



DEVIL'S KITCHEN SHOLA, PALNI HILLS, TAMIL NADU.
Shola forests are montane evergreen tropical forests that are unique to the high altitude regions of the Western Ghats. Stunted by fierce winds, sholas contain a wealth of plant and animal species.

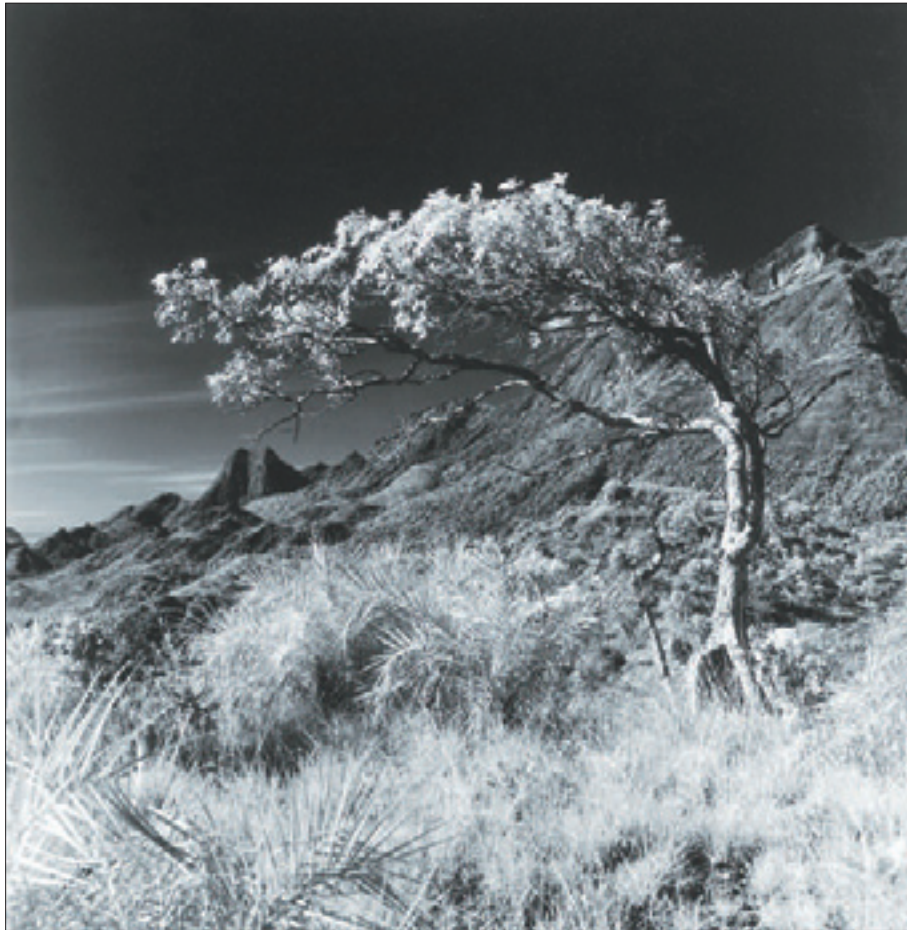
The India I See

*Photos and text
by Ian Lockwood '92*

I call India home. This may seem strange for a guy who was born in Kansas and looks like any other Midwesterner who might skip church in favor of a day of hiking. But aside from my years at Wooster, I have spent very little time in the United States. Our family has lived in South Asia for three generations, starting in the 1920s when my grandparents went to teach at the American College in Madurai. My parents have lived here most of their lives.

I chose to attend Wooster in part because of an old tradition of kids from my school, Kodaikanal International School, going to the College. I had a bemusing and sometimes difficult time adjusting to life in the United States while thoroughly enjoying the academic environment of Wooster. When I crossed the last I.S. hurdle and walked through Kauke's arch, I had little doubt about returning home to South Asia.

I started working in Bangladesh's vibrant community of non-governmental organizations. I researched and wrote reports, evaluations, and funding proposals for two years. I worked on issues of sustainability and conservation in a country known for its high population and poverty levels. Eventually I entered the education field. I have found my niche teaching environmental science, social studies, and photography to students at international schools. I completed six years of teaching at the American International School in Dhaka in June 2001. After a sabbatical year, I will resume teaching this fall at Mahindra United World College in Pune.



KALAKAD TREE, KALAKAD MUNDANTHURAI TIGER RESERVE, TAMIL NADU.
Some of the dramatic scenery and vegetation of the Western Ghats. The mountains are some of the first to rise from the plains near the tip of the Indian peninsula at Kanyakumari.



BULLOCK CART, MADHUPUR FOREST.
Madhupur is a moist, deciduous forest northwest of the capital city, Dhaka. It has now been largely degraded. A significant population of Garo tribals live in the forest. They survive despite widespread deforestation and the intrusions of outsiders.



KOLUKULMALAI VIEW, PALNI HILLS, TAMIL NADU.
Looking over a remnant patch of the grasslands/shola ecosystem.

Photography has given me a convenient outlet for my creative energies. At Wooster I worked for the College's photographer, Matt Dilyard, who encouraged me to pursue my vision of recording South Asian landscapes and people.

My current photographic work has focused on environmental themes in two geographic areas: Bangladesh and India's Western Ghats. In Bangladesh I recorded declining forest habitats in different biogeographic zones. The interest in forest conservation stems from my early childhood, when we lived in a expansive, moist-deciduous forest called Madhupur.

In my lifetime the forest was hacked away, resettled, and destroyed by short-sighted government policies and poor management.

The work on India's Western Ghats was influenced by my many years in the south Indian hill-station of Kodaikanal. Again, a concern for changing habitats and declining natural vegetation motivated me. The Western Ghats are the most significant mountains in India south of the Himalayas. They play a critical role in water regulation for the peninsula and also host spectacular biodiversity found nowhere else, yet little has been written about them. Since 1992



FARMER AND BANYAN, ASHULIA.

Banyan trees (Ficus bengalensis) are revered for reasons both practical (great shade) and sacred (they often function as a Hindu shrine). The advent of modern development threatens the trees. This banyan on the northern edge of Dhaka city has an uncertain future as the city spreads further into the countryside.



Ian Lockwood with his panoramic camera at "Arthur's Seat" near Mahabaleshwar, India.

I have explored the Ghats' many ranges, from Mumbai all the way down to the tip of India at Kanyakumari.

I choose to work in black-and-white because I feel that it has more impact and does justice to the phenomenal natural history of India and Bangladesh. I also enjoy being involved in the processing and printing of my work.

I continue to document the magical Western Ghats while starting work on some of India's other biological hot spots: the Andaman Islands and the North East Himalayas. Working with Mapin, an Indian art-book publisher, I hope to have a book out in a few years on the Western Ghats. E