

# Mountain View



*A newsletter by and for the Randolph Community, published by the Randolph Foundation*

## On the Rooftop of the World, part 2

*By Bob Kruszyna*

Westerners tend to think of Buddhism as an ascetic, philosophical, mystical religion, passive and tolerant in nature. Suppression of the self and earthly desires, following the teachings of the Buddha (The Middle Way), leads, over perhaps many reincarnations, ultimately to enlightenment, surcease, "nirvana". The actual practice of the religion bears, in my view, no resemblance to this doctrine. It is pagan, idolatrous, animistic, and especially, superstitious. The amount of flamboyant imagery and gaudy decoration, the number of images of deities of all sorts, and the unthinking obeisance of the worshipers surpasses even that of the medieval Roman church.

Probably most familiar to us are prayer wheels and prayer flags. Inside the wheels, which are spun clockwise, are stuffed papers inscribed with prayers whose texts, let alone meanings, are incomprehensible to the simple peasants who spin them. For them, good luck is the hoped-for outcome, not "enlightenment". Likewise with the omnipresent prayer flags. When they flutter in the wind, the message inscribed on them is wafted heavenward. In a shrine or pilgrimage site, the worshipers circulate in clockwise fashion, frequently mumbling the well-known Buddhist prayer, "om mani padme hum", whose real meaning is open to interpretation. (Nevertheless, I found myself doing it!). They fumble with a string of "rosary" beads to keep count. Three, thirteen, and 108 are especially propitious numbers. If that isn't superstition? As they pass by one or another of the innumerable statues of deities, they invoke a blessing by leaving an offering or lighting a yak-butter candle. The most popular of the Tibetan deities is not the Buddha himself but rather the Bodhisattva of Compassion, Avalokitesvara. Indeed, he is the patron saint of Tibet, and the Dalai Lama is considered his reincarnation.

Tibet offers countless pilgrimage destinations to the faithful. Sacred mountains and lakes are particularly sought after, usually involving long journeys for folk who have no wheels. They even make it harder for

*See "Rooftop", page 6 ....*

## The Great Flood of 1927 and its Effects in Randolph

*as described by Louis F. Cutter*

On November 3 and 4, 1927, a strong tropical disturbance with gale force winds (though short of a hurricane) came up the Connecticut Valley, dumping enormous amounts of rain, particularly high up on the mountains. The only actual measurement of rainfall was

made by John H. Boothman, one of the Selectmen of Randolph, a builder and hotel keeper. He had a repair job in the upper part of the Moose River valley [probably at the house subsequently owned by Elizabeth Hilles, now by Keith Dempster]. After the storm he found an open box that had been left on the ground. He measured 7 inches of water in it. As it is likely that the box leaked, 7 inches is indicated as a minimum rainfall for the whole storm...in the valley.... it seems to me probable that the precipitation on the mountain slope was considerably more than that in the valley.<sup>1</sup>

The oldest man in Randolph remembered no flood approaching this one, and had never heard of any. Mr. L. M. Watson is 77 years old and except a short time in his youth has always lived in Randolph. His father lived in Randolph and his grandfather was drowned in trying to cross the Moose in time of flood, but Mr. Watson had never heard of a flood approaching this one. I have seen two rather big floods and several smaller ones at Randolph, but I believe the peak discharge of this one was double that of the greatest that I have seen before.

The flood that resulted in the Moose River valley cut Randolph off from the rest of the world for about a week. A landslide obliterated the RMC's Cascade Camp shelter, and another spoiled the waterfalls higher up in Cascade Ravine. The force of water pouring down Bumpus Brook destroyed a dam that W. H. Peek had installed to direct all of the stream's flow over Coösauk Fall. The Jefferson Notch Road, which crossed the South Branch of the Israel River 8 times in

*See "Flood", page 4 ....*