**Himalaya Paper**

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**The basis for producing water graphics in the studio**

**by Ursula Schmidt-Troschke**

“Himalaya Paper“ is the brand name for paper from the Kingdom of Bhutan and Nepal. In a paper mill established in Bhutan a few years ago, hundreds of different types of paper are hand-made under extreme climatic conditions. In summer the sun beats down on the lokta plants , and in winter they brave the biting cold and icy winds. The photonized qualities of this paper survive subsequent treatment during the exhaustive printing processes. This has been scientifically proven.

Remarkable are the people who cut the rapidly-growing lokta plants at heights of two to three thousand metres and carry them to the paper mill, where the stringy, tough scrub is processed into a so-called “pulp” with spring water. The thick liquid is carefully poured out of vats onto a sieve and, still on the sieve, shaken into a smooth layer. The residue liquid drops back into the vat. The mass, resembling cotton wool, is beaten out of the sieve. The leaves are left to dry on thin bamboo netting, steep rock faces or on trellises in the open fields. Each leaf is carefully controlled and classified. Faulty, torn or unevenly-shaped leaves return to pulp.

If one holds a sheet against the light, the plant fibres appear as a fine web. The weight of the paper is measured in grams per square metre.

The paper does not yellow because it is made with spring water without any chemical additives. Bookbinders like it because it has no running direction, so that each sheet offers greater “utility”.