

## Round Table: "Mt. Kailash Nature Park"

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- In 2003, the Tibet Initiative Deutschland published this photomontage of machinery for road construction under the title „Save Mt. Kailash“, aiming at the acknowledgment of the Mt. Kailash region as UNESCO World Natural Heritage. This failed due to severe environmental problems in the Mt. Kailash region and the veto by the Chinese government.
- This rumour was increased in 2011 to a great extent, when road construction machinery was reported to work on the Kora of Mt. Kailash.



The provisional bridge over the Dölma La Chu at the start of the climb to the Dölma La was washed away with the strong snow melting every spring.



A solid bridge was built some years ago. The construction machinery caused the rumour.



However, even the ramp of this bridge is washed away by the strong snow melting and needs repair every year.

The only way for a permanent road would be a viaduct high enough above the Dölma La Chu.

There are no signs of the construction of such an expensive viaduct.

### The political situation

- Mt. Kailash and Lake Manasarovar are most important pilgrimage sites not only for Tibetans, but also for Indian pilgrims, and since the last few decades also for visitors from the western world.
- After the Sino-Indian War in 1962, every year only 200 Indians were allowed to travel to Mt. Kailash, selected by sort of a lottery. This limitation was eased in the first decade of the new millenium, which resulted in largely increased numbers of Indian Kailash-pilgrims, who travelled in several groups per day of up to 200 Indian pilgrims each.

### The ecological situation

- In the cold climate of the Mt. Kailash area in altitudes of about 5000 m and above, litter and human residues do not decompose on the rocky soil frozen most of the year. Therefore, public toilets were urgently needed.
- Traditionally, many Tibetans are not used to environmental protective behaviour, also many of the visitors are not either.
- Many Indians set out for their pilgrimage, once they are retired, some of them not in a good state of fitness and with insufficient acclimatization to the high altitudes. Therefore, means for emergency rescue service has to be provided.
- Burri, Katrin: „Umweltsschutz in der Kailashregion“, 2005. (environmental protection) [www.kailashprojekte.ch/downloads/UmweltschutzKailashregion.pdf](http://www.kailashprojekte.ch/downloads/UmweltschutzKailashregion.pdf)

### Solutions to preserve the Mt. Kailash landscape 1

- Along the most frequented pilgrims' paths at the Kora of Mt. Kailash and the Kora of Lake Manasarovar several public toilets have been built.
- Drivable tracks have been prepared for the rescue of pilgrims with altitude related sickness, where possible. At Mt. Kailash these tracks lead from Darchen to the Drira Phuk Gompa and some distance of the climb to the Dölma La - but not up to the Dölma La - and from the end of the descent from the Dölma La back to Darchen. These tracks are also used by Tibetans for the supply of the little teahouses or tents, where they sell tea and noodles to the pilgrims.



The checkpoint for the Kora of Mt. Kailash close to the Darboche is reached by foot or by bus.

The small white building on the left side is a public toilet.

### Solutions to preserve the Mt. Kailash landscape 2

- Large parking places were built in the Barga Plain outside of Darchen and close to Tokchen, as well as close to the Darboche to keep big numbers of cars away from Darchen and Lake Manasarovar. Darchen, Lake Manasarovar and the start of the Kora of Mt. Kailash at Darboche can be reached in cars or busses hired from the official Operating Company.
- Like in the National Parks in the USA, special rules and regulations have to be obeyed to to preserve the holy landscape and the sensitive flora and fauna in this vulnerable region of the Holy Mt. Kailash and Lake Manasarovar.