking insistently to us though we do not understand anything at first. Offers and prices are hurled at us, and then we realise gradually that we are being solicited by a group of houseboat agents. We follow a young man who has impudently seated himself on one of our mokicks and stay for the night in his houseboat, fancifully named the "Blue Bird".





SRINAGAR - VENICE OF THE EAST

This is the slogan of the travel agency brochures, and actually the two cities have one thing in common—canals. Like a network intersecting the town they branch off from the Jhelum River and Lake Nagin. We leave the mokicks ashore, hire a shikara, a boat resembling Venetian gondolas, and see the typical sights of Srinagar. Houses built on the embankment rise straight out of the water, and their filigree-like carving on oriels and balconies indicates that native arts are still alive here. Old masters with Moslem caps pushed backward hammer delicate lace patterns out of nut wood in their workshops. The clatter of the weavers' looms can be heard from the river. Cashmere silk and Cashmere shawls are in demand all over the world. Washer women sit along the bank loudly smacking their washing on steps leading down into the water. Hundreds of houseboats are at anchor in the river, a floating suburb of Srinagar. And there is still another attraction — floating gardens, islands made of grass banks held together by reeds and aquatic plants, with tomatoes, cucumbers and other



vegetables thriving in abundance. The peasants use boats for harvesting and row their produce to the market or offer their vegetables from a floating stall. Lake Nagin harbours the luxury-class houseboats, with water-ski fans swinging elegantly across the unrippled surface of the water. Lotus-flowers bloom in the water near the shore. It is a peaceful sight, but however tranquil the atmosphere appears to be, the quarrel between India and Pakistan overshadows the fair-like valley and we can only hope that the desperate conflict dividing the two nations over this country will be brought to a final and permanent peaceful solution.

SURGICAL OPERATION WITH DARNING-NEEDLE AND SEWING-THREAD

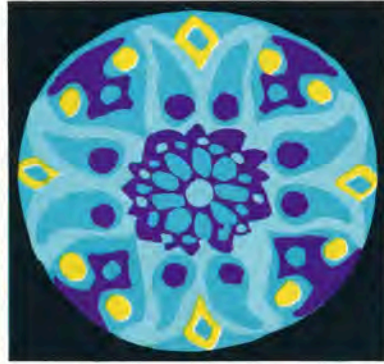
We roll through the wide plains of Northern India, having stayed briefly in New Delhi and Agra, the city distinguished by the Tadj Mahal. We have been deeply impressed by the ancient temples of Khajuraho and the commotion in Benares, the Holy City on the Ganges, but we must press on. A new country is waiting – Nepal. The engines drone on, and when we manage to keep up our speed of 60 km/h (37 m.p.h.) we will reach Patna in the evening and cross the frontier to Nepal next morning. But this is a black day for Wolfgang. A lorry approaches at high speed and does not turn aside for one millimetre, forcing Wolfgang on to the heavily corroded summer path. Wolfgang crashes badly hitting his head against the ground and losing consciousness. He bleeds from various wounds on elbow, eye brow and chin, with the chin wound gaping particularly wide. Taking a quick decision Dr. Langer reaches for darning needle and sewing-thread and makes several stitches. Damage sustained are bruised ribs, a black eye, a molar tooth lost, concussion of the brain, a battered mudguard, a broken foot rest and smashed sunglasses.



“STARS” ABOVE THE CLOUDS

The Nepalese frontier officials wish us luck on our way before we start for the most punishing stage of our trial trip. Ahead of us are the steep turns of the “Tribhuwan Rajpath”, the only communication between Katmandu and India. Built with Indian technical and financial assistance, the 75-mile-long road high up in the mountains was opened to the traffic in 1957, after three years of hard construction work. Up to that time the Mahabharat Mountains had completely closed Nepal against any motor traffic. Marco Polo, the great Roman globe-trotter, wrote of Nepal: “The country is wild and mountainous and rarely visited by strangers, whose presence is not tolerated by the king.” Today Nepal has thrown open its gates to tourism. Most of the tourists, however, travel by plane carrying them from Patna to Katmandu in a short time. Only a few are prepared to tackle the passes of the Tribhuwan Rajpath, whereas we regard this highway as an idela trial field for the Suhl mokicks. In a courageous layout the narrow asphalt track winds up into the mountains. Landslides caused by the recent rains have in some places raised the road level by several yards. Taking shingles and crushed stones in our stride we climb up higher and higher. Dangerous hairpin bends on dizzy slopes call for maximum concentration. We approach the clouds, and then we are sub-

merged in thick fog. Oncoming vehicles, ghost-like in their appearance, approach and pass us and disappear again in the intense grey of the clouds. Then, after an uninterrupted three hours’ drive in the whisking sea of clouds, the dark blue of the Nepalese mountain sky appears at last. We have reached the highest point of the “Tribhuwan”, the Jhimban-Jatang Pass, 2,500 m high. Our engines have carried us up to this altitude almost without any effort, and we have once again cause to marvel at their power and performance. The pass opens up a fascinating view of the snow-covered Central Himalaya Mountains. The summits of Dhaulagiri, Himalchuli, Manaslu, Langtang and Ganesh Himal and the Annapurna Massif, highly coveted by mountaineers all over the world, salute us. We are deeply impressed by the immense scenery of mountains covered by eternal snow, the landscape of central Nepal with the terraced rice fields and the scattered farm-houses. We look into the laughing faces of the Nepalese road construction workers, see them waving their hands and hear their greeting “Namaste”. Before pressing on for Katmandu, the capital, we spend the night on a stone ledge near the road. The following day sees us in Katmandu with its royal residence. The town is situated in a fertile valley set in snow-covered mountains. With its pagodas and temples, its ancient houses side by side with modern buildings, countless pedestrians in alleys and streets, its money-exchangers and its bazaars displaying sparkling



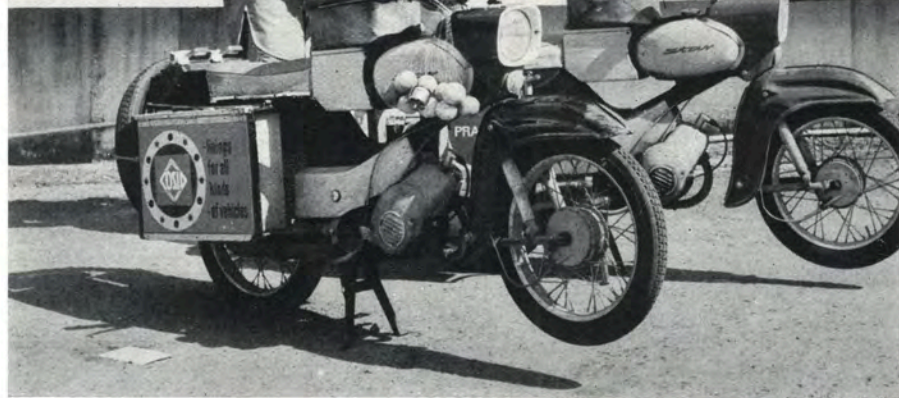
✿ **NEPAL** ✿

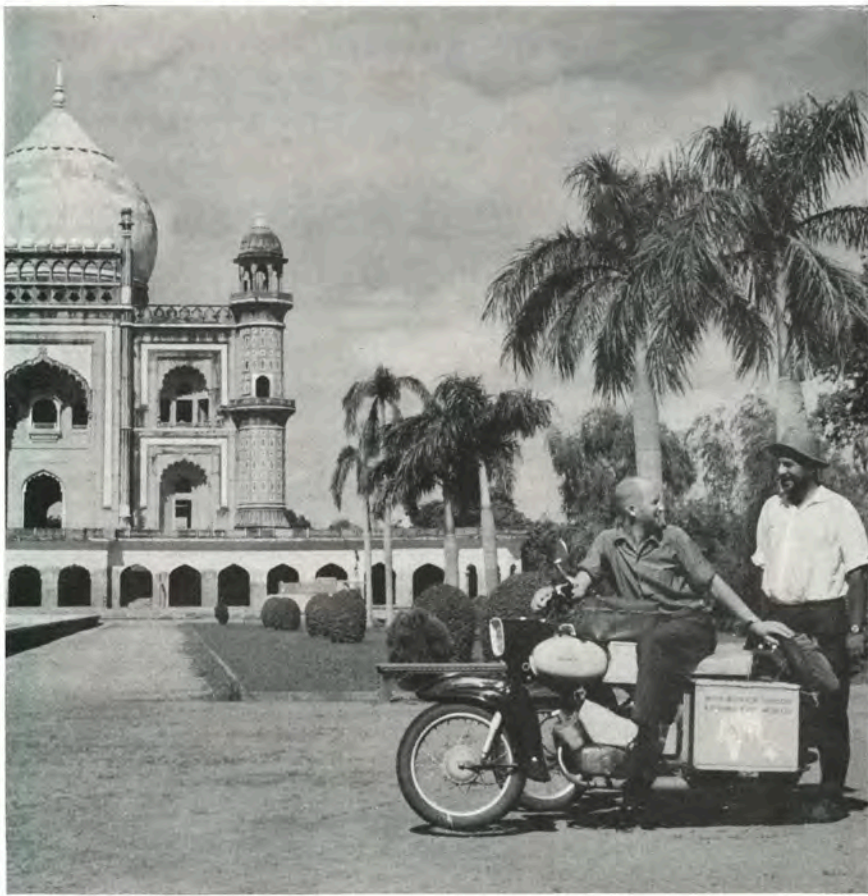
brasses, the town presents life in oriental diversity. With our “Stars” we cause considerable sensation. We are literally besieged by young people, who ply us with questions and offers and follow us right up into shops and our friend’s flat. The attractive appearance of our vehicles and the fact that they have successfully navigated the difficult and steep “Tribhuwan Rajpath” are conspicuous evidence of particular quality for bidders. We spend the next day sightseeing in the environs. Nagarkote is said to afford a view of Chomolungma (Mount Everest). The way leading there is full of stones and so steep that only rovers and mopeds can use it. Taking a routine look in the rear-view mirror Wolfgang suddenly notices that Heinz has disappeared from view. Quickly he jacks up his mokick and runs back. There is a suspicious noise in the grass five metres below the edge of the road, and looking more closely Wolfgang sees Heinz standing near his almost undamaged vehicle. He had had to avoid large rocks and had turned aside on to the grass at the roadside, without any idea that the leaves of grass covered a deep opening. Wolfgang is quite prepared to believe Heinz when he tells him that he, in spite of a strange feeling in the region of his stomach, has kept up a stiff upperlip. The combined effort of ten peasants is required to move the mokick back to the right way after its escapade. It is well worth taking the trouble, however; once we have reached Nagarkote we can actually see, though far distant, the summit of the world’s highest mountain.

e...and death

HOLIDAYS FROM THE HIGHWAY

We leave our Buddhist monastery lodging at the "Lotus Hill" of Katmandu, leaving the mokicks in custody of the monks. We want to acquaint ourselves more intimately with the life of the Nepalese mountain peasants and have a closer look at the giant mountains, and our vehicles would not be of any use on the narrow muletrack leading to Muktinath, a place of pilgrimage. In Pokhra, starting point of all mountaineering expeditions leading into the regions of Dhaulagiri and Annapurna, we hire a carrier, a local man who takes up part of our luggage and knows the route well. Our way leads us through icy cold glacial torrents, past rice fields and mountain villages, over steep slopes up to the wide rocky valley of the Krishna River. While there had been rich vegetation around Pokhra, there was nothing but bleak desert landscape up here at this height. For some days we have to follow the river bed, marching on its stones until we finally reach Muktinath, a place of pilgrimage 4,000 m high up in the mountains. The friendly villagers are very hospitable. They offer us food, tea and lodgings, and we live together with them and gain an insight into the severity of their life. Eleven days after we had set out in Katmandu we return to our mokicks, having walked a distance of 239 kilometres (appr. 143 miles) and climbed ascents totalling a height of 15,000 metres.





FROM KATMANDU TO CALCUTTA -

1,000 KM (650 MILES)
COVERED IN THREE DAYS

With hot brake drums we speed along the serpentine of the "Tribhuvan Rajpath" down to the plain Terai region of Nepal. This time formalities at the Nepalese frontier are the simplest possible. It is a Saturday, Nepalese red-letter day. We are permitted to leave the country without passport check and customs inspection. The Indian frontier officials work quickly and all formalities are soon over. We are back in India and have to get used again to the herds of cows obstructing the streets and the many pedestrians leisurely sunk in their day-dreams hogging the centre of the highway. Unfortunately we have to manage without a horn, but we had to give up our batteries in favour of carrying the spares. We try to attract the attention of pedestrians and ox-cart drivers by disengaging the clutch and revving up the engine, but we are rather unsuccessful. Heinz tries to clear the way by shouting but is completely ignored by the villagers, who walk along in somnambulist confidence. After a three days' journey we reach the outer suburbs of Calcutta. Our mokicks have travelled over a distance of 470 km (appr. 295 miles) today, almost without any break. It has taken us only three days to cover the distance of 1,000 km (appr. 650 miles) from Katmandu to the capital of Western Bengal.



❁ **SÜDINDIEN** ❁



ON A PLEASURE CRUISE THROUGH SOUTHERN INDIA

Our days in Calcutta had been filled with press conferences, desk work and sightseeing tours. Then we continue our trip through the mountains of Orissa and the wide open plains of Andhra Pradesh, reaching Madras after ten days. Once more we have to brave the monsoon rains. It takes us another three days to cross the Indian subcontinent and reach Goa, leaving the rainy regions behind us. The countryside of Goa is lovely with its many palm trees, and the people living here are cheerful and responsive, but we do not tarry. We are looking forward to Cape Komorin, our next destination. The long coastal road, which will one day connect the southern point of India with Bombay, is still in the process of construction. Should we make an enormous detour by choosing the interior route? We decide to make at least an attempt of following the coast. Mile-long construction sites, by-passes leading through practically pathless terrain that has been marked by lorries leaving deep tracks, all these must be taken in our stride. Fine dust par-



ticles obstruct the air filter pores, which require daily cleaning. The demands we make upon our engines mount with rising temperatures. We cross the Kalinadi by car ferry and press on, mile for mile further to the south. The sea has cut deep bays into the land. Primitive sailing boats serve as ferries where bridges will be constructed at some time in the future. Soon after we are confronted by another bight, but there are no sailing boats waiting, let alone a car ferry. We have to be content with a dugout, and our "Stars" fit into the canoe as if cut to size. Our boat has a list of some degrees to port, but it carries us safely to the opposite shore. In Mangalore, the small town on the Malabar Coast, we alter our course and turn again into the mountains. The "Blue Mountains" succeed again in surprising us with clouds and rain. It is quite cold at this altitude of 2,300 m. Then we descend to Kerala with its warm and humid climate.

We spend Christmas with friends in Madras, but the end of the year sees us again on the Malabar Coast.

By an extraordinary stroke of luck the "Freundschaft", a cargo motorship of the „Deutsche Seerederei Rostock“, enters the port of Cochin on New Year's Eve. For Heinz this means a reunion with the ship on board of which he had served as ship's doctor for one year on the South America run. Trivandrum, capital of Kerala, the Indian federal state, is our next station, and then at last we reach Cape Komorin, the extreme southern point of India. In front of us is the Indian Ocean, on the righthand side is the Arabian Sea, while the Gulf of Bengal stretches on the left-hand side. A long journey is behind us. We leave India convinced that we have made a small contribution to the friendly relations between our countries.



MALAYSIA



CROSSING TO PENANG

The "State of Madras", the Indian liner, is waiting for her passengers at the quay of Madras. The superiority of our vehicles is once again strikingly demonstrated, they are light and easy to handle and can be stowed away in dugouts or on board of passenger liners without any difficulty. During the crossing to Penang (Malaysia) the mopeds stand on deck. Safely lashed with ropes they stand the passage just as well as we do, and not even the seawater we take over does any damage to the paintwork. After a passage of six days the "State of Madras" anchors in the port of Georgetown, on Penang Island.

The next day the ferry carries us to the Malayan peninsula, Malacca. Under the scorching equatorial sun we travel along the wide asphalt road passing tin mines and rubber plantations. Superfast highway cruisers overtake us in rapid succession. Traffic is more sweeping but also more reckless than in India. Our destination is Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia, perhaps the most modern town in South East Asia. Tall buildings, elevated roads and the infinitely heavy traffic are the peculiar features of the metropolis of Malaysia.

NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATION IN TROPICAL RAIN

On board of MS "Freundschaft" we had celebrated the turn of the year in the conventional way, and in Kuala Lumpur we witness the Chinese New Year's celebrations. People keep banging explosives in the streets for days, since according to traditional opinion the spectacle is expected to drive out evil ghosts. The Year of the Dragon comes to an end on January 20, 1966, and the Year of the Horse is ascending. For the second time on this journey we welcome another New Year.

The next day sees us on our way to the eastern coast of the Malayan peninsula. Rubber plantations stretch endlessly, now and then replaced by jungle, whose uniform green colour has long since ceased to delight the eye. However narrow the peninsula is, there is a large difference in climate between the western and the eastern coast. We had left Kuala Lumpur in bright sunshine but were once again met by rain on the eastern coast, this time pouring down at a torrent that almost causes us to despair. But the rain does not only thwart our own plans, even the New Year's celebrations of the Moslems ordinarily held one day after those of the Chinese have to be postponed. The Keeper of the Royal Seal has been unable, on account of the rain clouds, to observe the crescent of the new moon indicating the turn of the year. The Council of Sultans decides therefore to have the celebrations held on the following day. On the beach of Kuantan, a small town on the South Chinese Sea, we welcome a new year for the third time, on this occasion celebrating with a Malayan family. They wave at us while we pass their handsome bungalow and invite us to sit down on the porch of their timber-house: "Selmanat Hari Raya - Happy New Year!"

The rain increases every hour, and even the native people cannot predict when this deluge will be over. It may go on for weeks, but we are bound to get back to the western coast. Meanwhile the road leading to Malacca has become almost impassable. Mile-long lakes cover the asphalt road. The water reaches up to our hips while the vehicles are submerged right up to the tank in the gurgling flood. We simply have to press on since the validity of our visa is running out. We remove our holdalls and carry them over to the opposite "shore", then we seal carburettor and exhaust port with cleaning rags and finally we push the vehicles through the water. Several of these "lakes" are navigated without any effects upon engines, which are always ready to start again, and we have left the queues of cars and lorries far behind. At last the water manages to penetrate into the engines and it takes us hours of work to get them going again. There is always the same routine to be followed, i.e. kick the starter, dry the spark plug, kick the starter, dry the spark plugs - a procedure that slowly consumes our strength in the pouring rain, when suddenly a fresh idea occurs to us. We turn our mopeds upside down, with complete success. A muddy liquid pours out of the spark-plug hole. The engines start, running irregularly at first, but picking up speed soon. We continue our trip to Malacca and Singapore, and the bright weather prevailing there reconciles us with the inclemency of the rainy season. There is another country coming up on our programme - Cambodia. This time we part from our "Stars", forwarding them to Cambodia by ship while we use the airliner of the "Royal Air Cambodge", which will take us to Phnom Penh in three hours.

"MISSION OFFICIEL"

The DC 3 of "Royal Air Cambodge" coming from Singapore flies a wide circle over Phnom Penh. Will there be somebody waiting for us on Pochentong Airport? We hope so and are not disappointed. A fair-haired young man walks up to the passengers waiting to pass the customs, looks round undecidedly but then comes straight at us. "I suppose you will be the moped riders," he says, "glad to see you!" The commercial





KAMBODSCHA



adviser of our consulate-general in Cambodia shakes hands with us. Two cardboard boxes are placed on the desk of the customs office. In former times they had contained bottles of lager, now they serve us as suitcases for the few things we carry. The customs official looks suspiciously at our globetrotter luggage and begins to untie the strings. The representative of our consulate-general interrupts him with "Mission officiel", and the official stops, gives us a resigned smile and hands us the parcels. When we reach the exit of the airport building there are representatives of the Cambodian sports movement and more members of the consulate-general waiting for us. We are surprised and happy about this reception. Again we cause considerable sensation with our mopeds in Phnom Penh. The colourful advertisements attached to our holdalls attract groups of people, and we are bombarded with questions. They are the same questions concerning our vehicles, or our trip, which we have already answered hundreds of times before. The sale of "Stars" manufactured by VEB Fahrzeug- und Gerätewerk Simson Suhl has recently



started in Phnom Penh, and our trial trip is therefore a particularly topical event at that time in Cambodia. Before setting out on our round trip we inform the local press of the route we have travelled so far. Sihanoukville, the seaport on the Gulf of Siam, is our first destination. The port of Sihanoukville built only a few years after the country obtained independence ensures and facilitates the extension of oversea trade, and ships from many nations have unloaded their cargoes at the up-to-date wharfage. We drive on through the southern provinces of Cambodia, stay for short rests in Kep and Takeo, and then we turn north. Our "Stars" travel easily on the good roads of Cambodia.

After a trial trip of 25,000 km (appr. 15,500 miles) on the dusty highways of India, the high mountain roads of Cashmere and Nepal, the flooded tracks of the Malayan peninsula, and the sun-scorched country-roads of Cambodia, we reach Phnom Penh, our final destination, in the early days of March, 1966. We can state that the "Stars" from Suhl have proved their excellent efficiency in the extreme climatic conditions prevailing in the tropical countries of South East Asia. Our vehicles are exhibited at the GDR export show, and apart from some dents in the tank and the front-wheel mudguards they still look quite attractive. It is no wonder, therefore, that the exhibition stand of VEB Simson Suhl displaying the test vehicles is always crowded with visitors. Boarding the plane taking us home we find it difficult to part from our two-wheeled companion that have served us so faithfully for one year. They will follow us one month later together with other exhibits. We are full of gratitude and appreciation for the working people at the Suhl factory, whose skill and efficiency provided us with top-quality vehicles and who therefore have a decisive share in the successful completion of the test trip.



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GRAFIK, GESTALTUNG:
ECKART DEWAG DRESDEN
FOTO, TEXT:
DIPL.-ING. SCHRADER
DR. LANGER
REDAKTION:
VEB SIMSON, WERBEABTEILUNG
ORGANISATION: W. KOCH
DRUCK:
DRUCKEREI FORTSCHRITT
ERFURT
V/4/59-15 (Ag 21/1/11/67) 43967

