

# The Amazing Adventures of **JOE REINHARD,** PhD



By Vicki Quade

Spread across an arid plain that lies between the Pacific coast and the Andean foothills of southern Peru, an enormous tangle of forms, the "Nazca Lines," poses one of the world's most tantalizing archaeological mysteries. Here a 200-square-mile expanse of land is embossed with piles of rock and shell arranged in lines that form more than a hundred giant geometric shapes and figures—animals, birds, insects, plants—some of which become coherent only when looked down on from an altitude of at least 1,000 feet.

Shirley MacLaine thinks the lines were built by, or for, alien from another planet, an idea popularized by Erich von Däniken in the book *Chariots of the Gods*. Von Däniken caused a brief stir in the 70s by offering intergalactic explanations for a variety of curious earthly phenomena, and the Nazca Lines gave him one of his most sensational points: these pictures were obviously meant to be viewed from on high, since the pre-Columbian people who made them did not have airplanes or helicopters, how else to explain the lines but by the agency of strange visitors from another planet?

Joe Reinhard has another explanation—one that isn't a little easier with the scientific community. Reinhard is an adventuring anthropologist currently affiliated with the Field Museum of Natural History; he grew up and makes his home—to the minuscule extent he can be said to have a home—in New Lenox, Illinois, a far-south suburb. He thinks the lines were

made by the Nazca people a millennium ago to honor the gods in nearby mountains, the gods who bestowed the water and the harvest. If they looked down with pleasure upon the drawings and offerings of the hopeful Nazca, perhaps they would grant rain and sufficient crops. Reinhard's suggestion that the lines relate to a mountain-fertility cult has been widely accepted in the field of anthropology. Peter Baumann, a well-known German author of anthropological books on the Andes, calls his work "a milestone in the history of Andean archaeology."

Reinhard has created two new subfields of anthropology: "high altitude archaeology" and "sacred geography." His work has taken him around the world, though the bulk of it has been done in the Andes and Himalayas. Here is a sampling of his contributions to the discipline:

- He discovered the last nomadic hunting and gathering tribe—the Baute—in the Himalayas. The Baute still kill monkeys with clubs and trade wooden bowls for grain. Reinhard came across them while investigating the yeti, the abominable snowman. Some villagers near the Himalayas believe that yetis are manifestations of mountain gods.

- He found and analyzed the world's rarest language, spoken by the Kusunda tribe in west Nepal. At the time, only three members of the tribe were living; Reinhard could find no relationship between their language and any other.

- He translated rare Tibetan manuscripts that turned out to be guidebooks to hidden valleys in the Himalayas—the stuff on which the legend of Shangri-la is based. Reinhard then located

three of the valleys listed in the texts. Under contract with the BBC, he filmed the traverse of a peak north of Everest and collected data on a hidden valley below that had been mentioned in the Tibetan manuscripts.

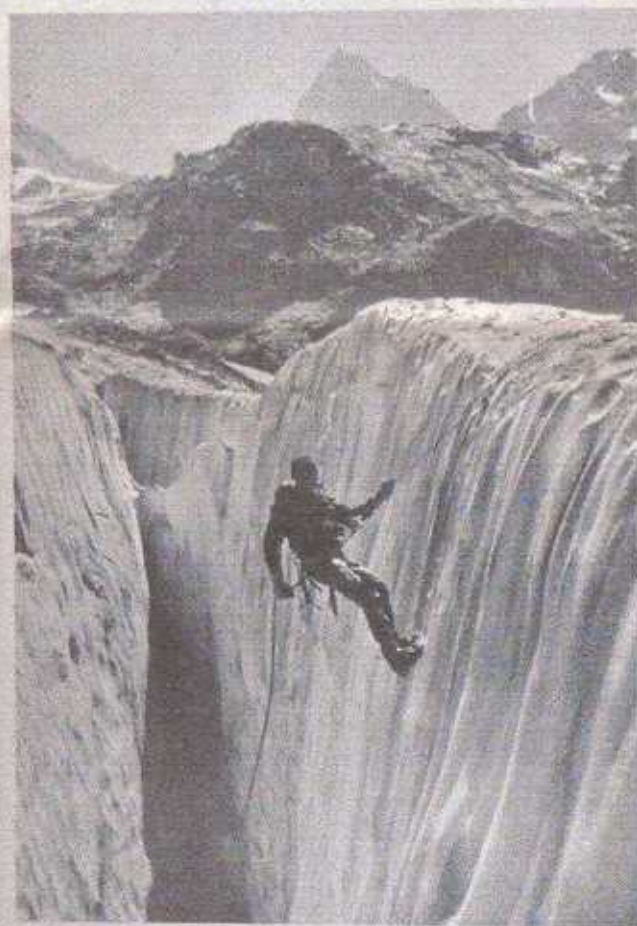
Tibetan Buddhists believe that mountain gods protect the legendary hidden valleys.

- He identified Chavin and Tiahuanaco, two of the most important centers of pre-Incan civilizations, as sites of mountain worship. At Chavin, north of Lima, stone carvings exist that contain elements of birds, serpents, and felines—all significant symbols of Andean mythology. At Tiahuanaco, southeast of Lake Titicaca in Bolivia, feline and serpent motifs similar to those at Chavin, as well as carvings with human elements, suggest the center was built as a ceremonial site. (In Andean mythology, deities who lived in mountains had human characteristics.)

- He climbed 10,000 feet in Chile to a crater containing the world's highest lake. Exploring underwater, he discovered a previously unknown ecosystem and a new species of zooplankton. The millions of crustacean larvae astonished Reinhard, as he was beyond the altitude at which fish and vegetation survive. He also found insect runs on the crater's rim.

- In other underwater work, he found and surveyed in Italy the first Villanovan (pre-Etruscan) village ever discovered in a lake. In Lake Titicaca on the western edge of Bolivia, he helped to resolve the controversy over whether underwater cities exist there. They don't.

All of this work has been accomplished on a minuscule budget and with little help. Reinhard could easily promote himself as a real-life Indiana Jones and parlay the image into big grant money.



**H**e's scaled the world's highest peaks.  
He's explained one of archaeology's  
most tantalizing mysteries.  
He speaks nearly a dozen languages.  
He gets a little nervous in supermarkets.

but that isn't his nature. He's had grants from the Organization of American States and the National Geographic Society. In 1965, he won a prestigious Rolex Award, which was created by the watchmaker "to provide financial assistance to persons with a spirit of enterprise in order to allow them to carry out unconventional projects."

Reinhard received a solid gold watch and 50,000 Swiss francs, or about \$34,000. It's the most money he's ever had to work with, more than five times what he usually spends in a year.

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"Decaf cappuccino"

Joe Reinhard, who is 45, speaks nearly a dozen languages, including the easiest on earth, but at the moment he is staring at a

waiter as though he's just heard a Martian dialect.

We're sitting in Cafe Albert, a little pastry shop on Elm Street that looks like it belongs in Vienna, which is where Johan Gjesen Reinhard studied half a lifetime ago. He is out of his element. A ruggedly handsome man, Reinhard can talk to you about the world's remotest corners, the mountaintop lakes he's flung himself into that other anthropologists had never heard of. But "decaf cappuccino" throws him completely.

Reinhard finds it difficult to come home for more than brief periods of

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time. "It's always hard to adjust to American culture," he admits. "I remember one return visit, I wanted a chocolate bar and I walked into this supermarket. There was a whole wall of chocolates, and I turned around and walked out. After not having access to something as simple as a chocolate bar, and then seeing more than you'd ever want, you're literally frozen. It's difficult to deal with the overabundance of American society."

The man adept at hiking days on end and scaling the world's tallest mountains began his odyssey, curiously, on some of the flattest land on earth. Growing up in New Lenox, he would camp overnight on creek banks ("My friends would say, 'Yes, yes, let's go camping.' And then nobody would show up. So I would go alone"), he'd wander prairies in search of Indian artifacts, and he'd practice the sprinting that brought him two school records at Lincoln-Way Community High School. Reinhard's 1961 time of 21.7 seconds in the 220-yard dash was never equaled at his school, and because the 220 is no longer run it never will be. His other record, 10.1 seconds in the 100-yard dash, was tied recently. Both those times would have been exceptional at any school, and at Lincoln-Way Community there was not even a track to practice on.

Reinhard was a mailman's son, the youngest of three children. When he was 16, he spent the summer on a Rock Island railroad line gang, digging holes, most of them by hand, and laying telegraph poles along the tracks.

The job took him to Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, and southern Illinois, where "it seemed like all the other workers were from the south."

"That's the first time I realized there were radically different cultures within the United States. And I learned that if you started something, you could stay with it, finish it. It was hard work, and I got beaten up at times, but once I got over the hump of being a pretty naive kid from the Chicago suburbs, it was quite rewarding. I've never had that same kind of work satisfaction since then."

Two years later, Reinhard was visiting a friend whose family had moved to Brazil, and that's where the anthropology bug bit. "I was hooked. Anthropology combines philosophy, learning about other cultures, exploration, discovery, in short, thinking and doing—all in one profession." He enrolled at the University of Arizona, then moved on to the University of Vienna, where he received his undergraduate degree and, in 1974, a PhD from the department of anthropology.

While collecting data for his dissertation, an analysis of shamanism and witchcraft in southwest Nepal, Reinhard lived among the people, learned native languages, studied primitive hunters and farmers, and investigated the "hidden valleys" of Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Here his ideas on mountain worship began to form, as he discovered that close to a billion nearby people, Buddhists and Hindus among them, consider the Himalayas sacred, believing them to be the dwelling place of deities and saints or the physical manifestations of the gods themselves. Reinhard discovered that shamans sometimes call mountain deities to protect people against illnesses and other misfortunes. In some areas, he says, the shamans are believed to undertake magical flights to

the sacred mountains in order to communicate face-to-face with the gods.

Having heard rumors of high-altitude Andean ruins that predated Francisco Pizarro and the other conquistadors of the 1500s, he set out to investigate in 1980. The quest, which began as a summer vacation, consumed him. He has found more than 50 religious ceremonial sites in Bolivia, Peru, Chile, and Argentina, on peaks from 17,000 to 22,000 feet above sea level. On many summits, he has found river stones, charcoal, and llama figures carved from rare spondylus shells, which were considered indispensable to the Incan ceremonies for obtaining water.

"I reached a point where patterns and findings began repeating themselves," says Reinhard. "It took time to gain an eye for symbolic structures and for tying together various bits of evidence to reconstruct what happened 500 years ago."

These ruins are by far the world's highest. They are among the few Incan religious sites to escape destruction by the Spanish. Among the ruins, Reinhard has found statues with clothing so perfectly preserved it could have been made yesterday.

Making the ruins doubly remarkable is the altitude at which they were built; in addition to the physical stamina required to attain those heights, the builders needed unusual courage to enter the domain of the mountains' deities and evil spirits. Reinhard discovered that the Incas knew more about mountain climbing than they've been given credit for. They'd solved many of the basic problems of high-mountain ascents. "We tend to take such solutions for granted today," Reinhard says, "but in mountaineering terms they represented a great step forward. One of these was the use of a base camp, with camps at intervals on

up the mountain. There are also buildings on the summits that clearly indicate they were used as temporary refuges, most likely for a single night. Offerings were made during the night or at sunrise."

The bedding was straw, and poles were jammed into the rock to support a blanket anchored by stones that became a sort of half-tent. The ascending Incas apparently wore wool caps with earflaps, and leather sandals or moccasins with wool socks. Reinhard found huge piles of wood on the summits and considerable ash, and he suspects that in such thin air, the Incas may have used some sort of oily substance as a starter to burn the wood.

He found corrals at the base camps of several mountains, suggesting that llamas were used to carry supplies. He thinks the Incas probably employed porters to help build and supply the camps.

An expert mountaineer who was a member of the 1976 American Everest expedition, Reinhard scales these Andean peaks using little more than axes, crampons, and ropes, seeking ruins that will help unravel the pre-Columbian origins of religious customs in use today. His research tries to explain how early South American people felt nature was linked to their survival. There continues to be an Andean belief that mountains form an *axis mundi*, a religiously significant link between the three realms of Earth, Sky, and Underworld. The early people believed that gods existed in each realm, and they honored the most important ones—the gods of the mountains—with ceremonial sites built high on peaks throughout the Andes. Reinhard has discovered many of them.

"Mountain deities were frequently believed to be the original ancestors of peoples," Reinhard has written.

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"There was a widespread belief that the souls of the dead reside in sacred mountains. (Indeed, still today some people in southern Peru believe Saint Peter is waiting with the key to open the door, not of the gates of Heaven, but of the spirit world within the mountain Coropuna.)"

"Mountain gods were seen as protectors of man, livestock, and crops, besides lords of all wildlife," Reinhard went on. "Ritual specialists were selected by them who cured illnesses, foresaw the future, all with the help of the mountain deities. . . . In the eyes of many Andean villagers today, the most powerful of the mountain gods are either equal to a supreme deity or act as his intermediaries to the people on earth."

Reinhard approached the Nazca Lines believing that a grasp of traditional religious practices was the right tool to penetrate the mysteries of Andean culture. Although the Nazca Lines cross an arid plain, Reinhard felt certain they were made to honor the mountain gods. To test his theory, he surveyed the summit of Cerro Blanco, a mountain near the lines, and found river stones and cuttings of cotton plants. The plants, he says, are a gift still made to the gods on behalf of the cotton crop, the stones an offering to guarantee the water supply.

On the summit of Illa-kata, a mountain to the east of the Nazca Lines, Reinhard found remnants of an ancient ceremonial structure. On the summit of Tunga there were seashells scattered among other ceremonial

ruins. Turning to the plain, Reinhard discovered seashells embedded in the lines. Seashells, he says, are "daughters of the sea," symbols of water. He also considered the motifs that make up the Nazca Lines, starting with the spirals, zigzags, and oscillations. He notes that in Peru, shells of a spiral form were often used by ancient cults. The spiral conch was commonly employed in ceremonies calling on the mountain gods for rain.

While reading a 1965 report of research done by Paul Kosok in Peru, Reinhard learned that an oscillating, pre-Columbian canal system had been found in northern Peru. That discovery, he believes, supports the suggestion that the oscillating lines of Nazca are a depiction of a water source. Reviewing the lengthy 1955 study by Rebecca Carrion of the water cult in ancient Peru, Reinhard learned that canals built then took a zigzagging or oscillating shape. Zigzags can also be interpreted as rivers or as lightning, he argues.

Large rectangles on the Pampa de San Jose section of the Nazca Lines fall in a roughly east-west alignment, he found, and point to the mountains that feed the Rio Ingenio, the major river of the area. Elsewhere, triangles point to the base of Cerro Blanco, where streams form after heavy rains.

Turning to the "geoglyphs"—the giant pictures themselves—Reinhard analyzed the better-known figures, including the hummingbird, condor, spider, fox, dog, monkey, lizard, fish, flower, and a man with deformed hands, and related all of them to water/fertility beliefs. He drew on his years of studying Andean religion and a review of the work of more than 80 anthropologists who have studied the culture, folklore, art, ecology, and ruins of the Andean peoples.

Condors, he says, were regarded as manifestations of the mountain gods, and the hummingbird as an intermediary between humans and condors. The spider was a sign of rain and the tarantula a symbol of fertility in southern Peru, beliefs that carry over to the present day. The fox, according to a legend that dates back to Incan times, was a messenger of the mountain gods. During droughts, the Incas were known to have tethered dogs and let them cry from thirst until the weather god took pity and sent rain.

The monkey and lizard were regarded as protectors of water because of their association with places where water is available. Some figures, such as the spider, dog, and monkey, are depicted with their sexual parts extended, which to Reinhard suggests a role in a fertility cult.

Fish, of course, are of the sea. The flower might be another fertility symbol.

One of the most unusual geoglyphs at Nazca is the depiction of a man with deformed hands. One hand contains six fingers, the other four. In Incan times, says Reinhard, it was widely believed that the deformed were children of lightning, thunder, and the mountain gods. Animals born deformed were sacred.

The geoglyphs are open to other interpretations, Reinhard acknowledges, and he readily admits his theory of the Nazca Lines won't be the last one. For now, however, his theory is well accepted in anthropological circles, and it's soon to be presented to the general public as well. Reinhard's work has brought him to the attention of the Art Institute of Chicago, which has asked him to help plan the first major exhibition of pre-Columbian art to which museums in both the United States and Latin America are contributing. Pieces are expected from Mexico, Col-

ombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. The exhibition is scheduled to open in Chicago in October of 1992, the 500th anniversary of Columbus's first voyage, the year Chicago originally intended to commemorate with a world's fair. The exhibit, "Nuevo Mundo: Images of Man and Nature in Pre-Columbian Art," will give Reinhard's work its first popular exposure. He hopes it will spark a new level of interest in the lives of pre-Columbian peoples.

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Chip Stanish met Joe Reinhard in 1986, while both were doing research in Peru. As the Middle and South American curator for the Field Museum of Natural History, Stanish had a natural interest in Reinhard's work, and he was impressed enough to recommend Reinhard as a research associate for the museum's Department of Anthropology.

"He's unorthodox," Stanish says of Reinhard. "He likes to travel around. He didn't really have an institutional affiliation, and he wanted one. Our museum is ideal for that because it provides him access to American granting agencies, a home base in the states, and a credit line he can put under his byline when he publishes. Granting agencies rarely give money to an individual. It always helps to have an affiliation."

"It's equally important for us to have an affiliation with him," Stanish adds. "It gives us exposure, and prestige. Ultimately, I guess, it translates into dollars that we can get because we can show we are doing something productive."

Approved by the Field Museum in 1988, Reinhard's appointment is good through June of 1990. "There is general agreement within Andean archaeology that Reinhard's work is important. His theories of mountain worship

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are innovative," says Stanish. Tom Lynch, professor of Andean anthropology at Cornell University, concurs. "Everybody agrees Reinhard is opening new vistas in the Andean world."

"In spite of what we like to say, we're not a very exact science, so there is a lot of subjectivity involved," Stanish continues. "The work someone like Johan Reinhard does involves a tremendous amount of observation to establish a pattern. The whole purpose of theories and ideas like that is to generate observation of these phenomena. He's done that. He's made people stop and think, and look at their data and make them reevaluate it."

Stanish was particularly interested in Reinhard's theory on the Nazca Lines (which Reinhard has discovered are not unique; similar lines can be found in northern Chile and in Bolivia). Reinhard's book on the subject, *The Nazca Lines, a New Perspective on Their Origin and Meaning*, has been translated into Spanish and Japanese. (Published by Editorial Los Pinos in Lima, Peru, it's available from the South American Explorers Club in Denver. There are 14,000 copies in print.)

"His objectives are to understand why people built ceremonial areas where they did," says Stanish. "There has to be an underlying ideology for that. You just don't build churches wherever without an underlying religious ideology to promote that. By studying these tribes, and by studying the placement of the ceremonial areas—in the case of the Nazca Lines, he can show correlations between the

lines and mountaintops—you can begin to understand the ancient ideologies. You can understand the religious feelings of people.

"All of this is not very important for people who don't have an interest in history," Stanish admits. "But who isn't affected by history? We know so little about these people because so much has been destroyed. From an educational, cultural, and scientific perspective, the work [Reinhard] does is extremely important."

Reinhard, who has also applied his theory of high-altitude worship to Machu Picchu, the famous "lost city" of the Incas in Peru, explains the importance of his work this way: "When you develop theories to explain ancient sites, in some sense it's science for science's sake. But it's not like collecting a species of beetles. It's helping in a qualitative way to understand major cultural periods.

"There is a practical side. For example, if you're developing a system to change crop cycles in Peru, you'd better understand how the crop cycle was perceived and how sacred geography fits into that cycle, why the people in those regions still believe the mountaintains are sacred.

"Offerings of food and animals are still made to the gods, and you need to know when to do them, how they relate to the agricultural cycle, to the wildlife. It's a very interrelated system. You have to understand the way they viewed the world around them. For them, there's no real division between practical and religious aspects. It's all one....

"We're only beginning to uncover answers to many questions that have plagued anthropologists about Andean culture. There is a link between the past and present in the Andes, and so by studying archaeological sites and historical sources we can better understand Andean people today. Even

Christianity is heavily influenced by ancient traditions."

Reinhard began a 1984-'85 journey through the southern Andes with a friend, Louis Glauser, a Swiss climber. In a letter back to Chicago, he described some typical days.

"At Nazca we found more extensive ruins on the summit of Illa-kata than I'd expected and ceremonial ruins on Tunga's summit. Both finds nicely fit the Nazca theory. Unfortunately, after I noticed the metal tape measure humming, we had to head down to avoid lightning. It's a strange feeling to be in the desert sun and a snow storm the same day.

"We spent Christmas eve in the Atacama Desert. The jeep broke down and we slept on the floor of the pool room of a lithium mining camp. This actually was better accommodations than we'd have had if the jeep had not broken down."

After making several ascents, hiking and climbing in 100-mile-an-hour gusts that had them grabbing rocks to keep from being blown away, and finding few ruins, Reinhard and Glauser paused so Reinhard could board a cruise ship as science officer for a tour of the Chilean fjords. When the lectures he'd been hired for were delivered, Reinhard was dropped off at Robinson Crusoe Island, of all places, where in vain he searched underwater for the *Dresden*, a German battleship sunk by the British during World War I.

Reinhard rejoined Glauser in Santiago, and they returned to the 21 peaks they would ascend in their five-month journey through Peru, Chile, and Argentina. "At the base of the last mountain I squeezed into one chullupa (funerary tower) that had bodies intact, skin still well preserved and horrified expressions on their faces.... I kept muttering, 'Why can't I find such

things on tops of mountains?"

"We drove up through Lauca National Park (interesting to see vicuñas going through water on salt flats with flamingos in the foreground and mountains in the background). While driving along a somewhat pitted section of the Pan American Highway in Peru, we saw painted on boulders 'Exigimos un nuevo camino. No somos animales.' ('We demand a new road. We aren't animals.')

"After nearly 20,000 kms, much of it off highways, we looked at each other and burst out laughing."

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Reinhard's base of operations in the Andes is La Paz, Bolivia, where his mail is received by a friend at the U.S. embassy, a woman named Constance Ayala. There is a friendship that began in Peru and has withstood years of anxiety.

In Peru, both had good reason to fear terrorist attacks. Ayala because she worked at the embassy, Reinhard because he wandered the country's back roads and might easily have been mistaken for a political operative. Terrorism in Peru has done much to discourage tourism in the last few years, and to make the work of anthropologists like Reinhard monumentally difficult. In 1986, a band of Maoist guerrillas called Shining Path planted a bomb in a suitcase aboard a tourist train bound for Machu Picchu from the Peruvian city of Cuzco. Two Americans were among the eight vacationers reported killed (Reinhard, interestingly, insists the number of casualties was inflated), and there were 40 other injuries.

Sometime after that, when Ayala was about to be reposted to La Paz, Reinhard decided to move there too. "There were two shootings in front of my home the month we left," he says.

Terrorism has reduced the number of areas in Peru that Reinhard can go

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into. "I was in a town in northern Peru with a friend and we were going to climb a mountain looking for a very important site. We thought we knew exactly where it was located. We were buying supplies when I saw a local newspaper. There had been a massacre. Terrorists had shot three people in the central plaza of a small village only a couple of miles from where we were thinking of setting up our base camp.

"Everyone had assumed they had escaped into the outskirts, which meant they could be sitting right where we wanted to set up the camp, or at least in the area. Walking into there, you'd be spotted for a mile, which makes it very dangerous. With a backpack, you can't run very easily, so we decided not to go. It was too dangerous. Those are the kinds of things you have to watch for."

Knowing how to negotiate around terrorists is just another of the nuts and bolts of Reinhard's anthropology. A sense of romance rarely tinges Reinhard's descriptions of his work; he speaks as if indifferent to the exotic charms of his Andean terrain. But in the book *Pure and Perpetual Snow*, a collection of writings on Incan civilization published in 1987 by the Free Solo Press, author David Mazel fills that void; he describes an encounter with Reinhard in Peru in the evocative terms Reinhard does not attempt.

Mazel writes: "The road to Ocongate climbs long switchbacks steeped in dust before topping out on the windswept altiplano. Far across the Sacred Valley of Cuzco, El Salcantay floats

like a mirage on the powdery blue sky. The road meanders among desiccated, shallow vales and crests until the immense block of the Cordillera Vilcanota swims into view to the southwest, then it drops into a eucalyptus-shaded valley and follows a rocky stream-course into Ocongate, where dust-devils whip across the square and kittens play on the dirt floor of the inn where we take tea in enameled cups..."

After stopping for gas in his VW van, Mazel heads for the village of Tinquiqui, where he will meet Reinhard. "We toss the duffelsacks into the dust and pitch camp in the local schoolyard. The village is small, though one of the biggest on the long, empty road to Puerto Maldonado; it consists essentially of two short rows of one- and two-story houses, one paralleling and the other perpendicular to the dirt thoroughfare, separated from the river by stilts of heaped stones and bounded at the lower end by the bright blue schoolhouse.

"At dusk," writes Mazel, "llamas and alpacas stand silhouetted atop a low ridge, black against the bright clouds now clustering atop Ausangate. Out in the schoolyard the village children play an unruly game of soccer; behind them a woman drives home her cows, which move like shadows in the thickening darkness around the tents. Over the whole scene, standing away and above, are the whitewashed buildings of the old hacienda, atop the bluff which commands the Paucartambo River."

Their goal is the mountain called Ausangate, where they will search for ruins and find none. But Mazel comes away with one interesting tale told by his companion. In Argentina a few years earlier, Reinhard heard that the frozen body of an Incan child had been spotted near the summit of a peak

called Quechuar. Determined to locate the body—which would be a rare anthropological find—Reinhard braved bitter snowstorms and climbed Quechuar's 20,106 feet. But he'd been beaten to the top by treasure hunters who'd blasted the mummy to pieces with dynamite.

"We picked up pieces of cranium and an ear out of a wall that showed it originally had been perfectly preserved," Reinhard says. "The treasure hunters destroyed something more valuable than anything they could have hoped to find."

Only three preserved Incan bodies exist in museums today. The most famous was discovered in 1954 on the summit of Cerro El Plomo in Chile. Ever since, the body has been held in cold storage at Santiago's Museo Nacional de Historia Natural.

There are rumors of other Andean mummies, and Reinhard wants to go and find them. He lacks both time and money.

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Reinhard doesn't get a penny of financial support from either the Art Institute or the Field Museum. His institutional backing may open doors, but it doesn't feed him or equip him. Money is a constant problem.

"The publicity value of winning the Rolex Award is greater than the money," he reflects—it's been given to only 20 persons since it was established in 1976. "I have friends who tell me I should get off my ass and parlay the award into more money. But that would mean interrupting my research. I've been able to live on very little because I've cut my expenses down. In order to really accomplish more on my projects, I should have a four-wheel-drive vehicle. That alone in South America can cost \$20,000. Then you need a driver because you can't leave it alone or it will be stolen. You start add-

ing up the expenses and you can see that \$34,000 doesn't go far.

"It would be nice," he muses, "to have more money to make life a little easier on these projects. I could get assistants to help and generate more interest in the research."

He thinks \$50,000 a year would be about right. That would allow him to buy two four-wheel-drive vehicles, hire two drivers and an assistant, and begin excavating the key sites he has discovered. "Right now I get by on about \$7,000 a year," he says. "It's not easy, but you do what you have to. Ideally, I would like to be able to make the best use of weather and time for my work. If I go into one area, it often means that, without assistants, I can't obtain data from another area until the next year. I have to limit the work I do because I have limited resources."

"I would especially like to do more excavations of high-altitude sites, and this means far greater expenses. They can't be done without a team, six members being ideal. These sites have yielded some of the most valuable finds in Andean archaeology, yet will probably all be pillaged by treasure hunters within the next decade. There are few intact Incan ceremonial sites at any altitude."

Reinhard wants to stay in the Andes at least three more years, but eventually he intends to return to the Himalayas to study the role of mountain worship in Hinduism and Buddhism and to flesh out local folklore, including the origin and legend of the yeti.

"I have to be selective now about what I go after," he says. "I don't have the kind of money to do it all. And in this line of research, you really do have to wrap up your project, get your findings into print, into a book form, and move on to other things."

Reinhard understands the ravages

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of his chosen life. He knows that if he is injured or falls all while alone on a trek, he probably won't survive. He has developed an acute resistance to all sorts of antibiotics. "Once in Nepal I thought I was dead," he recalls. "I was giving away things, since I was days from the nearest hospital. I had a fever that didn't go below 103 for days. I started taking antibiotics, and they didn't seem to have the slightest effect. One doctor later told me I had built up resistance to too many antibiotics because of the heavy doses I had taken in the past."

"The problem is that when I'm working I end up doing my own diagnosis and medical doses. There aren't many doctors around to consult when you're in these little villages. You have to figure it out for yourself. I remember being in west Nepal and I had dysentery during the whole of a three-month trip. I was really thin by the time I came out. You begin to think, 'It's really stupid to die.' But you get so

sick, you don't really care. In the Andes, you can usually walk two days or so and find some medical help if you really need it. In Nepal, it might take one or two weeks."

Death is another of the exotic details of Reinhard's career that it is not in his nature to speak of. "I'm so used to going out alone on a mountain, I don't really think about it," he says. "I've had more trouble going out with inexperienced climbers than I've ever had alone. If I do get sick, or injured, those are the chances you take. You don't dwell on them after a while."

Of more immediate concern is the sentence of slow death that he believes his sojourns at high altitudes have imposed on his own mind. Brain cells die in the oxygen-poor air, he says. "That's why when you come back from a climb, you have some short-term memory loss. I'm finding more and more I don't want to do high-altitude climbs. I feel I'm losing my mental acuity."

"Part of that might be that when you live alone, you don't exercise your mind, you're not pushed to think like you are in a university setting. Your mind needs to be worked just like your muscles do. Whether it's brain cells dying or a lack of stimulation, I definitely feel that I'm not thinking as

sharply as I once did."

Reinhard's career has also denied him the pleasures of home and family. "My life is extremely difficult," he concedes. "If I had a child, I would have to have a steady job because I would need income to support it. Getting a steady job would obviously cut into the kinds of things I need. I need the flexibility to be able to go off when the time is right." Reinhard still calls New Lenox home mainly because nothing has entered his life to supersede it. He gives as his address a post office box there, and an old high school teacher picks up his mail. "It's a place I feel comfortable with. It's a place where I have friends. There's no other place in the world where I have those roots. But that's not to say I feel so comfortable I want to live there permanently."

Martha "Murph" Hoffmann, a longtime friend and surrogate sister, turns her basement apartment over to Reinhard whenever he comes back to New Lenox. "It's like pulling teeth to get him to talk," she says. "He doesn't like to talk about himself. Even when you're alone with him, he'd rather talk about what you're doing."

Joe Reinhard's periodic returns to Chicago to work on the Art Institute's 1992 exhibition are giving him an op-

portunity to step back from his work and try to see where his future lies. He knows it's remarkable that he's still at his work at the age of 45. "The truth is, most people who think they'd love to live this kind of life would not take it for very long at all," he says. "It's totally unstructured. You never know where your money is going to come from, how you're going to survive. You have to be intensely involved with the work you're doing and in its being carried out the way you want, in order to keep up this way of life."

"That means you make sacrifices. I have no home. I have no car. I have no Social Security. I have no children, no family. When I come back to the States, I stay in friends' houses and I can never stay that long. You can't impose on friendship for too long a time. That's the price you pay for leading this kind of life."

"On the other hand, I've been able to live a life that, thus far for me, I have few regrets about. Maybe I stayed a year too long in Vienna, or a year too long in Nepal." Reinhard thinks a moment or two about that. "Essentially, it's never been a boring life. I've been able to do what I've wanted to do. The project in the Andes—if I could have invented a project, I couldn't have done any better."