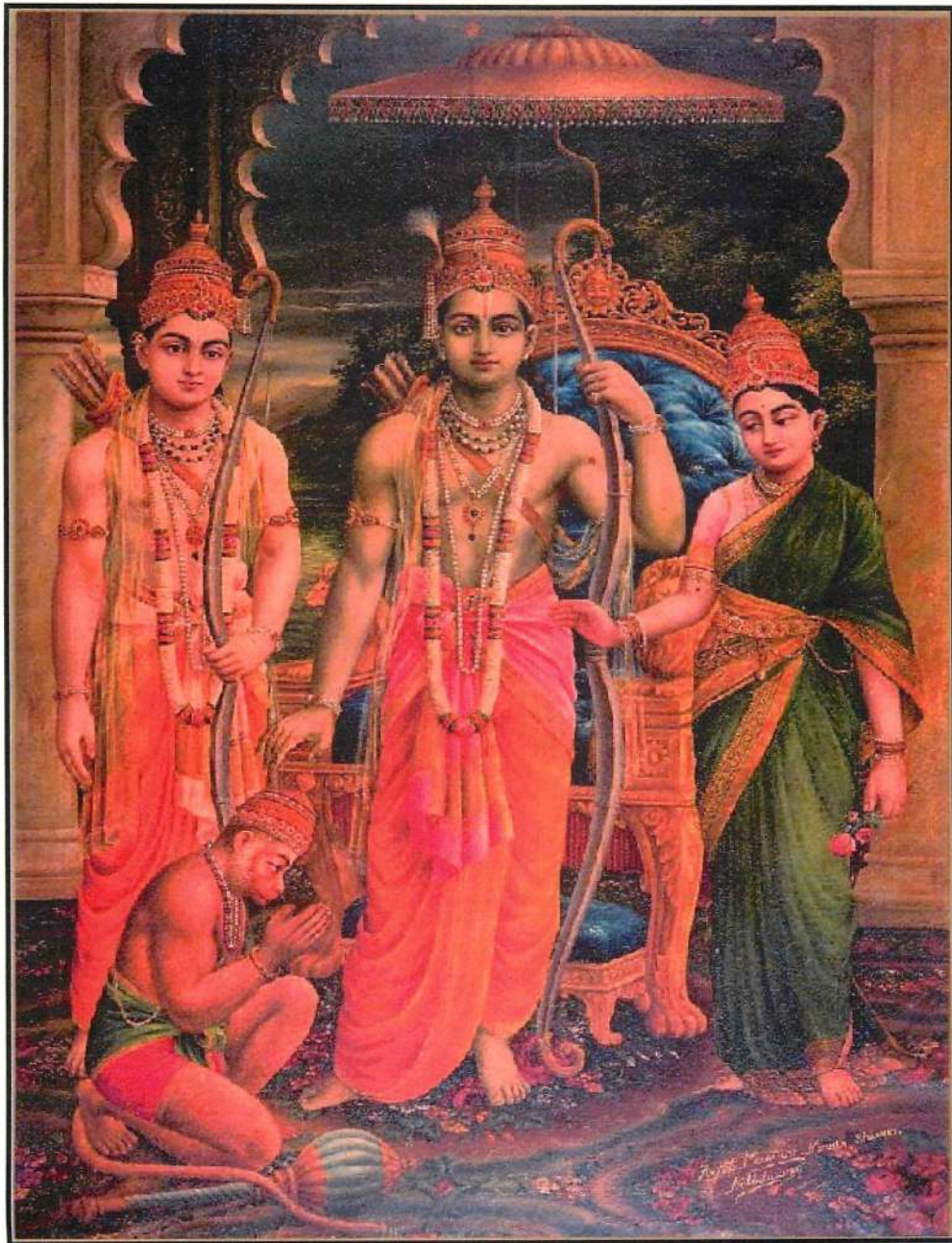


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Cover: Shree Ram, Laxman, Sita, and Hanuman, painted by an artist, as envisioned by Doodh Dhari Baba of Ram Kuti in Pashupatinath Temple.

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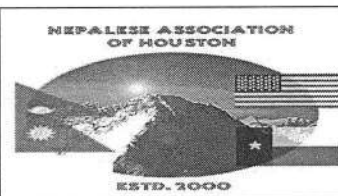
editor's desk

Sad but true, our country has plummeted sharply into a crisis, which has threatened each one of us and placed our future in obscurity. Social dilemmas, political inconsistencies, poverty and frustrations have continued to prevail and cripple the infant democracy in Nepal. Deeds inevitable to end violence is of utmost importance that shower greater consciousness among conscious leaders and citizens of the country. I feel proud that I am born in a nation where Buddha harnessed a philosophy of love and peace. On the other hand, I also believe that hatred and violence have been a way of life in recent days. But one thing for sure, I am not losing hope and I believe majority of our fellow countrymen are optimistic. Because, the birth of our nation is rooted in strong foundation, our nation-builders inherited honesty and bravery, and our history bestowed pristine spirits.

With these regards, some of the articles in this issue of Nepal Vision (the fifth one in circulation) focus mainly on the current socio-political affairs in Nepal. Lindsay Friedman has closely articulated the Nepali societies and as the saying goes "every dark cloud has silver lining", she has concluded these facts in our society. Swarnim Waglé, Bhisma Raj Karki, Ujjwal Bhattarai and Dr. Jagadish Sharma have been regular contributors of articles to Nepal Vision, and this time I can barely forget to present them a bouquet of appreciations for their continuous support to Nepal Vision Family. This issue also presents an award winning fictional-story written by Abha Bhattarai, a young girl studying in a high school in Austin, Texas. Beside her sharp imagination in fiction writing, she definitely embodies the inspiration to many others of her age group in our community.

Nepal Vision Family deeply appreciates the businesses, which continuously support the existence of Nepal Vision publication. Simple truth is, this publication is impossible without such financial support in the means of advertisements. Let me take this opportunity to thank Mr. Dinker Amatya for his enduring time and efforts to contact businesses to collect advertisements and Dr. Rajendra Shrestha for his continuous overseeing of Nepal Vision. Needless to mention, Akhil Dhungana, for his many sleepless nights to support my editorial mission. This is the last issue of Nepal Vision, I as Editor.

On behalf of Nepal Vision Family, I wish everyone a very Happy Dashain and Tihar. *Shree Pashupati Nathlé Hamii Sabaiko Raksha Garoon.*



houstonnepali wishes fabulous dashain and tihar to all the nepalis and friends of nepal living in the americas and rest of the world...

president's corner

April 13, 2002, was a red-letter day in the history of Nepalese Association of Houston (NAH). That day, the Greater Houston Nepali Community celebrated the second birthday of NAH. That day, amid a gala festival of Nepali music and dance, and great food and fun, and an overwhelming participation, NAH ushered in the New Year 2059 B.S. That day, NAH thanked and appreciated the outgoing executive committee for contributing to the nurture and growth of NAH, since its inception. That very day, NAH elected and welcomed the new executive committee.

The new NAH executive Committee deeply appreciates the opportunity to serve the Greater Houston Nepali Community. We have come up with a set of action plans and shall make our best efforts to implement them.

NAH has embarked on the "Maoist Victim Relief Fund" fund-raiser as of April 13. Thanks to your generous contributions, we have raised over \$2,000 to date. We plan to continue the fund-raiser until the Dashain Party on Oct. 19 and then transfer the fund to the Prime Minister's Maoist Victim Relief Fund in Nepal through a direct bank transfer. Please open your heart and make every effort to help the innocent victims of Maoist atrocities in our motherland. Our nation is in crisis and seeks your help and support at this trying time.

NAH co-sponsored the Peace Rally organized by the Coalition for Peace in South Asia in Downtown Houston on June 29. The theme of the Peace Rally centered around bringing the Greater Houston South Asian Community together on a common platform, showing solidarity, and sending a message to the whole world that war in South Asia was a no-win situation and hence any dispute between nations should be solved through peaceful dialogue in a non-violent manner. Our Houston Nepali talents: Prapti Regmi and Kshitij Regmi performed an excellent Nepali dance in the rally. In addition, participation in the Peace Rally has given NAH a much-needed exposure and contacts with its counterparts including various associations and societies in Houston.

At this moment, you are leafing through the fifth issue of Nepal Vision, a glorious example of teamwork including, but not limited to, contributions from the authors, the editors, the composers, and, most important of all, the advertisement contributors and collectors. Needless to say, the very existence of Nepal Vision solely depends on the advertisement funds. Therefore, the credit goes to you, the generous advertisement donors and collectors, for helping make the publication of this issue of NAH news-magazine possible. This issue of Nepal Vision is the last one edited by Pradhuma Shrestha. Our hats off to Pradhumnaji for a superb job in bringing out five excellent, consecutive issues of Nepal Vision.

The NAH annual picnic held on Sunday, July 14, at the beautiful, family-oriented, and serene lakeside setting of the Clear Lake Park in Seabrook, was a great success thanks to the organizational support of Linda Amatya and the Clear Lake Nepali Community.

History was made again on Saturday, August 10, when the Durgabari Auditorium in Houston buzzed with the largest assembly of Nepalis and friends of Nepal for the Nepali Musical Night featuring the living legend of Nepali music -Deep Shrestha - and the most successful musical band in Nepal -1974 A.D. NAH deeply appreciates your overwhelming support and participation. We are truly grateful to the business and individual sponsors, the concert organizational committee members headed by Sagun Vijayananda, all the volunteer brothers and sisters, the concert hosts, the Houston Durgabari Society, the Nepalese Society, Texas, for providing the drum set, and one and all, for coming together and contributing to the great Nepali social, musical and cultural event. Niraj Shrestha performed a fantastic job by creating lovely flyers, name tags, and placards. And most of all, Deep dai, 1974 A.D., and our own Houston Nepali talents: Prapti Regmi, Kshitij Regmi, Lekhnath Bhusal, Binod Kumar Khanal and Arun Shrestha, we can not thank you enough for accepting our invitation and electrifying the night with an awe-inspiring, dazzling and memorable performance. We have also received the feedback saying that Deep Shrestha and 1974 A.D. were immensely impressed by NAH hospitality, and have highly rated the organization and management of the Nepali Musical Night.

The famous and renowned Nepali Jai Sri Ram "Doodh Dhari" Baba from Ram Mandir in Pahsupati Nath area in Kathmandu, Nepal, rendered an eloquent, heart warming speech accompanied by enchanting Bhajans, in a simple, interesting and thought provoking manner, on September 22, as part of the NAH lecture program. Nepali Baba is currently located in Houston, and has been traveling in the U.S. for last 16 months.

NAH is scheduled to celebrate the Dashain festival with a culture program accompanied by delicious, mouth watering cuisine at Maharajah restaurant on Saturday, October 19. Please join us, be part of this gala festivity, and have a great time.

We wish you all a very happy and prosperous Dashain and Deepawali. May Goddess Durga and Goddess Mahalaxmi shower on us blessings of peace, prosperity, and good health!

Let us all unite, join hands and work together to soar Nepalese Association of Houston (NAH) to new heights.

Best regards,
Rajendra Shrestha
President, NAH

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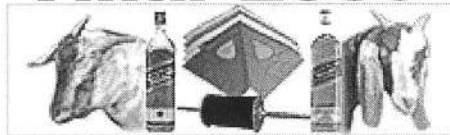
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letter to the editor

22 Aug. 002

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प्रबोध

एउटा लामो अर्थात् सम्म स्तम्भमा वसिन् ^{लंडन फर्कि आएँ} कण्ड वर्ष दिन पुरानो
 NEPAL VISION, Volume 2 Issue 2 octo 2001 AD. Kartik/Marga 2058 BS.
 हने शौभाग्य प्राप्त भयो।

Nepal Vision अर्को नियमित रुपमा प्रकाशित भै राखेको छ कि छैन ?
 केहि जानकारी पाए आभारी हुने छिने।

नेपाली हर आफ्नो मुलुक भन्दा धेरै टाढा, विश्वको जुन जुनै भागमा जुन जुनै
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 काटि फाल्न किमार्थ लकिन्दैन।

व्यक्ति, व्यक्ति वाट नै एउटा समाजको शृजना हुन्छ। समाजमा एक अर्कोसँग
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Harvard काड आफ्नो लक्ष्यको परिपूर्तिमा सफलता मिलोस भन्ने हार्दिक शुभकामना
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यसका साथ एउटा छोटो कविता पनि समावेश गरेको छु। उपयुक्त भएमा
 प्रकाशित अक्षय हुने छ भन्ने आशा छ।

शुभेच्छा
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मनोदेवा

डिप्लोमा मान्छेरु लंडन यु.के

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 सामाजिक आडमर तोडि दिन मन लाग्छ
 हो ! तिम्री बसेकी हौं मनमा
 समाजलाइ निर्भिक भनि दिन मन लाग्छ !

nepal news

'Ghantu' Dance Remains Formality In Gorkha

- Kathmandu Post: May 27, 2002 (Ishwori Neupane)

Another adverse impact of emergency was on 'Ghantu Nach' one of the cultural dance in Gurung and Magar community. The dance that speaks of age old culture of the ethnic communities limited to a mere formality this year in Gorkha District, concerned community leaders said.

The locals said that state of emergency and prohibition to stay out during nights has deprived the community from enjoying the charm of annual dancing fest.

Birinchowk at Prithvi Narayn Municipality-9 of the district is well-known for the dance in Magar community. In the years gone by, the dance would draw visitors from various parts of the country.

Even those staying outside the country would come to attend the cultural programme. However, this year, the programme could not be perfect and lively, sources said.

As to the ritual, the dance that started on the black moon day, fifteen days ago had to be concluded on the full moon day on May. However, as it could not be completed in time, it is scheduled to conclude on Friday this week, Hasta Bahadur Rana, the guru of the dance said.

The concerned are worried to have broken the ancient rule of the dance. People in the community believe that the sacred dance if performed without fulfilling its rituals loses its identity and fades away.

"Unfortunately, it is the time to admit that our culture is in crisis," a sad Hasta Bahadur said.

Youths Fleeing Homes for Fear of Maoists

- Kathmandu Post: May 27, 2002

A large number of youths from the eastern hill districts have fled their homes and taken refuge in many cities in the eastern Terai after outlawed Maoists forcibly began recruiting youths in their organisation with a view to using them as human shields.

Maoists have been widely condemned for using innocents as human shields while attacking the government's forces, and for recruiting people, including minors, in war at gun point.

The rebels have launched their campaign of recruiting new cadres in the hill districts like Dhankuta, Terhathum and Bhojpur. Rosan Adhikari, a resident of Sabla village of Terhathum district, who arrived in Biratnagar for fear of his life from the Maoists, said that the rebels are demanding either a boy or a girl from each of the households to recruit them in their organisation.

"Failure to meet this condition, a family is fined a sum of Rs. 40,000 in cash. If the family fails to meet either of the two demands, the re-

The main essence of the dance lies on its costumes that are typical to the community. Any householder of the community can host the dance participants. The dance as per the ritual has to go on during days and nights simultaneously for 15 days.

But, as the emergency prohibited mass gatherings at night, the ceremony lost its perfection this year, according to concerned sources. Four unmarried girls carried out the dance at Birinchok this year. "The dance could not be continued at nights," Krishna Kumari Rana, another promoter of the dance said.

During the programme, the maids taking part in the dance are bedecked with traditional costumes that give them a majestic look. The dancers are blindfolded with a white piece of cloth called 'Birpat.' Thus their eyes remain closed during the period of dance.

The performers go on dancing on the rhythm accompanied by songs and music from various musical instruments. The initial phase of the songs invites the gods. Thus divine force overpowers the dancers.

As their eyes are already closed, they fall unconscious and deities guide their dance. Thus each step of the dance is a divine movement. The dancers are not influenced by other external noises, according to locals.

However, according to the music experts, it is the perfect harmony of songs and music that has its spell cast on the dancers.

In the past years, people would throng at Birinchok in thousands from Kathmandu, Pokhara, Narayangarh and Bhairahawa. The area would be packed with the spectators and even the local clubs had to be mobilised for the arrangement of the visitors, Rudra Prasad Bagale the Secretary at a local Youth Club said.

Meanwhile, it is learnt that Ghantu dance at Vachhek, Shri Math Kot, Barpak and other Gurung settlements in the district could not be grand this year.

bels threaten to kill them," Adhikari told The Kathmandu Post.

Adhikari said he escaped from his home to be safe from being captured by the rebels. Youths who fled their home in Terhathum said that the rebels have pressed people of almost all villages for sending their sons and daughters for the so-called "People's War".

Umesh BK from Hamarjung village in Terhathum also has a similar tale to tell. BK said he could not join the insurgency, nor could he pay them the amount demanded by the rebels. Most of the youths from various villages of Terhathum district have left behind their elderly parents for fear of being used as human shields by the rebels.

Another Maoist victim, Chandra Thebe from Jaljale VDC, said Maoists usually came into groups and pressed youths for joining the guerrilla warfare. He said that more than 60 youths in the district were recently forced to join the rebellion.

Acting Chief District Officer of Terhathum, Taranath Upadhyaya, also admitted the fact and said that necessary steps were being taken to stop the rebels from continuing their recruitment campaign

"When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare at me in the face, and I see not one ray of hope on the horizon, I turn to Bhagavad-gītā and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. Those who meditate on the Gītā will derive fresh joy and new meanings from it every day."

- Mahatma Gandhi

Gurkha Soldier Faces Wait For Compensation

- BBC World Service: June 11, 2002

A British employment tribunal has heard that a man with Nepali origins who's seeking compensation for not receiving pay and pension rights equal to those of his British counterparts, faces a further three-year wait before his case is resolved.

A lawyer representing the former Gurkha soldier, Hari Thapa, said the delay was the result of an appeal lodged by the Ministry of Defence.

It's seeking to overturn a ruling by the tribunal which allows the ad-

mission of matters dated earlier than 1997 - the date Mr Thapa brought his case.

The tribunal has accused the ministry of stalling tactics. It's been estimated that if Mr Thapa wins, Britain could face a bill of about \$3bn to compensate thousands of Gurkhas and their families. Mr Thapa - a British national with a Nepali father - was recruited to the British Army under a 1947 tripartite agreement between Britain, India and Nepal, which links Gurkhas' remuneration to that in the Indian Army.

From the newsroom of the BBC World Service

Non-Resident Nepali Entrepreneurs Request Changes In Law

-Kathmandu Post: June 9, 2002

A group of non-resident Nepali entrepreneurs have requested the government to make radical changes in the prevailing laws to facilitate investment in the Nepalese economy.

The group, consisting of non-resident Nepalese of the Russia-CIS-Nepal Industry and Commerce Association, held a press conference in Kathmandu Sunday saying there were immense possibilities of the non-resident Nepalis investing in the country's economy. They however, pointed out the need for radical changes in the laws to facilitate such investments as the existing laws were not investor friendly.

A statement issued during the press conference states that the Income Tax Act 2031 and Act relating to foreign investment 2049 does not have clear policies regarding investment by non-resident Nepalis and

has put forward nine separate recommendations.

The recommendations include provisions for opening of foreign currency accounts by non-resident Nepalis investors, provision for dual citizenship and the right of Non resident Nepalis to withdraw their investment.

Speaking during the press conference, President of Association of Russia-Nepal Industry and Commerce Upendra Mahato said despite the current state of emergency in the country, several non-resident Nepalis were keen on investing in Nepal and he called on the government to create favourable atmosphere. He however, said there were three main obstacles for this.

Mahato further added that however rich a Nepali living abroad might be, if he is not able to bring the wealth back to his country, it was meaningless. Jiva Lamichanne said there were about 500,000 non-resident Nepalis and that they were in a position to provide effective support to Nepalese economy. (rk)

Non-Resident Nepalis To Get Special Visas

- Satyendra Timilsina (Kathmandu Post: May 21, 2002)

KATHMANDU, May 20: With an aim to facilitate Non Resident Nepalis (NRNs) and attract their investments into the country, the government has decided to offer special concessional new visa scheme.

The cabinet, in its meeting held last week, decided to issue special visa valid for 10 years to interested NRNs willing to stay in Nepal either for academic pursuit, establishing businesses or conducting researches.

According to government officials, the visa fees will be US\$ 50 per year to the students and US\$ 100 per year to others and can be used for several entries within the specified period. The new visa would be issued from the concerned diplomatic offices upon the request of the NRNs.

"The latest decision would come into effect after it is published in the gazette, which is expected next week," said Tika Dutta Niraula, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA). He further said

that the new provision is expected to help boost industrial, business and tourism sectors of the country.

According to the new provision, any NRN willing to receive the NRN visa under new scheme will have to apply to the nearest Royal Nepalese Embassies or consular offices.

With the new scheme, more than 100,000 NRNs, who are currently using foreign passports to enter Nepal, are expected to benefit. NRN groups have long lobbied for such provisions without much success, until now. They claim that with special visas, NRNs could bring in much needed investments and expertise.

NRNs from Thailand and Burma had been asking their respective embassies to provide them with special facilities to allow educating their children in Nepal. Likewise, professional NRNs including doctors, engineers and other technical personnel staying in Europe and the United States also have shown their willingness to serve in Nepal. The NRNs from Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) are also demanding such facilities to start business in Nepal.

JOKES...

Doctor! I have a serious problem, I can never remember what I just said.

When did you first notice this problem?

What problem?

What is difference between man and Superman?

Man wears underwear under the trouser and superman wears it over the trouser.

Sam: Would you punish me for some thing I didn't do?

Teacher: no, of course not.

Sam: good, because I didn't do my homework.

Rare Publications To Be Microfilmed Soon

- *Bhuvaneshor Sharma (The Rising Nepal: September 30, 2002)*

In a bid to preserve the country's rare books, endangered manuscripts and historical documents, Tribhuvan University Central library will soon begin microfilming them so that Nepalese readers are able to study these documents even in the distant future.

There are more than 70 million pages of Nepal-related publications, including in the English language, which need to be microfilmed. Microfilming of these documents will be carried out in different phases, said Chief Librarian Krishna Mani Bhandari.

"It has taken us 10 years of continuous effort to receive a cultural grant from Japan so as to preserve many historic and endangered documents," said Bhandari. Japan has agreed to provide Rs. 20 million to the library, which will be spent on installing microfilming technology, said section officer Hari Prasad Panday at the Foreign Aid Coordination Division of the Ministry of Finance. "A formal agreement on the grant between the two countries has yet to be reached. But it will happen soon," informed Panday.

Japan annually provides Rs. 50 million in cultural grants to various organisations to preserve cultural entities. We have requested Japan for an assistance of 49,831,300 Japanese yen, which will pay for the equipment, transportation and technical manpower necessary to install the technology, said Bhandari.

The country's biggest library has many historical and rare documents, which are not available in other places. It is responsible for preserving

important documents as well as providing services to its readers at the same time.

Microfilming is the technology of preserving books on film. "It is the best available technology, and people would, therefore, be able to peruse historical documents and books for centuries," said Bhandari.

The library has 430 rare Nepali books and 425 rare journals in its store. There are another 35,000 journals in its Nepal collection alone that needs to be preserved. This is the single largest heritage in print on Nepal.

Of the 21,000 books on Nepal that are on the priority list for conservation, 10,000 are in the Nepali language and 11,000 in English, said Bhandari. "Immediate steps to preserve its 500 manuscripts is essential." These also include rare government reports, he noted. There are important journals to microfilm as well. These include 4,100 journals published from Nepal, of which 1,000 are in the English language.

The library also has a reserve of 2,000 rare government documents. It must also preserve 500 Ph.D. theses and 5100 masters' level theses. Filming the entire 70 million pages is expected to take some two decades. "This is based on the what we at the library can do - we can film about 313, 000 pages," Bhandari said. The library has a collection of 250,000 books.

Many books in the library are not available in other libraries. And it is not feasible to reprint them because there is no demand in the market and many of the writers are already dead.

Holistic Approach Against Poverty Recommended

- *Rajkumar K.C (The Rising Nepal: September 30, 2002)*

The third meeting of the Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation (ISACPA) held in Islamabad since Saturday decided to hammer out 'concrete solutions' to alleviate poverty in the South Asian region by 2015 in a bid to meet the UN Millenium Development Goal. The meeting came to the conclusion that reduction of poverty by 10 per cent in 10 years was too dismal and recommended some strong measures.

Expressing deep concern over the tardy progress being made in this direction, 14 independent economic experts, two from each of the seven member countries of the SAARC, agreed to take a 'holistic approach' to bring down the level of poverty to less than five per cent by 2015. The participants also discussed how far this was possible to achieve.

According to Prof. Bishwombhar Pyakurel, the experts reviewed the progress made by each of the SAARC countries and elaborately discussed the process of economic reforms and the global impact as well. While discussing the preliminary report, they tried to thrash out what type of 'regional intervention and future course of action' would be essential to lessen the impact of globalization in the present context, he said.

Various issues relating to country specific and region specific were discussed and suggestions and comments were made for the final round of the meeting to be held in Dhaka from November 16-18 this year.

The recommendations of the third meeting will be presented in the

next round of meeting which will prepare the final draft for the 12th SAARC summit slated to be held in January in Islamabad in 2003. This time Bangladesh -co-convenor of the ISACPA - chaired the meeting.

Former Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai is the chairman of the ISACPA, which was instituted in 1992 with the objective of alleviating poverty from the region by 2002.

During the Sixth SAARC summit held in Colombo in December 21, 1991, the heads of the State or Government had decided to form an independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation. It was to consist of eminent personalities from each of the SAARC member countries to conduct independent studies of diverse experiences on poverty alleviation.

Although each SAARC summit has accorded top priority to poverty alleviation in the region, the drive has been a failure. The preliminary report disclosed Bangladesh as the most successful country at reducing poverty from 58.8 per cent to 49.8 per cent. According to Dr. Shankar Sharma, member of the National Planning Commission (NPC), the meeting identified various areas of poverty alleviation and helped develop a consensus to battle poverty from the region.

Dr. Sharma talking to The Rising Nepal said that the third round of meeting was more successful and result-oriented. He said that the meeting would give a good feedback to the final round of the ISACPA meeting.

The first meeting of the ISACPA was held in Nepal and the second meeting took place in New Delhi.

Nepal's Telecom Sector Can Attract \$ 1b: Report

- Kathmandu Post: May 29, 2002

Mercury Strategy, one of the leading American consultancy firms engaged in exploring investments possibilities in the telecom sector worldwide, has stated the possibility of investing up to one billion US dollar in the telecommunication sector in Nepal.

The company in its latest feasibility study has underlined that the investment in the sector could be US \$ 100 million in the short term, which could go up to US\$ 1 billion in the long run. The company presented its study report during the recently concluded visit of Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Dauba to the United States. The study report, among others, urged the government to take necessary steps to immediately attract the huge telecom investments.

The low penetration of mobile phone users, unique geographical structure and nominal use of spectrum, a satellite space allocated for Nepal as per the international regulation, are some of the major reasons, which can attract huge foreign investments in the telecommunications sector in Nepal.

The international consultancy firm has also said that the unique terrain that Nepal enjoys could provide rare facilities to the international telecom companies to conduct various experiments of the technologies that they develop in the telecom sector.

Similarly, despite huge potentials, the low subscription of cellular phones in Nepal, which is the lowest in the region, is also another reasons

that can attract international investors' attention to the sector.

Currently, Nepal has only 20,000 cellular phone subscribers. However, the firm has also urged the government to bring some policy changes to ensure such investment. The company has also recommended splitting Nepal Telecommunications Corporation (NTC), the state-owned telecom monopolist, into fixed phone and mobile phone companies. NTC at present has been providing both the fixed phone and mobile phone services.

During the presentation in the US, the government also highlighted its various efforts to attract foreign investments in Nepal and clarified that the government has already opened up foreign investments in telecom sector by adopting various investment-friendly policies. The government on the occasion assured to take necessary steps to ensure such investments.

Dr Shankar Sharma, Member of National Planning Commission and a member of Prime Ministerial delegation told The Kathmandu Post that the outcome of the study is very encouraging and underscored that Nepal need to take appropriate steps to be benefited from such investment possibilities.

The telecom sector in Nepal has lately become competitive after the government opened up private investments in the sector breaking decades long monopoly. It has already initiated the process of awarding cellular mobile phone operation license to a private sector, which is expected to begin its operation in a joint venture with an Indian company in the near future.

Wetlands For Life

- Achyut Raj Adhikari (Sunday Post, September 15, 2002)

Wetland comprises 6.2% of world's total land area. Survival of human civilization is intimately linked with wetlands since about 4500 BC. Wetlands are lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or land is covered by shallow water. Any land to be wetlands must have one or more of following three attributes : 1) at least periodically, the land supports predominantly hydrophytes, 2) the substrate should be undrained hydric soil (wet soils), and 3) the substrate is non soil and is saturated with water or covered by shallow water at sometime during the growing season of each year. The over exploitation of wetlands causes loosening of its sustainability. Altogether 25-50% of the earth's wetlands have been already destroyed.

Wetlands provide a unique habitat for a wide variety of flora and fauna. Wetlands are usually useful as sources, sinks and transformers of a magnitude of chemical, biological and genetic materials. Many of the preserved fossil fuels on which we depend now are really from the swampy environment of the carboniferous period. "One preserved human body over 2000 years old, known as the Tollund Man was discovered in a peat bog in Denmark in 1950 with skin, whiskers and fingernails intact". The analysis of pollen and microfossils from peat soil from all over the world has enabled scientists to determine historical vegetation changes and climatic variations as well as human impacts on the landscape as far back as 275,000 years ago". So undisturbed wetlands are thus a time machine to past conditions.

Wetlands, the most productive ecosystem on earth, are sometimes described as the "kidneys of the planet" (James 1995). Because they cleanse the water from sediments, chemicals and other pollutants that pass through them of. Many countries are using wetlands as a site for sewage treatment. They are sometimes referred as "Nature's civil Engineer" by providing effective system of flood control and protecting

from soil erosion. Because of the extensive food webs and rich diversity of plant and animals, scientists recognized wetlands as a "Biological supermarket". Everyone should realize that wetlands because of its specific values for maintaining the genetic and ecological diversity of any region.

Wetland in Nepal is known as "sim sar" where sim is derivative of Persian word 'sin' means low-grade land which is not suitable for cultivation; 'sar' is a Sanskrit word meaning water. Nepal, being a mountainous country, also comprises various types of wetlands such as - rivers, lakes, floodplains, swamps, marshes, ponds, reservoir and paddy fields. Wetland comes about 7437 sq. km. or approximately 5% of the total area of our country (Shrestha, 95).

According to IUCN- (The World Conservation Union) 163 wetland sites have been identified in Terai region only, where 38% of wetlands found in the far western development region and large number of wetland sites are represented by lakes and ponds (48%).

For the preservation of wetlands globally, The Ramsar Convention was held in Iran on 2nd Feb, 1987. Every signatory country should have at least one wetland of International importance so that Koshi Tappu region of eastern Terai was listed as The Ramsar Site on 17th April, 1987. Altogether 134 species of fish and 365 species of birds have been listed only from Koshi Tappu wetlands (Sah, 1997). More than 3% of Nepal's total reported plants are found in wetlands have been carried out by IUCN but the works on Midland wetlands are not explored. Besides Koshi Tappu, Bishazar Tal in Chitwan, Ghodaghdi Tal in Kailali, Khaste and Dipang lake in Pokhara are other hot spot of Nepal's wetland (Adhikari, 2001).

In case of our country, wetlands can be agronomically utilized for production of food, non-food crops, medicinal plants and other aquatic plants. Still, fishing is being a common practice frequently. But on these days, Nepal's wetland are facing degradation mainly due to eutrophication and anthropogenic activities as well.

Do You Know The Falsely Indicted Govinda Incident?

- Nepal Vision Reporter

The criminal case of Nepalese, Govinda, known as 'The Murder of an office lady (OL),' working for Tokyo Electric Company. This incident aroused much public attention.

In March, 1997, a woman in her thirties was found murdered at an apartment in Shibuya-ku, Tokyo. The murder itself would have been treated, as a common incident of homicide but the woman happened to be a graduate of a famous private university working for a top ranking company and the body was found near a pleasure quarter of the city where it was difficult to imagine her to be going judging from her day-life. The disparity between her social attributes and the pleasure quarter of town, at once aroused great interest of the mass media. Almost every day the media carried the interest-oriented news about the 'single,' 'beautiful,' and 'elite' OL's night-life. Some media reported her personal history from her kindergarten days while some even carried her picture in nude.

Although the mass media were severely criticized for going too far with interest-oriented reports just as in other cases of Kazuyoshi Miura's Los Angeles case, and the mother and child murder case in Tsukuba, it is deplorable that the media has not learned any lessons.

I have no words to express my feelings when I think of the bereaved family of the OL who was not only murdered but blemished by the distorted reports of character by the mass media.

The person suspected of murdering the OL by the police investigation authorities was the Nepalese man, Govinda Prasad Minale. Govinda was living in a condominium next to the apartment, Shibuya-s101, where the murdered woman's body was found. Govinda was planning to move to Shibuya-so 101 apartment and had borrowed the key to the apartment from the superintendent before the incident. This fact caught the investigation authorities.

Three days after discovery of the murdered body, on learning that the police was looking for him, Govinda reported himself at the police. He was then arrested for a different reason, for overstay in Japan after expiration of his tourist visa.

During his detention, Govinda was examined mostly on suspicion of OL murder and scarcely on illegality of overstay. On March 31, although he was prosecuted of murder. To interrogate a person on a different charge while he is being prosecuted for another crime is apparently an illegal act.

Day after day, Govinda had to endure the questioning by the police, which he denied he had no knowledge of. On May 20, the public trial for his illegal overstay was held and on the same day he was given the verdict of 'probation'. If this was an ordinary case of a foreigner on probation for an overstay indictment, he would have been taken to the Immigration Office from the court to be repatriated. The treatment should have been the same for Govinda.. However, just after The verdict of 'probation' Govinda was arrested on two charges, for the murder of OL and burglary, of stealing money from her Thus began Govinda's long, long serious fight for acquittal of the 'false

charge' against him.

Govinda's public hearings were held more than thirty times between October 1997 to January 2000 and were carefully examined. Interrogations were conducted on:

- (1) If the account of the eye-witness of having seen a person looking like Govinda at the scene of murder can be trusted.
- (2) Whether it was possible for Govinda to reach the scene of murder in time (from where?) to commit the murder.

(1) Other points of disputes were carefully examined.

The prosecution submitted as a supporting material evidence the result of the DNA test which corresponded with that of Govinda found in the body fluid in the condom thrown away at Shibuya-so. Govinda contended that the condom was used ten days before the incident when he had a sex relation with the murdered OL at Shibuya-so. In this way, Govinda countered the material evidence presented by prosecution.

On April 14, 2000, the Tokyo District Court proclaimed Govinda as 'Not Guilty,' on the ground that there was not enough evidence to prove that the defendant was guilty of the murder. On hearing the verdict, Govinda jumped with joy and after the dismissal of the court bowed deeply to the three judges and said, "Arigato gozaimasu" (I thank you very much) in awkward Japanese.

If the incident were to end there, it would have been a happy end in spite of the bitter 3-year life of detention. However, the prosecution appealed the case to the Higher Court and requested the court to detain Govinda to prevent him from being sent home. To detain an innocent defendant was considered not possible by law. The defendant's counsel, of course, opposed Govinda's detention.

The fourth Criminal Affairs Division of the Tokyo High Court in charge of this case accepted the appeal and decided to retain Govinda and to transfer the hearings to the Court of Intermediate Appeal. Govinda's detention was widely reported and its problems pointed out by the mass media

At the trial conducted by the Tokyo High Court, which detained Govinda who was supposed to be released, the request for taking evidences by the prosecution was accepted but a similar request by the defense counsel was rejected. The proceedings of the hearing appeared unfair and prejudiced.

On December 22, 2000, the 4th Criminal Affairs Division of the Tokyo High Court pronounced the verdict of 'Guilty with life imprisonment,' reversing the decision of 'Not guilty' of the District Court.

The ruling of the High Court based only on a loose logic appeared to have overruled the verdict of the first court of 'Not guilty' which was based on a firmly constructed logic Govinda immediately appealed to the Supreme Court on the day the 'Guilty' verdict was declared, and the stage was transferred to the Third Party Bench of the Supreme Court.

In July 2001 the Statement of Grounds of Final Criminal Appeal was submitted to the Supreme Court and now Govinda is waiting for the decision of the Supreme Court.

We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearth-stone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature. - Abraham Lincoln

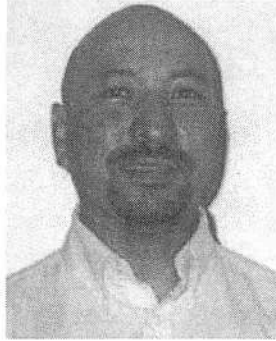
who's who

Nepal Vision features who's who in its every issue. We select a true Nepali role model who has made the community proud and incessantly become a source of moral, academic and /or entrepreneurial inspiration.

We are privileged to introduce Mr. Binod Shrestha in this issue of Nepal Vision.

Mr. Binod Shrestha

- Born to parents Sri Narayan Prasad Shrestha and late Srimati Tirtha Kumari Shrestha in Chainpur, Sankhuwasabha District, Koshi Zone
- Earned Bachelor of Law degree at Nepal Law Campus, Kathmandu
- Served as Vice President of Junior Jaycees in Kathmandu, (1980-82)
- Moved to Houston, Texas in 1984



- Married to Babita Maskey; blessed with two lovely daughters: Bridhi and Brishti
- Currently employed at Double Tree Hotel and Finley Fine Jewelry at Foley's Department Store
- Believes in "Sewa Nai Dharma Ho," i.e., "Service is next to Godliness"
- Loves to be involved in social service and community development activities
- Served Nepalese Association of Houston (NAH) as a cofounder, and past President and Vice President
- Hobbies include watching sports, cooking Nepali dishes and working around the house.

If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.
- Mother Teresa

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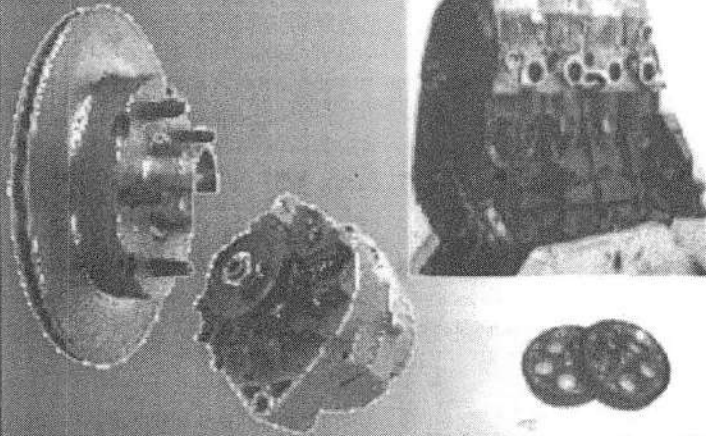
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politics & hope

Nepal: Some Desultory Reflections

- *Bhishma Raj Karkei*

In this article I discuss many things, hopping from issues to issues and from one thought to another. It is full of desultory ramblings, although I try to pass them off as reflections. Sometimes I have managed to gain some consistency. At others, I wander off in different directions. So it is not going to be organized around some clear ideas. As I do the writing, I have a sense of superficiality of the whole thing.

At the outset my mind goes back to my imprisonment in Bhadracol jail. It was during the civil disobedience movement (Satyagraha, 2042 B.S.-1985 A.D.). In the decrepit and crowded Bhadracol prison I read Toynbee's work named, *A Study of History*. The late Mr. Toynbee was a great historian with a prolific output. *A Study of History* is work in ten volumes which seeks to distill the essence of various universal cultures and civilization from far antiquity to our age. To make matters easy, there is an abridgement of ten volumes by D.C. Sommerville. Sushil Koirala had this book, apparently belonging to his famous cousin B. P. Koirala. B.P. Koirala had love for books and ideas, unlike the lethargic indifference of contemporary leadership of Nepali Congress in power now. He had a curious and informed mind.

I am not meaning to discuss the merits and demerits of Toynbee's work here. I must admit this is a very difficult task. One of his central themes in *A Study of History* is the idea of a creative minority acting as a driving force behind every civilization. This theme is illustrated by rich historical details. That the intelligent creative minority stimulates and contributes to the betterment of society is not entirely his original idea and is hardly surprising.

Mr. Toynbee sets before himself a great project and works on it with an unlimited zeal. There are some grand questions nagging historians. They want to solve the universal puzzles like: how do civilizations rise and fall? Historians like Oswald Spengler maintained that a civilization dies out when it exhausts all its possibilities. However, there is a more sober note in a philosopher like Henri Bergson when he tried to find an explanation in the role of the *élan vitale*, a vital life-force which makes it possible for man to acquire religion and culture, build society and civilization and nurture them. While Bergson's

élan vitale is like an innate quality of a man, the idea of creative minority was its active manifestation for Toynbee. He deals with the universal history, trying to find in it undiscovered patterns and laws.

A reluctant supporter of the civil disobedience movement, I found myself incarcerated in Bhadracol prison for six months. For a young generation growing up in the Panchayat era it was difficult to distance oneself from the political upheaval. While in prison and in the course of my political activity as a student, I came to know a great many people, leaders and plain activists; some of whom are at the helm of Nepal now. There was no doubt that the political struggle against Panchayat was full of difficulty. For a vast majority of people in the opposition, the main motivation was, however, to be found in a crude idealism and disenchantment. There was nothing inherently profound and attractive about this opposition; it is not to belittle the long democratic struggle and denigrate the suffering of numerous men and women. It was a simple faith powerfully stirring the mass.

The erstwhile opposition camp, upon the success of the democratic movement in Nepal in 1990, finds itself ill prepared to confront the problems of a country. Toynbee's work gives us a yardstick to measure their overall fitness to lead the country. We are appalled to find the present ruling class getting more and more lost in its own pettiness. It lacks the decency to try to halt the wretchedness of Nepal even in a small way. The ruling class is increasingly reviled and rightly so. The present milieu is not qualitatively different from the one that prevailed during the Panchayat and Rana eras. A leadership that can harness new possibilities arising from the democratic system is yet to emerge. As things stand now, I do not find anything to cheer my spirit on in the glory hours of these philistines who are now ruling Nepal.

A clear picture of Nepal's problem can be formed by the Toynbesque search -light. There is an upward movement of a society as long as it is led by the creative minority. To a large extent Nepal's failure can be attributed to an incompetent leadership in a broad sense of the word. This failure is evident in all the major areas, particularly poignantly in education. The educational institutions in Nepal are in shambles. The majority of people who have the means to afford the so called higher education continue to face bleak future and do not know how to make sense of their life even now. Many end up becoming "misfits" in their own country. The discovery of a creative minority should be

the top priority of education while giving every citizen an equal opportunity to do his best. An emergence of a creative minority is not yet visible on the horizon of Nepal.

We do not live in the uncomplicated simplicity of an isolated world. Nepal needs to interact with the modern world, while trying to modernize herself. Her ascent can only come through a scientific revolution. In the pre-scientific era, the test of a highly capable leadership lay not so much in changing the society for better or worse but mainly in safeguarding its continuity by meeting external challenges. Before the advent of science, all societies were in the grip of inertia. Generation after generation lived in the same socio-economic condition. And a pervasive religious environment engendered the otherworldly outlook, to forget the misery of this world. There simply was not forward momentum; the great changes so omnipresent in modern world were absent. Many changes in pre-scientific world came from religions and clashes between them.

Mr. Toynbee claims how a basic human organization like society and gigantic one like civilization fare in the long run depends critically on its relation with a creative minority. Let me give a famous example of the Roman Empire. In doing so, I am perfectly aware of my very infirm understanding. What caused the decline of the Roman Empire has given rise to conflicting interpretations. But historians agree when they claim that the Roman Empire was strong and viable as long as it was led by a ruling class able to shape the appropriate responses to the internal and external challenges. In the Greco-Roman chrysalis we find the nascent germ of vitality for later day western civilization. The Roman Empire, when it was strong, gave a better life for its population though it is not so high by modern standard. The Romans had a strong belief in their cultural superiority, which infused them with a mission to conquer a great territory for their empire. This was achieved by not just military prowess; there was, as it were, an inexplicable destiny pushing it forward. Later on, with the steady deterioration of leadership came the decay and decline. Romans found themselves overwhelmed by the might of barbarian from beyond the border. Yet it lingered on, its fortune rising and falling, finally becoming a ghost of its former self. The eastern Byzantine Empire, which claimed to be a successor of the Roman Empire was no match for the ferocity of Ottomans in the 15th century. In the long history of the Roman Empire, we find colossal vice and virtue, meanness and greatness, bravery and cowardice, technological marvel, civil

(Continued on page 17)

war and peace. Some names like Julius Caesar, Julian, Marcus Aurelius, Pliny and Cicero still stand out in the gallery of heroes and embody in them the marvel and glory of the Roman Empire. Yet, the drying up of creative vitality hastened the downfall of the Roman Empire.

A great role of the creative minority is evidenced in the rise of the modern west. One of the most important features of modern world is that it was possible for a small area of western Europe to establish its world domination. This was possible because they went through a new awakening and scientific revolution. The scientific outlook and technological know how unleashed the forces of economic transformation which have been able to sweep even the most remote region from its placid isolation.

Paradoxically, next door to the British India, Rana rulers kept Nepal virtually frozen in time until they were toppled in 1950. After a brief experiment with western style democracy, a royal coup resulted in a new dispensation in the form of Panchayat which sought its following by appealing to the peculiarity of the historical evolution of Nepal and extolling the institution of monarchy as a source of unquestionable sanctity. The suppression of political opposition was very severe and brutal in the early years of Panchayat and a gradual loosening came about after the declaration of referendum in 1979. The Panchayat system was detested universally and its downfall was swift in 1990.

The democratic Nepal, despite early enthusiasm, is disillusioned and confused. An outdated Maoist insurgency has grown in strength to create a climate of terror in a large area of rural Nepal. That the government did not have the prevision to anticipate its destructive fury speaks clearly for its incompetence. Meanwhile Nepal is changing, although the voice of change is not articulate enough. If it were a closed society there would be a familiar rhythm and certainty. An open society opens before its member a myriad of possibilities but unless it is dynamic, it means more suffering in the short run. A current of dangerous discontents goes towards swelling the rank of even a backward ideology like Maoism. The weird stories of corruption in government seemed to elevate the murderous band of Maoists in the popular eye for a while.

There is confusion and fumbling in the chaos of Nepal. As she struggles to be open and modern, she has to deal with a slow economy. How do we cope with the challenges of a country when we cannot rely on the certainty and security of our backward agrarian

economy? The political and economic changes will not come about unless there is a vibrant educated group which is ready to take over the leadership, much it may find itself frustrated and thwarted. Do we have a system, which enables our country to harvest the human resources of bright and intelligent men and women?

An automatic mechanism is not in place even in highly developed countries to ensure that it benefits from the extant minority of the creative people. We might recall here the IQ movement pioneered mainly in America whose aim is to identify an intelligent minority from very early on. Roosevelt called it raking genius from the rubbish. There is an acerbic debate in America about how best it can educate its citizen. In a controversial bestseller like *The Bell Curve* there is a confident assertion that the IQ difference accounts for the eventual place of American in American society. The authors claim that there is a cognitive elite taking over the leadership of America and that this trend is both desirable and unstoppable. I wish to make it clear that I find this reliance on IQ implausible. In rebuttal to the growing vogue of a plethora of standardized tests, there was a book written by Stephen Gould dealing seriously with the implication and reliability of the IQ measure. His book is justly titled "The Mismeasure of Man". Although what determines man's ability and how it blooms is very difficult to pin quantitatively, the fact that there are more able and less able people is not disputable. The upshot is that a creative minority is an active force, not just a theoretical artifact.

There is an important lesson for Nepal in the spectacular economic success of some Asian countries. A simple-minded imitation of a successful country might lead to unhappy results. Yet a cautious approach might give wonderful results. The question is: how was it possible for some East Asian countries to attain prosperity during a single generation? There are no simple explanations for this economic miracle. However, some trends are clear enough. Before the spurt of economic growth in Singapore, Hong-Kong, Korea, Taiwan and other countries in Asia, there was a strong program to provide universal education for everybody and a higher education for a minority, which was manifestly capable. This highly educated group was in the center of the swift transformation of these countries. They had a better understanding of the limitations of democracy in a culture based upon obedience to authority and how best to operate within its framework. A favorable condition for a free society and democracy was more readily created when the modicum of prosperity was availa-

ble to large majority.

What can we do in Nepal? It will be a naïve foolishness to believe that democracy by itself is enough to guarantee a spontaneous progress in Nepal or elsewhere. Educated citizens and economic growth make it viable and more efficient. More important is the presence of a large educated population. In a society where education and economic growth is not powerful enough, any system becomes deformed and manipulated by the entrenched vested interest. No threat to democracy exists in Nepal because there are no serious rival ideas and a traditional style royal takeover is impossible. But degeneration has eaten at the vitality of Nepali democracy when it is the most accepted mode of government. Money plays a decisive role in election. In many cases there are reports of outright rigging. Political parties finance their activities with dubious money. For a ruling party it is very common to misuse government power to finance its activities. Politics is seen as a risky profession and a political success gives an opportunity for the winner to become rich overnight. So unfolds the sad story for Nepal.

There is some checking mechanism in democracy but in despairing and dangerous times people long for a great ruler. Hence a search for enlightened and benevolent dictator has engaged some of the great minds. It is like looking for savior and prophet in a more primitive society and a great leader in a more refined country like Germany and Italy. A storm of fascism broke out in Europe when democracy was seen as a weak system unfit for the warlike climate. A study of prewar Germany and Europe provides an understanding of how democracy was easily uprooted by a popular dictatorship. For a man to follow the craving for greatness and submit to the authority of a great leader was a favorite theme among many German writers. A very well-known representative is Nietzsche. His thunder - Beneath the shadow of sword lies my paradise- correctly foreshadowed the turbulent time ahead. I am no connoisseur of Wagnerian music but it is said to celebrate the legend of strength of the old Germanic past. Democracy was contemptuously looked down in pre-war Germany. An excerpt of poem reproduced below from Joachim Fest's biography of Hitler captures the mood in connection with the quality and emergence of a great leader

He shatters fetters, sweeps the rubble heaps

Back into order, scourges stragglers home

Through the storms and dreadful trumpet blasts

Of reddening dawn he leads his band of liegeman

To daylight's work of founding the New Reich

Sometimes this hero causes more suffering than is possible under the rule of the run of the mill politicians. The yearning for a great leader, a refined version of the search for a savior in primitive society, may turn out to be both beneficial and destructive.

I do not know what is good for Nepal; I can offer only vague suggestions. This might seem a banal observation but I see hope in a democratic system if it fosters the education and opens the avenue for the creative minority in the leadership of a country, not just political leadership. To be more specific, the ruling class in Nepal is hopelessly uneducated in proportion to its power and privileges. By education I mean a cultivated and refined mind. Such a mind makes a constant effort to understand the world by striving for knowledge. I wish our ruling elite had assiduously devoted considerable part of their life to educate themselves, despite the imperfection of democratic election. This voluntary pursuit gives him an awareness of what worthy life is. It whets his nascent idealism and develops a critical mind. As rare individuals: that the highly educated people find themselves outnumbered in any society is only to be expected; that they are outwitted in the sea of self-serving crooks who seem to appropriate to themselves the leadership of all major political parties in Nepal is tragic enough.

A common man needs a rousing to set his goals on a higher purpose. In a backward country, noble aspiration is alive intensely only in a creative minority. He realizes that he must struggle alone against hopeless odds and be willing to suffer for his conviction, although if he chooses a different path, he can lead a life of comfort and happiness. A creative minority has understanding, the strength of purpose and ability to chart his country through a treacherous water of un-

seen difficulties. Honesty comes to him naturally. He does not seek political office for a vain grandeur. He acts out of nobility of purpose and finds the Machiavellian worship of power contemptible. He is as ready to lead as to be led.

Is it possible for prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba to act in such a haste to dissolve parliament when the whole country is burning, unless he is fired by the basest instinct? Nepal is terrorized by Maoist violence. It is a disastrous decision to dissolve parliament. Nobody believes Prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's boast that an election can be held successfully now. This is not possible until the Maoist uprising is crushed. Whenever a prime minister faces difficulty in Nepal, he goes in for the dissolution of parliament. Because of his personal failure, a serious crisis looms over the country. There was no justification for midterm election either when G.P. Koirala ordered it or now when Sher Bahadur Deuba does so. A prime minister says he represents the popular mandate and is, therefore, entitled to exercise his constitutional right. What is the dividing line between what he wants and what people want? Why let his personal failures open the gate for the constitutional tragedy of the country? Dissolving parliament at the whim of prime minister has been so commonplace in Nepal. It is hard to invent a system that makes a ruling class, a prime minister, a minister, and a minor official more responsible and honest. Left to themselves they go to any length to further their own interests and agenda. Only some vague fears stop them from all out depredation of Nepal. If the ability of a ruling class of Nepal is anything to go by, it is indeed a cause for alarm. The misfortunes of backward countries like Nepal are bound to grow worse, as the primary impulse of the government after government in Nepal has been to survive at any cost and fight safely for the spoils of power.

The ruling House of Shah nearly crumbled last year with the tragic royal massacre at the

hand of crown prince Dipendra. Why did this madman remain undetected until the fatal tragedy struck? "Your failure as a son is my failure as a father," said Emperor Marcus Aurelius to his scheming son in the Oscar winning film "Gladiator". As his cunning villain of a son knows about his father's wish to disinherit him, he strangles his sick old father to death and declares himself emperor against the secret wishes of his father, only to meet violent death at the end. Alas, Nepali royals were not able to see through a mad murderous rage that Dipendra was harboring against his kinsman. Yet, he was the product of a monarchy, whose foundation, with all its inscrutable airs and distance, seems suddenly so shallow and shaken. And to the eternal discredit of Nepali fondness for canard, many Nepali people still cast a suspicious eye on King Gyanendra. For the House of Shah the ordeal is not yet over. If the ruling House of Shah looks vulnerable, other prominent political families of Nepal are no less disgraced. Neither the Koirala, nor the Singh, nor the Rana family commands respect in Nepal. No prominent politician has been able to keep his popular image untarnished. The macabre tale of corruption continues to feed the flame of popular imagination. Verily, the rise of corruption has been phenomenal in Nepal.

The change for good will surely come if from the present foul degeneration a group, nay, a minority of dedicated, intelligent, constructive and honest people win the struggle for the leadership of Nepal. Only through a force of responsible and enlightened and, in summary, a heroic leadership can we find redemption for Nepal. It might be said this was the case in 1990. Certainly there was faith but without the revolutionary determination and clarity to guide it. Now even the simple faith is dead and the plunder goes on.

(An engineer by education, with political-passion at his young hood while at college life, Bhishma Raj Karkei keeps politics, history and philosophy his hobbies.)

Politics and Hope

- Paschim

Reading the New York Times of April 24, 2002, where Sher Bahadur Deuba is cited as implying that the King risks "losing his crown" should he choose to seek a more active role, it struck me that something very important is happening in Nepali politics as we speak. Let's analyze history as it is being made. Some quick thoughts:

1. Politics is about power. Since the unification in 1769, only two camps have

competed overtly for it in our country: i) the palace-military-aristocracy nexus, and ii) literate civilians. Given the country's literacy rate of 1% in 1950, the emphasis on "literate" civilians is paramount. Of the 233 years since unification, the first camp has ruled Nepal for 93% of the time, except: i) 1951 to 1955, ii) 1959-1960, and iii) 1990-2002. Civilian Nepal - crudely, the "Janata" - have thus only ruled for 17 of the 233 years. Since 1951, the perpetual competition for power between these two camps - Janata and Durbar - has been ironical and against an old wisdom from my birthplace

Gorkha: "Praja moto bhaye durbar baliyo hunchha". Failure to sort out the victor through legitimate means in the Raja-Praja tussle has been a great Nepali tragedy, most stark example of retrogression being the royal coup of 1960.

2. While these two camps in Nepal are dominated by distinct caste groups: the first by Rana-Shah Thakuris, and the second by Brahmin-Chhetris, power struggle in Nepal is fortunately not for ethnicity specific control of resources, but thank your respective gods, for political and economic well-

being of the populace, however flawed the execution of will. People in power so far have not been representative of the population at large, although both have claimed so for legitimacy purposes. The first camp's tacit policy has been to appease the ethnic groups through token patronage while the second camp's claims are more benign and substantive with them having struggled for a democratic system that opens opportunities for all. Accepting the uproar against Bahun-Chhetri domination of the civil service and political parties now, I take a broader sweep of history as a guide to shape my hopes: these early anomalies are bound to be redressed in the very democratic system now seemingly dominated by the Bahun-Chhetri literates. Democracies, by definition, are the only representative regimes with built-in mechanisms for redresses of skewed power: there're elections, legal provisos, civic activism, media, literacy, lobbying, constructive dissent, etc. Believe in the collective wisdom of maturing citizens, not revolutionary quick fixes, or ethnic hatred.

3. While Nepal's political irony has been the Palace-Janata tension for power, there are two successful precedents of their unity. The first is the Unification itself that began with Raja-Praja unity in Gorkha. The second is the overthrow of the Ranas. Not that these processes were flawless: Unification was scarred by the crushing suppression of ethnic autonomies, while in overthrowing the Ranas, King Tribhuvan's cooperation wasn't exactly ideal. He vacated the throne and just fled en-masse, engineering a crisis of legitimacy. And legitimacy – moral or mathematical – is the only thing that matters in politics. So it worked, but I have often wondered if the outcome would have been better for Nepal if Tribhuvan had not been so risk-averse and instead flown to Palpa according to Nepali Congress plans to declare a parallel government there. Going by just-released memoirs of Nara Shumsher, Nehru would have had no problem with this as long as he was shown that the “people” were behind the king. What Nehru asked for in Delhi was just a list of signatures of court officials saying they wanted the king and some change, which was duly furnished much to Mohan Shumsher's chagrin. I posit that the Rana-Congress truce would have been of better form if negotiations were held within Nepal, in Palpa or Morang, with subtle diplomatic facilitation on the part of the Indians. **This would have been possible** if Tribhuvan thought a little bit more about the country than women. The so-called Delhi Compromise was not a compromise, and although a great achievement, was nevertheless flawed in sustaining civilian control of power. Period between 1950 and 1960 proved so chaotic

that a poet-king ended up becoming an emperor.

4. I have argued that the year 2001 shattered the myths of the palace and the military. We now know they are weaker than previously thought. The June 2001 massacre and the slow advance of the military against the Maoists indicate that contrary to ugly rumors, the King, backed by the military, is not in a position to take over the country to rule. So, there is zero possibility of a 1960-like coup. It can be done, but won't last a month. The fact that even Deuba is saying the king risks “losing his crown” is illuminating. The best hope for the king's longevity is for him to exercise influence only through his weekly audiences with the elected PM. He should reign, but never rule. The first camp has now been defeated for good. People's power, a flawed but the only legitimate force in politics has won in Nepal too. Democracy is here to stay and thrive. I know it's hard to believe this in the current climate of unease, but take a broader view of history, pray with respect for all Nepalis being killed now, drink some Jhapa tea with milk and no sugar, think about the lovely actress Sonali Bendre, and please smile.

5. Since 1996, a third force emerged in the form of the Maoists to vie for power complicating the 230 year old equation. The Maoists split the Janatas and what we have seen in the past 6 years is a triangular struggle between the palace (backed by the military and aristocracy), parliamentary camp (Congress, UML) and the Maoists. Until a year ago, all three tried to play one against the other for petty, minor, myopic interests. Only in the past 3 months has it dawned on them that stakes are more serious. Hence the emergence of the Janata-Raja coalition that, like in the past 2 instances, has the possibility of creating a sound outcome like the Unification and the overthrow of the Rana oligarchy. And unlike in the past, it's the Janata who have an upper hand over the Raja, and for the first time in history, the Raja has nudged the Army to fight for democracy. Please note these without being cynical.

6. It would have been wonderful if we could have successfully mainstreamed Maoists into the parliamentary system. Thanks to Madan Bhandari and the accidental blessing of Congress incompetence, the manner in which the UML has now irreversibly become a parliamentary force is legendary. Even after the Maoists took up arms, I remained hopeful that they could be tempered of their misplaced revolutionary rhetoric. Like many observers, I also saw them as a “genuine political party with violent tactics”. But in the past 6 months, the Maoists have

degenerated into an utterly terrorist organization, burning in the process all their political credentials. Their fate, in existing form, is thus doomed. Even with half-hearted military enthusiasm and some American help, they will be crushed; a faction will yield, but an armed splinter group will continue to become a nuisance. No doubt, the seeds of violence have now been sowed and our beloved Nepal will never be the same again. But I reiterate, the end of the Maoists in their current form has begun. The tragedy is that this senseless mis-adventurism would have claimed a few thousand lives, cost millions, and pushed Nepal back by a generation, say 25 years, when it's finally over in the next 2 years.

7. So, let's start thinking about a Nepal following the post-mortem of the Maoists. That's also a time when some from our generation (20-35 year olds) will, through incentives, motivation, or personal calling, work for a better Nepal through politics, philanthropy and charity, ideas and enterprise, etc. How will we handle post-death pangs of the splinter Maoists, how will we lock up the army back in the barracks, and tame both their ambition and that of its patron the King? How can we sustain the Raja-Janata alliance in the interest of a functioning constitutional democracy? How will we enhance channels of accountability and legal institutions to cleanse the wrongs of the past and bring to justice the current crop of crooks? How will we improve literacy rates, longevity, and GDP per capita? How will we make our governments more representative of all ethnic groups that inhabit Nepal? How will we seek, through potent diplomacy, to engage India – and less so, China, to leverage their growing global clout to advance our own interests regarding water, control of trafficking, markets for our products, immigration, and dignified jobs for our unemployed millions who have been migrating south for a season or two to escape hunger for the past 300 years?

Let's begin the thought process. Let's get to work. Let's strengthen our collective resolve for our land. If you think I'm a mad man with misplaced optimism who is completely out of touch with reality, kindly wake me up. But in doing so, please use facts and informed opinions as your tools, not received wisdom of yesteryears. My request is humble: I'd rather dream than be woken up for false alarms.

(Currently based in Hanoi, Vietnam, Paschim works for United Nations)

Facing Terror - Use Your Head: Hold a Mouse, Not Guns

- Dr. Jagadish Sharma

The Big Bang

A royal proclamation declared a state of emergency throughout the country and promulgated an ordinance to contain terrorist acts. Following three rounds of talks, the Maoists had resumed their terrorist campaign with a big bang. The Royal Nepal Army camp in Dang was hit; fourteen military personnel were killed; and a considerable amount of arms and ammunition was looted. A major assault was also launched at the district administration in Syangja and Solukhumbu killing dozens of officials and policemen. Minor incidents were reported to have taken place in other districts as well. The nation was shocked. People were benumbed. The entire country virtually came to an emotional (psychological) standstill. And, His Majesty the King himself had to finally act by authorizing the Royal Nepal Army to be mobilized against the terrorists

The Military Option

The option to use the Royal Nepal Army, which had so far been averted, has been exercised not by any willful political design but by the turn of political developments resulting from the ill conceived attack on the part of the Maoist themselves. Now that the die has been cast, there is simply no alternative but to engage in an all-out military campaign. The glorious heritage the army is endowed with ensures an early resolution of the conflict, irrespective of the cost in human lives such an operation may eventually entail.

The Dialogue Must Not Be Discontinued

The fact that a military confrontation has ensued does not, however, imply that the negotiation process so far underway should be disrupted. In fact, there is a justification for pursuing the talks with added vigor and momentum at all possible levels now that the horns have been militarily locked. The Maoists are Nepalese, our own brethren. They are, of course, very much misguided and hence must be extended all possible assistance to be moved back to the right path. Every Nepali, who has the capability to think and act, must endeavor in all earnestness to point out the flaws in Maoist perspective and try to knock some sense into their heads.

Inaccessible rugged terrain, widespread illiteracy, and the resultant poverty have been the factors responsible for breeding the Maoist insurgents in our midst. Insurgency on their part is only the symptom of the disease, not the cure by any conceivable stretch of imagination.

Hold the Mouse, Not Guns

We must use every resource at hand, especially the mass media, to persuade the Maoists that the return to the jungle is a movement back to the Stone Age, which must hence be averted at all costs. The Maoists must be made to realize the benefits of dropping their guns and holding instead a computer mouse in their hands. The enemy is neither the upper class nor American imperialism nor Indian hegemony. It is instead our own backwardness, our own inability to take advantage of opportunities that lie in front of us.

We are presently witnessing the onset of a new era of knowledge, communications and information technology (IT). The advent of computers and Internet has helped to shrink geographical barriers and the world has become a global village as a result. Rich and developed countries such as the United States are increasingly outsourcing their requirements to be serviced from countries like India and Nepal. The fact that we are ahead of the United States by almost twelve hours in the natural cycle of time works very much to our advantage.

The unexpectedly early resolution of American war on terror against the Taliban in Afghanistan portends a favorable trend towards the business of making more money. The recessionary trend about to take place in the U.S. economy is showing signs of coming to an end, now that the clash of civilizations has been finally averted. As a result, the dire consequences predicted after the terrorist attacks on September 11 are not going to take place and Americans are more likely to outsource their various requirements to be serviced from countries like ours.

In IT enabled services like medical transcription, medical practitioners in the United States can get their files transmitted to us through the internet before they go to bed and receive the same back in transcribed document form when they arrive at the of-

fice early in the morning. Medical transcription is required by law and presently involves an amount of some twenty billion dollars as a business. This has already been well identified as a business in Nepal and is in the process of being vigorously pursued. In response to a call for training fifteen hundred students as Medical Transcriptionists (MTs), a little over fifteen thousand people have presently applied. His Majesty's Government has already formulated a well-publicized IT policy with a plan to train ten thousand people during this very fiscal year. Given some far-sightedness among our policy makers, there is no reason why the entire two-thirds of the applicants cannot be trained as MTs.

A marketing campaign would have to be definitely undertaken in the United States to acquire the required business but given the magnitude of demand for such skilled manpower, it is very much within the realm of possibilities. With a little prodding from Kathmandu, the Royal Nepalese Embassy in Washington could be activated to extend a lending hand in acquiring more outsourcing business in other IT enabled services like call centers, back office operations, insurance billing among others than can employ other tens of thousand of our unemployed youth. The converse likelihood of having ten thousand young people remain unemployed in our body politic is too bleak a prospect to contemplate as a possible breeding ground for future Maoists.

Conclusion

The armed confrontation is already a fact of life and cannot simply be wished away. The army must be given a free hand in its execution of the military operation. But while the operation is being militarily pursued, a simultaneous effort must be launched through the mass media to pinpoint the basic flaws in Maoist thinking with a well thought out plan to bring as many as possible back to the mainstream. A far-sighted policy to promote income generating employment schemes of massive proportion by taking advantage of opportunities IT may provide is also very much called for so as to preempt the breeding ground for future terrorists of the Maoist kind.

(Dr. Sharma got his Ph.D. from University of Pennsylvania in 1960's in International Studies. Currently he manages Nepal College of Technology in Kathmandu, Nepal.)

साँच्चै भन्ने हो र छातीमा हात राखेर इमान्दारीका साथ कबुल गर्ने हो भने २००७ सालमा जनताले मलाई सुम्पेको विश्वास फर्काउन मलाई ३९ वर्ष लाग्यो । मैले २०४६ सालको जनआन्दोलनपछि म अन्धणी भएको अनुभव गरेको छु । मैले सकी नसकी यहाँसम्म बोकेर ल्याएको जनताको आस्था र विश्वासको नासो जनतालाई नै सुम्पेको छु । म जनताको ऋणमुक्त भएको छु । मेरो विचारमा जनता र मेरोबीचको भावनात्मक सम्बन्धको कडी प्रजातन्त्र हो । प्रजातन्त्रकै सन्दर्भमा नेपाली जनताले मलाई नेताको रूपमा ग्रहण गरेको हो । मैले जनताको माया, स्नेह र विश्वासलाई त्यही रूपमा स्वीकारेको छु । यो न मेरो अहंकार हो, न विनयता । यो मेरो आत्मस्वीकृति हो र यथार्थ पनि यही हो ।

गणेशमान सिंह (मेरो कथाको पानाहरु, खण्ड २)

sewife. She was a working lady. I raised my hand and asked the teacher what shall I write if I was asked this question in the exam. She said to strictly follow the book, regardless. My perception of my mother changed. I started to imagine her as more of a housewife than anything else. This is also because she used to look after house-works after coming back from her office. Whereas, my father used to come home and used to start his routine newspaper reading session, until the dinner time. I began to realize that I am a girl, a future woman, like my mother as a housewife. The toys, that were given to me, such as Barbie, kitchen utensils and so on further enhanced my visionary career. In contrast my brother used to get fighter plane, bike, helicopter, tanker etc. One can argue that toys have nothing to do with growing-up kids with respect to gender discrimination

but let's analyze this scenario closely. I believe it builds up a perception among the young kids to think of themselves as a girl or a boy in socialization process. I expect readers to view such activities very carefully and accordingly act in daily social lives.

Fairy tales are examples of how women perceive themselves. Fairy tales portray girls as delicate, frightened, shy person who are always rescued by a brave prince. These stories impact child psychology; it helps perceive a girl-child herself as a delicate figure, in contrast to a boy as a brave and macho. Such stories plays a vital role in promoting such perception.

Conclusions (What Next?): It's the responsibilities every Nepali citizen to think seriously towards building up a 'just' society, free of

discriminations against any citizen. Men need to see such discriminatory rituals with women's eyes. Women are second wheel of a cart. Women should be given equal rights and opportunities.

Let's join hands to abolish the discriminatory practices.

Let's advocate for the equal rights to women.

Let's promote gender-balanced education.

Let's join hands together to build up a JUST society, free of gender discrimination.

(Rojee Kattel is reporter/producer/editor - at Nepal Television. Currently, she is Hubert Humphrey Fellow 2002-2003 at University of Missouri School of Journalism. For comments, she can be reached at rosykattel@yahoo.com)

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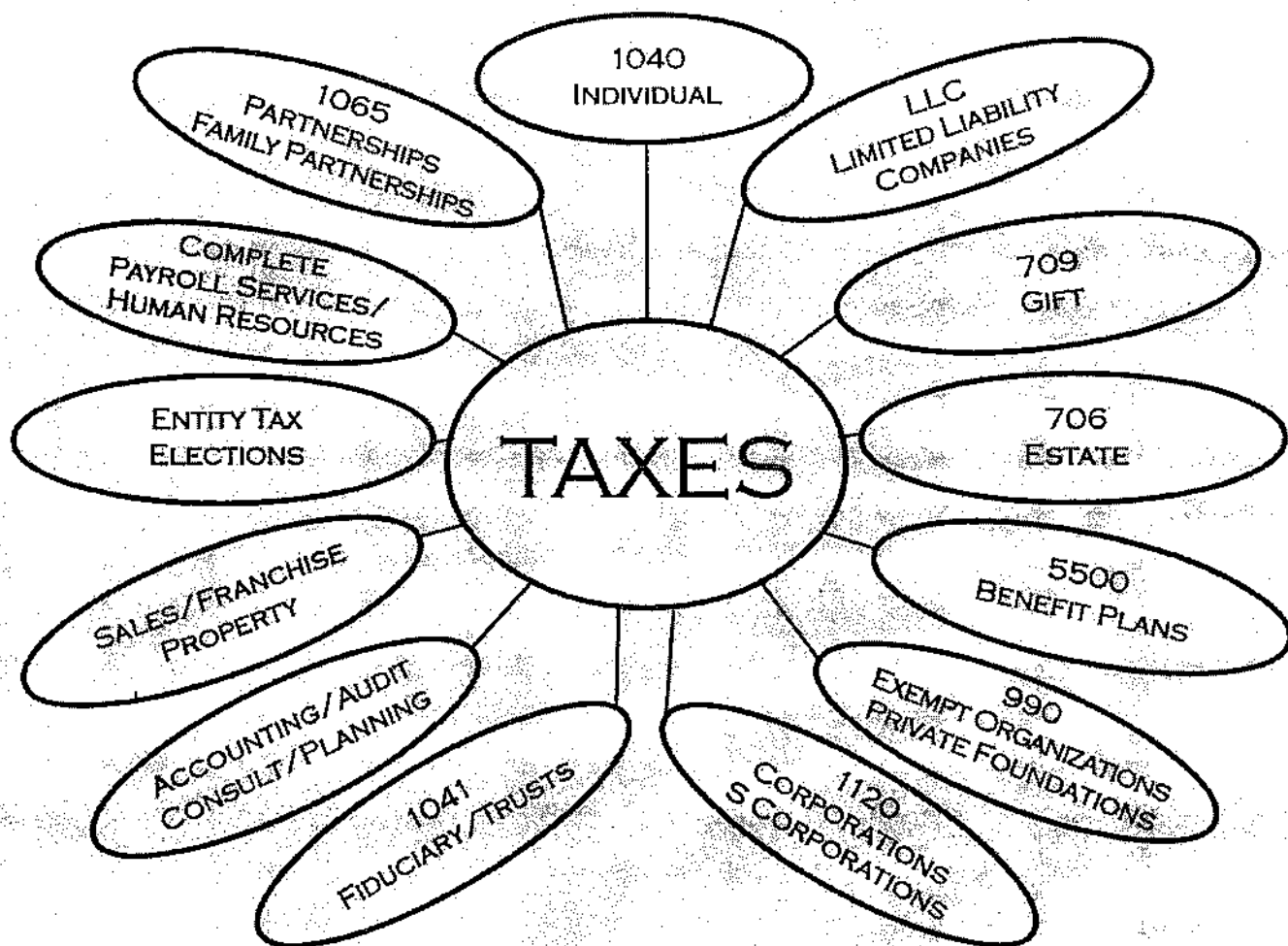
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What Is This Kathmandu?

- Lindsay Friedman

"Kathmandu is an absurd city. The absurdity of Kathmandu, the capital of the world's only Hindu Kingdom, is both physical and metaphysical. The physical absurdity of the capital is in the deep incongruity between the beauty of its natural landscape and the ugliness of its human habitation. The metaphysical absurdity of Kathmandu is in the wide incongruity between the primitive, animistic and elemental simplicities of the rest of the kingdom and the pseudo-civilization of the capital."

It would be interesting to hold a contest to find opinions on the date of these opening sentences of a moving, and beautiful, piece of writing, Kathmandu, your Kathmandu. Many might have said it could have been written 20 years ago, others 10 years ago and some might have thought it could have been perhaps a year ago, even yesterday. It was in fact written 35 years ago; by K.P. Malla, himself Kathmandu born and bred, who elaborates on his opening sentences most convincingly and fascinatingly.

It seems Kathmandu is still absurd, or maybe extraordinary. The physical absurdity certainly stands. The metaphysical absurdity is a little different at this time.

The world outside believes Nepal is in a mess, in a tragic mess with an economic pit before it and political horrors on-going of previously unknown and undreamed of violent strife between police, army, Maoists and peoples. But does Kathmandu believe this? Life has been going on in Kathmandu, not quite as it did 35 years ago, but with almost the same cultural threads dominating, or transcending, the new global features of par-

ty politics, human rights, multinationals, social justice, violence.

Lhosar, the festival of the high Himalayan peoples, was celebrated with as great gusto and joy and abandonment as ever, just a couple of weeks ago. People, not Hindu connected but Buddhist connected, poured in around Boudha in their best and gayest outfits, and sang and danced and ate. The trappings of the Wedding Season, processions, bands, garlanded vehicles and brides and grooms proceeded regardless: weddings are necessary and the trappings equally necessary for life to continue. Then there was Saraswati Puja, maybe not so respected as in the past when true learning was revered, but still given a serious place in the activities of Kathmandu people.

And already there are more weird looking saddhus around preparing themselves for Shivaratri, which will, hopefully, present as ever its glorious magical night of the year. Lots of other similar, but smaller gatherings take place to celebrate something. Shivapuri Baba's ashram was open for its usual offerings of peaceful meditation and food, for the needy as well as the followers.

For those who have been directly hit by the tragedies, there is no participation in all these activities, whether they are Kathmandu residents or refugees from the strife-torn areas outside. But for others the horror is more like a drama, to be discussed avidly, with disbelief perhaps, but not allowed to interfere noticeably. Even many of those desperately looking for some kind of income for survival are participating with open hearts. And, it seems, the participants are not only the 'establishment', the wealthy, the well set-up. They include also the shaky-positioned, the middle and lowish, though not the bottom, who, as ever, now or in the past, have no

strength to raise their beings above the struggle for survival of the body.

How is this? Is it that a quality of the psyche in Kathmandu, and in Nepal in general, is to live in the present? That people have internalised as part of their cultural heritage what so many westerners try hard, through various forms of imported meditation techniques, to acquire: the truth that the 'now' is all that can be known, that imagining the future has no meaning? Or is it the intensely reviving spring climate and beauty of the setting with sharp white Himal set against azure skies? Or is it simply the unbelievableness of the madness, a horror of literally unimaginable strife, such that it cannot break up the deeply embedded realities of the culture, a culture practiced over so many generations and in different political situations?

Who knows? It is a western weakness to have to find reasons for everything. Maybe we should not try to find out how and why, but simply observe with wonder and take as an omen the strength of the culture in face of the horrors around it. Believe that the beauties and strengths of the culture will survive as its weaknesses respond to change.

For some, the last paragraph in Malla's piece may be true:

"Meanwhile, the streets of Kathmandu are thick with forebodings. The omniscient eyes of the Buddha are transfixed in a searching gaze upon Kathmandu, your Kathmandu."

But for many, even most others, cultural beliefs and practices continue unbroken apparently as they have for much longer than 35 years. And through them confidence and hope, perhaps, are maintained.

Silver Linings - In a True Story of Yesterday

- Lindsay Friedman

One of the farm workers most valued for hard work turned up to-day to continue the heavy digging he had started a week ago. He had bruises on his cheek, but looked as relaxed as ever.

"What happened? You said you'd be back after three days and it's now eight days. And how did you get the bruises?"

"Well, when I went back to the village, one of my friends said his wife had just born him a son. After four daughters! You can imagine how happy he was and I was really hap-

py for him. He's a good pal and we share a lot.

"So we decided to celebrate. Went to Kathmandu. Had a few drinks. After all, a man can't work without a bit of raksi. Have to have it - to work as hard as you know I work, and I'd been working. So, with the work and the son, we had to take quite a bit. And on the bus back to the village we were relaxed: sang and spoke out our real, deep thoughts. Can't remember exactly what these were, but for sure they were deep.

"Then the next thing I know is that I'm in an army prison with a bit of a battered face. I guess the army boys at the check post didn't like our deep thoughts. Of course, my raksi

had protected me from feeling the battering. A bit sore the next day, but the food was really good for the few days we were in. And the army boys, they're human, you know. They gave us a little something to help the bruises - not like we're used to, but then we were resting, not working.

"We have to report every week or so, but that's suits us fine, because we need a bit of time off from our work. It gives us a reason to leave, and once a week is just right for us. Don't know how long this will be, but whatever, no big problem!"

Fuzzy Logical implications of this happening:

- If a man values daughters as much as sons, he might not get drunk.
- If a man does not get drunk, he might not get imprisoned.
- If a man does not get imprisoned, he might not get a good meal.
- If a man does not get a good meal, he might not work hard.

- If a man does not work hard, he might not get paid.
- If a man does not get paid, he might not be able to buy raksi.
- If a man can not buy raksi, he might not be able to work hard.

Further implications:

- Soldiers are human.

The continuation of hard work and raksi down a genetic line may result in a section of the human species with a highly developed, impregnable liver (as, it is said, Sherpa-types have highly developed lungs from high altitude living).

On Being a Foreigner in Nepal - a Family Case Story

- Lindsay Friedman

Once upon a time, many years ago, a western man and his western wife and their baby daughter came to Nepal to work. After some time they adopted an abandoned Nepali baby girl to be the bahini of their first daughter. Their experience had shown them there were too many unwanted, unloved and uncared for babies in the world and they felt no need to reproduce their own genes again. After a few years the husband left Nepal and the 3 females stayed on until the daughters were around puberty, when they partially relocated to the west. At that time their mother felt they should learn how to deal with the culture of the land of their official citizenship, since they would never be able to live permanently in Nepal. They had mostly Nepali friends and participated in the cultural life of Nepal, but still, they were not Nepali.

So they left Nepal, and yet didn't. Their relations with their friends was an ultimate commitment and bond. The daughters grew up – into beautiful tarunis – and all three returned to Nepal from time to time.

The relations of each with Nepal is different.

For the elder daughter Nepal is a magic place. It is a land of warm, loving people, of a living culture of the stories of her childhood, beautiful landscape, a place where time does not control daily life and no one is in too much of a hurry to laugh and share and help. She charms, not only her friends by her outgoing nature, but Nepali strangers by her Nepaliness in contrast to her foreignness. She is obviously a foreigner: tall, fair skin and brown hair, but she speaks Nepali fluently, so she can tease and make jokes with anyone, all casts and types. She wears Nepali dress, bangles. In other words she is a foreigner who, it is instinctively felt, has 'gone all the way' to meet the naturally open, generous and welcoming Nepali soul, and so she is fully accepted.

Because she is visibly a foreigner she has the great advantage of not being expected to follow the rules of the Nepali woman. Nor has

she has ever had a job here, so she doesn't know the baffling difficulties of dealing with the bureaucracy.

For her Nepal is perfect.

For the younger daughter Nepal is different. She is shy and less outgoing than her didi, and she is more western in her norms, though physically a Nepali beauty with black hair and gaungoro colouring. She has loving relations with her old friends, but not with Nepal. She was disturbed by the lack of freedom of her Nepali girl friends and she found offensive the crude remarks of passing youths, which she had not experienced in her western life. In the west mutually consenting sex is freely given and virginity not a virtue, while non-consenting sexual behaviour is deplored. So she, a westerner in a Nepali body, was deeply upset by the experience of being 'felt up', her body grabbed by men, on three occasions, on all of which she was with friends and amid many people.

She is not eager to return, as much as she cares about her friends here.

The mother is never away from Nepal for long. She is often asked why she chooses to live in Nepal and never has a satisfactory answer to give.

"Because I like it there," means nothing. "Because I belong there," is a bit better, but still the 'why' returns.

"Because existence at various levels, physical, emotional, spiritual, is more intense, real and alive; because food is grown and processed, or slaughtered, in front of your eyes; because spiritual practice is inextricably a part of every daily action, because global business has not yet taken control of everything, because there are so many poor and the poor are so generous; because friends have time for each other, because.....?"

Sometimes she answers "Because as an outsider and an insider at the same time I can sometimes be useful. And that makes me feel good."

But she has few illusions in Nepal. She is well aware of the social damage of khuttaa taannu 'leg-pulling', of the frustrations of the

bureaucracy, of entrenched feudalism, of the serious, overwhelming problems of over population, of gender, ethnic and caste inequality and all the rest.

And she is well aware that she is not Nepali. This brings advantages. She does not suffer from gender discrimination; she can mix freely with and be welcomed by any caste and ethnic group; her passport ensures she does not need a huge bank balance or a major position to get a visa to the western world, and is free to leave whenever she wants. On the other hand she misses out a lot. She derives less strength from the spiritual life around her than Nepalis. Her Nepali is not adequate to get the subtle meanings of delicate folk songs or the infinite jokes and puns that are exchanged by friends. But they never allow her to feel left out. Her elder daughter went through a ceremony and has a mitini, but she needs no ceremonies to ensure hospitality, love and loyalty.

Over the years she has seen many changes, of course. The bad ones are known to all: the environment, greater poverty, the political scene and so on. But there are many, many good ones: caste and ethnic prejudices are beginning to crumble, as if a Pandora's box has been opened; communication with roads, telephone and internet is bringing people together; the media have been transformed into internationally valid professions; indeed, professionalism has been introduced in many areas, when once there was little. Nepalis have triumphed in sport, in spite of little training. Brilliant minds have succeeded abroad. Considerable potential overall has been revealed and a small fraction of it realised.

She believes strongly in the potential of Nepal, but is aware its realisation will take time and will emerge only after the political strife has been settled and probably only after her lifetime.

The moral of this little family case story is for the reader to decide.

(Lindsay Friedman came first to Nepal in 1972 as an academic linguist at T.U. and subsequently, under the influence of Nepal, diversified into other fields.)

Women's Collective Initiatives for Peace Building In Nepal

- Sangina Malla for Strii Shakti

Introduction

The year 2002 has been a year for building momentum towards peace throughout the world and Nepal is no exception to this, especially given its current political and social crisis. Building sustainable peace has been put on the international agenda and there has emerged ongoing commitment from diverse groups and sectors around the world to combat terrorism and violence in all its forms. Collective initiatives on conflict resolution have come to serve as the primary techniques of a variety of states dealing with issues of large-scale violence and social economic breakdown. In this process women have always contributed both at the political level and at the personal level within families. Women do possess immense potential to work against injustice and inequality if they are given the opportunity to do so.

Our country is going through a profound crisis and all Nepalese are suffering from a sense of insecurity and uncertainty about what the future holds. Severe violations of civil rights and human rights in conflicts and the massive destruction of economic and social infrastructure have put the future of Nepal into serious question. The social fabric is tearing, leading to an erosion of values and an unprecedented escalation of violence. Women and children are the ones who are affected most by social crisis. Immediate and long-term solutions are becoming increasingly necessary from all sectors of society, including the state and civil society - NGOs, private citizens, public and individual interest groups.

Below paragraphs present briefly the activities currently underway in our communities. For further information, feel free to contact Shtrii Shakti at 247072 in Kamaladi, Kathmandu.

Who is Doing What

The Institute of Human Rights Communications Nepal (IHRICON) took initiatives among NGOs formed a core group of various interest groups as well as political parties to work effectively to bring about concrete changes in alleviating the human rights crisis in Nepal. This work includes, but not limited to, conducting research, workshops, and organizing peace and awareness rallies.

South Asia Partnership- Nepal (SAP-Nepal) is working to promote the peace-building

process at the social level, building partnerships and alliances between the stakeholders of state and civil societies, such as NGOs, CBOs, the media, academics. This in effect, has brought them together on a common platform to discuss strategies for peace building and conflict resolution.

Nagarik Awaz, a subsidiary of TEWA, is working to provide direct services to the victims of violence, and is in the process of forming an awareness raising and resource-generation committee.

Human rights organizations such as the Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC), are working to disseminate information about the reality-picture of human rights violations in Nepal. In the same regard, religious organizations have gotten involved in the peace process by regularly conducting peace prayers.

Shtrii Shakti's Role in the Peace Building Process

Strii Shakti aims bringing together women from diverse backgrounds to collectively intervene in the peace building process. Shtrii Shakti recently conducted a signature campaign for peace by collecting signatures of women, who strongly believe in peace, from various backgrounds throughout the country. This signature campaign was the direct outcome of the forum conducted by Strii Shakti in Kathmandu on International Women's Day on March 9, 2002. This campaign symbolizes the solidarity of women's demands for peace in our nation.

Beside this, Strii Shakti has indirectly been involved in peace building by conducting a daily prayer and meditation session every morning for an hour, calling upon peace within each person, home, workplace, throughout the nation and the world. The prayer is based on the philosophy expressed in the Peace Package and the Golden Triangle developed by the Life Foundation. Strii Shakti has been conducting Annual Peace Walk around Swayumbhunath Temple to mark the International Peace Day on August 6th. Last year, Shtrii Shakti brought a Peace Flame to the Walk, lit by combined flames of seven different continents, which symbolized the global search for peace. Strii Shakti subsequently shared this flame with other peace activists throughout Asia. Strii Shakti has also planted trees in various sites in the Kathmandu Valley to bring further awareness for peace.

Strii Shakti's Small Crisis Support Program is also involved in peace-building process by providing long-term support on education,

training, skill development and short-term support for the victims of any forms of violence and poverty.

Strii Shakti has been actively involved in "mobilizing youths". Youths of today are frustrated by Nepal's political instability, limited employment opportunities and uncertain future. The plight of young Nepalis in villages is made worse by the intense pressure as a result of daily violence, fear and forced conscription. Many youths from the lower income households leave their home and families to make extra income in India, Gulf and Far East Asian countries, while others from towns and cities of Nepal go abroad to Western countries for higher studies and subsequent glorious future. Strii Shakti has been conducting and providing employment generation activities for young Nepalis in its many forms.

On international fronts, Strii Shakti has been coordinating with various organizations involved in the peace building process, focusing primarily on strategies to resolve conflict through dialogues and negotiations.

Strategies and Conclusions

A sustainable peace building process that can achieve a final resolution to the current conflict and its economic, social and political consequences is necessity for a long-term impact. This process requires a collective effort and solidarity between diverse organizations. Peace-building needs to emerge out of the local and national levels to end political and social violence, and more fundamentally, to prevent violence by addressing the economic, social, political and cultural inequities. These inequities are the foundation for such occurrences. This process needs to involve people who have faced violence and the victims of violence.

Futures of people in rural remotes are shattered and their sufferings unnoticeable. Time has come to give a peace a chance with efforts from each one of us. Women should also play a key role in developing and implementing strategies for a process that ensures a democratic and sustainable economic future for the country and the entire region. Let us not lose the hope. Together we can make a difference.

(Sangina Malla works for Strii Shakti, a Kathmandu based NGO. In recent days, she has been actively involved in coordinating peace activities among organizations in Kathmandu for "Peace")

Your Attention Please!

- Rosee Kattel

It was very hard for me to choose the title for this article. I chose this title at the end because it contains the issues we all know but what is needed is to pay attention minutely.

It is a matter of pride for every Nepali to introduce their cultures and social customs to the international arena. In fact, they are so unique that if we explain to the larger audience we can leave them spell bound. It is exciting, full of cultural norms and values and great social respect too. But, today let's look it from the other side. Being a gender sensitive person I would now like to draw the readers' attention to the hidden discriminations against girl child and woman in these customs.

It will take me many years to describe all those discriminations and how it is being promoted unknowingly in the society. But, I would like to mention very few of them. The purpose of mentioning them here would be to request all the readers to join hands in bringing changes to such discriminatory practices and practice a gender balanced culture. The issues we are going to discuss in this article are not new for the majority of the readers but the point will be to look it from different perspective.

I have divided this discussion in following four sections:

1) Proverbs: Let's discuss about some of the proverbs commonly used in Nepalese society, which are very much gender discriminatory. We often hear older people at our homes saying 'Chhora Paye Khashi Chhori Paye Pharsi', meaning that a boy is preferred to a girl if somebody is pregnant. In this proverb the birth of a girl has been associated with the pumpkin feast, which is quite cheaper and consumed by the poor people of the society. But, the birth of a boy has been associated with the lamb feast, which is expensive and consumed by the higher-class people. One can easily imagine what impact such proverb will leave in the pregnant women and the fetus growing under her womb. This is something that begins prior to the birth of the child. Even after the birth of the child it is always said that 'Chhori Bhaneko Ta Aruko Bhitto Talne Jaat'. It means that daughters are made for others. They have to get married and work for their in-laws. That is why parents do not see any return from educating a girl child as a result more than 60% women of Nepal is still illiterate. Moreover, there is another popular proverb in our society, which does nothing, more than to promote polygamy 'Mardako Dus Oti'. It means

that men can have even ten wives. I mean to say that these proverbs though look nothing are the root causes for the gender discrimination. It is a popular proverb that women and men are two wheels of a cart. But, in reality the wheel named women is dysfunctional because of lack of air comprising of education, money and access to other basic needs. Here, it will be my prime responsibility to request my readers to ask themselves about the relevance of these proverbs and how should we deal it for our future generation.

2) Popular Rituals: My next attempt will be to look at some of our popular rituals and how do we celebrate it. We will be discussing about the rituals in so called higher caste (Brahmin and Chettris). As far as birth of a child is concerned, except from the biological difference, there won't be any differences between boys and girls. But, it is the socialization process through which such discriminatory practices become visible to us. Let's take the example of rice feeding ceremony. The rice feeding ceremony is the process, which introduces child to the solid food. It is from that period when the child is given foods other than mother's milk. This ceremony is observed for the daughters when they are five months old and for the son when they are six months. Let me mention here that mother's milk is the most important food for the child. Longer the child is fed mother's milk stronger he/she will be. To explore the reason I contacted two persons, one is the medical doctor and other is my own grandmother. The doctor told me that it must be because girls have higher immune power and they can live even with less amount of mother's milk after five months but boys may need bit longer to achieve the same degree of immunity. I was little bit satisfied with the answer and I was happy also because he said that girls have higher immune power than boys. Then, I was wondering where does this strength disappear after she grows up. The second person to whom I asked was my grandmother. I asked her presuming she would have the explanation on behalf of those who were practicing these even before they knew about a doctor. She told me a different story. She said that it is because son is the one who takes care of the parents during their old age so he has to be more stronger than the daughter who will get married and depend on her husband. Somehow I liked her explanation. But, as an educated citizen I was hurt by her answer. This kind of perception is there in all communities but the difference is that sometimes we practice it knowingly and sometimes unknowingly. As an educated citizen of Nepal I would like to request my readers to give some time and think over these issues and ways to build up a 'just' society, free of any

discrimination against women.

3) Festivals: Our festivals are sometimes the root cause for gender discrimination. I am unable to describe all festivals at the same time because it would take pages. But I would again draw the reader's attention towards the popular festival 'Teej', among women in Nepal. This festival is popular among women because they observe fasting throughout a day, without even drinking water, wishing for their husband's long life. For those who do not have husbands or those who are widows wish for their sons' long life and prosperity. Those who are not married observe this festival for getting good husband in the future. It sounds great because the women are doing so much of sacrifice for their men. At this point, I would like to raise a question here: Why do women have to do all fasting for men? Why don't they do it for themselves? Do men really live longer by having their wives perform fasting? There are so many occasions in our culture when women do fasting for men. I don't mean to say men should also observe fasting. However, we should now think towards changing such practices that are being encouraged in the name of culture and tradition. It is amazing to hear that some educated women themselves are promoting these kinds of practices in the name of fashion. Let's think what could be done together to modify such culture and tradition and make life easier for women also. Many readers may wonder that this culture has been changed gradually and that women have started eating some fruits or juices during the so called fasting day. But, those who are living in rural areas and those who work in field all day long, they cannot afford to stay fasting, without eating anything. The reality is they do.

4) Curriculum: We discussed about our culture and festivals. Let me now draw readers' attention towards curriculum. Let's go back to our childhood study course book, especially "My English Book" of Grade IV in Nepal. In one of the chapters there are some questions and answers illustrated by pictures. The questions and answers given in the book read similar to the following.

"What is your father? My father is a doctor."

"What is your mother? My mother is a housewife"

"What does your father do? My father earns money."

"What does your mother do? My mother cooks food at home"

My teacher was teaching this lesson in my class in my childhood. We were told to read it loudly for ten times. Whilst, I literally had a problem, because my mother was not a hou-

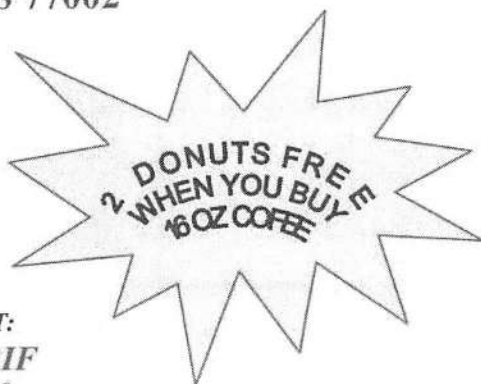
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fiction

Teenage Mothers Face Tough Decisions, Hard Times

- Abba Bhattarai

A gold ring worn through years of handling rests on junior Savannah Waterman's right hand. It is the promise ring that her father gave her mother, and the ring that her mother gave to her. It has signified a husband's commitment to his wife, and a daughter's promise to abstain from premarital sex, but 20 years and broken promises later, it serves as a reminder of the pain she has endured. Waterman remembers the ring falling off her finger as she left boyfriend Billy Fletcher's room just moments after she'd discovered that she was pregnant.

"I had promised that I would stay a virgin until I was married. My parents had broken the first promise the ring stood for with their divorce, and I told myself that I would not have the same fate, but I screwed up. The ring slid off the night of my Confirmation (when I found out I was pregnant) and that really scared me," Waterman said. "I'd just accepted my vows and promised that I'd uphold my belief in God, but here I was, 15 and pregnant. Everything just fell apart at once."

Waterman found out that she was pregnant, March 2000, after the results of a home-pregnancy test came out positive. Her boyfriend at the time, Fletcher, had suspected that something was wrong and required Waterman to take the test upon entering his bedroom.

"We both ended up sitting on his bed and crying for about an hour. We didn't know what to do or what to say," Waterman said. "The first thought I had was, 'Oh my gosh, how am I going to do this? How am I going to tell my mother?'"

It was Fletcher who told her mother the next morning at a red light on Howard Lane. Moments before they pulled into the CHS parking lot, he spontaneously asked her how she felt about grandchildren. Although she was initially shocked, Ruth Ann Toon supported Waterman and Fletcher. Seven months later, she coached her daughter through labor when Waterman gave birth to a baby boy, Oct. 12, 2000, and stood by her side when she signed his adoption papers.

"I was excited at first," Fletcher, a CHS senior, said, "but after a while I realized what it meant. There was a lot less personal time and a lot more time worrying about the baby. It affected my emotions a lot. Before we had the baby, I was happy and excited, but after we gave it away, I was a down a lot of the time," Fletcher said. "The experience was too much to take on at that point in time, and I just didn't have what it takes."

During the next seven months, Waterman and Fletcher struggled with every option available for their baby. After deciding to put him up for adoption during the first couple of weeks of the pregnancy, they briefly considered allowing Fletcher's parents to adopt him but soon decided against that.

For many of the months that followed, they were adamant in raising their son themselves, but Waterman's perception of teenage motherhood changed when she got a glimpse of the reality she would be facing. After visiting welfare offices, considering the advice of an aunt who had been in a similar situation and spending time with her young cousin, she decided to give her child up for adoption. Waterman, who had grown up without a father, wanted her baby to have a stable family and financial security.

"I had a change of heart. I didn't want my child in day care. I wanted him to be taken care of by a mother. It was very hard; we had gone eight months thinking we'd keep him. I still have baby furniture and clothes in the garage now," Waterman said. "We were really lucky because it took only a month for us to find the perfect parents."

Keith and Marion Forbes, a couple whom Waterman had known through church, contacted her when they heard she was pregnant and offered to adopt her child. Along with the Forbeses, Waterman and Fletcher developed a program in which they will sustain a close relationship with their son and his family for the first three years of his life. After that, they will back away and allow him to live his life, but will keep no secrets if he decides that he would like to continue his relationship with his biological parents. Both Waterman and Fletcher were present at Jonathan's baptism, Feb. 11, and receive photographs of him from the Forbeses every month. Although she was unable to attend Jonathan's birthday party Friday, Waterman spent time with him and his family for a couple of hours on Sunday.

"I think it's best for the child if we have that relationship with their parents open and available, but that isn't always possible," said Marion Forbes, who has two adopted children in addition to Jonathan. "When they're young, our children cannot make decisions to keep up with their biological parents, so our job is to maintain that relationship so that when the child wants to further that relationship, it's a possibility that's there. I want my children to know that they're loved and very much wanted. Just because their parents gave them up for adoption doesn't mean that they don't love them. Adoption creates a uniquely special bond. The relationship isn't biological, but we're still related and we love each other."

Even Waterman's son's name parallels the circumstances that his adoption has created; he has two birth certificates, each with a different name: Caleb Ryan Waterman, the name that his biological parents gave him and Jonathan Samuel Forbes, the name that his adoptive parents chose for him.

"Two unexpected misfortunes - the Forbeses not being able to have kids and my pregnancy - came together and created the perfect bond," Waterman said. "I want people to understand that I didn't give my baby up because I didn't want him or love him. It's hard for people to understand why a mother would just give up her child, and it's a very hard thing to do. Wanting to take care of someone you love is human nature, but you have to think about what you can do at that point in your life. If you can't be what you think is a perfect mother at that point in time, then you're not ready."

It is important to Waterman, a French horn player in the CHS band, that her son is nurtured by music, and finding adoptive parents who shared her love of music was instrumental to her son's adoption. Waterman remembers sitting on the sidelines during "0"-hour rehearsals while she was pregnant last year, listening to the band play. She believes that Jonathan's love for music was already apparent before he was born, when she could feel him doing somersaults in her stomach and kicking to the rhythm of the music.

"I remember the picture from the last sonogram I had and I remember finding out that the doctor was going to have to induce labor," Waterman said. "I couldn't sleep the night before he was born, all I could think of was how he'd be born and this baby that I'd have to give away this baby that I'd had for nine months."

Two days after giving birth, Waterman signed the adoption papers as she lay in her hospital bed with her son crying five feet away from her.

Her memories of the brief moments she shared with her son as his mother are of his crying.

"I know he's happy now, so that makes everything ok," Waterman said. "I know what it is to make an eternal sacrifice and I know what it means to really care about someone, to love a child. I'm living

proof that you don't have to take care of somebody to love them."

(Reproduced from "The Connection" Newspaper of the Connally High School, Austin, Texas. This story won the "Tops In Texas" medal. Ms. Bhattarai is a high school student in Austin, Texas.)

"You Are Not a Wave; You Are Part of a Ocean."

- Ujjwal Bhattarai

In 1979, during a basketball game in Brandeis University gym, student section began to chant. "We're number one! We're number one!". Morrie was sitting nearby. He looked puzzled. At one point, in the midst of "We're number one!" he rose and yelled, "What is wrong with being number two?" They stopped chanting. He sat down, smiling and triumphant. I bet very few of us have thought it is OK to be number two. Not me. Not until I read this book "tuesdays with Morrie".

This is not a book review of "tuesdays with Morrie". This is my effort to envy Mitch Albom (writer of the book) for having a great teacher like Morrie Schwartz at Brandeis University in Boston, MA. Morrie taught Mitch not merely college courses but also scarce courses of life before dying from ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis). Morrie's thoughts were so natural yet so profound and his messages were so extraordinarily ordinary: about life, death, family, love, and money.

"Life", Morrie states, "is a series of pulls back and forth. You want to do one thing, but you are bound to do something else. Life is a tension of opposites, like a pull on a rubber band and most of us live somewhere in the middle." So which side wins? Morrie adds, "Love wins. Love always wins."

Have you ever said: "I wish I were 18 again." We all have. We usually infer aging as decay not growth. Listen to Morrie, "Saying such, means unsatisfied lives, unfulfilled lives. Lives that have not found meaning. Because if you've found meaning in your life, you don't want to go back. You want to go forward – see more, do more."

Having family is a feeling – a feeling that someone knows you and loves you, has an eye on you, is watching you the whole time. It is about this 'spiritual security' and not just love. Above all, Morrie says, there is no experience like having children. There is no substitute for it. You cannot do it with a friend. You cannot do it with a lover. If you want the experience of having complete responsibility for another

human being, and learn to love and bond in the deepest way, then you should have children.

Once, media mogul Ted Turner (owner of CNN) said "I don't want my tombstone to read 'I never owned a network' " over his inability to buy CBS network. This is about money and power. Morrie says, "Money is not a substitute for tenderness nor is power. When I am sitting here dying neither money nor power will give me what I am looking for, no matter how much of them I have." Morrie adds, "Satisfaction comes from offering others what you have."

Have you not wasted any time in front of TV sitcoms or "Movies of the week"? Rather, Morrie teaches to create a cocoon of human activities-conversation, interaction, affection-and it fills life like an overflowing soup bowl. "So many people walk around with a meaningless life. They seem half asleep, even when they're busy doing things they think important. This is because they're chasing the wrong things. The way you get meaning into you life is to devote yourself to loving others, to community, and to create something that gives you purpose and meaning."

The question, "who am I?" often hunts us. Sometimes it really gets difficult to figure out who we are and what we are for. Morrie told a nice story that helped me visualize who I have to be. The story is about a little wave, bobbling along in the ocean, having a grand old time. He is enjoying the wind and the fresh air—until he notices the other waves in front of him, crashing against the shore. "My God, this is terrible", the wave says, 'Look, what's going to happen to me!' Then comes another wave. It sees the first wave looking grim, and it says to him, "why do you look so sad?" The first wave says, 'You don't understand! We're all going to crash! All of us waves are going to be nothing! Isn't it terrible?' The second wave says, 'No, you don't understand. You're not a wave, you're part of ocean'. That is what we are and what we ought to be – a part of ocean. Got Morrie's point?

(Ujjwal Bhattarai is environmental engineer, currently lives in New York with his wife Sunita and their 1-1/2 year old son Nitya)

QUOTES...

Each man must for himself alone decide what is right and what is wrong, which course is patriotic and which isn't. You cannot shirk this and be a man. To decide against your conviction is to be an unqualified and excusable traitor, both to yourself and to your country, let me label you as they may. - Mark Twain

Wisdom begins in wonder. - Socrates

The quintessential revolution is that of the spirit, born of an intellectual conviction of the need for change in those mental attitudes and values which shape the course of a nation's development. A revolution which aims merely at changing official policies and institutions with a view to an improvement in material conditions has little chance of genuine success. Without a revolution in spirit, the forces which had produced inequities of the old order would continue to be operative, posing a constant threat to the process of reform and regeneration. It is not enough merely to call for freedom, democracy and human rights. There has to be a united determination to persevere in the struggle, to make sacrifices in the name of enduring truths, to resist the corrupting influences of desire, ill will, ignorance, and fear. - Aung San Suu Kyi

आज प्रजातन्त्र दिवस हो ।

नीर्मल श्रेष्ठ, प्युहफ्टन, टेक्सास

त्यसलाई प्रजातन्त्र को बहस औधी रमाईलो लाग्छ । शायद, म त्यस्को आज स
म्मको सबै भन्दा असल श्रोता हुँ ।

यो पो हो प्रजातन्त्र - त्यो टेबुल को पल्लो छेउ बाट म तिर गिलास घचेट्छु । म माल
बोरो लाइट को एक खिल्ली मिल्काउछु टेबुल को पल्लो कुना तिर । मेरो जीन्स मा
जिम्पोलाइट रगडे पछी बन फायर सुरु हुन्छ । चूरोट बन्छ । फोक्सो बन्छ । ठर्रा
को रन्काई मा कलेजो अनि के के बल्ल सुरु हुन्छ ।

यो हो प्रजातन्त्र को सौन्दर्य- त्यो बर्बराउछ ।

यो पो हो प्रजातन्त्र को सौन्दर्य- म दोहोर्याउछु त्यस्का शब्दहरुलाई ।

मार्लबोरो का खिरिलो धुवां फोक्सो भएर विस्तारै आकाश तिर लाग्छ र सिलिंग मा ठो
क्किएर विसर्जित हुन्छ ।

त्यस्को अनुहार धप्पक बन्छ ।

त्यो चूरोट को धुवा लाई चक्का चक्का पादै आकाश तिर उडाउँछु, म हवारह्वार्ती
ओकल्लु खतरा गाडीको साइलेन्सर ले भै ।

त्यो रांगाको छोयला संग एक सिप ठर्रा मार्छ, म एक टुक्रा छोयला चपाउँदै त्यस
लाई पर्छिन्छु - त्यो खांदा बोल्दै र बोल्दा खाँदै ।

साहुजी अर्को एक प्लेट छोयला जाओस् - त्यो साहुजी तिर हेरेर चिच्याउँछु । म त्यस
का शब्दहरु को सुरुवात पर्छिरहन्छु । धेरै बोल्थ्यो र कम खान्थ्यो त्यो, आजकल धेरै
खाने र कम बोल्ने भएछ ।

त्यो ठर्रा को ट्वाक टेबुलमा बजारेर बर्बराउछ - यो हो प्रजातन्त्रको सौन्दर्य ।

प्रजातन्त्र यहाँ भएको भए तेरो प्रशसा सुनेर भाग्यी होली, पहिले साहुजीको छोरी भागे
जस्तै - म जवाफ दिन्छु ।

त्यो अट्टहास् छोड्छु, म फिस्स मुस्कुराउछु ।

तर बुफिस् तैले प्रजातन्त्र को उपयोग गर्न पाईनस् । त पनी जन आन्दोलन मा म स
गै दौडेको मान्छे होस्, तर के गर्ने, तैले प्रजातन्त्र को उपभोग गर्न पाईनस् ।

मैले तैले जस्तै थुप्रै चोटी फेल हुन सकिन नी ।

म अट्टहास् छाड्छु, त्यो फिस्स मुस्कुराउछ ।

दश वर्ष अमेरिका बसेर पनी तेरो बानी गएन छ - त्यो म तिर हेरेर भन्छ ।

दश वर्ष चन्द्रमा बसे पनी फेरिदैन मान्छेको बानी - म उत्तर दिन्छु ।

त्यो फेरी थर्रा को ट्वाक घचेट्छु म तिर । म मार्लबोरो का खिल्ली मिल्काउछु त्यो
तिर । धुवा हरु फेरी सन्सनाउदै फेरी फोक्सो छाडेर बाहिरिन्छ ।

साहुजी फेरी अर्को एक प्लेट छोयला जाओस् ।

साहुजी मुस्सुक मुस्काउछ । उस्का पहला दांत हरु गुलुप को पहलो उज्यालो मा भनै
पहेलो देखिन्छ । चोइटा परेका दांत हरु एकाबिहानै घाम को पहिलो किरण ले कुनै
पाटो पहेला बनाएका हिमाल हरु भै टल्कन्छ ।

भट्टीमा त्यो छ, म छु र अरु कोही छैन । निकै सेलाए जस्तो छ साहुजी को भट्टी,
वा भट्टीमा जांड खान आउने हरुसंग भात खाने पैसा पनी हुदैन । सभ्य भनाउँदाहरु
पहिले पनी आउदैन थिए भट्टीमा अहिले पनी आउदैन । आजकल प्रजातन्त्रक कुरा
गर्न भट्टीमा जानु पर्दैन । सडक मा मन परी चिच्याउन आजकल जांड खाएर
मात्तीनु पर्दैन ।

भट्टीको सौन्दर्य मा निखार आएको छ । अब भट्टी भट्टीको लागी भएको छ । अब
भट्टी ठर्राको लागी छ, प्रजातन्त्र को लागी होइन । आजकल भट्टीमा मान्छे हरु स

साहुजी की छोरी हेर्न आउदैन । भट्टीकी साहुजी की छोरी कुनै प्रजातन्त्र वादी संग पो
इला गई सकीछे ।

साहुजी छोयला को प्लेट छाडेर जान्छ, साहुनी ठर्राको बोटल साटेर जान्छे । ठर्रा को
बोटल बाट निकलने मन्द आंच मा त्यस्को अनुहार धप्पक पाकेर आउछ ।

एकादेशमा, यो भट्टी यो बजारको प्रजातान्त्रिक मन्च थियो । नेता हरु आफ्ना र
जनितिक दर्शन सुनाउन आउथे । नेता हुन चाहनेहरु, नेताहरु को चाकडी बजाउन
आउथे, र टप्प टुप्प आफ्ना राजनैतिक दर्शन को अंकुश मिल्काउथे ।

भट्टीमा स्पष्ट छुट्टिन्थ्यो, प्रजातन्त्रवादी हरु र जनतन्त्रवादी हरु । दुई चार वटा थोत्रे टे
बुल र मेच ले छुट्टयाउथ्यो तीनी हरुलाई । तीनी हरु एक आपस मा संकालु आंखा
मिल्काउथे । कहिले काही एक दुई शब्द हरु तीनी हरु को स्वागत सिमा रेखा हरु
छाडेर आर पार हुन्थे ।

अप्रजातन्त्र वादी, अराष्ट्रिय वादी तत्व हरु ।

अर्धसमन्त नोकरशाही पूजीवादी दलाल हरु ।

आफ्ना शब्द भन्डार मा भएका दुई चार वटा शब्द हर सिद्धिए पछी तीनी हरु चुपचाप
नया शब्द आविस्कार नहुनेजेल पर्खी रहन्थे ।

अनी कहिले काही नितान्त नौला नितान्त ठर्रा को लागी आउने अनुहार हरु बिच मा
बसेर बर्बराउछ - अराष्ट्रिय तत्व हरु ।

कहिले काही पुलिस को गस्ती गुज्जन्थ्यो भट्टी भएर । अनी पछाडीको गल्ली तिर खुल्ने
धोका बाट भागा भाग हुन्थ्यो । शायद त्यही एक चोटी थियो तीनी हरु को मेल हुने स
मय । अनी भट्टी शान्त हुन्थ्यो ।

अहिले देशमा प्रजातन्त्र आएको छ त्यसैले प्रजातन्त्रको गफ गर्न भट्टीमा आउनु पर्दैन ।
भट्टीमा आउने हरु नितान्त ठर्रा को लागी आउछन् । साहुजी को पछाडी गल्ली तिर
खुल्ने चोर धोका मा माकुराको जालो लागेको छ । शायद नखुले को बर्षो भयो होला ।

सम्फनाछस् ? त्यो पछाडी को ढोका देखेर भन्छ ।

माकुराको जालो लागेछ - म भन्छु ।

नखुले को बर्षो भयो होला, त्यसैले त भन्दै छु तैले प्रजातन्त्र को उपभोग गर्न पाइनस् ।

फेरी भनौ ?

त कहिले सुधिन्छस् ? ए, अनी त के गर्छस् ? त्यो प्रश्न गर्छ ।

कलेज सिद्धियो, जागीर गर्छु । कम्प्युटर को की बोर्ड लाई चुट्टै बिती रहेको छ दिन
हरु । म उत्तर दिन्छु ।

तेरो पो मस्ती छ, शहर बजार मा बस्न भाषण गर्दै खान पाइ रहेछस् ।

आजकल पहिले जस्तो कहा हो र । आमसभा देखे भने तर्किएर हिड्छन् मान्छेहरु ।
त्यो खिल्खिलाएर हांस्छ । खैर नसुनुन मान्छे हरु ले तर भाषण गर्न पाइन्छ ।

यो त हो नी प्रजातन्त्र को सौन्दर्य - म खिल्खिलाएर हांस्छु । त्यो पक्क परेर मलाई
नियाली रहन्छ ।

त्यसले फेरी पछाडीको धोका देखाएर भन्छ - थाहा छ म कती चोटी भागेको छु त्यो ढो
का बाट ।

म पनी त भागेको छु त संगै कती पटक ।

थाहा छ म कती पटक छचारिएको छ गुर्गुन मा ।

दुई चार चोटी त मैले नै बोकेर दौडाएको छु तलाई, तलाई होस नभए पछी । म उत्तर
दिन्छु ।

यो चोर ढोका बाट भाग्नु पर्दैन आजकल, यो हो प्रजातन्त्रको सौन्दर्य - त्यो चिच्याउँछ ।

त्यो ठर्रा को गिलास उठाउछ, गुलुप को पहेलो उज्यालो मा भद्दा पहेलो देखिन्छ गिलास। त्यो ग्याम्बे गर्न लाई गिलास उठाउछ, म पनी गिलास उठाउछु। गिलास बज्छ, साहुजी तर्सिएर नियाल्छ हामीलाई। ससाना टुक्रा टाक्री हरु छोडिसकेको विफर जस्तै गिलास बाट शायद एउटा अर्को टुक्रा छोडिदिन्छ।

विस्तारै सांभ भ्यांगीदै आउछ। बाटो मा हिडने मान्छे का हल्ला हरु पदचाप हरु घट्दै जान्छ। साहुनी हामीलाई कर्के आंखा फ्यांकेर जान्छे।

तल बेसी मा थुप्रै पुलीस मरे जस्तो खबर छ, साहुजी हामीलाई सुनाउछे। साहुनी हतार हतार धोका हरु बन्द गर्छे।

आज प्रजातन्त्र दिवस हो नी छिट्टै पसल बन्द गर्नु पर्ने बिसि राखेको। यो बुढाले पनी सम्झाउनु पर्छे नी। नानी हरु पनी घर लाग्ने हैन ? साहुनी सुनाउछे।

दश वर्ष पछी फर्केको छ यो अमेरिकाबाट, यती चाडै कहा घर गै हुन्छ र - त्यो सुनाउछ। नियमित ग्राहक लाई नकार्न सकिदैन साहुनी।

ठर्रा रिदिन्छ, चूरोट रिदिन्छ। सांभ भांगीदै आउछ। हामी घर जान को लागी उठ्छौ।

यो ढोका नखोलेको पनी बर्षौ भयो। साहुनी पुरानो अगराठ को ढोका को आग्लो लाइ बल्ल तल्ल खोल्छे।

बाहिर सडक बाट जानु ठिक छैन आजकल सांभ परे पछी। आज त भन्न प्रजातन्त्र दिवस। कर्फ्यू छ। साहुनी सुनाउछे।

विस्तारै जानुस् नानी हरु, गुयान मा चिप्पिएर लडिएला। भट्टीको चोर ढोका फेरी खुल्छ एक चोटी र हामी भट्टीबाट विस्तारै बाहिरिन्छ।

मेरो कानमा गुंजी रहन्छ त्यस्को शब्दहरु - यो त हो प्रजातन्त्र को सौन्दर्य।

आज प्रजातन्त्र दिवस हो।

QUIZ...

WHO SAID THIS TO WHOM



If you know the answer, contact Mr. Bimal Joshi (Tel: 281-548-7809, bimal_joshi@hotmail.com), Vice President of NAH, to receive a **check worth \$ 15.00** from NAH. Those in Nepal will receive equivalent Nepali rupees.

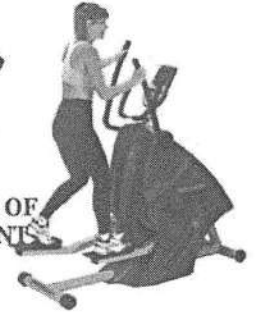
हुन्न गर्ने मेरो वानी
प्याडु हान्ने उसको वानी
म आउंहु आउंनु
मान्छे नुहुनु है नानी



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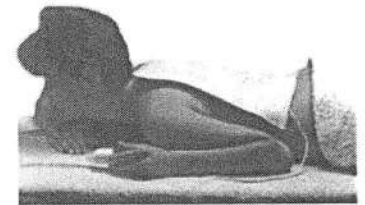


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हिजो आज शहरमा एउटा चर्चा छ । हाम्रो पेट छ । पेट भएकाहरुले खानुपर्छ । खान पाउनु हाम्रो मानव अधिकार हो । भन्दै तारे होटलमा सरकारी, राष्ट्रिय तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय गैह्र सरकारी संस्थाका साथीहरु चर्चाका लागि जमघट हुनु भएको छ । खानाको आधार के हो ? को हो र कहाँ हो भन्ने तिर भन्दा पनि खान पाउने भाषण कहाँ र कति खेर गर्ने भन्ने कसरतमा जुटेका साथीहरुको ध्यान करिब ६ वर्ष पछि पुन इटालीको रोममा हुन गइरहेको विश्व खाद्य सम्मेलन तिर आकर्षित भएको प्रतिक हुन्छ । जबकि हाम्रो ध्यान खान पाउने हकका लागि भन्दा पनि बेशी खाना बन्ने बीऊ र उत्पादन गर्ने कृषकको अधिकार रक्षा तिर केन्द्रित हुनुपर्ने थियो । कसैले खान पाएको छैन भनि सोच्नुभन्दा अगाडी खान नपाउनुको कारण के हो भन्ने सोच्यो भने आजको हाम्रो नारा "खाद्य सुरक्षा, खाद्य सार्वभौमिकता" भन्नु भन्दा पनि "बीऊ विजनको अधिकार कृषकको आधार" हुनुपर्ने थियो । दुःखको कुरा हाम्रो पीरमर्काका लागि हामी आफ्नै नारा समेत बनाउने क्षमता राख्दैनौं वा त्यसो गर्दा हामीले विदेशीको साथ पाउदैनौं ? यो प्रश्न तिम्राम गैह्रसरकारी संस्थाका साथीहरु जसले नागरिक समाजको लोगो पनि आफैले लिएका छन् र खाद्यान्नको चिन्ता, कृषकको अनुपस्थितिमा तारे हो टलमा "लन्च" खाएर गरिरहेका छन् ।

निश्चित रूपमा विश्व खाद्य तथा कृषि संगठन (FAO) को विधानमा समेत खान पाउने अधिकारलाई मानव अधिकार भनि उल्लेख गरेको छ तर बीऊ विजनको अधिकारलाई कृषकको अधिकार भनी उल्लेख गरेको छैन । आखिर उल्लेख गरिस पनि कसरी किनकी विश्व खाद्य तथा कृषि संगठन (FAO) र विश्व व्यापार संगठन (WTO) दाजुभाई संगठन हुन । एउटा को भरमा अर्को चलेको छ । एक हातले दिने अर्को हातले लिने विदेशी सहयोगको सिद्धान्त नै हो । यदि FAO ले खान पाउने हकलाई भन्दा बीऊ राख्न पाउने अधिकारलाई प्राथमिकता दियो भने शायद हाम्रा गैह्रसरकारी संस्थाहरुले पनि कृषकको अधिकारलाई महत्व दिने छन् । तर त्यो कसरी हुन सक्छ जबकि विश्व संगठन बिचको भाग ञण्डामा बिजको भाग त विश्व व्यापार संगठनलाई परेको छ । एकातिर अनिकाल र सुखाग्रस्त क्षेत्रमा खाद्यान्न पठाएर विश्व खाद्य तथा कृषि संगठन दयालु देखिन्छ । अर्कोतिर कृषकको आफ्ना बीऊ विजनहरु खोसेर विश्व व्यापार संगठन राक्षसी प्रवृत्ति प्रस्तुत गर्दछ । विश्व संगठनहरु बिचको यो दोहोरो भूमिकामा नाच्ने र गाउने तालमा लागेका छन, आज हाम्रा गैह्रसरकारी संस्थाका समुहहरु ।

जसले आफ्नो घरको खोपी र भकारीबाट बीऊ फिकेर खेत र बारीमा अन्न फलाउँछे र वर्षभरि आफ्नै उत्पादन खान्छे । त्यो वर्ग जसलाई हामी कृषक भन्छौं । ९० प्रतिशत कृषककै परिचयबाट कृषिप्रधान देश नेपालको पहिचान बनेको छ । आखिर एउटा आन्दोलन कृषकको अधिकारका लागि लड्न सकियो भने त्यसको उपलब्धिले हाम्रो पेटलाई रक्षा गर्ने त निश्चित नै छ र त्यतिखेर भन्न जरुरी हुने छैन कि खान पाउने अधिकार मानव अधिकार हो । विश्व खाद्य सम्मेलनको यो माहोलमा शक्ति सम्पन्न राष्ट्र र कम्पनीहरुले आज कसरी विश्व संगठनहरुलाई आफ्नो स्वार्थसिद्धिको माध्यम बनाएका छन् । त्यता तिर पनि ध्यान पुऱ्याउन जरुरी छ । राष्ट्रिय तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय गैह्रसरकारी संस्थाका साथीहरु सरकारको माथीबाट तल योजना (Top down approach) फाल्ने पद्धतिहरुलाई जसरी विरोध गर्दै तलको लागी योजना तलै बन्नु पर्छ र योजनाहरु तलबाट माथी (Bottom up approach) जानु पर्छ अनि स हभागितामूलक विकास तब मात्र हुन सक्छ भनी कार्यपत्रमा लेखे र बोल्ने गर्दछन् । तर जब आफ्नो पालो आउँछ हामी फेरी त्यहि माथीबाट तल पद्धतिलाई नै वकालत गर्छौं । जस्तै आज त्यो देखिरहेछ कि विश्व संगठनको कार्यपत्र र विधानमा आधरित भएर हाम्रो स्थानीय स्तरको शिर्षकलाई स्थान दिइरहेका छौं जबकी यो पनि त्यही माथी देखि तल पद्धति कै अवधारणा हो । यथाथमा कृषकको चाहना र आवाज "राम्रो मल र राम्रो बीऊ हामीलाई राख्न देऊ" हो । यदि कृषकको यो आवाज अनुसार हामीले विश्व खाद्य सम्मेलनमा आवाज उठाउँछौं भने अनिमात्र हामी तल देखि माथी विकासको पद्धति अनुसार चल्ने छौं भन्ने प्रमाणित हुन्छ । जसका आधारमा हाम्रो जोड खाद्यान्नमा नभइ बीऊविजनमा हुनेछ ।

आज संसारमा ८० करोड भन्दा बढी मानिसहरु दिनहुँ भोक भोकै बाँचिरहेका छन् । यस मध्य पनि दुई तिहाई भोकाहरु एशिया महादेशमा बस्छन् । नेपालको कुरा गर्दा १९७० को दशकमा खाद्यान्न निर्यात गर्ने देशमा पर्दथ्यो तर दुर्भाग्यवश १९७० दशकको अन्ततिर आएर खाद्यान्न उत्पादन कम भएका मुलुकको सूचीमा दर्ता भयो । अब शुरु भइरहेको हाम्रो खाद्यान्न आयातको कार्यक्रम १९७६ देखि ४० लाख अमेरिकी डलरबाट बढेर १९८६ मा ६ करोड ९० लाख डलर पुग्यो । १९९७-९८ मा खाद्यान्न आयातको बृद्धि ८ करोड ४० लाख अमेरिकी डलर बराबरको भयो । जुन वार्षिक निय

तको १९.४ प्रतिशत मात्र हुन जान्छ । यो क्रम फेरि बढ्यो । सन् १९९६ मा ८ करोड ५० लाख डलरबाट १९९७ मा ८ करोड ६० लाख डलर सम्म उर्कलियो । जसको प्रभाव जनसंख्या बृद्धिमा गएर देखा पर्‍यो । सन् १९९० मा जनसंख्या बृद्धि दर २.६६ प्रतिशत थियो । जबकि त्यही समयमा खाद्यान्न उत्पादन २.१ प्रतिशत मात्र थियो । यसबाट के प्रष्ट हुन्छ भने विश्व खाद्य तथा कृषि संगठनले सानो तथा अतिक्रिसित राष्ट्रका कृषकलाई उत्पादनका लागि प्रेरित गर्न भन्दा पनि ठूला तथा अतिक्रिसित राष्ट्रका अधिक खाद्य उत्पादन थुपार्ने क्षेत्रका रूपमा प्रयोग गर्न थाल्यो । शुरुका वर्षहरुमा खाद्यान्न सहयोगको रूपमा बितरण गरिएका खाद्य परिणामले गर्दा कृषकको परिश्रम र उत्पादन क्षमतामा हास आयो । फलत यही मौकाको खोजीमा रहेको विश्व व्यापार संगठनले निष्क्रिय रूपमा रहेका कृषक र उसका बीजहरु माथी आक्रमण गर्दैछ । अर्कोतिर बहुराष्ट्रिय कम्पनीहरुका लागि पनि यो गतिलो र उपयोगी समय साबित भइरहेको छ । कुनै पनि कुशल व्यापारीले आफ्नो सामान देखाउन र बेच्नु अगाडी ग्राहकलाई जसरी चिया, चुरोट, पानीले स्वागत गर्दछ । मानौं त्यही कुनै क्रेता र बिक्रेता नै छैनन् । तर पछि जसै व्यापारीलाई लाग्दछ अब आफ्नो माल र मूल्य जाने निश्चित छ । तब मात्र व्यापारीको असली अनुहार देखिन्छ । आज विश्व संगठन निर्माणकर्ताहरुको त्यही सक्कली अनुहार देखिएको छ । एकातिर विश्व खाद्य तथा कृषि संगठन अर्कोतिर विश्व व्यापार संगठन, पहिला एकहातले दिने पछि दुई हातले लिने निती यी संगठनहरु बिचको दोहोरो मापदण्ड भित्र देखिन्छ । उनीहरुको यो दोहोरो मापदण्ड नितीको जालो आज विश्व भरि फिजिएको छ । गैह्रसरकारी संस्थाहरु पनि यहि नितीको जालमा परेको भान त्यति खेर हुन्छ जब कृषि रणनिती कृषकहरुका हित र रक्षाको कुरा हुन्छ तब कृषि प्रधान देशका बहुसंख्यक कृषकहरुलाई यस्तो मुद्दामा सचेत गराएर अगाडी बढनुको सट्टा शहरको तारे होटलमा रातको १२ बजे ८,१० व्यक्ति गैह्रसरकारी संस्थाको प्रतिनिधिका रूपमा कृषकको मुद्दा तयार गर्न लाग्दछन् । यो भन्दा विडम्बना के हुन सक्छ ? बबूक ठूलाहरुले साना दुखीहरुको समस्याको कुरा साँच्चै समाधान गर्नका लागि गर्छन या आफ्ना पेशा र व्यवसायका लागि गर्छन् ? या अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय सम्मेलनमा स हभागि हुनका लागि गर्छन ? यी र यस्तै कयौं प्रश्नहरु विश्व खाद्य सम्मेलनको आगामी जुनमा हुन गइरहेको भेला अगाडी चर्चामा छ । एकातिर गैह्रसरकारी संस्थाहरु यसरी हलुका ढङ्गबाट यति महत्वपूर्ण विषयमा प्रस्तुत भएका छन् भने अर्कोतिर सरकार भन्ने हलुका कृषि रणनितीक कदमहरु संचालन गरिरहेछ । एकातिर जनसंख्या बृद्धि अर्कोतिर खाद्यान्न अभावको अवस्था आज देखिएको छ वास्तवमा यो स्थिती सरकारका विगतका कृषि विकास सम्बन्धि हल्का कदमहरुको परिणाम हो । फलत मुलुकको खाद्य उत्पादनको अवस्थामा तीव्र हास आएको छ । नेपालमा स-साना कृषि जोतहरुको आधिक्यता छ । बहुसंख्यक जनताको आयको प्रमुख स्रोत र अवसर कृषि क्षेत्रभन्दा बाहिर धेरै कम भएको हाम्रो देशमा झण्डै ६८ प्रतिशत पहाडी र ८८ प्रतिशत हिमाली जिल्लाहरुमा खाद्यान्न को अभाव नै देखिन्छ जसको मूल कारण बिद्यमान भौगोलिक बिबिधतालाई प्रयोग गर्ने कृषिजन्य उत्पादनमा समेत बिबिधता अपनाउन नसक्नु हो । माउन्टेन इकोनोमि भएको हाम्रो जस्तो देशमा विश्व खाद्य तथा कृषि संगठनले खाद्यान्न डम्प गर्ने क्षेत्र बनाउनु भन्दा बिबिध कृषिजन्य उत्पादनलाई सहयोग र प्रोत्साहन गर्नु पर्ने हो ।

एकातिर युरोप र अमेरिका मुलुकहरुकमा कृषिजन्य बस्तुको बजार बन्द गरिएको छ, अन्य मुलुकबाट आफ्नो उत्पादन त्यहाँ पठाउन सकिदैन अर्कोतिर उनीहरुको उत्पादन भने विश्व खाद्य तथा कृषि संगठनहरुले सहयोगको नाममा अन्य मुलुकमा निर्यात गर्ने गर्दछ भने विश्व व्यापार संगठनले ती बस्तुको नै अधिकृत बिक्रेताको लोगो चलाएको छ । यो कस्तो बिरोधाभासपूर्ण रणनिती हो जसले बहुसंख्यक जनतालाई गरिब र सिमित वर्गलाई धनी बनाई रहेछ । विश्वमा बिषमता बढाउनुमा विश्व संगठनले नै दोहोरो भूमिका खेली रहेछ । आज स्वास्थ्य, शिक्षा र खाद्य जस्तो मानवको आधारभूत आवश्यक बस्तुहरुमा बहुराष्ट्रिय कम्पनीहरुले गिदै दृष्टि राखेका छन् । त्यसले भोली कस्तो परिणाम ल्याउला ? बहुसंख्यक मानिसहरुको आगामी दिनहरु कति दुखद छ स हजै श्रुतमान गर्न सकिन्छ । आजको अवस्था त त्यसको टेलर मात्र हो । एकातिर आज सक्नेहरुले स्रोतहरुलाई अन्धाधुन्दा प्रयोग गरेका छन् । अर्कोतिर आफ्नो थोर बहुत स्रोतहरुलाई परिचालन गर्न नसक्नेहरु "दाँत नभएकाले सुपारीको स्वाद बारे चर्चा गरे भैं" भएका छन् । विश्वको ८० प्रतिशत देशहरुले मात्र २० प्रतिशत स्रोत प्रयोग गरिरहेका छन् भने २० प्रतिशत देशहरुले मात्र ८० प्रतिशत स्रोत प्रयोग गरिरहेका छन् ।

हाम्रो देशको सन्दर्भमा कुरा गर्दा १.४ प्रतिशत स्रोत समेत प्रयोग गर्न नसक्ने देशहरुको सुचिमा हामी रहेका छौं । हिजोको दिनमा खेतीका लागि प्रयोग भएका भूमिहरु समेत आज खाली भएका छन् । व्यापक रूपमा भएको आन्तरिक बसाईसराईले गर्दा खेती योग्य भूमिहरुमा घरहरु बनिरहेका छन् जंगलहरु मासिदैछ । आधुनिक विकासका नाममा विनाशहरु बढदैछन् । खेतीमा उपयुक्त बिऊ, मल र सिचाईको अभावले गर्दा १५ जिल्ला मध्ये ४९ जिल्लामा खाद्यान्न उत्पादनको कमीले गर्दा आयात गर्नु पर्ने स्थिति छ । सन् १९८०-८१ र १९९०-९१ का अबधिमा प्रतिव्यक्ति उपलब्ध अन्नको स्थिती ०.२ प्रतिशतले घट्यो । यहि अवस्था हालको दशकमा पनि जिबिती छ । कृषि क्षेत्रको कमजोरी हट्न सकेको छैन । कुन भूमिमा, कस्तो हावापानीमा, कुन उत्पादन राम्रो

हुन्छ भन्ने प्रयोग र कृषकलाई प्रोत्साहन गर्ने काम जे.टि.ए हरूले गर्न भन्दा शहरबाट जाँदा शहरिया बिऊ लगेर कृषकलाई दिने र यो बिऊ बाट धेरै फल लाग्छ भन्ने अफाहा फैलाउने एजेन्ट भएका छन् कृषि विशेषज्ञहरु। यो बिडम्बना एकातिर छ अर्को तिर असमान जमिन वितरण समेत खाद्यान्न उत्पादन कम हुनुको कारण बनेको छ। स हि कृषकको हातमा कम जमिन र भूमिपतिहरुको हातमा धेरै जमिन रहेको छ। ती जमिनहरु कृषि उत्पादनमा प्रयोग हुनु भन्दा कुनै रुख रोप्ने र ओगट्ने काम मात्र भएको छ। देशको ७० प्रतिशत भन्दा बढी मानीसको हातमा एक हेक्टर भन्दा कम जमिन छ। उनीहरु संग सम्पूर्ण जमिनको ३०.५० प्रतिशत जमिन मात्र छ। १-५ हेक्टर जमिन ओगट्ने जनसंख्याको प्रतिशत २८ देखिन्छ। जबकी तिनीहरुले ५४ प्रतिशत जमिन ओगटेका छन्। अनि ५ हेक्टर भन्दा माथी जमिन ओगट्नेको संख्या १.५ प्रतिशत छ। जुन सम्पूर्ण खेती योग्य जमिनको १६ प्रतिशत हो। यस्तो जमिनमा भएको वितरणले आधुनिक खेती प्रणालीलाई प्रोत्साहन दिदैन फलतः कृषि उत्पादन र उत्पादकत्व वृद्धि हुन सक्दैन।

विश्वमा खाद्यान्नको समस्या बढ्दो छ। त्यसमा आस्वस्थ हुने अवस्था नै छैन। जस्तै १९९६ मा विश्वमा खान नपाउनेको संख्या ८० करोड थियो। फलत थुप्रै प्रतिवद्धताहरु १९९६ मा भएको विश्व खाद्य सम्मेलनले गरेको थियो। तर ६ वर्ष पछि फेरी ९६ कै सम्मेलनलाई फर्केर हेर्ने सम्मेलन रोममा हुन गईरहेको छ। हाल आएर विश्वमा भोकहरुको संख्या ८३ करोड पुगेको छ। पौष्टिक खानाको अभावमा नेपालका ४६ प्रतिशत बालबालिका कुपोषणका शिकार भएका छन्। यो तथ्यलाई सन् २००१ को विश्व खाद्य तथा कृषिसंगठनले समेत घटेको देखाउन सकेको छैन। भूँनै उदेक लाग्दो पक्ष के छ भने कुपोषण पिडित ४४ प्रतिशत जनसंख्या दक्षिण एशियामा मात्र छन्। यस्तो अवस्था र परिस्थितिमा नेपाल विश्व व्यापार संगठनको सदस्य हुन लागी परेको छ। विश्वव्यापी आन्दोलनमा नपसे पनि धर छैन पसे पनि हाम्रो जस्तो देशको कुनै अस्तित्व रहदैन। तर पनि यति जरुर भन्नु र गर्न सकिन्छ कि विश्व संगठनहरुमा प्रवेश गर्दा सरकारले चाहिंदो गृहकार्य गर्न जरुरी छ। हाम्रा सरकार र राज्य संचालकहरुको यो मूल समस्या हो कि प्रतिबद्धतामा हस्ताक्षर गर्न जति हतारिन्छन्। त्यसलाई व्यवहार मा लागु गर्न निस्क्यु भईदिन्छन्। तर यो खाद्य सम्मेलनमा उठाउने मुद्दाले समेत विश्व व्यापार संगठनमा प्रवेशको विषयलाई सचेत गराउँछ। जस्तो १९९६ मा खाद्य सम्मेलनमा गरिएको प्रतिबद्धतामा खाद्यान्न सहयोग भनि डम्पिङ्ग वितरण गर्ने प्रक्रियामा रोक लगाइनु पर्छ साथै कृषकको बीज माथीको अधिकारलाई कायम गरिनु पर्छ भन्ने थियो। जुन कुरा विश्वव्यापार संगठनसंग कम विकसित राष्ट्रको रूपमा खाद्य सुरक्षा स्थिति पुति र कृषक हित तथा अधिकार संरक्षण हुने किस्मले नै सदस्यता लिने समयमा स्पष्ट गर्नुपर्दछ। साथै दिगो कृषि नीतिका लागि विश्व खाद्य तथा कृषि संगठनको भूमिका र विश्व व्यापार संगठनको भूमिका स्पष्ट हुनु पर्दछ।

Impact of Open Border Between Nepal and India

- *Buddhi Narayan Shrestha*

Background:

The Himalayan kingdom of Nepal is surrounded by India on three sides and China on the northern border. Mighty Himalayan range, as the natural wall, is elongated as the northern border. On the contrary, there is the Indo-Gangetic flood plain, without any natural barrier in the southern frontier of Nepal with India. Mostly mountain ranges, hills, and hillocks are existed on both the eastern and western borderlines of Nepal, adjoined with India. Nepal has its controlled border system with China, whereas open border system is prevalent with India. But Nepal has never experienced closed border system with any of its neighboring countries since time immemorial.

Initiation of Open Border:

So far as the open border between Nepal and India is concerned, it is not known how and when the system of free movement of people on either side of the border started. However, British India primarily initiated it after the restoration of Oudha Tarai/ Naya Muluk (Banke, Bardia, Kailali and Kanchanpur) to Nepal in 11 November 1860. Free movement in the cross-border area was not prevalent even after the treaty of Sugauli in 1816. Anyone entering into Nepal particularly to the Kathmandu valley and towns of Tarai in general, had to get Raha-dani or visa from the district administrations, prior to the restoration of Naya Muluk by Nepal, as the controlled border system was prevalent during that period. Nepal-India Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1950 motivated for the openness of the border between two countries. Article seven of the treaty says "The Government of India and

यस्तो अवस्थामा हाम्रो चासो र सरोकार कृषि क्षेत्रको स्वरूपमा व्यापक सुधार र परिवर्तन कसरी गर्न सकिन्छ भन्ने हो। ०.१ प्रतिशत वास्तविक कृषक संगमात्र खेतीयोग्य जमिन उपलब्ध छ। ग्रामिण जनताको पहुँच भूमि, स्रोत र शिपमा हुन जति जरुरी छ त्यति कै आधुनिक प्रविधि र पद्धतिमा प्रवेश आवश्यक छ। जसको अधिकार वास्तविक कृषकमा निहीत हुनु पर्दछ। हाम्रो देशको कृषि प्रणालीको कुरा गर्दा यसमा महिलाको भूमिका र अधिकारलाई बेवास्ता गर्न मिल्दैन किनकी कृषिमा महिला तथा केटाकेटीको भूमिका हाम्रो परिवेशमा पुरुष भन्दा महत्वपूर्ण छ। केही दिन अगाडी विश्व खाद्य सम्मेलनको ध्यान केन्द्रित गर्ने आशय र विश्व व्यापार संगठनमा नेपाल प्रवेश गर्न अगाडी सचेत गराउने मनशायले एउटा जुलुस शहरमा निस्कियो। महिला, केटाकेटी र कृषकहरुलाई लिएर। जसको आवाज थियो। बिऊबिजनको अधिकार-कृषकको आधार, खेतीपाती जसले गर्छ - बिऊ बीजन उसले राख्छ, सन्तान जति प्यारो छ - त्यो भन्दा बेशी बीऊ बीजन, भोक जसको खाद्य उसको - भूमि जसको बीऊ उसको, महिलालाई थाहा छ - उनको बारीमा के फल्छ र ९० प्रतिशत जनता जहाँ छन् - के सरकार पनि त्यता छन्। अत्यन्तै सान्दर्भिक मुद्दाहरु लिएर निस्किएको यो जुलुसले खास गरि बीऊ र मल जसमा महिलाको राम्रो दखल छ त्यसमा सरकारले ध्यान पूर्वक संरक्षण, सम्बन्धन र विकास गर्नु पर्ने भन्ने मुल आशयबाट प्रेरित थियो। निश्चय नै यो भोलिको खाद्यान्नका लागि चिन्ता गर्ने विषय थियो तर तारे हेाटलहरुमा बसेर चिन्ता गरिएको शैली र सोचमा भन्दा यो पृथक लाग्थो। यसमा खान देऊ भन्दा पनि खाना उत्पादन गर्ने अधिकार "नखोस" भन्ने मुलमन्त्र बाट प्रेरित थियो। यो कार्यक्रम जति सान्दर्भिक थियो त्यति नै विषयबस्तु प्रति मौलिक थियो। विषयबस्तु संग चासो राख्ने नागरिकहरुको समुहलाई (सहिमानेमा "नागरिक समाज") नेपालको स्त्रीशक्ति र भारतको विविध महिला विविधताका लागि गैह्रसरकारी संस्थाले संयुक्तरूपमा साथ दिएका थिए।

अन्तमा

गत जुनमा इटालीको रोममा भएको विश्व खाद्य सम्मेलनमा हाम्रो सरकार र गैह्रसरकारी संस्थाका प्रतिनिधीहरुले विश्व संगठनहरुको नियतलाई स्पष्ट बुझेर आफ्नो राष्ट्रिय चासोलाई ध्यान दिनु पर्दछ। खाद्य अधिकारका लागि विश्व खाद्य तथा कृषि संगठनसँग स्वर मिलाउनु भन्दा कृषकको बीज राख्न पाउने अधिकार संरक्षणका लागि विश्व व्यापार संगठनलाई सावधानी गराउनु कृषिप्रधान देशको जनताको हितमा हुन्छ। अन्तत् "राम्रो बीऊ राम्रो मल हामीलाई राख्न देउ" भन्ने कृषकको आवाजलाई सुनिश्चित गराउन सके हाम्रा खाली भएका पाखा र बारीहरुमा अझै हामीलाई चाहिंदो उत्पादन गर्न सक्ने क्षमता राख्दछन् हाम्रा कृषकहरुले।

Nepal agree to grant, on reciprocal basis, to the nationals of one country in the territory of the other the same privileges in the matter of movement and privileges of a similar nature."

In other aspect, if we have a look on the Nepalese perspective, Raha-dani or controlled system was on practice till four and half decades ago. This system was unknowingly relaxed after the construction of Tribhuvan highway, which linked Kathmandu to the Indian town Raxaul. The Indian technical personnel constructed it with an assistance of the Government of India. Before the completion of this highway, Nepalese people even going from Nepal to Nepal via Indian territory had to obtain Rahadani permit from Rahadani Goswara, Kathmandu or local/ district office (Gadhi-Gaunda- Goswara).

Purpose of Open Border System:

The British Government initiated the India-Nepal border open primarily for two purposes. The first was to maintain unrestricted migration of the Nepalese hill people for recruitment in the Indian army as British Gurkha regiment. East India Company army men were familiar with the braveness and obediency of the Gurkha fighters and they wanted to make their army battalion stronger. The second factor was to have easy and free access of British and Indian goods into Nepal, and to secure raw materials from Nepal to India such as timber and forest products, herbs and medicinal plants, hides and skins etc. In summary, British Government formulated India-Nepal border open to keep Nepal as their market place for their finished goods and as resource country to exploit varieties of raw materials for their factories and industries, including the conversions of honest and raw Gorkhali Nepalese boys into sturdy British Gorkha soldiers.

Acceleration in the System:

After the installation of democracy in Nepal in February 1951, it became a major turning point in reinforcing the Nepal-India border open with the accelerated movement of Indians into Nepal. At first, Indians used to come to Kathmandu as politicians and advisors to the Nepalese ministries, as counselor to the administrators, overseers as technical experts, unemployed Indian citizens as teachers in remote area schools even in Kathmandu Valley. After the elapse of time, retailers came to Nepal as whole seller businessmen. Vegetable and fruit vendors even in the narrow lanes of Kathmandu metropolitan city are the Indians these days. Indian hawkers use to roam and visit every nook and corner of the city to collect old materials as they voice "Khali Sisi, Purano Kagaj (empty bottle, old newspaper)." Now these types of general Indian nationals could be found even in the remote hill towns and settlements of Nepal in connection to their livelihood as businessmen and construction oriented workers. Nepalese are also free to go to Indian cities in search of work as guards, domestic workers and restaurant waiters etc. All these phenomena can be cited as Nepal-India open border as it is unique in the world in the sense that people of both the countries can cross the borderline from any point / any time, whether it may be day or night. One single citizen could cross the frontier of both the sides without any record running to and fro so many times a day.

Impact:

Nepal-India open border system has its negative and positive impacts for both the nations. But Nepal has experienced a large percentage of negative impacts in many cases, as compared to India.

If we make an inventory, negative impact outnumbers the positive one for Nepal. Some of the positive aspects of Nepal-India open border system are the easy access, fostering harmony and mutual understanding, maintaining relationship among the people to expand socio-cultural activities etc. The negative or adverse impact may be the border encroachment, criminal cases, anti-social activities, lawlessness, illegal activities, smuggling of goods / drugs and arms, trafficking of girls and narcotics, movements of terrorists etc.

Positive Impact:

As we make a list of positive impacts, it may be the followings:

[For the purpose of limited space in Nepal Vision, the following subject points are edited by deleting the elaboration of each. You may contact the editorial committee of Nepal Vision to get a copy of this article in full. NV editorial committee apologizes for such.]

- 1) Easy access
- 2) Strengthens relationship
- 3) Rescue operation
- 4) Health service
- 5) Instant supply of labor
- 6) Competitive Market
- 7) Prompt Supply of food grains and daily stuff

Open border has economically benefited the inhabitants of both sides of the border from the sell and purchase of livestock products, vegetables and daily kitchen stuff in Hat Bazars (open-roof markets) taking place regularly in various days a week in different parts on either side. These are the points of favorable impact on positive side. However, it depends upon a good understanding of the political circumstances of the state govt. of India.

Negative Impact:

Current open and unrestricted border system between Nepal and India has created so many adverse impacts and it has emerged many problems. Some of the issues have been mentioned as follows:

- 1) Border Encroachment
- 2) Cross-border terrorism
- 3) Trafficking of girls
- 4) Illegal import of arms and ammunitions
- 5) Smuggling of goods, material and machinery
- 6) Smuggle of archeological artifacts
- 7) Cross-border crime
- 8) Kidnapping
- 9) Highjacking
- 10) Robbery and theft
- 11) Infiltration of Bhutanese refugees
- 12) Deforestation and exploitation of medicinal plants and herbs.
- 13) Peace and Security
- 14) Migration
- 15) Pollution on politics
- 16) Trafficking of narcotic drugs, encroachment on the Nepalese culture and traditions, leakage in revenue collection, distribution of fake academic certificates, prevalence of anti-social activities, rape cases, construction of dams and embankment submerging the borderline are also the result of thorough passage from the uncontrolled and wanton border.

Public Opinion:

Kantipur Daily newspaper has made an internet poll to know whether it is necessary to formulate a regulation on the cross border movement for the nationals of Nepal and India. As a result of internet gallop poll, 89.5 % percent (1,053 people) voted for the need of the formulation of regulation, whereas 10.5% percent (111 persons) opined as it is not necessary to change the system (Kantipur Daily, 21 February 2000). Similarly, Media Services International had conducted a voting survey in 15 districts of hill and Tarai areas. 85.5% of the participants voted that it must regulate the border. Among them, 42.9% expressed their opinion in favour of the execution of passport system. In the voting, 44.4% mentioned that both Nepal and India are responsible for uncontrolled border system and negligency in border inspection activity, whereas 40.7% expressed as the weakness of Nepal and 3.8% have taken as India's weakness for unrestricted system (Kantipur Daily, 3 July 2000). With the result of these polls, we can understand that Nepalese people have expressed their desire in favour of the controlled border system between two countries.

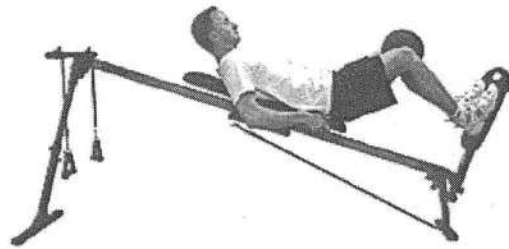
Concluding Remarks:

Open border system has created so many problems and it has affected in social and economic aspects for both Nepal and India. The most sensitive issues these days are the free movement of the terrorists and transportation of illegal arms and ammunitions across the open border. This is quite harmful for both the countries. An uncontrolled, unrestricted and opened border constitutes the breeding ground for terrorism, criminal, illegal and anti-social activities. Keeping in view the welfare and development of general people of the two nations, there is an urgent need to manage and regulate the free movement of people. It needs to check and stop transportation of smuggled goods across the unpatrolled open border. The time has been changed much from peacefulness to disturbing and troublesome. General people of both the countries are feeling panic and fearfulness due to current circumstances in the South Asian region. It has to be made joint efforts to review the impact of open border system through dialogues and negotiations. It must come to the conclusion jointly to make the border restricted for the terrorist, controlled for smugglers, obstructed for the girl traffickers, checked for the criminals, stopped for narcotic holders but managed for the genuine passengers and regulated for legal export and import.

(Mr. Shrestha is former Director General of Survey of Nepal and recipient of Madan Puraskar - 2057.)

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local news

Nepal Influence Adds Spice to Lineup of Foods

Abby Kaighin (Business Review – Austin American Statesman, November 20, 1999)

Six years ago, after visiting her homeland of Nepal, Kala Uprety had an inspiration. She then took the idea – that Austinites might love the nutritious, well seasoned vegetarian food she grew up eating – and launched Kala's Kuisine.

Now, shoppers at Austin stores such as Central Market, Whole Foods, Sun Harvest and several Indian grocers depend upon Kala's Kuisine to add variety and spice to their diets.

"I'm very at spice," Uprety said as she made a delivery to the original Central Market store on North Lamar Boulevard. "I always wanted a business, but I first thought about it, I didn't think I spoke English well enough. Since I'm good at spices, I wanted to make dry spice packets for things like salad dressings or soups."

When she first explored the business possibility, "the health department told me I needed a commercial kitchen. Then I gave up the idea." But Uprety's husband, Donald Fussell, a computer science professor at the University of Texas, encouraged her to keep trying. Uprety has lived in the United States for 30 years, 18 of those in Austin. She had worked as a systems analyst at Texas Instruments and Motorola, then spent several years doing volunteer work.

Five years ago, she began her business after a pasta company allowed her to use its kitchen. Her first hurdle was getting insurance. "Suppliers won't take your products unless you have insurance and the insurers don't want to insure anyone who hadn't been previously insured," she said.

Paying high first-time rates was only way out of the problem, she said. Uprety began by selling to Taj Grocers, MBM Grocers and other Indian food stores. After her first year and a half in business, she approached the Whole Foods store at the Crossroads Shopping Center at Burnet Road and U.S. 183. "The customers loved it. I was doing real well, and sometimes I would go twice a day to stock it because my food was sold out," Uprety said.

Soon, a Whole Foods store downtown Austin and a Sun Harvest

store in South Austin were requesting her products.

Uprety said other food vendors were helpful in teaching her what she needed to know. She learned how to check her food into the stores and registering them in store computers, for example. It was also through another food vendor, Sabor Hot Sauce, that Uprety found another commercial kitchen, where she now makes her food.

Uprety sells fresh and frozen foods, transporting them to stores in ice chests. Local health officials advised her in the proper procedures for cooling food, storing it and complying with other health regulations.

Because Nepal borders Indian and Tibet, its cuisine reflects the influences of both countries. But it also is distinct, Uprety said. "We use mixed raw and cooked vegetables with lots of bamboo shoots, mushrooms and soybeans in our authentic dishes," she said.

Some of her other products include samosa, a pastry filled with potatoes, peas, carrots, cilantro and spices; chole slightly hot dish made with garbanzo beans seasoned with cashew cream, tomatoes and spices; and saag paneer, a mixture of spinach, mustard greens and freshly made cheese.

Central Market's tradition of allowing vendors to offer samples of their products has done a lot to attract customers, Uprety said. Sometimes Uprety's 16-year old daughter, Natasha, helps her by staffing a vendor display.

So far, Uprety has self-financed her business. But she said, she would to have some machine to enable her to advance beyond purely hand-made products. She used to make a special kind of Nepalese bread, but it was too hard to do without machines. "I would like to take out a loan if I were to buy the machines," she said.

Uprety said she likes earning her own money, which she can use to help others. She sends some money to help Nepalese communities. She also has donated to the cause of another food vendor she has met "There's a man who sells Nile Valley tea, and I helped his cause to build a well his village in Africa," she said.

Indian friends often share their recipes with Uprety, who spices them up and makes her own rendition. "My friends say, 'Kala, we teach you how to make it and you make it better than I do.'"

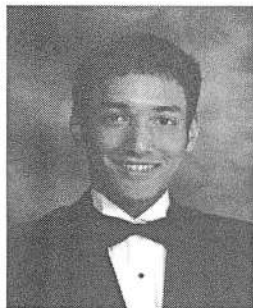
Incredible Achievements

-Nepal Vision Reporter

NAH takes pleasure in introducing Rajendra Bhakta Shrestha, son of Bharat Bhakta and Bajjanti Shrestha, Katy, Texas, who has recently graduated from Taylor High School.

Raj is ranked highly nation-wide as a tennis player and is known far and wide for his master skills in the tennis court. As the following highlights reveal, Raj has excelled not only in the sports arena, but also in the academic field. He will be attending Dartmouth College in New Hampshire this fall.

The Greater Houston Nepalese Community is proud of Raj Shrestha's achievements in tennis as well as in the school and wishes him all the very best in his college and future endeavors.



Raj Shrestha's credentials par excellence are highlighted as follows:

- v Captain of Taylor High School Tennis Team
- v Back-to-back Doubles Tennis Championship 2001/2002
- v Top 5 tennis ranking in Texas
- v Top 150 tennis ranking in the USA
- v Nominee for Wendy's High School Heisman Award
- v Finalist for Greater Houston Touchdown Club Scholar/Athlete Award
- v Graduated in top 3 percent of 578 in Taylor High School Senior Class
- v Recipient of Teagle Foundation Scholarship
- v UIL Scholar
- v Volunteered at Katy Herman Memorial Hospital
- v Hobbies include playing violin, golf and swimming
- v Aspires to follow in business footsteps of his grandfather Sri Indra Bhakta Shrestha

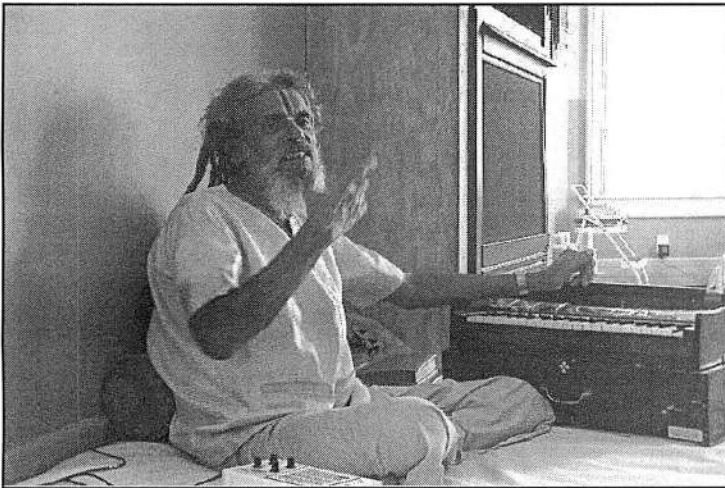
“Doodh Dhari” Baba In Houston

- Nepal Vision Reporter

Visiting US with noble cause of feeding homeless children in Nepal, the famous Nepali Baba is on a stop in Houston for a short period of time. A renowned expert on Hindu Epics, the seventy-year old hermit has been living on two liters milk a day for last 30 years. Decorated with nine-foot “Jatta” (dreadlock) for last 52 years since his “Vaishnava” initiation, Baba is one of the three among millions Mahatmas living solely on milk.

He resides in Ram Mandir across the Arya Ghat in the Pashupati Nath. He has dedicated his life in helping the poor, needy, deprived, and the downtroddens.

According to him, at the age of 10, He saw a five-headed Naag (serpentine) in the jungles of Pashupati Nath; at sixteen, he had an encounter with Lord Shiva at Gosain Kunda. He meditated for fourteen in the forests of Madhya Pradesh, near the origin of the Narmada. Another sixteen years, he traveled in search of enlightenment.



Doodh Dhari Baba giving a talk on Hinduism among Nepali community in Houston on September 22, 2002

Nepali Baba is said to have tremendous power of being able to foresee and foretell the future events.

His three messages to the human kind are:

- Fulfill your duty
- Remember God whenever time permits you.
- Take your mind away from earthly pleasures.

With the power of elevating the spirits and healing the wounds, his presence enlightens and inspires the soul, which we have been deprived of in the rat race of life in this country. So please, make it a point to visit with Nepali Baba, when he is in town.

The contributions from the sale of his Bhajan CD's and pictures of Ram - Sita will provide food to the needy people in his Ashram in Pashupati Nath. He will also be available to visit your place for a “Pooja,” an initiation, a Bhajan, a course on meditation “Yoga,” a discourse on Ramayana or Bhagwad Gita, or a discussion on the Hindu religion.



NAH Election

Nepalese Association of Houston (NAH) Election was held on April 13, 2002. This is the first election of NAH since its birth in March 2000. Prior to the election date, NAH was ran by interim executive committee, established at the time when NAH was registered with the State of Texas as a non-profit organization. The following executive committee was elected, with their designation as mentioned. This executive committee holds the office for 2 years from the date of the election as per the NAH constitution.

President: Rajendra Shrestha, Ph.D.

Vice Presidents: Bimal Joshi
Madhukar Amatya

General Secretary: Pradhumna Babu Shrestha

Treasurer: Akhil Dhungana

Assistant Secretary: Sajan Gautam

Assistant Treasurer: Sailesh Sigdya

Members:

Arpana Dhungana
Linda A. Shrestha
Biggyan Sharma
Pawan Shrestha
Nirmal Shrestha
Prakash Adhikari

NAH humbly appreciates Houston Provider Management Services, Inc. (Mr. Dinker Amatya) for providing office space and conference room to hold NAH monthly meetings at its office regularly, since the inception of NAH. NAH salutes Dinker Amatya.

Deep Shrestha & 1974 AD live in houston

Deep Shrestha & 1974 AD Live in Houston

Nepali Musical Night with Deep Shrestha & 1974 AD Band was a great success in Houston on August 10, 2002. The concert was held at Durgabari Auditorium at Schiller Road. Local Nepali talents also performed dances and songs as forms of welcome openers to the concert. Sagun Vijayananda, the convener of the concert, lead his strong organizing committee to make this musical night a great success. NAH takes this opportunity to thank the following volunteers to make this night a grand success (from A-Z):

- Amrish Regmi
- Astha Vijayananda
- Ayesha Amatya
- Ashish Shrestha
- Bimisha Gautam
- Bindra Shrestha
- Chez Gurung
- Hiren Shrestha
- Kiran Ranabhat
- Kshitij Regmi
- Lekh Nath Bhusal
- Nirmal Shrestha (concert anchor)
- Nisha Joshi (concert anchor)
- Nadeem Amatya
- Pramod Shrestha
- Prakash Adhikari
- Pratik Pandey
- Prapti Regmi
- Rajan Shrestha
- Suchit Bhattarai
- Sailesh Shrestha
- Shristhi Shrestha (concert anchor)
- Sanjeev Shrestha
- Sajan Gautam
- Yogendra Poudyal.

Words of appreciation from Sagun Vijayananda, the convener of the concert, to the Nepali community of Houston, via email.

From: ~S@g~ ---> [sag@whoever.com]
 Sent: Tuesday, August 13, 2002 12:26 AM
 To: NAHinfo@yahoogroups.com
 Subject: [NAHinfo] Note of appreciation

Houston! It was a privilege to be able to be worthy to be a part of Organizing committee of Nepalese Musical Night. I was moved to see so many people's eagerness to help out in every possible way to make the difference. I have got so many people to Thank, without whom the show wouldn't have been possible. We are indebted to the legend of the legends, Mr. Deep Shrestha, and the greatest Nepalese band in the world today, 1974AD, for their history making performance in H-Town. I admire the leadership of Mr. Rajendra Shrestha, Pradhuma Shrestha, Binod Shrestha, Madhukar Amatya, Dinker Amatya, and Akhil Dhungana. My appreciation to Personal sponsors and Business sponsors.

I am grateful to all the volunteers. Mere words are not enough to appreciate their effort, time, and their zeal to make it happen. I would like to thank (from A-Z) Amrish Regmi, Astha Vijayananda, Ayesha Amatya, Ashish Shrestha, Bindra Shrestha, Chez Gurung, Hiren Shrestha, Kiran Ranabhat, Kshitij Regmi, Lekh Nath Bhusal, Nirmal Shrestha, Nisha Joshi, Nadeem Amatya, Pramod shrestha, Prakash Adhikari, Pratik Pandey, Prapti Regmi, Rajan Shrestha, Suchit Bhattarai, Sailesh shrestha, Shristhi Shrestha, Sanjeev shrestha, Sajan Gautam, and Yogendra Poudyal. If I miss anybody's name please accept my sincere apology.

A special thanks to the organizing committee members Binod Khanal, Arun Shrestha, Niraj shrestha, Binod Shrestha, Linda Shrestha, Sailesh Sigdya, and Bigyan Sharma. Thanks to Rajendra Shrestha family for hosting the friday night potluck and Mr. Binod Shrestha for Saturday night dinner. And most of all thanks to the audience. Thank you all the brothers and sisters for coming to the show and making it the greatest Nepalese event ever in Houston. Shri Pasupati nath le hami saabai lai raksha garun.

Sagun Vijayananda
 for NAH

A note of appreciation form Mr. Madhukar Amatya, vice president of NAH, to houston-nepali, via email.

From: "Madhukar Amatya"
 Reply-To: NAHinfo@yahoogroups.com
 To: NAHinfo@yahoogroups.com
 CC: deep02shrestha@hotmail.com
 Subject: [NAHinfo] Wonderful Concert !!!!
 Date: Tue, 13 Aug 2002 17:54:15 +0000

Dear friends,
 Where there is unity, there is victory. Nepalese Music Night could not have occurred without teamwork and support. We believe, that collective enthusiasm, motivation and perseverance are the factor that separate success from failure.

Anyway, the credit for the success of Musical Night goes to everybody who participated in the program. This musical night provided an excellent opportunity for our children and youth to have fun in a relaxed environment while learning about Nepalese music, culture and values. As a vice president of NAH, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all, who attended this program. Still we have to recognize some individuals who work so hard to make this event a grand success. Sagun, you did a great job. Concert committee, all the volunteers, program conductors, our local performers and all the sponsors also contributed there efforts equally to make this event wonderful. Let's give them a big applause.

I believe, success of any program is success of the leader, let's congratulate our president Rajendra Shrestha for this memorable evening.

Our sincere thanks go to Mr. Deep Shrestha and Team of 1974 AD, for taking timeout of their busy schedule, to visit Houston. We look forward to seeing you all in Houston next time.

Regards
 Madhukar Amatya
 Vice President, NAH

SNAPSHOTS at jasonlove.com



Struggling with issues from his own childhood, the Bedroom Bandit would sneak in and jumble the rooms of kids everywhere. Not a mother believed it.

Words of appreciation from Mr. Deep Shrestha:

From: deep shrestha [deep02shrestha@hotmail.com]
 Sent: Saturday, September 28, 2002 10:20 PM
 To: rajshrestha01@hotmail.com
 Cc: Dinkeramatya@msn.com; bindra_s@hotmail.com
 Subject: Missing you all:

Dear Rajendra Ji,
 Really it was a beautiful evening when we entered your house, the first evening. I have ever thought of that kind of warm and sincere reception, really it was amazing. We had a very nice time along with the Houston Nepalese Audience. Any way those are in my mind and my soul as an unforgettable memories. I apologize for not sending the mail to the other friends. Though I don't have the E-mail addresses too. So please kindly convey my warm regards to every one there. Rest is fine and as usual.
 Sincerely yours, Deep Shrestha.

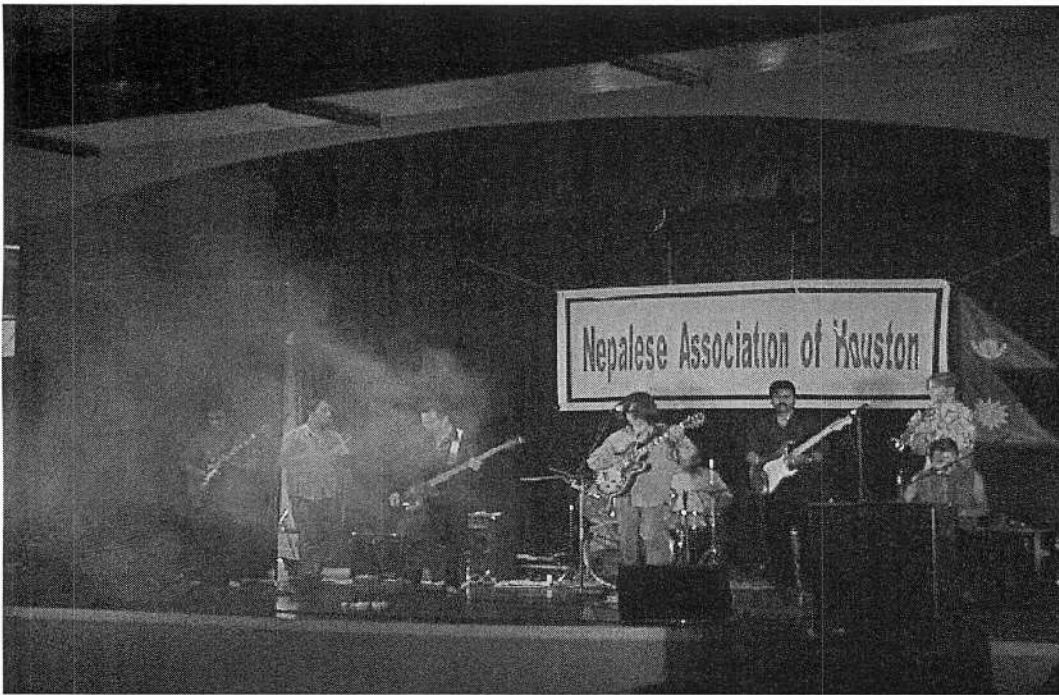
Words of appreciation from Mr. Manoj K.C., lead guitarist of 1974 AD:

From: manoj kc [mannu_kc@yahoo.com]
 Sent: Sunday, September 22, 2002 11:55 PM
 To: NAHinfo@yahoogroups.com
 Subject: [NAHinfo] from 1974ad...

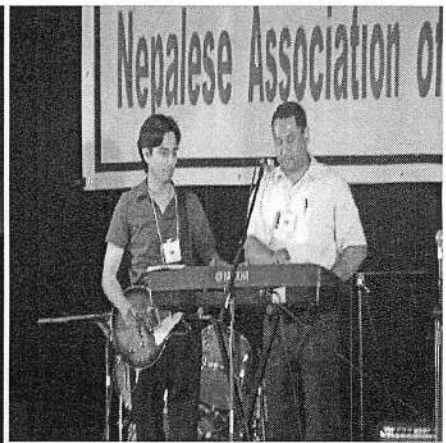
Dear NAH,

We'd like to thank and appreciate the company and warm hospitality as well as the good organizing spirit of Houston; we really had a wonderful time. In our opinion, the association of Nepalese in Houston is the best in United States. Not only the association but also we've met people who are really down to earth. Once again we'd like to thank the association of Houston. Thank you very much and hope to see you again.

Manoj Kumar KC (1974ad)



1974 AD – jam in fog ▲



Binod K. Khanal and Arun Shrestha, on a melodious Bachhu Kailash song...▲

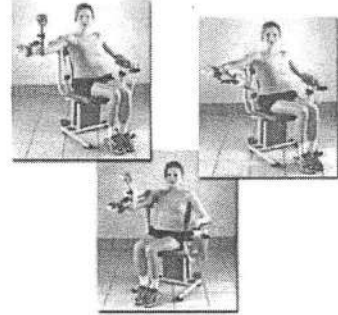
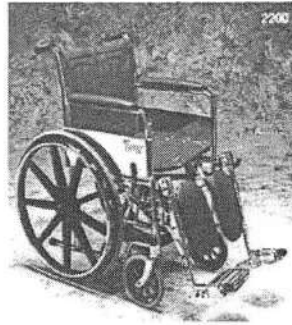
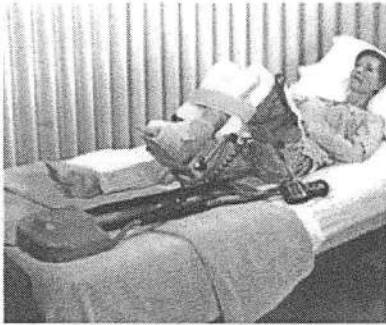
Deep Shrestha with 1974 AD ▼



Lekhnath Bhusal on classical Nepali dance ▲



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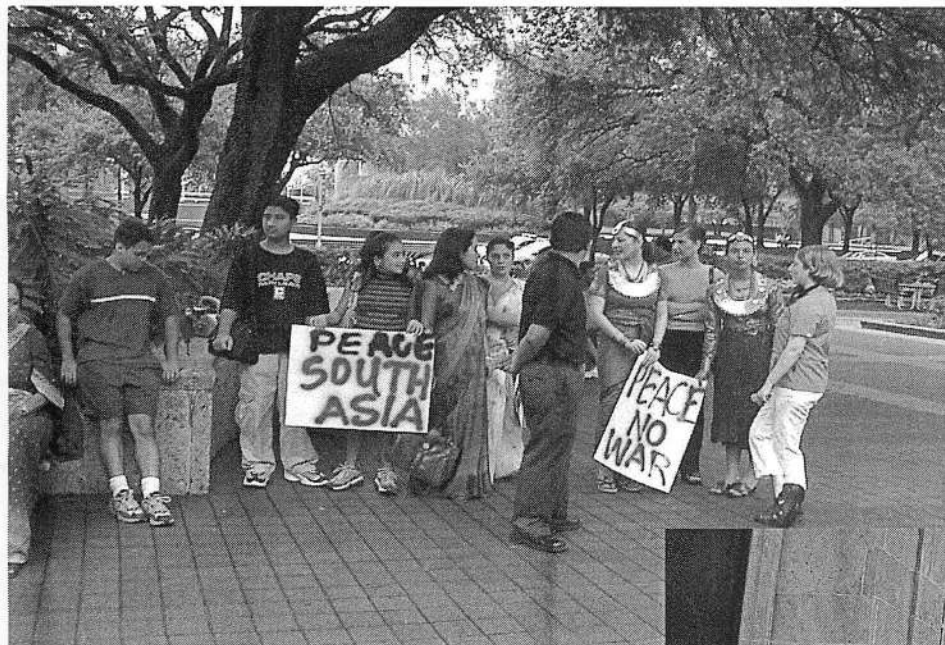
Email: overseas@overseastrade.com

NAH, Co-sponsor of Peace Rally In Houston

NAH was the cosponsor of the Peace Rally, organized by “Coalition For Peace in South Asia”, on June 29, 2002, at the City Hall in Downtown, Houston. The following resolutions were agreed on as the proposed objectives of this coalition:

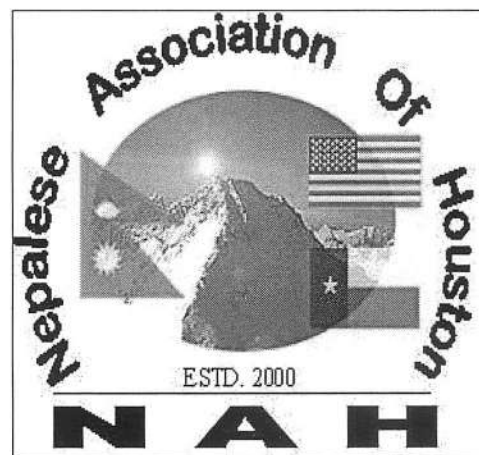
- 1) Oppose any conventional or nuclear war as a method of conflict resolution in South Asia.
- 2) All issues should be resolved peacefully through negotiation, diplomacy and mediation with utmost importance to the human rights and aspiration of all people in the region.
- 3) Urge the U.S. government, the United Nations and all regional and international governments to get involve to resolve the conflict.
- 4) The core issue of Kashmir be resolved as per UN resolution and with full regards to the rights and aspirations of the people of Kashmir.
- 5) All troops be withdrawn to their peace time positions.
- 6) Urge peace loving people everywhere to oppose the escalation of war.

Other sponsors of the rally were Bangladesh Association of Houston, Pakistan Association of Greater Houston, Voices Breaking Boundaries, India Culture Center, Islamic Society of Greater Houston, Sri Lankan Association of Houston, Presbyterian Peace Making Committee, Bangladesh Liberation War Photo Museum and Tagore Society of Houston.



Nepali participants in the peace rally. ▲

Dr. Rajendra Shrestha, president of NAH, giving speech at the peace rally. ▼



Hasan Rahman, chairman of Bangladesh Association and spokesman of the rally, giving a speech. ▲

Students Participation in the International Cultural Show

- Linda Shrestha

Nepalese Students Association of University of Houston - Clear Lake, participated in the International Cultural Show which was held on March 22, 2002 at University of Houston- Clear Lake. Various countries including India, China, Bangladesh, Philippines, Thailand, Russia and some African countries participated in the function.

In the picture: ▶▶▶

first row (left to right)- Rakshya Kar-macharya, Linda A. Shrestha, Juni Shrestha
Top row (left to right)- Sailesh Shrestha, Sanjeev Shrestha, Bijay D. Shrestha



NAH 2002 Picnic at Clear Lake Park

The following is the email message of appreciations from Ms. Linda A. Shrestha to the Nepali community living in Greater Houston. Ms. Shrestha was the lead organizer of the picnic.

----- Original Message -----

From: linda amatya

Sent: Monday, July 15, 2002 3:34 PM

To: NAH NAH

Subject: [NAHinfo] Thank You All

Dear All,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Nepalese for the active participation to make the picnic a Great success. We had a huge crowd of 90 adults and about 25-35 children. The day started with thunder and lightening for about an hour or so, but the remaining of the day just was just too fabulous with cool breeze and crispy Clearlake water.

A bouquet of appreciation to Mr. Jayanta Paudel for his generous donation of \$200 for the picnic expense. This picnic spot had an additional expenses of spot rental - \$100 and security - \$80.

Heart felt thanks to Clear Lake Nepali community, including Sanjeev Shrestha, Nirmal Shrestha, Pramod Shrestha, Jayant Paudel, Bijay Shrestha, Binod Joshi, Shesh Raj Sharma, Sailesh Shrestha and Pradhuma Shrestha for their donation as well as contribution for making this day a great success.

Thanks to Cuisine of India of Clear Lake (Mr. Shesh Raj Sharma) for the delicious food and moreover, for providing courtesy desert à la Khirā. Shesh dai, I heard from everyone that your food was just so Nepali.

Thanks to Bindra Shrestha, Nayana Amatya, Iren Amatya, Juni Shrestha and Rinku Joshi for the delicious Nepali Aalu Achar.

Thanks to all the Nepalese from Austin, Central and Nacogdoches for driving all the way down to Clear Lake to attend the picnic. I hope we were enough hospitable to comfort your long drive.

Thanks Shristi Shrestha for making the children have fun and for your active participation in the picnic. Hope all of you had a good time.

Linda A. Shrestha and Clear Lake Nepalese Family

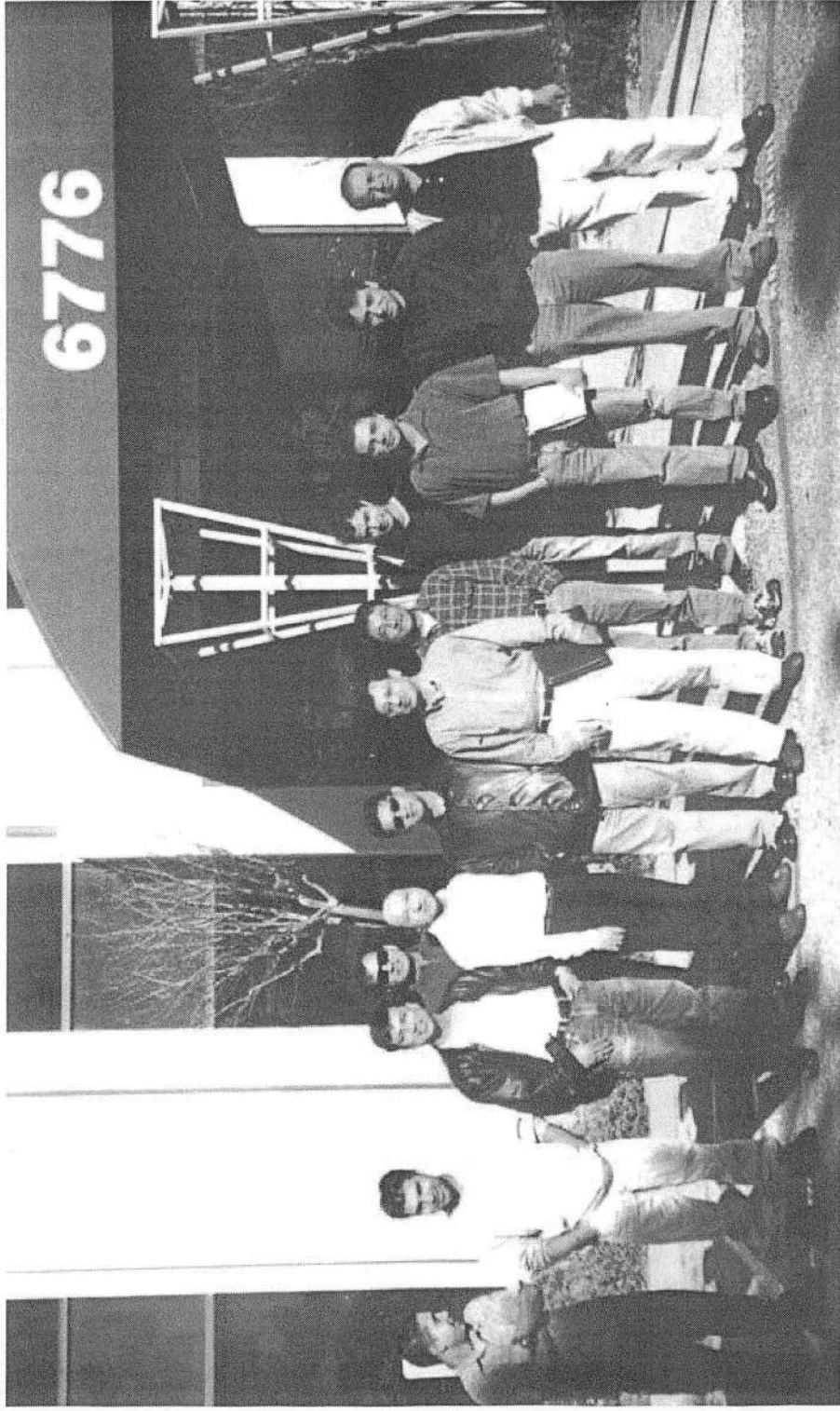


NAH Picnic in Clear Lake Park, South Houston ▲



At the NAH Naba Barsha Party at Maharajah Restaurant on April 13, 2002. ▲

From left to right: Nirmal Shrestha, Rajendra Shrestha, Pradhuma Shrestha, Akhil Dhungana



Attendees of the January 2002 NAH meeting, outside NAH office. □

From Left to Right: Biggyan Sharma, Sailesh Sigdya, Pawan Shrestha, Ratan Jha, Binod Shrestha, Nirimal Shrestha, Rajendra Shrestha, Pradhumna Shrestha, Sajjan Gautam, Akhil Dhungana, Sanjeev Shrestha, and Madhukar Amatya
(Photo by: Jyoti Ghimire, photo courtesy of Jyoti Ghimire)

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Recipe for Aloo Ko Achaar

- Hema Shrestha, Houston, Texas

- 4 big red potatoes, boiled, peeled and cut into 1/2 inch cubes
- 2 medium carrots cut into 1 inch long pieces
- 2 medium lemon, extract juice
- 1 cup chopped cilantro
- 3 jalapenos, each cut into 4 pieces lengthwise
- 1 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp chili pepper
- 5 tbsp vegetable oil
- 3 tbsp sesame seed, dry roast in high heat and then grind into powder
- 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
- 2 pinch fenugreek (methi)



1. In a large bowl, combine and mix potatoes, carrots, cilantro, lemon juice, salt, chili pepper, and sesame seed powder using a wooden spoon.
2. Heat cooking oil in a heavy saucepan, add fenugreek and temper until they turn black. Sprinkle turmeric powder.
3. Pour the mixture into the large bowl containing other ingredients and mix until they turn yellow.
4. Heat little oil on a saucepan and sauté jalapenos for a minute.
5. Garnish the ingredient in the bowl with sauteed jalapenos and cilantro.
6. Cover and chill to blend flavors.

inside kollywood

source: www.nepalhomepage.com

Nepali Box Office

1. Ghumto (***) Ramesh Uprety and Jaya Shah
2. Panchhi (****) Karishma Manandhar, Shiva Shrestha and Puja Chand
3. Siudo Ko Sindoor (****) Rajesh Hamal and Niruta Singh
4. Dhansampati (****) Dilip Rayamajhi and Jharana Bajracharya
5. Kasto Saino (***) Rajesh Hamal and Karishma Manandhar

Profile: Dilip Rayamajhi

Dilip is well-known nepali actor in Kollywood film industry. Who has got a good reputation in Nepali film industry within a short period. He is also known as a no. one nepali actor.

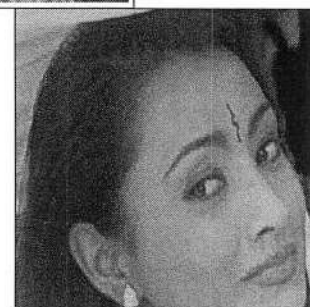
His first film was Bhanubhakta where he has played a serious role. After watching the movie every body has got the sense that the actor has suited only around this sort of roles but when moviegoers find him as a romantic actor in Darpan Chhaya they might get shock due to his acting. So, moviegoers known him as a versatile actor. Moviegoers says, his acting is similar to Bollywood superstar Sharuk Khan and taking style is noted Nepali actor Hari Bansa Aacharaya.

Dilip was fond of dancing since schooling age. While studying in 12 class he danced in the song of nepali film named Parivasha as a side dancer and got Rs. 800 as servicing. At that time he was really thrilled with his first income, he says. But, now he plays in lakh per film. My labour and the love of nepalies draw me in this position, he says.

While learning a dance he fell in loved with his classmate and married with her.



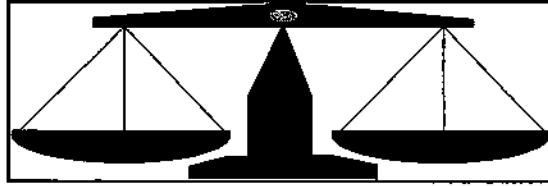
Ghumto...



Siudo ko sindoor

TOP TEN SINGLES

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. AAUNA GAUMA | NIMA RUMBA |
| 2. CHULESIMA | SNAJEEV SINGH |
| 3. SUNSAAN TAAT | MADHYANHA |
| 4. TIMLAI BHETNE | NABIN BHATTARAI |
| 5. TIMI BINA | UDAY MANILA |
| 6. GORI YETA SUNANA | SANJEEV SINGH |
| 7. TIMRO SAMJHANALE | SACHIN RAUNIYAR |
| 8. EH HOI MERI | PRAKASH OJHA |
| 9. ANSAN | RABIN SHRESTHA |
| 10. DESH DHUKDA | DEEPAK BAJRACHAR |



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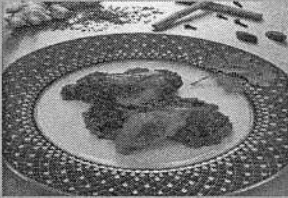


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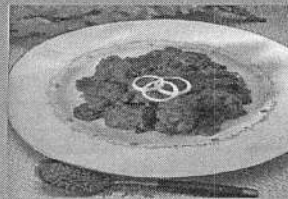
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*Nnaemeka Odunze, MBA, CPA (Partner)
Certified Public Accountant* | *Anita Laz, Esq. (Partner)
Member, American Immigration
Lawyers Association*

CALENDAR

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|--|---|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | <i>Ekadashi</i> 1 ₁₇ | <i>Duwadashi</i> 2 ₁₈ | <i>Trayodashi</i> 3 ₁₉ | <i>Chaturdashi</i> 4 ₂₀ | Purnima 5 ₂₁ | |
| A.K.Pratipada 6 ₂₂ | Dutiya 7 ₂₃ | Tritiya 8 ₂₄ | Chauthi 9 ₂₅ | Panchami 10 ₂₆ | Sasthi 11 ₂₇ | Saptami 12 ₂₈ |
| Astami 13 ₂₉ | Nawami 14 ₃₀ | Dashami 15 _{oct1} | Ekadashi 16 ₂ | Duwadashi 17 ₃ | Trayodashi 18 ₄ | Chaturdashi 19 ₅ |
| Aunshi 20 ₆ | A.S.Pratipada 21 ₇ | Dutiya 22 ₈ | Tritiya 23 ₉ | Chauthi 24 ₁₀ | Panchami 25 ₁₁ | Saptami 26 ₁₂ |
| Astami 27 ₁₃ | Nawami 28 ₁₄ | Dashami 29 ₁₅ | <i>Ekadashi</i> 30 ₁₆ | <i>Duwadashi</i> 31 ₁₇ | | |

Ashwin 2059
September/October 2002

20th September/2002/Ashwin 4th Indraja-
tra (Kumari Jatra)

12th October/2002/Ashwin
26th Phulpati

13th October/2002/Ashwin 27th Maha
Astami

14th October/2002/Ashwin 28th Maha
Nawami

15th October/2002/A16 October/2002/
Ashwin 30th, Tika

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| | <i>Trayodashi</i> 1 ₁₈ | Trayodashi 2 ₁₉ | | | | |
| Chaturdashi 3 ₂₀ | Purnima 4 ₂₁ | K.K.Pratipada 5 ₂₂ | Dutiya 6 ₂₃ | Tritiya 7 ₂₄ | Chauthi 8 ₂₅ | Panchami 9 ₂₆ |
| Sasthi 10 ₂₇ | Saptami 11 ₂₈ | Astami 12 ₂₉ | Nawami 13 ₃₀ | Dashami 14 ₃₁ | Ekadashi 15 _{Nov1} | Duwadashi 16 ₂ |
| Trayodashi 17 ₃ | Aunshi 18 ₄ | K.S.Pratipada 19 ₅ | Dutiya 20 ₆ | Tritiya 21 ₇ | Chauthi 22 ₈ | Panchami 23 ₉ |
| Sasthi 24 ₁₀ | Saptami 25 ₁₁ | Astami 26 ₁₂ | <i>Nawami</i> 27 ₁₃ | <i>Dashami</i> 28 ₁₄ | <i>Ekadashi</i> 29 ₁₅ | <i>Duwada- shi</i> 30 ₁₆ |

Kartik 2059
October/November 2002

03rd November/2002/Kartik 17th Dhan-
wantari Jayanti

4th November/2002/Kartik 18th Laxmi
Pooja (Gai Pooja)

5th November/2002/Kartik 19th Gobard-
han Pooja

6th November/2002/Kartik 20th Bhai Tika

9th November/2002/Kartik 23th Sambid-
han Divas

10th November/2002/Kartik 24th Chhat
Parba

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|--|--|--|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Trayodashi</i> 1 ₁₇ | <i>Chaturdashi</i> 2 ₁₈ | <i>Purnima</i> 3 ₁₉ | <i>M.K.Pratipada</i> 4 ₂₀ | <i>Pratipada</i> 5 ₂₁ | <i>Dutiya</i> 6 ₂₂ | Tritiya 7 ₂₃ |
| Chauthi 8 ₂₄ | Panchami 9 ₂₅ | Sasthi 10 ₂₆ | Astami 11 ₂₇ | Nawami 12 ₂₈ | Dashami 13 ₂₉ | Ekadashi 14 ₃₀ |
| Duwadashi 15 ₁ | Trayodashi 16 ₂ | Chaturdashi 17 ₃ | Aunshi 18 ₄ | M.S.Pratipada 19 ₅ | Dutiya 20 ₆ | Tritiya 21 _{Dec 7} |
| Chauthi 22 ₈ | Panchami 23 ₉ | Sasthi 24 ₁₀ | Saptami 25 ₁₁ | Astami 26 ₁₂ | Nawami 27 ₁₃ | Dashami 28 ₁₄ |
| Ekadashi 29 ₁₅ | | | | | | |

Marga 2059
November/December 2002



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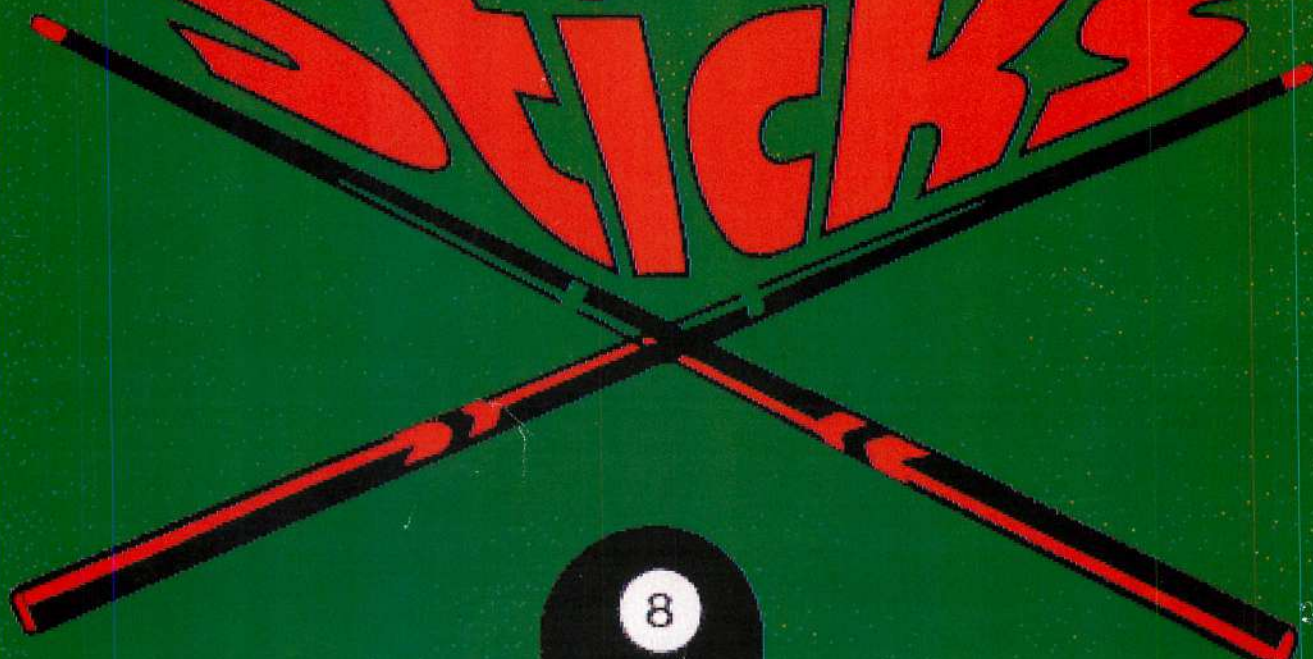
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