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‘MOUNTAIN RESORTS’: ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION

Abstract: The paper discusses the background for the emergence of such ‘mountain resorts’, their types and changes in their mode of operation. Some theoretical and practical issues will be illustrated with examples derived from Europe, North America, Asia and Africa.

Key words: ‘hill station’ concept, British India, Bokor, winter sports station concept (*‘station de sports d’hiver’*), Obergurgl-Hochgurgl.

1. INTRODUCTION

Even though the first localities situated in mountains and sub-montane areas having a tourist function date back to ancient times (especially the Roman Empire), they developed either spontaneously or according to the prevailing town-building concepts. Only when the concept of *‘sacro monte’* emerged towards the end of the Middle Ages, and the idea of a ‘spa resort’ some time later, can the starting point which initiated planned and deliberate development, be identified.

Although the concept of *‘sacro monte’* (or *‘sacri monti’* in plural) refers to the idea of a ‘sacred mountain’, and can be encountered in nearly all major religions (i.e. those with a large number of believers), it is mainly connected with centres of Christianity, mostly of the Catholic Church (http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacro_Monte, 28.11.2008). In general terms, the *‘sacro monte’* concept, which originated at the turn of the 15th c., draws on the idea of the spatial organisation of Jerusalem as it was in the time of the life and death of Jesus Christ (KOPEĆ 2002). The first calvary¹, or *‘sacro monte’*, was created in Varallo in northern Italy in 1491 (and was known as Sacro Monte ‘Nuova Gerusalemme’ di Varallo). *‘Sacri monti’*, or calvaries, could also be termed landscape-based pilgrimage sanctuaries (MITKOWSKA 2004), because their characteristic feature is not only the re-creation (to the largest possible extent) of places and locations encountered in ancient Jerusalem, but also their embedding in a given natural environment. However, due to the fact that the organisation of space in *‘sacri monti’* was strictly based on the

information and guidelines provided by the Bible and religious traditions, and not the actual (i.e. not faith-related) needs of pilgrims, they can hardly be called tourism destinations in today’s meaning of the term.

The concept of a ‘spa resort’ dates back to the second half of the 16th c., when in 1571 William Slingsby discovered a mineral water spring and built a well for water intake at Harrogate (Yorkshire) after his return from Spa (Spaw) in Belgium. In this way, Harrogate became the first purposely founded spa in the British Isles (in 1596), dubbed by Timothy Bright as ‘The English Spaw’ (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spa>, 28.11.2008). As ‘spa resorts’ began to appear not only in mountain and sub-montane areas (such as Belgium’s Spa) but also in lowlands (Harrogate is situated at an altitude of 100–200 metres), and even in coastal areas, the latter are not discussed in this paper because many do not fulfil the main requirement that ‘mountain resorts’ must satisfy.

Only ‘mountain resorts’ fulfil the criterion of being situated above a specific altitude. For this reason, the author has decided to focus his attention on two types, ‘hill stations’ and *‘stations de sports d’hiver’*. Although there is a distance of over 100 years between their origins, and the first such facilities were developed on different continents, today they represent a significant component of the tourist infrastructure in mountain, sub-montane and upland areas in many countries across the globe (notably in Europe, North America and Asia).

2. THE 'HILL STATION' CONCEPT

The concept of a 'hill station' is much younger than the concepts of '*sacro monte*' and 'spa resort' mentioned above as it was first developed in the early 19th c. While the first two concepts were formulated in Europe (and it is in Europe that the majority of '*sacri monti*' and 'spa resorts' can be found), Asia (and more specifically British India) is the continent where the idea of the 'hill station' gained widest support². The main underpinning factors, other than social and geographical, were historical, political, ideological and philosophical (KENNEDY 1996, KENNY 1997).

According to MITCHELL (1972), KENNY (1991, 1995) and KENNEDY (1996), the main idea that underpinned the establishment of the first 'hill resorts' was health. It was believed that 'hill stations' set up in the mountains or uplands would have a much more agreeable climate for Europeans than the main cities of what then was the British India (especially Bombay, Calcutta and Madras which were located in coastal lowlands). Other very important reasons for the emergence of such places were psychological. One of the authors mentioned above is of the opinion that 'hill stations' were set up as a result of the longing of British colonial functionaries for their homeland, which can be seen particularly through their spatial organisation. The usual components included an Anglican church located in the middle, a clock tower in the main street, wattle-and-daub houses modelled on late English Gothic (the Tudor style) and Alpine-style buildings, as well as public buildings in the late English Gothic style, sheltered verandas, vegetable gardens and orchards at the back, etc. (KENNEDY 1996, 3–4).

Over time, however, 'hill stations' began to epitomise the different cultural identity of the British (or rather Europeans) *vis-à-vis* the indigenous Indian population. Thereby, their very existence was embedded in psychological and social factors rather than curative ones. Kennedy goes as far as to claim that such resorts owing to their political, administrative and military functions came to represent the British domination in the Indian peninsula and serve as guardians of the principles underlying the social order of the 'Raj'. According to Kennedy, in the political and social context of British India at the time, 'hill stations' had a double role to play: they were sites of refuge or isolation from the Indian population, and at the same time – sites of surveillance over the indigenous inhabitants of India.

However, such resorts were set up not only for political or social reasons and were viewed as places of recreation and leisure, offering possibilities of a bustling social life. KENNEDY (1996, p. 1) compared

their role to that of Brighton or Bath, British watering places attracting an upper middle class clientele. Other authors expressed similar opinions and wrote (based on British 19th c. sources) that in many cases the curative qualities of hill resorts were questionable, and the main reasons for their establishment, other than political and social factors, included tourism assets as well as opportunities for sports (e.g. polo or golf), entertainment, hunting, etc. (LAL 1997).

It should be observed that professionals and upper middle classes in Britain looked at 'hill stations' with reserve, being particularly critical about the lifestyles of public officials as they regarded their stay there as a squandering of public funds. This view was shared by the activists of the Indian independence movements, who on top of that regarded 'hill stations' as a symbol of the '*...arrogance of the ruling class...*' (KENNEDY 1996, p. 5).

Interestingly enough, even though India gained independence in 1947 (along with neighbouring Pakistan), Indian society has preserved many warm feelings for them, proved for example by all those new resorts been set up after the collapse of British India (MITCHELL 1972, ENGLER 2004). In contemporary India, mountain resorts still enjoy great popularity both with domestic and foreign tourists. However, such resorts have considerably changed in character (CHATTERJI 1997): although they still have a tourist function, they have become 'obligatory' honeymoon destinations for the Indian middle class and locations for the making of movies, etc. (LAL 1997).

The concept of a 'hill station' was well received in the overseas dominions of France, where localities with a tourist function, known as *stations climatiques*, began to develop. This process however started much later than in the territories of the British Crown.

In 1904, the French Ministry of Colonies made a decision to develop tourist locations offering the attributes of climatic resorts in picturesque areas with an agreeable climate. As early as 1905, South China Sea coastal resorts of Cap Saint Jacques (Cochin China) and Sam Son (Tonkin) were constructed; mainly intended to attract the French living in Saigon and Hanoi. In addition, in the same year a decision was made to set up mountain resorts in Tam Dao (Tonkin) and Da Lat (Annam) – (earlier, in 1898–9, there were plans to set up a mountain spa in the town of Dan Kia 10 km away from Da Lat, but they were ultimately abandoned).

Similar activities were undertaken in neighbouring Cambodia. The first tourist town to be set up (as early as 1908) was the coastal resort of Kep-sur-Mer (currently Kep), located on the Gulf of Siam (South China Sea). Several years later the French colonial

administration decided to build a *station climatique* in the mountains. The Elephant Mountains were selected for this purpose, and the Bokor (originally Bockor) mountain plateau lying near the South China Sea, 42 km from the town of Kampot was chosen for building, from scratch, a tourist retreat. The decision to develop a resort was made in 1917, and the following factors determined this particular location (*Les resorts climatiques ... 1931*):

- climatic conditions (an elevation of 1080 metres a.s.l., a six-month long dry season),
- flat area,
- panorama encompassing the nearby coast of the Gulf of Siam,
- the picturesque Popokvil waterfall (6 km away),
- the proximity of Ream harbour (22 km).

Characteristically for Bokor, the development of the accommodation base was accompanied by the construction of an extensive supplementary infrastructure, both technical (water network, power lines, etc.) and social (church, hospital, school, etc.) (Fig. 1).

The resort's splendour did not last long because the casino was closed down in 1940, and due to the ensuing occupation of French Indochina by Japanese troops, Bokor was no longer a place visited by tourists or visitors seeking to improve their health (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bokor_Hill_Station, 31.08.2008).

The end of World War II did not have any tangible effect on the restoration of tourism because very soon a war for liberation began in French Indochina, with Bokor converted into a military hospital

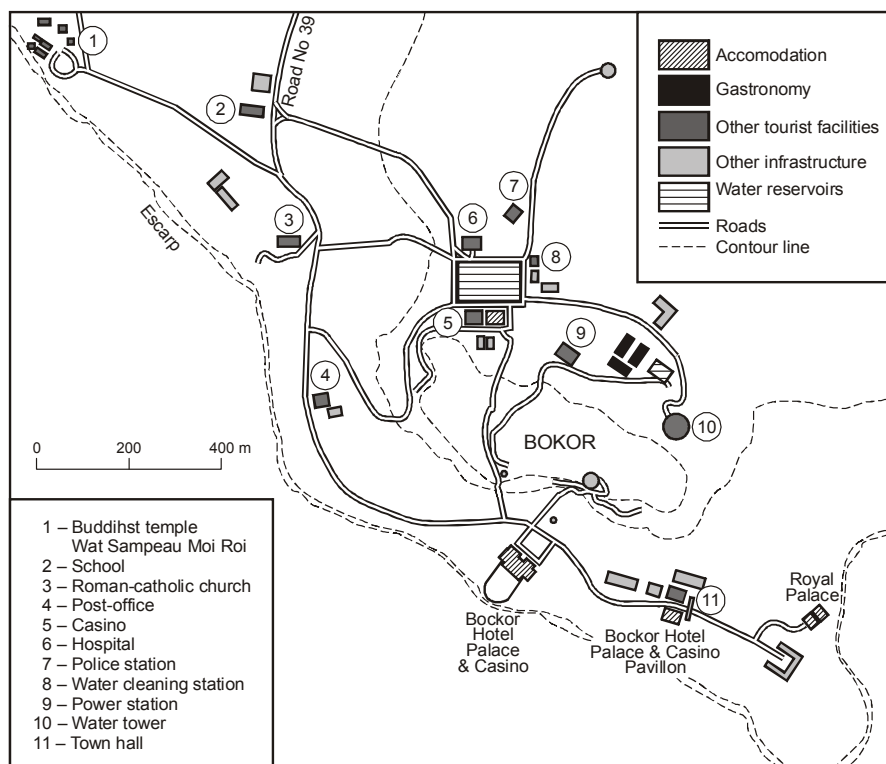


Fig. 1. Tourist infrastructure in „climate station” at Bokor (French Indochina, presently Cambodia) in 2003
(source: <http://adventurevacationtrip.com/south-cambodia-bokor-hill-station-june-2006-2-route>; 04.09.2008)

The area to be developed with a tourist infrastructure occupied 5 km². First, a road was built to Bokor in 1921, while the construction of the first buildings (such as a Catholic church) started in 1922. Many of them were completed by 1924 (for example the Buddhist temple of Wat Sampeau Moi Roi), and in 1925 the luxurious Bockor Palace Hotel (38 rooms) and a casino were opened (the entire complex was known as the ‘Bokor Hotel Palace & Casino’).

and a sanatorium for convalescent soldiers. When the war had come to an end, the resort was almost totally plundered by gangs of robbers operating in the area.

Bokor did not resume its activity as a tourist centre until the second half of the 20th c. in what was now a free Cambodia. The first new investments came in 1959, and as a result Bokor soon became Cambodia’s leading tourist centre. This situation lasted until 1972, when its renewed splendour faded

again. The coming to power of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia in 1975, and the ideology they embraced, meant that tourism as such would vanish altogether. As a result, Bokor continued to lie abandoned, with the Khmer Rouge soldiers the only 'guests' that it hosted. Bokor was ultimately destroyed in 1979, during the struggles between Vietnamese troops and the Khmer Rouge who opposed them (and who recaptured the area in 1982). In the 1990s, although the civil war in Cambodia had ended, Bokor remained abandoned and desolate (except for a post of the Cambodian forest ranger service, stationed in the former hospital, this a result of the national park that had been set up here in 1993, and a tiny hostel run by the park), in 2008 there was only a small Buddhist temple here. Due to the outstanding scenery, the site was used as a location for filming movies, such as: 'City of Ghosts' in 2002, and 'R-Point' in 2004 (<http://www.geocities.com/cambodia-less-travelled/bokor.html>, 01.09.2008; <http://urban-desertion.squarespace.com/bokorhill>, 31.08.2008).

In January 2008, a company called Sokimex Group (which leased an area covering 140,000 hectares for 99 years) announced its plan to rebuild Bokor's infrastructure, with the cost of the project estimated at USD 21 million. There are also plans to transform Bokor into a mega-tourist attraction over the next 15 years, which however would involve an expenditure of some USD 1 billion (http://www.sokimex.com.kh/future_projects/index_future_projects.php?page=bokor-project, 01.09.2008).

As its first priority, the investor intends to build a new road leading up to Bokor (33 km), rebuild the historic hotel and casino buildings and construct a new hotel with 300 rooms. It is also planned to open a motel, build bungalows with apartments, a large restaurant, and a facility serving as a club and a golf course. If Bokor is to perform a tourist function again, other necessary investments include:

- construction of a water intake and water treatment station and redevelopment of the water and sewage network,
- rebuilding of the power network,
- construction of a network of local roads,
- rebuilding of the hospital,
- arrangement of a modern-style farm,
- construction of trade and retail facilities,

According to the adopted schedule, the main development is to cover an area of 2,000 hectares, while the rest of the site is to be left 'green'.

The idea to restore Bokor to its former splendour seems very opportune. Although the concept of hill stations is some 200 years old, in the late 1990s in Malaysia the multi-functional tourist resort of Genting Highlands was built from scratch, under a government decision of 1969 (REED 1979). The

resort is sometimes regarded as a 'hill station' (one of the reasons being its location at an altitude of 1850 m), but it resembles Las Vegas (also because of the First World Hotel with its 6,118 rooms) or a huge entertainment park rather than a classical colonial 'hill station' (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genting_Highlands, 06.12.2008). Experiences from nearby Vietnam, where the mountain resort of Da Lat is attracting more and more foreign tourists, and the tourist function of the Sa Pa spa is planned to be restored (MICHAUD & TURNER 2006) seem to indicate that the idea to bring back Bokor to its former grandeur from the 1920s and 1930s is not so unrealistic at all.

3. THE CONCEPT OF A WINTER SPORTS RESORT (*'STATIONS DE SPORTS D'HIVER'*)

Although the popularity of mountain tourism dates back to the end of the 18th c., it started to develop rapidly as downhill skiing became an increasingly popular pastime. This was accompanied by the emergence of specialised ski resorts in the Alps (and later also in other mountain ranges), referred to in French as '*stations de sports d'hiver*'. Most such resorts can be found in Europe (notably in France, Italy, Austria and Switzerland), however as the popularity of skiing increased, many centres intended for tourists this type of sport and leisure activity appeared in North America (United States and Canada), Asia (Japan, Korea, Turkey, India, Iran, Lebanon), South America (Argentina, Chile), Africa (some examples from Morocco, Lesotho and Republic of South Africa) and Australia.

The term '*station de sports d'hiver*' (WARSZYŃSKA & JACKOWSKI 1978, p. 32) refers to '*...a tourist settlement situated in the mountains, with good climatic conditions (that have a decisive impact on the length of snow coverage) and adequate tourist amenities which allow for winter sports ...*'

Sestriere in the Italian Piedmont is commonly regarded as the first 'winter sports resort' to have been purpose-built. Although the construction of the first amenity for tourists began in what was then Sestrières³ directly before World War I, it was not completed until 1921 (the Baraccone hostel with 20 rooms, extended to 70 rooms in 1929). However, a breakthrough moment came for Sestrières in 1930 when, on the initiative of *Incremento turistico Sestrières*, a joint-stock company (soon to be transformed into *Società Anonima del Sestrières*), works were started almost immediately to develop local master plans for the area where a state-of-the-art winter resort was to be founded. It is commonly

believed that the idea was thought up by Senator Giovanni Agnelli, president of the Fiat corporation.

In 1930-1, a road was built up to Sestrières which allowed for development works to begin in the settlement itself (<http://www.sestriere.it/date.aspx>, 28.11.2008). In 1931, the first cable car (Alpette-Sises), a ski jump and a spacious restaurant started to be built, while 1932 saw the start of the construction of a large hotel (Torre di Sestrières) and a golf course, and 1933 of yet another large hotel (Duchi di d'Aosta) and a cable car to Monte Banchetta. At the same time, the building of smaller accommodation and catering facilities began. In 1934, a new commune was created in an area isolated from the communes of Champlas du Col, Sauze Cesana and Borgata Sestrière (and the commune building was also completed), which in the coming year was named Sestrière (http://www.comune.sestriere.to.it/e_storia.htm (28.11.2008)). Soon after modern accommodation facilities had been built, a golf course was completed in 1936 (and enlarged in 1953), and the Monte Fraiteve cable car was built in 1937. Although World War II halted the development of Sestrière, a ski race was organised there as early as 1948, as well as the end of a stage of the Monte Carlo Rally. In the 1950s and 60s, Sestrière was regarded as one of leading ski resorts in Europe, and in the coming decades was among a small number of major global winter sport centres. This was largely due to the organisation of the alpine World Ski Championship in 1997, the finals of the alpine World Ski Championship in 2004 and alpine skiing competitions of the Winter Olympic Games in Turin in 2006).

Although a considerable number of winter sports resorts similar to Sestrière can be found in Italy and other Alpine countries, the idea has met with the widest interest in France.

In his history of such resorts, the French geographer KNAFFOU (1978) has distinguished four stages in their development using the example of France. First-generation resorts were as a rule developed at an altitude of 900-1200 metres in the Chambéry area, in locations which had earlier been Alpine villages and small towns (such as for example Aix-les-Bains, Megève, Chamonix, Villard-de-Lans), while second-generation resorts were built from scratch as ski centres at an altitude of 1600-1800 metres. L'Alpe d'Huez (founded in 1934) and Courchevel (planned in 1946 and commissioned in 1948⁴) can be taken as examples of such resorts. Activities which were undertaken at that period were characterised by the considerable role of the local authorities, both at the planning and implementation stages (KUREK 2004, 27). In the 1960s, third-generation resorts were founded, in many cases initiated by government institutions. Owing to a careful planning

of tourist amenities and observing certain principles concerning the entire investment process, they are frequently referred to as integrated centres. As a rule, such winter sports centres are located at a level of over 1600 m. Soon after 1975, fourth-generation resorts were started. Although they were built in a planned way, they resemble to some extent the old Alpine villages on which they were modelled in terms of their layout, architecture and size. For projects which were completed in the 1980s and 1990s, certain natural environmental considerations were also addressed through the strict observation of environmentally-friendly planning principles (http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Station_de_sports_d%27hiver, 28.11.2008).

One of the major ski resorts in the Alps is Obergurgl-Hochgurgl. It is situated in Tirol (Austria) and lies in the direct vicinity of Sölden, one of Austria's major skiing centres lying in the Ötztal valley.

It is commonly believed that the first visitors (scientists and landscape painters came to the Gurgl valley (*Gurgler Tal*) in 1840 and stayed in Haus Kuraten farm, while the first tourists did not appear until several decades later, arriving at Gurgl from the nearby Sölden. It was for such visitors, as well as those who would like to stay longer in the Gurgl valley, that in 1889 Martin Scheiber built the first hotel, the Edelweiss, in the settlement of Obergurgl. It was a typical mountain hotel which, in its owner's opinion, should be mainly visited by tourists seeking fresh air and mountain views. Despite its new tourist function, the parish of Gurgl (the highest in Europe) was still scarcely populated, with a mere fourteen farms before World War I. The first road to Obergurgl was built as late as 1929, on the initiative of Angelus Scheiber, the then owner of the 'Edelweiss Hotel' and the newly completed 'Gurgl Hotel'. Because of a road connection with the Ötztal valley, and thereby with the rest of Tirol, the Gurgl valley could now attract larger number of tourists. Yet, what really made Gurgl famous was the forced landing of August Piccard's balloon in 1931. Due to the rapid influx of tourists, the settlement of Hochgurgl (2150 m) was founded before World War II in addition to the already existing villages of Obergurgl (1930 m) and Untergurgl (1793 m) - http://www.edelweiss-gurgl.com/en-hotel_tyrol-edelweiss_gurgl.shtml (22.08.2008).

However, the real development of Obergurgl-Hochgurgl took place after World War II as skiing rapidly grew in popularity and nearby Sölden experienced quick growth.

Following the completion of a good road connection, the construction of many ski lifts, and development of the accommodation and catering facilities,

the number of tourist dynamically increased, to reach about 100,000 tourists per year, with 4,230 beds available in 2008 in Obergurgl-Hochgurgl, a hamlet with only 420 residents <http://www.obergurgl.com/main/EN/GG/WI/skigebiet/skigebietsfacts/index.html> (25.08.2008).

The ski-related infrastructure in Obergurgl-Hochgurgl was developed gradually. Initially, ski lifts, cable cars and well-prepared *pistes* were built separately in the Obergurgl and Hochgurgl regions. Only after some time were these areas merged to form one system. This was possible owing to the Top-Express Bahn gondola completed before the 1997/8 season which connected the Obergurgl *pistes* with the Hochgurgl skiing areas. As a result, those skiers who would like to try a new ski area do not have to travel from Obergurgl to Hochgurgl (or vice versa) by road, but can get there in merely nine minutes, travelling in eight-person gondolas (with its 50 cars, the Top-Express Bahn can transport 1,200 skiers within an hour).

Parallel to the construction of new cable cars and ski lifts, more and more attention was placed on *piste* maintenance in order to ensure better comfort and safety; since 1999, an impressive 90% of all *pistes* have been subject to regular maintenance to make skiing both safer and more enjoyable.

Table 1. Cable cars at Obergurgl-Hochgurgl in 2008

Cable cars	Length (m)	Altitude above sea level (m)		Difference between lower and upper resorts (m)
		Lower resort	Upper resort	
Festkogel Bahn	2 169	1 910	2 671	761
Gaisbergbahn-Hohe Mut Bahn	1 480	1 906	2 643	737
Hochgurglbahn I	911	1 789	2 160	371
Hochgurglbahn II	2 175	2 160	2 713	553
Top Schermerbahn 3000	2 200	2 422	2 922	500
Top-Express Bahn	3 600	Train linking Obergurgl with Hochgurgl		

Source: Based on <http://www.obergurgl.com/main/EN/GG/WI/skigebiet/skigebietsfacts/index.html> (25.08.2008).

November 2006 saw the opening of *Top Mountain Star*, a 100-seat restaurant sitting atop the 3082 m Wurmkogel, which was an important investment project in Obergurgl-Hochgurgl not only from a skiers' perspective. [As an additional attraction, restaurant guests can admire a 360° panorama of the Alps and the Dolomites.]

The most recent major investment projects completed before the 2007/8 season were the Hohe Mut Bahn and Top Schermerbahn cable cars (with an hourly capacity of 2,400). This increased the aggregate hourly capacity of all cable cars and ski lifts in the Obergurgl-Hochgurgl region to 39,400 in the 2007/8 winter season.

In 2008, the ski infrastructure in the Obergurgl-Hochgurgl area comprised:

- 7 gondolas (the cable railway to Hohe Mut in fact consists of two sections: the lower Gaisbergbahn and the upper Hohe Mut Bahn),

- 6 chair lifts,

- 8 T-bar ski lifts⁵,

Of 110 runs (56 in Obergurgl and 54 in Hochgurgl) 35 were marked as easy (blue), 55 as moderately difficult (red) and 20 as difficult (black). In addition, there are 12 specially marked *pistes* for cross-country skiers and the region's skiing infrastructure includes ski schools, first aid units, landing ground for rescue helicopters, ski bars, car parks located at the lower cable car resorts and ski lifts, as well as Skibus stops (Fig. 2).

Obergurgl-Hochgurgl's accommodation base is a major component of its tourist infrastructure. In 2008, there were 23 top quality hotels (4- and 5-star), 6 medium quality ones (3-star), one pension (*Hotel Garni* in German), 22 inns (*Gästhof* in German) and 23 holiday cottages let to tourists (*Ferienwohnung* in German). As for catering, there were 14 restaurants, 16 bars and nightclubs and one inn (<http://www.obergurgl.com/main/EN/GG/WI/skigebiet/skigebietsfacts/index.html>, 25.08.2008).

Europe was not the only continent where the idea of organising winter sports resorts 'caught on'. In addition to the United States and Canada, recently the largest number of modern ski resorts have been developed in Japan and Korea.

The main Korean ski resorts include Yongpyong Resort, the first such centre which opened in 1975 (Gangwon province), as well as Cheonmasan Ski Resort (1982), Bears Town (1984) and, a little later, Jisan (1996)⁶, all situated near Seoul (Gyeonggi province). Yongpyong Resort (proper name: Yongpyeong) is the largest and most popular of these ski resorts, in the east of Korea (near the Sea of Japan), situated from 700 m to 1,438 m above sea level and occupying an area of 1,740 ha (<http://www.yongpyong.co.kr/eng/about/intro.asp>, 28.11.2008).

Due to its average annual temperature (-6°C) and average yearly snowfall (250 mm), Yongpyong Resort offers good skiing conditions from mid-November to early April. There can be little surprise therefore that in the resort's vicinity there are as many as 31 ski slopes (with an area of 1,620 ha) and 15 km cross-country skiing trails. With its good snow

Table 2. Major similarities and differences between hill resorts and winter sports resorts

Similarities and differences	Type of 'mountain resort'	
	hill resort	winter sports resort
Similarities		
Location in mountain, sub-montane and upland areas	Yes	Yes
Location in an attractive landscape	Yes	Yes
Created to serve a specific purpose	Yes	Yes
Creation preceded by improving transport accessibility	Yes	Yes
Well-developed accommodation base	Yes	Yes
Well-developed culture and entertainment infrastructure	Yes	Yes
Well-developed recreation and sports facilities	Yes	Yes
Guests stay for a specific period (seasonal use)	Yes	Yes
Prevalence of guests with material status higher than average	Yes	Yes
Poor functional links with the immediate environment ('the enclave effect')	Yes	Yes
Personnel to serve guests residing in areas outside the resort or in its periphery	Yes	Yes
Differences		
Era when first resorts were founded	Early 19 th c.	First half of the 20 th c.
Main reasons for founding	Climate and health	Tourism and sport
Location	Mainly Asia	Mainly Europe
Nature of accommodation base	Closed facilities (private lodgings)	Generally accessible (hotels, pensions)
Nature of catering amenities	Small number of facilities	Large number of facilities
Institutions behind founding	Higher-level political and administrative authorities	Local authorities and/or private enterprises
Length of stay during the year	As a rule several months	As a rule under ten days or between ten and twenty days
Guest rotation over the years	Relatively small	Generally considerable
Additional economic functions	Frequent agricultural function, less frequent R&D function	As a rule no additional functions
Adverse environmental impact	None or negligible	Relatively large
Demographic-social structure	Large share of women with children	Mostly families with children, couples, young people
Other	In many cases very well-developed educational function (many schools) and curative-spa function (hospitals and sanatoriums)	In some cases a curative-spa function

Source: Prepared by the author.

conditions and extensive technical infrastructure (one gondola and 14 chair lifts), Yongpyong Resort's daily capacity is up to 25,000 skiers (while local snow rental services offer 3,000 pairs of skis and snowboards).

Yongpyong Resort's accommodation base consists of 1,078 rooms, and this number is to grow to 2,800

by 2010 (which means 18,000 guests can be hosted). One of the reasons which spurred the development of the accommodation infrastructure was Yongpyong's aspiration to organise the 21st Winter Olympic Games in 2010 (finally Vancouver, Canada, was chosen)⁷.

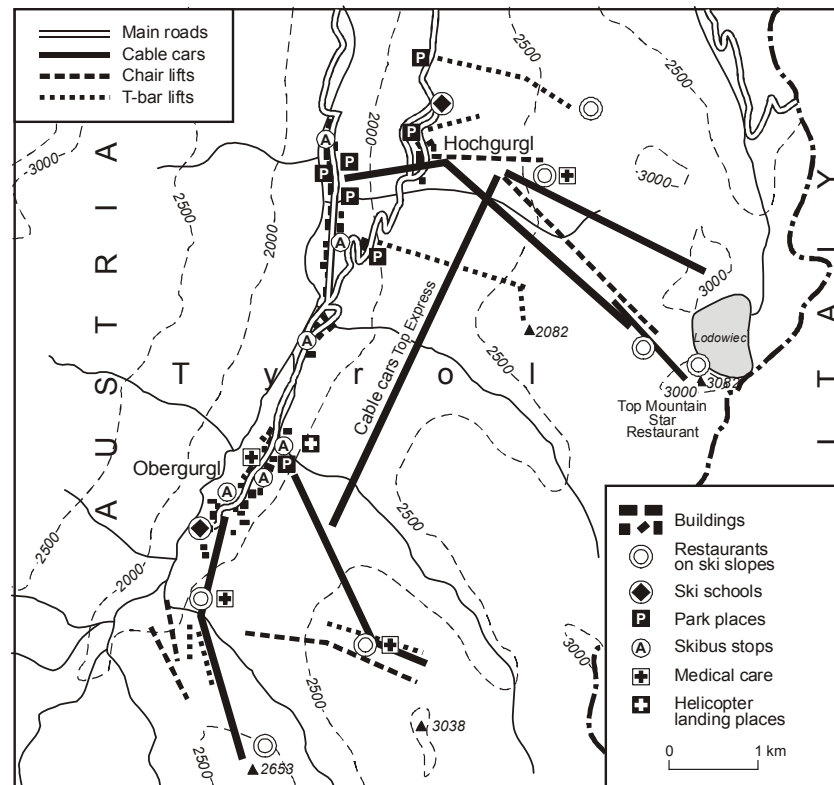


Fig. 2. Tourist infrastructure for slope-skiing at Obergurgl-Hochgurgl (Austria, Tirol)
(source: <http://www.obergurgl.com/main/DE/GG/WI/ortsinformation/ortsplan/index.html>; 23.08.2008)

4. SUMMARY

Although – as written in the introduction – the concepts of ‘hill station’ and ‘*station de sports d’hiver*’ appeared in different eras and on different continents, the locations which can be regarded as those best embodying the ‘hill station’ concept are in many cases quite similar in nature. The main feature they have in common is obviously their function.

Another important reason for the similarities between hill resorts and winter sports resorts is their location in mountain areas. And, thirdly, they can be regarded as different forms of the same category as they are in areas of picturesque scenery. However, in addition to similarities certain differences can be found. As the list of similarities and differences is shown in the table below (Table 1), it should be added that the main differences include the era when they were founded, their location, the availability of accommodation, and length of stays.

Although the literature on hill resorts (MITCHELL 1972, REED 1979, ENGLER 2004) indicates that some existing today came into being during recent decades, their mode of functioning and organisation of space more resembles winter sports resorts than classic ‘hill stations’, encountered mainly in 19th c. British India.

FOOTNOTES

¹ According to some sources, the first calvary – i.e. ‘*sacro monte*’ – was built from 1405-20 near Cordoba in Spain (<http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalwaria>, 28.11.2008).

² A few examples of hill stations can also be found in Africa, e.g. Clarens or Champagne Valley in the Republic of South Africa.

³ The name was changed to Sestrière in 1935 (<http://www.sestriere.it/brevestoria.aspx>, 28.11.2008).

⁴ The years of founding L’Alpe d’Huez (1934) and Courchevel (1948) were quoted in KUREK (2004, p. 27).

⁵ The number of chair lifts and T-bar lifts is prone to frequent changes. Several years ago there were 12 chair lifts and 7 T-bar lifts.

⁶ These resorts vary in size: Cheonmasan Ski Resort has 5 ski slopes as compared to 11 in Bears Town and 10 in Jisan Resort (<http://english.kg21.net/tour/sightseeingSite>, 28.11.2008).

⁷ Yongpyong Resort is an important tourism destination in the summer, mainly owing to its well-developed golf infrastructure. In addition to two full-size private golf courses (18 holes), it has a nine-hole course open to the general public (<http://www.yongpyong.co.kr/eng/about/intro.asp> (28.11.2008)).

Translated by Dorota Szmajda

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