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- **INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL MAPS AND BOOKS**
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AXIS OF EVIL MAPPING NEWSLETTER #4 OF 2018 – End of April – New Titles: see below for details

INTRODUCTION

Lan and I spent the first half of April in Asia, visiting Vietnam (Lan alone), Japan, China, and India. It was pretty hectic, but we survived! We'll provide some details below. As with all of our trips this one was all business and no pleasure. Seriously, we work hard on these trips, but yes, there are many enjoyable moments. Asia is the "in" place to travel these days, especially with political turmoil in the Middle East and the USA, so we used this opportunity to gather much useful information that will benefit future maps. We are now 'back in harness' and are catching up on the backlog of projects that constantly accumulate. Several new titles/editions have arrived, but even more titles have run out of copies, so we're busy updating and preparing even more exciting titles for printing.

TRIP TO CHINA

China is definitely a 'hot' touristic centre these days, and maps are mostly unobtainable there. Those one can find are mostly simplistic sketches or are advertising mechanisms to tempt the reader into visiting certain stores. On this trip, we used our ITMB Shanghai map to good advantage, and found it to be quite accurate, albeit dated by the rapid expansion of the Metro transit system. Shanghai now has 16 Metro lines and they are very efficient. We also used our ITMB map of China South, although as it turned out, the week-long tour we were on actually took us to only three cities and all were in the immediate area of Shanghai, so apart from saying that this part of China has lots of motorways and is interesting to see, we didn't actually see a large portion of the country. Regardless, the trip was worthwhile, as we visited three cities we have not previously seen (Suzhou, Wuxi, and Hangzhou) as well as having two days in Shanghai itself (population 33 million). Most nationalities require a visa to enter China, but one can usually obtain a multi-entry visa good for the length of the passport. One can also obtain a three-day 'stop-over' visa at the airport of arrival. There is a bit of paperwork to fill in, but it isn't complicated. China is very efficiently run these days and is a highly recommended travel destination, as long as one avoids political discussion. We went on a tour organized by a Chinese firm operating in Richmond, BC, and feel that a tour is good value for China. The cost was reasonable, being less than \$700cdn for the week, the hotels were all five-star quality, the food was good, and it was nice not to have to worry about luggage, transportation, or where to stay at night. We're reaching the age of not wanting to search out cheap hotels or lug our belongings on our back, but our ITMB maps would be useful for anyone going to China. Our guide advised that their company hosts 60,000 tour guests per month; this is a significant number!

TRIP TO INDIA

I was last in India in 1968, so a lot has changed. India is more prosperous than it was, and the physical infrastructure has greatly improved. However, India is still a generation behind China in its development. The country remains fragmented by a language dilemma that seems unresolvable. The caste system, while removed legally, remains deeply entrenched socially and this acts as a huge drag on the economy. The country remains deeply divided in its political viewpoints and intractable political infighting drains the country of much of its ability to move ahead. I would never encourage any country to follow the Chinese communist dictatorial form of governance, which I feel holds back China, but India's ability to progress is greatly limited by its own system of governance. That said, we were there as tourists, not critics, and we thoroughly enjoyed seeing Delhi, Agra and the Taj Mahal, Ranthambore Game Reserve and its tigers, and the Pink City of Jaipur. As in China, we went to India on an organized tour. We stayed in very nice hotels, travelled by air-conditioned bus, and ate at good quality restaurants. Yes, we tended to see only what was offered on the tour, and to a certain extent existed in a glass bubble, but we had plenty of free time to explore cities on our own. India is not a country to visit as an individual unless one is young and feeling immortal. It's a wonderful country, but not one for the faint-hearted. Food, for example, is spicy; one has to be VERY careful what one eats or drinks in order to avoid Delhi belly. We will be returning next year for a more extended visit.

JAPAN ON THE FLY

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Japan is the second most-developed country in Asia after Singapore. It is also one of the world's most developed economies and a generation ahead of China. We visited Hiroshima and Kochi in the far west of the country as part of a cruise we took with Royal Caribbean Lines, so we saw only a sampling of the country. It did, however, provide the highlight of our month-long trip. In a 7-11 convenience store, a young girl started following me around and became my new best friend. She was about seven and spoke no English, but we communicated by some means or other. Her mother was shopping with a friend and left without remembering that her daughter had been accidentally left behind. I realized this, so entertained the child until her frantic mother realized that she had mis-placed her daughter and ran back to the 7-11. To avoid the child realizing that she had been forgotten, I showed the mother the games we had been playing, then said goodbye to my new best friend and rejoined our tour.

IT'S WRITTEN IN STONE!

How often have we used the phrase 'written in stone' in relation to something regarded as being eternal, such as the Ten Commandments? Well, thanks to technology, waterproof map printing paper is now available made from stones. That's right – pieces of rock! This revolutionary, innovative, new paper-like product is comprised of calcium carbonate (i.e. ground-up rocks), recycled concrete, and a non-toxic biodegradable resin. Most importantly, stone paper requires no trees or water in its preparation, produces zero air or water pollution, and requires no harmful bleaches (unlike paper from trees), acids, or dyes. The carbon footprint for stone paper is 67% less than for paper produced from pulp. Stone paper is waterproof and tear resistant in the same way that applies to plastic paper. The difference is that plastic requires an enormous amount of energy to be usable and includes halogens and phthalates in its production process, and is not recyclable. Besides, plastic paper isn't made in America, and import costs are going up all the time. One ton of stone costs next to nothing and is in plentiful supply in Canada. Using that ton of rock to produce paper saves 20 trees, 16,000 gallons of fresh water, and saves 6 million BTUs of energy.

This is new technology. It has never before been used to print commercial maps – until now. ITMB is proud to announce that it has published the first-ever commercial map printed on stone paper. The process has been tested successfully on give-away maps provided by selected ski resorts on smaller sheets of paper, but our recently-published map of India is the first-ever large sheet ever used for a travel map. While ITMB is pleased to be associated with cutting-edge technology, our few newly-released maps are experimental. Will it stand the test of time? We don't know, but we're committed to finding out. Apparently, if a stone map is left exposed to direct sunlight for a year, it will start to decompose, but who leaves a map in direct sunlight for such a long time period? Even paper maps will fade away if exposed to direct sunlight over time. We are trying out stone paper for its obvious advantages and if the technology proves to be durable we will use it more commonly in the future.

The paper is about as heavy as laminated paper maps or most plastic paper used to make maps. Stone paper prints well, and our printer advises that the printing process is faster than with plastic 'paper' and much faster than with laminated paper. The printed stone paper folds easily into pleats and compresses naturally into an acceptable format for packing into bundles and storing in cartons and stands up properly on store shelves. It is also flame resistant, as it consists only of crushed stone and concrete. It is also freeze proof, as it contains no water.

The advantages of using stone over pulp for paper are considerable. The disadvantage is cost. It may be 100% Eco-friendly, but it is expensive to buy at this stage. Also, we can only print 10,000 copy+ runs economically, and most of our print runs are for fewer than 5,000 copies. However, we will be using stone paper for our next edition of BC South, and probably for a gradually increasing range of ITMB titles. ITMB has always been in the forefront of technology. We were the first map publishing firm to develop a computerized inventory control program, the first to use a fax machine, the first to use satellite imagery to prepare a commercial map (Cuba); now we're the first to print maps on stone. I never thought I'd live long enough to see something like this! Wow; written in stone!!

I DIDN'T KNOW THAT!

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Every day should include something that is a learning experience. The “I didn’t know that” concept does not include false facts or imaginary suppositions, or misleading information similar to what we’re becoming used to seeing politically, but provides real knowledge. My local newspaper recently published an article about William C. Durant, the salesman who cobbled together disparate companies to create General Motors, which was, until recently, the biggest car/vehicle manufacturer in the world. Durant started, like many of his generation, making wagons in the late 1800s. By 1904, his firm was making 150,000 wagons per year in multiple locations. He met David Buick, a plumber, who had made a motorized car but had no idea how to market it. Durant took over the almost bankrupt firm and within three years, the Buick car was second in sales to Ford – and for anyone with a Buick today, that’s the origin of the car’s name! In the next three years, Durant bought Oldsmobile, Cadillac, and a firm called Oakland. The latter firm had several models, but only one survived – Pontiac. He then met Sam McLaughlin, a Canadian carriage maker, and together they created General Motors of Canada and started manufacturing cars in Oshawa, Ontario. Durant then acquired various truck firms and merged them into the brand known today as GMC. By 1910, having expanded too rapidly, Durant lost control of his empire due to some poor investments, so he approached a young racing driver named Louis Chevrolet, who headed Buick’s racing team, and asked him to design a six-cylinder car, which was done and was manufactured in McLaughlin’s factory in Canada as – you guessed it – the Chevrolet! He used his successful investment in this Canadian car to re-gain control of GM in the USA, and introduce the Chevrolet to the American market. The master salesman who never made a car was now the President of the largest vehicle manufacturing business in the world (1915) but kept buying more and more companies and was soon over-extended again. Ousted from GM again in 1920, he formed Durant Motors in Toronto and did very well until the Great Depression. He declared personal bankruptcy in 1936, but a grateful GM paid his expenses until his death in 1947. GM continued to expand worldwide after WW2, adding such brands as Opel (Germany), and Holden (Australia) to its line and is still a great company, although it needed a US government bailout during the Great Recession (since repaid). What an inspiring story of entrepreneurship!

THE FASTEST TRAIN IN THE WORLD!

As congestion clogs roads and as most rail systems use trackage developed a century ago, governments are increasingly creating new high-speed rail systems to move people from point A to Point B. Japan probably still has the most advanced system of such trains, called Shinkansen, linking most cities in the country, but China but have almost as much fast train trackage and a remarkable network of comfortable high-speed trains. Various countries in Europe have also developed high-speed trains for use between major cities and are planning to integrate all the rail lines for passenger trains starting next year. All of these systems operate at top speeds of approximately 300 kms per hour, due to trackage and stopping constraints.

While I was in Shanghai recently, I took advantage of some free time to ride what must be the fastest train in the world. The Maglev line is powered by German technology and uses magnets to levitate the train slightly to reduce friction on the wheels. The train runs from the international airport (Pudong) to a transit hub in eastern Shanghai and briefly reached the speed of 423 kms/hr on its relatively short 20 km run. This is, by far, the fastest I’ve ever travelled on land or water. The line is one of the modern marvels of the world, but it is so expensive to operate that it is unlikely to be extended or to find favour. China wanted to purchase the technology from Siemens, but failed and lost interest in the concept. It was a thrill to say I travelled so fast, but I’m afraid that super-fast trains of the future will run on different technologies than Maglev, much to its manufacturer’s disappointment. It is, however, a great tourist attraction in Shanghai. Most individuals going to the airport use Line 2 of the Metro as it is much less expensive, but it was worthwhile going to Shanghai, if only to ride on the fastest train in the world!

CROOK OF THE MONTH

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This story emanates from New Delhi, India. I read it in one of the local papers during my visit there this month. It appears that a 22-year-old electrician fancied himself smart enough to rob a bank of its cash-dispensing machine. He wore a mask and long gloves to disguise his identity, entered the ATM booth and spray-painted the security camera, then started to work on opening the safe by using a blow-torch to force open the machine, confident that no one could see him. He didn't realize that spray-painting the CCTV camera instantly alerted security staff to something untoward happening and police were immediately despatched. Officers found Nazir happily melting away the door to the safe and took him into custody. The miscreant was so confident that no one could see him that he had not bothered to post a lookout man, nor did he make any effort to stop what he was doing even after the police arrived and were forcing open the door to the ATM booth. It just didn't occur to him that he could be caught!

A NOT-SO-FUNNY STORY

This story emanates from China, from another local paper, but relates to a situation that happened in South Korea, where a man, who was annoyed by a barking dog, threw a stone at it and unfortunately killed the animal. The 62-year-old decided to cook the dog. He then invited the dog's owner, his next-door neighbour, over for dinner. The two men enjoyed their dog-food dinner and it was only later that the neighbour wondered where his dog was and put two and two together. The neighbours are no longer on speaking terms with each other.

WORK IN PROGRESS ON CURRENT PROJECTS

Colombia is out of print. A new edition is at press; not ETA as yet.

Cook Islands is out of print indefinitely.

Georgia & Armenia suddenly had a surge in sales and is getting low on inventory. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Indonesia is now out of print. A new edition is being prepared; not ETA as yet.

Work is well underway for a brand new ITMB title, Japan Railway Atlas, coming this spring. No ETA at the moment. The current Japan Road Atlas is out of print.

Kuala Lumpur is now out of print. We are re-developing it into a new title for release later this year.

Lesotho is now out of print. We are working on a new map, combining Lesotho and Swaziland into a double-sided map; Swaziland is also getting low on inventory (see below).

Manhattan is out of print. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA is yet available.

Mexico City is out of stock and in the process of being updated. No ETA at the moment.

Morocco is now out of print. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA is yet available.

Namibia is out of stock. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA is yet available.

Quito/Central Ecuador is getting low on inventory. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA.

Samoa/American Samoa is out of print indefinitely.

Singapore is out of print indefinitely.

Swaziland is close to depletion. Later this year, we hope to release a combined map of the country, along with Lesotho on the reverse side; no ETA.

Tahiti is almost out of print. A new edition of this interesting travel area is being prepared; no ETA.

USA Southwest is essentially out of print. A new edition is being prepared; no ETA is yet available.

Vancouver Northshore Hiking Trails is out of print. A new combined map that will include the Fraser Valley on the reverse side is being prepared, but no ETA is yet available.

NEW RELEASES IN April, 2018

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Albania Travel Reference Map 2nd Ed. 2018 1:210,000 ISBN 9781553411079 UPC 815534110725 \$12.95 E9.50 8.95GBP – This is our second edition of Albania, and we have made improvements to the artwork, but not enough to justify changing the ISBN or cover picture. As a country, Albania is a bit of a mystery; ostensibly Muslim, it is surprisingly secular. Formerly ardently communist, it is the only portion of the former Soviet Empire to vote out the communists and establish a democratic form of governance. It is proud of its heritage, but would love to join the EU. As a country, it is pulling itself up by its own bootstraps, so to speak, improving infrastructure as it can afford to do so, without relying on loans or foreign aid. We enjoyed our time in the country, which is, after all, as Mediterranean as Greece. The map also has insets of Tirane, Dures, and four other urban areas. Albania is friendly, and border formalities are minimal. It is one of Europe's hidden treasures. **AVAILABLE**

Mexico South Travel Reference Map 4th Ed. 2018 1:1,200,000 ISBN 9781771294621 UPC 817712946218 \$12.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – The southern half of Mexico is one of the most popular travel destinations in the world. It contains 90% of all resort destinations in Mexico, and includes the heartland of cultural and historic Mexico. Whether one wishes to visit Puerto Vallarta, San Miguel de Allende, or Taxco, the western half of the country offers marvelous opportunities for exploration. The eastern half, on the reverse side of the sheet, portrays the Yucatan Peninsula, with all its many Mayan cities, Cancun with its many resorts, and Belize. Northern Guatemala, with Tikal and a dozen other ancient sites, is also on the map. **AVAILABLE**

World Wall Map (large size) Political Version 59x35" (blue ocean) 1:27,000,000 ISBN 9781771298957

World Wall Map (large size) Antique Version 59x35" (brown ocean) 1:27,000,000 ISBN 9781771298964

There isn't much one can say about a map of the world that is innovative or different. Obviously, these two maps, printed on paper, are worthwhile wall hangings. They are accurate, up-to-date, detailed, informative, and hopefully attractive. They are provided flat or rolled individually in plastic sleeves. We can bundle together ten or more into a roll to reduce shipping costs, but the bottom line is that the cost of shipping is very high for small quantities. The suggested retail price for each is \$26.95cdn/us E19.95 18.95GBP. ITMB also released two smaller-sized world maps last month. They would fit into most commercial laminating machines, and lamination would increase their value.

NEW RELEASES IN MARCH, 2018

Canada Travel Reference Map 2nd Ed. 2018 1:6,000,000, with detailed insets ISBN 9781771290142 UPC 817712901422 \$10.95cdn/us E9.50 E8.95 – This is our second stab at mapping the second largest country on earth, and we decided that a fresh approach was needed. Canada is too large to map in the same way that normal-sized countries can be portrayed, so we have prepared a political map of the country for this edition on one side, with each province or territory designated by a different colour and the road and rail network portrayed. Please keep in mind that Nunavut is four times larger than Europe, and that at least three provinces are each larger than all of Europe put together, and the vastness of Canada starts to sink in. Open this side and imagine spending six days and seven nights on a train just going from Toronto to Vancouver. This is a very accurate map, prepared by the Canada Map Office, and is in English and French. The other side of the page is where we have become innovative. It consists of 10 large inset maps of particularly noteworthy parts of the country for tourism. For example, the Rocky Mountains and Yukon have expanded coverage, as does Newfoundland (but not Labrador), the Toronto region, southern Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and the Ottawa to Montreal to Quebec City portion of central Canada. In other words, we portray the entire country on one side and the most important segments for tourism on the other side. **AVAILABLE**

World Wall Map (smaller size) Antique (brown ocean) Political Version (comes flat only) 2nd Ed. 2018 1:50,000,000 (33x20") ISBN 9781771298940 (No UPC code) \$14.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – ITMB has published four maps of the world for the past several years. All are political in format, and vary only by size of page sheet and colouration. ITMB has been selling maps as a retail venture for 38 years now, and the demand for a map of the world is constant. We accept that there are many excellent world maps on the market by a variety of firms, but we also accept that, as a major publisher of maps, we need to offer our designs to the world as well. This is the smaller sheet size version, using traditional brownish shades for the ocean. **AVAILABLE**

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World Wall Map (smaller size) Modern (blue ocean) Political Version (comes flat only) 2nd Ed. 2018 1:50,000,000 (33x20") ISBN 9781771298933 (No UPC code) \$14.95cdn/us E9.50 8.95GBP – This is the second of four versions of our ITMB World map that we are profiling this month. The other two will be noted next month. This particular version is the partner to the one noted immediately above. The information on both is identical; only the colouration is different. Some people like maps with traditional brownish ocean colouring, and others prefer the more modern blue ocean colouring. Both are excellent maps. This size is appropriate for customers having space limitations to display a map on a wall. It is also good for using as a desk covering. Both versions noted here can be laminated, either by ourselves or by any store with laminating equipment. We do not have a separate ISBN for either map, laminated, just a higher price. **AVAILABLE**

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