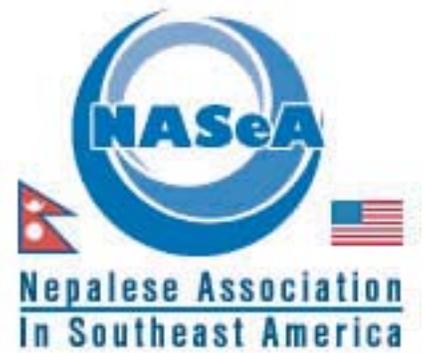




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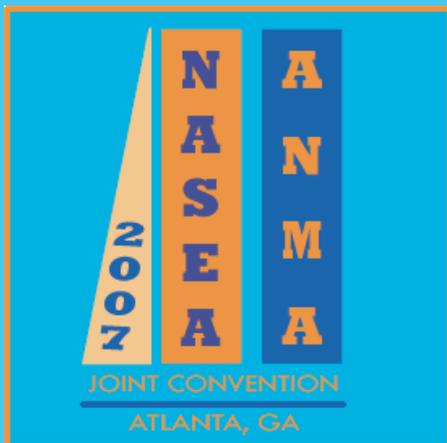
Association of Nepalese  
in Midwest America



Nepalese Association  
In Southeast America

# YETI VIEWPOINTS

Convention Edition - 2007



Featured Articles:

Transfer of Technology

Essays - Students

Economy & Corruption

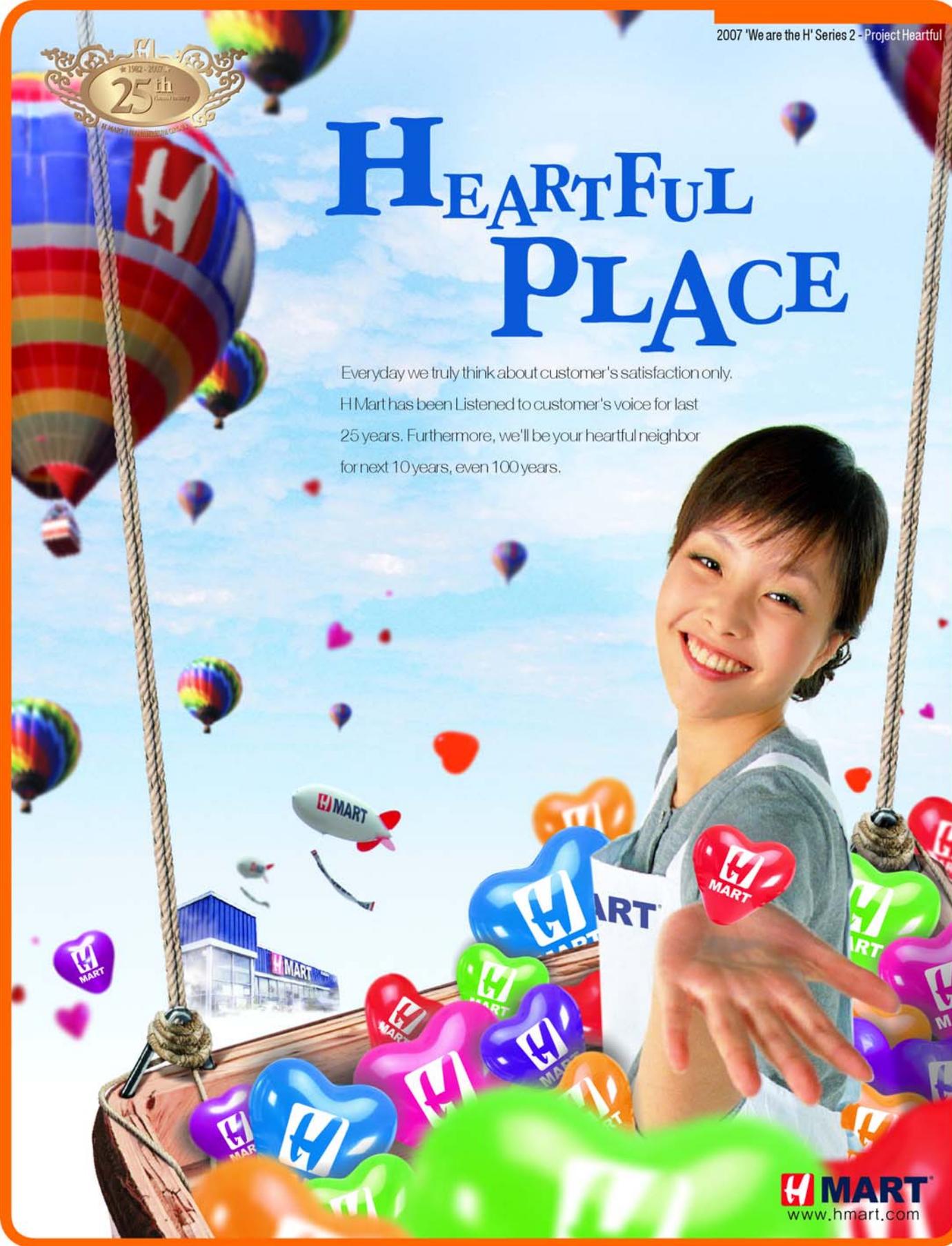
New Language Classes in Atlanta





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## Welcome to Atlanta!



It is my pleasure to welcome you on behalf of Convention Committee in this **2007 NASEA-ANMA Joint Convention** at this beautiful city of Atlanta. Also it has been my pleasure to volunteer for this organization specially working with good team of energetic & dedicated volunteers putting their solid effort to bring this convention together. This is the third Convention, and **Nepalese Association in Southeast America and Association of Nepalese in Midwest America** are celebrating together with the theme of “BRINGING NEPALI DIASPORA CLOSER”. Behind the scene, there are many pieces of puzzle to put together. I would like to take this opportunity to take you back where we started, and how we got here today in brief summary.

Right after we concluded successful joint convention at the Crowne Plaza Hotel by Chicago O’Hare Airport on Labor Day weekend of 2006, we started to plan for this convention. It is always the venue selection is the major concern. Initially, we were discussing to hold this convention at Birmingham, Alabama. Since we had difficulty to find reasonable and affordable size of hotel to run this size of convention, we had to move on to our second option, which was the Atlanta, and we started to search for the Venue. After making countless phone calls, we got response from handful of Hotels around Metro Atlanta. We went through the process of negotiation with hotel management and hotel visit one at a time. Finally, we found our perfect match with Crowne Plaza Hotel by the Atlanta Airport and signed the contract. So, we were ready to announce our Venue!

By mid of January of 2007, we started putting together our Convention Committee and the planning for the convention; the executive committee meeting on February of 2007 at Birmingham, Alabama approved the Convention Plan and gave authority to move ahead. Then our planning team started to write code for convention web-site, budgeting, detailing the tasks, volunteers, revenue resources, forums, publication, publicity, concert & culture programs, food & logistics and so on. At the mean time, we were planning for NASEA-ANMA joint meeting for April of 2007 as well at the Tennessee. With the generous help of families at Tennessee and Mr. Girija and Mrs. Kapila Gautam, we had a fruitful joint convention planning meeting on April of 2007, where members from both organizations were fully participated and discussed every aspect of this convention.

Since then we are in full swing! Pieces of puzzle started to fit-in. Rounds of weekly conference calls, personal calls, e-mails and live meeting started to come into play. This result is purely a volunteer effort of so many of us, full time students, full time job holders, business owners and so on. I would have to say: our organization is very fortunate to have these talented and dedicated volunteers. I can’t close this note without recognizing few names whose countless hours of their time, dedication and tireless effort made this difference: Samir Upadhyay, Saunak Man Ranjitkar, Srijana Sharma, Batsal Devkota, Ram S. Dongol, Dr. Tilak B. Shrestha and Mahim Ojha. I would also like to thank all the volunteers, everyone who helped us in this convention in any form and thank you all the participants. Narayan Dai and Sanjay, thank you for your hard work and your leadership.

Hope you enjoy this convention! Your on-going support will take us a long way.

*With Best Regards,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tek Thapa', written in a cursive style.

Tek Thapa  
Chair, Convention Committee  
**2007 NASEA-ANMA Joint Convention**  
Atlanta, GA

# Nepalese Association in Southeast America

## Executive Members

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Dr. Durga Paudel (LA)

# CONVENTION SCHEDULE

## 9/1/2007 - Saturday

Begin	End	Event	Location
10:00 AM	7:00 PM	Registration	Main Lobby
10:00 AM	11:00 AM	Organizer Meeting	Director's Room
12:30 PM	2:00 PM	Homeless Feeding	Lombard I
1:00 PM	6:30 PM	Sports Tournament	Off Campus
2:00 PM	4:00 PM	Cultural Program Practice Session	Lombard I
2:30 PM	4:00 PM	Welcome Address & Opening Plenary Session	Mansfield Ballroom
4:00 PM	5:00 PM	Forum: Woman's Global Network	Gable II
4:00 PM	5:00 PM	Forum: Role of NAPAC - to Address Nepalese American Issues	Gable I
4:00 PM	6:30 PM	Forum: Literary Session / INLS	Lombard II
5:00 PM	6:00 PM	Forum: Suicide, Preventing and Coping with it	Gable II
5:00 PM	6:30 PM	Social Hour	Main Lobby
6:30 PM	8:00 PM	Dinner	Bogart & Hepburn
8:30 PM	11:00 PM	Concert (buy your ticket)	Mansfield Ballroom
11:00 PM	1:00 AM	Open Dance Floor	Mansfield Ballroom

## 9/2/2007 - Sunday

Begin	End	Event	Location
7:30 AM	8:30 AM	Ganesh Pooja & Prasad	Gable I
7:30 AM	8:30 AM	Organizer Meeting	Director's Room
7:30 AM	7:00 PM	Registration	Hallway
9:00 AM	6:00 PM	Sports Tournament - Finals	Off Campus
9:00 AM	10:00 AM	Opening Session with Keynote Speakers	Mansfield Ballroom
10:00 AM	12:30 PM	Forum: NRN / NACC	Mansfield Ballroom
11:00 AM	12:00 PM	Women's Musical Chair	Lombard I
12:30 PM	1:30 PM	Packed Lunch	Bogart & Hepburn
1:30 PM	3:30 PM	Forum: Nepal Issue	Gable I
2:00 PM	3:30 PM	Forum: Immigration & Entrepreneurship	Gable II
2:00 PM	6:00 PM	Children's Program	Ziegfield
3:00 PM	5:00 PM	American Society of Nepalese Engineers	Lombard II
3:30 PM	4:30 PM	NASeA Elections	Lombard I
3:30 PM	4:30 PM	ANMA Exec Meeting	Gable II
3:30 PM	5:00 PM	Forum: How to help Nepal through transfer of technology	Gable I
4:30 PM	5:30 PM	Forum: Defining Dharma	Gable II
5:00 PM	6:00 PM	NAC Meeting	Gable I
5:00 PM	6:00 PM	Social Hour / Networking	Hallway
6:00 PM	7:30 PM	Dinner	Bogart & Hepburn
8:00 PM	11:00 PM	Award Ceremony, Fashion Show & Cultural Program	Mansfield Ballroom
11:00 PM	1:00 AM	Open Dance Floor	Mansfield Ballroom

## 9/3/2007 - Monday

Begin	End	Event	Location
9:00 AM	10:00 AM	NASeA Business Meeting	Director's Room
9:00 AM	10:00 AM	ANMA Business Meeting	Board Room
10:00 AM	11:30 AM	NASeA+ANMA Joint Business Meeting/ Closing Remarks	Board Room

**THANK YOU ALL VOLUNTEERS**

## CONVENTION PERFORMERS

DEEPAK BAJRACHARYA &

THE RYTHM BAND

SANJAY SHRESTHA

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SAROJ DUTTA

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HAVE A GREAT CONVENTION !



September 01, 2007

Dear Members and Friends:

On behalf of Association of Nepalese in Midwest America (ANMA), I welcome you to the NAsEA-ANMA Joint Convention in Atlanta, GA. This Joint Convention marks the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of cooperation & collaboration with Nepalese Association in Southeast America (NAsEA). The convention is co-sponsored by Association of Nepali Teraian in America (ANTA), and several affiliate/sister organizations.

The convention theme is “Bringing Nepali Diaspora Closer,” which reflects our goal to serve the Nepalese community via a unified front. ANMA was founded 26 years ago to serve this purpose. Till date our mission remains *to promote, coordinate, and facilitate close cooperation among Nepalese and friends of Nepal in North America (particularly in the Midwest Region of the United States), for maintaining and fostering Nepalese identity and cultural heritage.*

Ever since I accepted the leadership of ANMA, It has been my intent to bring new & innovative ways to serve our community here in the United States, and our people back home in Nepal; to involve the younger generation in congruence with the organization’s purpose and goals, and to expand the joint convention partnership with other regional and grass-root Nepalese organizations.

Last year, ANMA was a key sponsor of the KIVA Micro-Finance Project (part of the Smart Design, Smart Village Project). This project is being lead by Dr. Alok Bohara of the Nepal Study Center, University of New Mexico. The goal of this project is to promote People-2-People Tele-micro-financing program in Nepal. For more details, please visit [http://nepalstudycenter.unm.edu/P2PMicroFinance\\_Kiva.htm](http://nepalstudycenter.unm.edu/P2PMicroFinance_Kiva.htm)

I am very proud to announce that several senior members of ANMA have played an instrumental role in shaping the NRN movement in North America, and whose dedication lead to the much awaited approval of the NRN bill by the Legislature Parliament in Kathmandu. They are Mr. Sharda Thapa, Dr. Gaury Adhikary, and Mr. Mukesh Singh.

Last but not the least, I would like to thank the Convention Committee for their superb job in bringing us this wonderful convention weekend. This was possible through the tireless dedication and effective leadership of Mr. Tek Thapa (Convention Chair) and Mr. Samir Upadhyay.

I am confident you will enjoy every moment of the convention weekend. I thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sanjay Shrestha".

Sanjay Shrestha, President  
Association of Nepalese in Midwest America

Dear Members, Friends, and Families,

Namaste!

I sincerely welcome you all to the Nepalese Association in Southeast America (NASeA) and Association of Nepalese in Midwest America (ANMA) joint convention in Atlanta, GA. This convention marks the third consecutive year that NASeA has successfully united with ANMA to conduct this convention with a theme, "Bringing Nepali Diaspora Closer." This year I am elated to welcome Association of Nepali Teraian in America (ANTA) as the co-sponsor and several affiliate/sister organizations as the collaborator of the convention. On behalf of NASeA, I would like to sincerely thank all members, volunteers, friends, and families for their wonderful support in successfully launching this convention.



This year I am completing my two years tenure period as the Eighth President of NASeA. It is a great honor and a privilege to serve Nepalese community. I am very proud to be a part of NASeA family and have greatly enjoyed working with an extremely supportive and a cooperative executive body. I would like to sincerely thank my executive members for their enthusiasm, determination, and continued service to successfully advance the association's mission and activity.

During our first year, we focused on expanding our relationship with Emory University in GA, Troy University in AL, North Carolina State University in NC, and Asian/Pacific American Council (APAC) in GA in promoting Asian Study and Cultural Program and assisting Nepalese students. During our second year, we focused on strengthening NASeA as an institution for serving Nepalese community in the USA, Nepal, and abroad with following activities:

- We took a lead on establishing a project, "Transfer of Technology" to preserve the vanishing technology in Nepali culture. Primarily, we facilitated a study in symbiotic relationship among value of Nepali culture, indigenous technology, and natural environment by holding an essay contest open to all high school students of North America and Canada. The contestants were encouraged to do their own research and write an essay linking these facts. The first three outstanding essays are published in this newsletter. I would like to thank all the students who participated in the contest along with the judging committee (Chair Dr. Sushama Pradhan, Co- chair Dr. Bal Krishna Sharma, and Members Mr. Bala Panta, Dr. Jyoti Rayamajhi, Dr. Suraj Shrestha, and Dr. Tilak Shrestha) for their efforts in making this educational event a success.
- We identified ten regional representatives from different southeast region of the USA to collaborate, coordinate, and communicate NASeA activities with Nepali community and other public who are interested in learning, participating, and promoting Nepali culture and values in the region. We respectfully admire their enthusiasm to work with NASeA.
- We increased life members by approximately 52%. As of today, we have 104 life members to support NASeA activities. During NASeA's Life Member Honorable Day on January 13, 2007, they were recognized as key members for promoting NASeA's mission. Their enthusiastic and respectful admissions as life members have certainly rewarded us.
- We established a pilot project, "Capacity Building" for underprivileged schools in Nepal. This project aims at assisting teachers and students through strengthening their computer skills to promote their academic knowledge in developing, transferring, adapting, and applying modern science and technology relevant to Nepal. NASeA has already donated two computers to a school, *Laxmi Vidya Mandir School in Bhaktapur*, to facilitate activities under this project.

Besides the above activities, there are several community service projects being continued under NASeA. One such successful project is "Helping Schools in Nepal." Dr. Prakash Malla (Former President of NASeA) has highlighted the project in this newsletter. Please visit [www.naseaonline.org](http://www.naseaonline.org) for more detail.

Currently, we are seeking your valuable opinion, comment, and concern on the "Transfer of Technology" project for developing a roadmap for coming years. Therefore, a forum on "How to Help Nepal through Transfer of Technology" is organized in this joint convention. You are cordially invited to attend this forum.

In addition to the "Transfer of Technology" forum, there are several other important forums designed for your interest. The convention committee has worked hard to cover social, cultural, political, and educational arena for this convention. I would like to express my sincere appreciation for their tireless effort. More specifically, I would like to deeply acknowledge Mr. Tek Thapa and Mr. Samir Upadhyay for their devotion and patience in bringing this convention to this stage. I hope you will enjoy every aspects of this convention. Thank you for your support and participation.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Narayan Rajbhandari". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Narayan Rajbhandari, Ph.D.  
President, NASeA

# Association of Nepalese in Midwest America

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## Welcome To Atlanta

Best Wishes From

*Bala & Tracy Pant*

Enjoy your time at this NAsEA / ANMA Joint Convention!

## ATLANTA NEPALI LANGUAGE SCHOOL (ANLS)

Nepalese Association in Southeast America (NASEA) is proud to announce the establishment of Atlanta Nepali Language School (ANLS) under the leadership of Srijana Sharma and with the guidance of Mrs. Menuka Bista. The school will begin its first Semester in fall (Mid September- Mid December). The school's focus is not only to teach the Nepali language, but also to develop and promote an understanding of Nepali culture and heritage among Nepali children in America, thus helping to keep our customs and traditions alive. School curriculum includes instruction in reading, writing, and verbal communication as well as cultural education. This school will run by a dedicated and committed group of about ten volunteer teachers.

Every Sunday morning classes are conducted under the following categories:

- Kindergarten -3
- Levels 1 - 4
- Adult (beginner / intermediate).

**Contact:**

Srijana K. Sharma

[srijana98@gmail.com](mailto:srijana98@gmail.com)

Ph: 404-639-2188

Time – Sunday Morning (TBD)

Location - TBD

For more information please visit our website

<http://www.naseaonline.org>

Please call or email Srijana if you want to volunteer in this Nepali Language School Project.

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**Welcome To Atlanta**

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Enjoy your time

at this NAsEA / ANMA  
Joint Convention!

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**Welcome To Atlanta**

Best Wishes From

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Enjoy your time at this NAsEA / ANMA Joint Convention!

**Welcome To Atlanta**

Best Wishes From

*Sagun & Dipti  
Shrestha*

Enjoy your time

at this NAsEA / ANMA  
Joint Convention!

**Welcome To Atlanta**

Best Wishes From

*Tek Thapa*

Enjoy your time

at this NAsEA / ANMA  
Joint Convention!

## High School Student Essay Contest

*Dr. Sushama Pradhan*

Under the leadership of Dr. Narayan Rajbhandari, President of Nepalese Association in Southeast America (NASEA), a high school essay contest was conducted to encourage and develop interest of young teenage students in Nepal and Nepali culture. This is the first time any Nepali organization in the USA has conducted this kind of contest at a high school level to promote and increase knowledge about Nepal. It was open to all North American high school students including Canada.

This contest has made contestants look back to their roots and made them think and do brainstorm about their land of origin. This kind of activity will not only increase their knowledge about Nepal but will also definitely help to make their bond stronger and understanding deeper. For those who were born in Nepal and have spent some years of their tender life, it was a refreshing flashback of fading memories. This kind of rekindling of memories of young generation and learning on their own active participation is more rewarding and lasting not only to them but to family and community as well.

A six member Essay Contest Committee was formed under the chairmanship of Dr. Sushama Pradhan. Dr. Bal Krishna Sharma was the Co-Chair. Other members of the committee were Mr. Bala Panta, Dr. Jyoti Raimajhi, Dr. Suraj Shrestha, and Dr. Tilak Shrestha. This year's topic was "Nepal/Nepalese Culture and Natural Environment" concentrating on "Nepali Culture, Indigenous technology, and Natural Environment". The goal of this essay contest was to think critically about these issues and shape their own arguments and reach their own conclusion rather than summarize or evaluate available resources.

Altogether 14 essays, one from Alabama, five from Georgia and eight from North Carolina, were received. That is very encouraging considering it was the first year; and also very exciting to see the interest shown by young people. It was truly not easy task to compare, rank and to select the best three essays from all very

quality essays. It was so rewarding to read the wonderful work that so many talented students presented.

The first prize went to Lorna Devkota. The second and the third prize winners were Alima Karki and Tenzin Dekyi respectively. The first, second and third place winners will be awarded prizes of \$300.00, \$100.00 and \$50.00 respectively along with award certificate. The winners will be honored during upcoming NASEA/ANMA joint convention at Atlanta, GA.

This is of vital importance for the survival and development of the community that our future generations keep interest, love and nostalgia to Nepal and Nepali culture. I hope that learning about our extremely rich culture, heritage and nature that only few countries in the world can parallel will make our young generations proud to say loudly "I am of Nepali origin" and be ambassador of Nepali cause.

**Welcome To Atlanta**

**Best Wishes From**

*Narayan & Nirmala  
Rajbhandari*

**Enjoy your time**

**at this NASEA / ANMA  
Joint Convention!**

## IGNORANCE IS BLISS

*Lorna Devkota*

As I sit on my computer ready to get started, I am finally realizing how little I know about the Culture, Indigenous Technology, and the Natural Environment of Nepal. I have to admit I am a bit ashamed of myself for being this ignorant and with that I have realized the sole purpose of this essay, which is for High School students such as myself to have an increased knowledge and understanding of Nepal.

The culture of Nepal is fascinating and leaves many at a lost for words. It is a culture filled with great music, architecture, religion and literature. Music varies as much as the multiple ethnic groups in this country. Religious, pop, classical and folk music seem to be popular but Tibet and Hindustan musical genres also have an immense influence in Nepal. Festivals are also a huge aspect of the culture in Nepal. A festival is always considered a significant and memorable event in the life of Nepalese people. Every festival has some purpose to serve. From worshipping the dead to bringing in the rain or averting calamities, every festival has a spiritual quality about it. During the month of Kartik in the Bikram Sambat calendar, the Nepalese people enjoy themselves in the biggest festival of the year, Dashain. Dashain is the most auspicious festival in the Nepalese annual calendar, celebrated by Nepalese of all caste and creed throughout the country. It is a fifteen-day celebration that ends on the full moon. Thorough out the kingdom of Nepal the goddess Durga is worshiped with innumerable pujas, and thousands of animal sacrifices for the ritual holy bathing, thus soaking the goddess for days in blood. As being an American citizen, I have come to find that Dashain is one of the few festivals celebrated here as well. Nepal has more festivals than the number of days in a year. With that incredible high number, it is one of the greatest ways to understand and appreciate the Nepalese ways of life. Food is also a significant part in understanding the culture value of Nepal. Nepal's cuisine has been greatly influenced by climate but by neighboring India as well. Typical meals include rice, lentils, pickles and curried vegetables. One major difference I have noted from America to Nepal can only be placed in one phrase, "Americans live to eat, and Nepalese eat to

live". In Nepal, food is valued primarily for human fuel rather than social interaction.

Nepal is also a country that has many striking indigenous technologies. The stunning Bodnath Stupa is a prime example of this. It is the largest stupa in Nepal, and one of the largest in the world. Built in the 14th century after the Mughal invasions by Tibetan Buddhists, the stupa is now the axis of the Tibetan refugee community. The Bodnath Stupa is not only breath taking but is also a stronghold of Tibetan culture in the heart of the Katmandu valley. The Stupa was also designed in a very abstract way, which secures it as one of the best indigenous technologies to be seen in Nepal. Nepal's religious architecture is another art medium that is an important part of the country's indigenous technologies. There are three broad styles - the pagoda style, the stupa style and the shikhara style. The pagoda style refers to multi-roofed structures with wide roof space supported by carved wooden struts. The Pashupatinath temple is a temple based on this type of architecture. It is a Hindu temple that is regarded as the most sacred temple of Shiva, the god of destruction and regeneration, in the world. Some come to breathe their last while the deceased are brought to the river Bagmati at the foot of the temple for cremation others come to receive blessings from lord Shiva early in morning. The exquisite woodcarvings and superb architectural designs of the pagodas such as Pashupatinath have fascinated visitors in Nepal for centuries. There are also the Swoyambhunath and Boudhanath shrines, which are Nepal's first examples of the stupa or Chaitya style. This style is purely Buddhist in concept and execution. The exceptional feature of the stupa is a hemispherical mound topped by a square base supporting a series of the thirteen circular rings. This makes it an incredible part of the native technologies found in Nepal. The Shikara style forms another architectural design found in Nepal. The excellent structure is a tall curvilinear or pyramidal tower whose surface is broken up vertically in five to nine sections. With all of these astounding activity. Rice and wheat are the main food crops found there. The lowland Terai region produces an agricultural surplus, part of which supplies the food-deficient hill

areas. Because of Nepal's dependence on agriculture, the annual monsoon rain, or lack of it, strongly influences economic growth. Writing about the natural environmental of Nepal has opened my eyes to the realization of its beauty and the steps necessary to keep Nepal's natural environment at its best.

Nepal is country that deserves major recognition for everything including its Culture, Indigenous Technology, and the Natural Environment but it is also a country that barely gets noted on the map. Ignorance is bliss when you live in a different nation and have no reason to understand and learn about a small eye-opening country halfway across the world. Last week, I went to a camp for teenagers to explain about Nepal and only 1 out of every 4 person even knew where it was. That is unacceptable and needs to be changed. With every Nepali being proud of whom they are and spreading the word about their own nation, the ignorance can be changed. Among those final words, I would like to Thank you for giving me the opportunity to research more on a country that captivates and fascinates me.

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Best Wishes From

*Madan & Dharma  
Rajbhandari*

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## Congratulations to Prashanti and Ashok

Prashanti Aryal, MD, daughter of Shakti and Usha Aryal was honored at the Chief Residents' and Fellows' graduation banquet hosted by the University of Washington, School of Medicine, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology on June 15, 2007.

Her medical interests include laparoscopic and vaginal surgery, dysplasia, and taking care of immigrant patients. She will be joining a group health practice in Seattle, Washington from September 2007.

Prashanti and her husband Ashok Cattamanchi, a University of Washington fellow in Allergy and Infectious Diseases became parents of a son, Surya who was born on June 6, 2007. Both the mother and son are doing fine.

## Nepal / Nepalese Culture and Natural Environment

**Country Background:** Nepal, a small landlocked country situated in South Asia, is bordered by China to the North, and India to the East, West, and South. Nepal constitutes 0.3 percent of the total area of Asia and 0.03 percent of the world's. Mount Everest, the tallest mountain in the world, is the most impressive identity of Nepal. Yeti, a mythical creature, is believed to exist in the mountains. Nepal, the birth place of the Lord Gautam Buddha, is another vivid identity. Sherpas are well known to international arena for their extraordinary ability to climb mountains. Ang Rita Sherpa is the only person in the world to climb Mt. Everest 10 times without the use of supplemental oxygen. Late Pasang Lhamu Sherpa was the first female Nepali Mt. Everest mountaineer.

**People:** Nepal is a garden of ethnic diversity. It has four major castes (Brahman, Kshatri, Baishya, Sudra), and 36 tribes. Each caste and tribe has its own specific identity in the community, and each differs slightly from the other in terms of costumes, dialect, and food habits.

**Religion:** Hinduism is the major religion (80.6%), followed by Buddhist (10.7%), Muslim (4.2%), Kirat (3.6%), Christians (0.4%), and others (0.4%) (NTG, 2006). People worship gods and goddesses in hopes of fulfilling their wishes e.g.: Saraswati for wisdom and knowledge; and goddess Laxmi for wealth. Kumari, the only living goddess in the world, exists in Nepal. Interestingly, people live in harmony irrespective of their beliefs in different religions. Similarly, temples/houses/monasteries in most communities contain statues of different gods and goddesses. Hindus often offer animal blood and animal products like milk, yoghurt, ghee and eggs to appease the gods during certain occasions.

**Costumes:** Each ethnic group is enriched in fascinating costumes. Dhakatopi, Daurasuruwal, Potka, and Jwaricoat are men's traditional costumes; and Phariya, Chaubandicholo, Potka, and khasto are women's common costumes. Dhoti, generally white, is a popular dress for men in Terai, and Bakkhu for Sherpa in Mountain areas. Also, people wear different costumes during festivities, rituals, and marriage ceremonies according to ethnic groups.

**Environment:** Based on latitude, Nepal is classified into three geographical regions: Mountain, Hill and Terai. Nepal is rich in animal and plant biodiversity. It is a home of 2% of all the flowering plants in the world, 8% of the world's population of birds, 4% of mammals on earth, 11 of the world's 15 families of butterflies, 600 indigenous plant families, and 319 species of exotic orchids ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mystic\\_Nepal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mystic_Nepal)).

The three major rivers: Koshi, Karnali, and Narayani including many other rivers, streams and rivulets have made us the world's second richest water resource country. Nepal has many national parks such as Sagarmatha, Shivapuri, Royal Chitwan, Khaptad, Phoksundo, and Royal Bardia. Correspondingly, Rara, Phoksundo, and Phewa lakes have increased Nepal's attraction for outsiders. Accordingly, hiking, rafting, mountain climbing and elephant polo are some other fascinating attractions for tourists. In addition, yarchagumba in Nepal is a rare plant species widely used in clinical medicine. Similarly, Nepal's one-horned rhinoceros is equally popular in the world ([http://www.panda.org/about\\_wwf/who\\_we\\_are/index.cfm](http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/who_we_are/index.cfm)).

**Agriculture:** Around 20% of the total land area is cultivated and 43% is under forest and shrub. The distribution of cultivated land is the highest in Terai (49%) followed by Hill (40%) and Mountain (11%) (CBS, 1996). Agriculture is the economic backbone of the country engaging 76% of the population (WB, 2005). Mostly, agriculture is of subsistence and mixed with crop, livestock, forestry, and fishery. Commonly grown major crops include rice, maize, wheat, barley, and millet. Sugarcane, tobacco, tea, coffee, coconut, nuts, and spices are also produced. The majority produce some fruits, vegetables, root crops, and pulses for home consumption. In case of livestock, cattle, buffalo, goat, and poultry are the most important farm animals. However, sheep, pigs, horses/mules, yak-nak, chauri, rabbits, and duck are also raised in some parts of the country (PC, July 07).

**Food:** Nepalese are rich in traditional cuisine that varies with ethnic groups. Traditionally, Dhido and Gundruk are popularly practiced by diverse ethnic groups mostly in rural areas. Yamari, Chatamari, Momo, and *Baji* in Newar community are widely

preferred food. Also, Samosa, Pakauda, Roti and Dahl symbolize connoisseur of Terai people in preparing food (PC, July 07). Bhote chiya in the Mountain region, basically consumed by Sherpas, is a fascinating drink for outsiders. Offering food first to the husband and other members, and eating at the end is a customary practice for rural women. More interestingly, the father seldom eats his children's and wife's jutho. People generally offer a small mix of every item prepared to the gods and ancestors before eating. The higher social castes still maintain distance with lower social castes especially while eating. Similarly, food habits vary greatly according to ethnic groups e.g.: Brahman and Kshatri are socio-culturally prohibited to rear and consume swine (PC, July 07). Most Nepalese eat with their hands (especially the right), though some have started using spoons, forks and knives.

**Festivities:** Dashain and Tihar are the most important festivals. Furthermore, Teej, Janai purnima, Mage sakanrati, Basanta panchami, Holi, Rankhi, and Maha Shivaratri are other widely celebrated festivals. Equally, Bhote jatra, Kumari rath tanne, Bisket jatra, and Ghode jatra are some popularly celebrated valley based national festivals.

**Language, Music and Culture:** There are at least 92 different local dialects spoken in Nepal. However, Nepali written in Devanagari script is the official, national language; and serves as *lingua franca* among Nepalese of different ethno linguistic groups ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mystic\\_Nepal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mystic_Nepal)). There are various types of music representing all ethnic diversities such as Newari, Khas, Gurung, Kirat, Tamang Magar, Sherpa, Maithili, and Bhojpuri. All these ethnic groups have a unique and specific cultural taboo. Sarangi, Basuri, Harmonium, Madal, and Tabala are commonly used musical instruments. Moreover, the Panche Bajaa, primarily used in marriage and other traditional celebrations, is a unique traditional music. However, Bandbajaa is getting popular in urban areas.

Nepal is highly prosperous in cultural diversity. Therefore, it is beyond the scope of this paper to cover all those aspects. In short, name giving ceremony, rice feeding, bratabandha, gupha rakhne, belmarriage, jankhu; and after death kiriya, masik, barakhi, and shraddha are some common ritual practices (PCs, July 07). Hitherto, almost all ethnic groups approach witch

doctors known as dhami-jhankri because they believe that sickness, failure, and misfortune come when the gods are displeased. Therefore, Tantric traditions are deep-rooted in many communities. It is believed that Tantrics are able to appease gods, and chase demons away through chanting, beating drums, and offering animal sacrifices.

**Conclusion:** Prominent identities of Nepal such as the highest mountain in the world, our various traditions, and environment are our pride. Nepal is extremely rich in natural beauty, plants, and animal biodiversity. There are many unexplored wonders yet to be discovered. To translate our dream of making a new Nepal, all Nepali diasporas need to work proactively to prevent our motherland from brain drain by alluring retained intellectuals abroad including us, to go back home to work for people; in order to free them from hunger, poverty, malnutrition and illiteracy. Also, the bureaucrats and politicians governing the country should promise to aid for the same purpose. Only then, the dream we have been dreaming for centuries will come true.

**Alima Karki**

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## ENCHANTING NEPAL

*Tenzin Dekyi*

Nepal is a country enriched with beauties. It is a land with age-old cultures, amazing scenery, snow capped high mountain ranges, innumerable historical sites and peaceful people. The depth of how much one can observe is obviously seen by continuous tourist inflow every year. Every city has something to exhibit in its own unique way. The capital city, Kathmandu, where I lived has a lot to boast of. Well known other cities include Pokhara, Biratnagar, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, etc.

Kathmandu is abundant in historical places such as Hanuman Dhoka, Swoyambhunath, Pashupatinath, Boudhanath, and many more. Hunuman Dhoka has many temples built mostly during the Malla dynasty dating back to the 15th century. It was named after the Hindu god Hanuman. It has temples like Teleju, Jagannath and statues of Hanuman, King Pratap Malla, Kumari Ghar, etc. The doors of the temples are carved beautifully and designed intricately. Swoyambhu is located on a top of a hill. It is a Buddhist stupa with a white dome and a gold conical structure. The legend behind it says that Manjushri came to the Kathmandu Valley while it was still a lake and cut the south wall and drained all the water out. The structure was then built on the holy site. I lived in that area and used to go round the stupa with my parents. We used to enjoy watching numerous playful monkeys dwelling on the hillock. Pashupatinath situated beside Bagmati river is one of the most sacred Hindu temple of Lord Shiva. It also has many beautiful carvings and statues. Thousands of people come on pilgrimage to this site. Boudhanath is one of the most visited Buddhist sites. It is a huge stupa shaped in a Mandala like design. It has many paintings of different Buddhas and statues made of gold. There are many Buddhist monasteries, Tibetan stores and restaurants in the vicinity. My family and I used to go there a lot not only to go round the stupa and buy groceries but also to eat delicious momo.

Nepalese people are peaceful, gentle and joyous. I used to observe the villagers singing melodious songs while harvesting their crops when I went to Pokhara on bus or weaving woolen rugs in carpet factories.

The children are found smiling innocently to the strangers. The Nepalese people celebrate numerous festivals including Navavarsha, Dashain, Tihar, Holi, Shivaratri etc. They eat sumptuous food on these occasions. These holidays and festivals show people's spiritual depth and reveal Nepal's unique costume, food and music. Dashain is celebrated around late September and lasts for 15 days. It symbolizes victory of good over evil. On this day, Lord Ram defeated Ravan. People celebrate the festival by decorating their homes. The streets are filled with shoppers who buy temple offerings, clothes, food etc. They wear beautiful saris, and traditional jewelry like bangles, gold necklaces, and gold earrings. Animal sacrifices are also done in the temples to honor the goddess Durga. The festival of lights or Tihar is celebrated for 5 days during late October for the Goddess Laxmi. Houses are cleaned and decorated with oil lamps. Crows, dogs and cows are also honored. Fireworks were going off in every neighborhood and I'd always try to go to the market early to get the best ones. On the last day, "Bhai Tika" sisters put Tikas on their brothers to pray for their long life. "Holi", one of my favorites is also known as the festival of colors. People throw colors, water balloons and forget about their worries. Baisakh is the Nepali New Year and is celebrated during April. Families get together and have feasts. They enjoy special Dal Bhat (rice lentil), various meat curries, and different vegetable dishes like Pahmaya and Bhuti. Traditional music is performed with traditional instruments like the Madal, Sarangi, Flute, etc. Shivaratri is celebrated in honor of Lord Shiva. Hindus from all over visit Pashupatinath Temple to pray and get blessings.

Geography of Nepal has everything from the plains to the mountains including Mount Everest. The Mountain are covered by thick forests and beautiful parks. Some major parks include Chitwan National Park, RaRa National Park, and Everest National Park. Chitwan Park was the first national park of Nepal and was developed to save endangered Rhinos and Bengal tigers. It can be toured on an elephant's back. I once enjoyed it because I got to see tigers walking pass by us. It was an unforgettable experience. I also had

some horse riding and saw crocodiles. Over the years Chitwan has saved a lot of wildlife and vegetation. RaRa Park is Nepal's smallest park yet has Nepal's largest lake, "RaRa Lake" or "Mahendra Tal". It is surrounded by forests, different types of flora and fauna and rivers. Its wild life include black bears, leopards, birds and the rare red panda. Everest national park is located in the southern half of Mt. Everest and this is the place where you will never forget the fresh air. The area is filled with trees and rare species of birds. The view of Mt. Everest is so clear and the sight is truly captivating. Although agriculture is harsh around the areas of Mt. Everest, there are Sherpa's who plant crops and have built their homes around there for centuries. Namche Bazaar is a town near Mt. Everest and lively tourist spot. The residents own domestic animals such as a yak, sheep, goats, etc. Once you journey back to Kathmandu, you will see lots of farms, fields of crops and traditional life along the way. Homemade Nepali "Chai" or tea is found in many small restaurants along the way everywhere. Terai or plain of Nepal is rich in agricultural produces. Smaller traditional Nepali homes made of mud and straw roofs are seen. Terrace farming is also done because of many hills and was used centuries ago because water supply was easier than on plains. Lakes are also plentiful all over Nepal. Pokhara city has several crystal lakes

and is a great tourist destination and vacation spot. This tourist city is filled with boaters, restaurants, parks and a temple in the middle of the lake. I used to visit this beautiful valley almost every fall or winter to visit my grandma. I loved going there because it was more relaxing than Kathmandu city. I used to enjoy my grandma's homemade cooking. Boating was a favorite spot of my family. We would rent a boat or hire someone and go to the temple in the middle.

Joint family system is still prevalent in the rural areas. The children take it pride to serve their parents and grand parents. Before the recent political instability, Nepal was really a heaven on earth. It was a must visit place for any tourists. A visitor finds not enough time to finish the exploring vaturein this popular tourist destination in Asia. The age old culture brings happiness to every ethnic background. I pray for a lasting peace and political stability after the forthcoming election and hope to go back someday to revive the happy memories of my childhood in Nepal. The taste of food, music, scenery, festivals and peaceful environment in my mind cannot be compared to any other places in the world.

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## "के हुने हो"

अमीता अधिकारी



जिन्दगी एउटा मरुभूमिको यात्रा हो भन्दा फरक नपर्ला । त्यसो त जीन्दगीको परिभाषा व्यक्ति पिच्छे भिन्दा भिन्दै हुन्छ । किनकी प्रत्येक व्यक्तिले जीन्दगीलाई आफूले जे भोग्यो त्यही अनुरूप परिभाषित गर्छन् । मलाई भने भवसागर रूपी यो जीन्दगीको यात्रा गर्दा गर्दै वाक्क र दिक्क लागिस्को एउटा साथीले सोध्नुभयो किन र ? के भयो रु अब म उहाँलाई के जवाफ दिऊँ सबैलाई थाहा भएकै कुरा हो । देशको कुरा भिन्न लागे कतिले देश भक्तिले छोएको भन्छन । केही होइन चारैतिरको ताल-भाल देखि दिक्क लागेको भनेर टारिदिए । तपाईं आफै भन्नोस् के मैले देशको परिस्थिति देखेर वाक्क भएको भन्दा पत्याउथे त ? कतिले समाज सुधारक बन्न खोजेको भन्ने सोचेर उल्टो कुरा काट्दै बस्थे । तर मलाई साँच्चै पिरालेको छ यहाँको परिस्थितिले । अब कसरी भन्नु । हुन्छ भने सबैभन्दा पहिले यहाँ लागेको महारोगको गाथा सुनौं । सुरूवात गरौं निम्न स्तरको कर्मचारीबाट । तपाईं केही काम लिएर जानुस् उनीहरू भन्छन भोली गरौंला । यो महारोगले उनीहरू भन्छन भोली गरौंला । यो महारोगले उनीहरू यसरी जकडेको छ कि उसले फुत्किने बाटै देखेन । विभिष्ट स्तरका कर्मचारीलाई घुस भन्ने रोग लागेको । अनि मन्त्री वर्गको त कुरै नगरौं । मै खाऊँ मै लाऊँ, सुख सयल मै गरौं । यो विना उनीहरूको प्राणै चल्दैन भन्दा फरक नपर्ला । अब भन्नोस त यस्तो तालले देशको सुधार होला त ? हाँसो उठ्दो कुरो के छ भने बच्चा जन्मिए देखि न्वारन मा पछी गएर फाइदा हुने खालको के नाम राख्ने भनी सोच थाल्छन । बच्चै देखि (घुस्याहा) भ्रष्टाचारी, लोभी, अलिख नामले प्रतिष्ठीत भएपछि उनीहरूको प्रवृत्ति पनि त्यतैतिर किन नलागोस् । अस्ति भर्खरका कुरा हो, म एकजना मन्त्रीको छोराको पास्नीमा गएको थिएँ । उनको छोराको नाम सुनेर मत दंग परें । उनले आफनो छोराको नाम खुट्टा तान्न पो राखेका रहेछन् । यस्ता मन्त्री वर्गलाई सुहाउने भलादमी नामहरू त मैले पनि थुप्रै सुनेको थिएँ । तर यो खुट्टा तान्नेले त मेरो दिमाग नै घुमायो त्यसैले उनी भएका ठाउँमा गएर सोध्न पुगें । उनी भन्छन् "हेनोस आफू पर्यो मन्त्री, आफूलाई अरूले पदबाट हटाउने षडयन्त्र रच थाले र आफू माथी चढ्न थाले भने त्यसको खुट्टा कसले तान्ने ? त्यसैले त्यस्ता व्यक्तिहरूको पछी खुट्टा तान्ने काम यसले गरौस् भन्ने सोचेर मैले उसको नाम खुट्टातान् राखेको हुँ ।" यो कुरा सुनेर म त छक्क र दिक्क परें । अब हेनोस त भूडी भर मन्त्रीको खुट्टातान्न छोरा भएपछी देशको पनि खुट्टा नभाषिएर के हुन्छ त ? यी नेताहरू देशको मतलबै छैन । जनसाधारणले मात्र चिन्ता गरेर के गर्ने ? तैपनि इमान्दार व्यक्ति एकजनालाई मात्र भएपनि मन्त्री मण्डलको सदस्य त बनाउँनै पर्थ्यो भन्ने सोची एउटा इमान्दार व्यक्तिलाई उठाउने प्रयत्न पनि गरेर हेरें । तर अचम्मको कुरा यो परिवर्तन हुने त्यस्तो इमान्दार व्यक्तिलाई उठाएको सत्तामा पुग्ने वित्तिकै उनले आफनो नाम इमान्दारबाट बेइमान पो राखे । अब अरूबाट आश गर्नु व्यर्थै रहेछ भन्ने सोची एउटा कृनामा बसेर उपाय सोच थालें । त्यसपछि मलाई लाग्यो कि देशको सुधार गर्ने हो भने आफै सत्तामा नभइ हुदैन । देश सुधार गर्न निस्किएको व्यक्ति देखेपछि जनाताले पनि साथ नदिने त कुरै भएन । चुनाव पनि जितियो, अनि सत्ताको विडो पनि उठाइयो । आज आफैलाई हाँसो उठ्दैछ कुर्सीको मत भनेको पनि कस्तो हुन्छ । ओठ निचरे दुध आउने दुधे वालक देखि पिण्ड खाने वृद्धसम्मलाई त्यही कुर्सी चाहिएको छ । अब अचम्मको कुरो के भयो भने कुर्सीमा बस्ने वित्तिकै मलाई पनि भित्र भित्रै काउकुती लाग्न थाल्यो । अब काउकुती कस्तो भन्नु हुन्छ भने त्यै क्या धुस्या देखेपछी लाग्ने काउकुती घुस खाऊँ खाऊँ, भूडी भरू भरू लागेर रातको निन्द्रा समेत भ्राम भएपछी भने बल्ल थाहाप्राइयो कि कुर्सीको मत भनेको कस्तो हुंदो रहेछ । किन मान्छे वेइमान हुन्छन भनेर । अब आफू त वेइमान हुनु भएन, देश सुधारन निकलेको आफै वेइमानी, घुस्याहा भएर निकलिए निमुखा जनताको के होला भनी सोची म धरतीमाताको तपस्या गर्न थाले । मेरो तर्फबाट खुसी भएर माताले "भन के बर दिउं" भने पछी मैले भने हेनोस माता यो कुसीमा बस्ने वित्तिकै मान्छेको प्रवृत्ति घुस्याहा, वेइमानी जस्तो हुंदो रहेछ । त्यसैले मलाई पनि यो रोगले ग्रस्त पार्न थाली सक्यो, मुक्ति दिलाउ भने पछि माताले एउटा रूद्राक्षको माला मेरो गलामा पहियाइ दिइन् । त्यसदिन देखीभने मलाई त्यो महारोगले छुन छाड्यो । अब मैले जस्तो अरू नेताहरूले पनि माताको तपस्या गरेर यस रोगबाट मुक्ति पाए कस्तो हुन्थ्यो । सबै यी वृत्तान्त सुनाउंदा आफू वाइयात होइन्छ । अब कसैको कुरा कसैले नै नसुन्ने रोग लागेपछी भने कसको के लाग्छ र ?

## गर्न नहुने दुइटा कामहरू

नगेन्द्र गृहस्थी

वि.सं २०४६ सालमा नेपालमा प्रजातन्त्र आयो भनेर काठमाण्डौको टुडिखेलमा ठूलो जात्रा लागेको थियो । राता-निना भण्डाहरू निकै फरफराएका थिए तर प्रजातन्त्र त आएको रहनेछ, किनकी त्यतिवेला प्रजातन्त्र आएको भए फेरि २०६३ मा अर्को संग्राम हुने थिएन, जनताहरू मनै थिएनन् । राजाका नङ्गाहरू अर्भे काटिएका रहेनछन् । जे होस हिले भए पनि प्रजातन्त्र आयो, फेरि नेपाली जनताहरू रमाएका छन् । खुशी छन् ।

तर दुःखको कुरो उताउलो ककुर सोभै नमरि भुक्न थाल्छ "भनेको जस्तो नेपालमा प्रजातन्त्र भित्रीन पाएको छैन, त्यसको दुरुपयोग हुन थाली सक्यो नेपाली जनताको साथै नबुभी, जनमतको कदर नगरी आफनो निरंकुशता नेताहरूले नेपालमा देखाउन शुरू गरे । त्यो भन्दा पहिलो कुरो यो सरकार (गिरीजा सरकार) वैधानिक छ कि छैन त्यो बुझ्न जरुरि छ । जनताले चुनेर नआइ दादा गिरी र जुलुसको भरमा आएको सरकारले अवस्थ जथाभावि नियम कानून परिवर्तन गर्न पाउनु हुदैन ।

नेपाली जनताको धार्मिक आस्था र मान्यता लत्याउदै, संविधान सभाको चुनावै नगरी नेपाल "हिन्दु अधिराज्य" हटाउनु यो सरकारको आवश्यक बाहिरको काम मात्र नभइ गुण्डागर्दि हो ।

यो २०६३ को संघर्षमा नेपाली जनताले खोजेको माग होइन । धर्म र राजनीतिलाई एउटै भांडोमा राखेर बोल्थे भने त्यहबाट आगो निस्कन सक्छ र त्यो आगोले नेपाली जनताको प्रत्येक घर डढाउन पनि सक्छ, अनि डढेको आगनमा राजाले आफनो शक्ति पुन फैलाउन सक्छन् । त्यसैले यो निर्णय गर्नु भन्दा पहिला केहि सोच्नु पर्थ्यो । नेपालका राजा ज्ञानेन्द्रसंग राक्षसी आदत भयो भन्दैमा पशुपति नाथको मन्दिरमा दिसा वस्नु जानु बुद्धिमानी ठहर्दैन । साँताको रीसले आफनो श्रीमानको कमेजमा पिसाब फेर्नु कहां सम्मको सभ्य ठहर्छ त्यो सत्तामा बस्नेहरूले बुझ्नु पर्छ । राजा ज्ञानेन्द्र निरंकुश भए, उनले नेपाली जनतालाई मुठिको माँखो संभ्रिए तरपनि आफनो परिचयलाई माटोमा धुनु हो । हिन्दु संभ्राटको नाममा राजाले गरेको दुरुपयोग सहन नसकेर नै यस्तो निर्णय गर्न बाध्य हुनु परेको भनेर नेताहरू पन्छिन खोजे पनि हतकठी लागी सकेका राजाले अवस्थ त्यसको दुरुपयोग गर्न सक्ने ताकत थिएन त्यसैले यो अपरिपक्व निर्णय हो । वास्तवमा "हिन्दु संभ्राटको" नाममा मात्र नेपालमा अधिकारको दुरुपयोग नभइ जातिवाद र ब्राह्मणवादले नराधोसंग गाजेको छ ।

जबसम्म तल्लो जात माथील्लो जात, पानी चल्ने नचल्ने भनेर राखिएका रूढीवादी सीमाहरू भत्कीदैनन् तबसम्म धार्मिक शोषण भइरहन्छन् । त्यसैले कुनै शरीर रोगी छ भने त्यसको उपचार तिर लाग्नु पर्छ न कि जिउदै मान्नु उचित निर्णय होइन ।

जथाभावि सालिकहरू ढाँदै हिँड्न अर्को नेपाली जनताले गर्न नहुने काम हो । राजा ज्ञानेन्द्र वेवकुफ निस्कीए यो दुःखको कुरो हो तर सम्पूर्ण पूर्व राजा महाराजाहरूको सालिक फोड्न पर्ने आवश्यक छैन । नारायण हिटी दरवारमा असनको साँडे बसोस वा साधारण नेपालीको छोरा तर नेपालका एकताका प्रतिक पृथ्वीनारायण शाह नै हुन । उनको शक्ति र सामर्थ्यले नै हामीहरू नेपाली भएर विश्वमा हिँड्न पाएका छौं र हाम्रो देश नेपालको सृजना उनैले गरेका हुन सम्पूर्ण नेपालीहरूले उनको कदर गर्न पर्छ । इतिहास बदल्ने हिम्मत कसैले पनि गर्नु हुदैन ।

सालिक एउटा कला हो अनि जड पदार्थ जडमा रीस पोख्नु कहां सम्म बुद्धीमान हुन्छ । त्यो नेपाली जनताले बुझ्नुपर्छ अर्को तर्फ सालिकहरू राष्ट्रिय सम्पति हुन । हामै पसिना र रगतबाट आएको करको पैसाले जडान भएका हुन त्यो नास गर्नु भनेको हामै सम्पति खोलामा बगाउनु हो । आफू शक्तिमा आउना साथै इतिहास नै धुलो पिठो बनाउन खाज्ने परम्पराबाट देशमा कलहको विजारीपण शुरू हुन जान्छ । त्यो परम्परालाई हुर्कन दिनु हुदैन ।

अचम्मको कुरो त जहानिया शासन भनेर दिनरात हामीहरू राणाहरूलाई सराउँ आएका छौं तर त्यी नै राणाहरूको सालिक काठमाण्डौको गल्ली गल्लीमा तरवार लिएर खडा छन्, त्यसमा कसैको टाउको दुखाई छैन तर साना तिना राज्यहरूलाई एकतामा बाच्ने राजा पृथ्वीनारायण शाहको मूर्ति ढाल्न यति हतार देख्दा अवस्थ कुनै भित्री तत्वले खेल खेलेको हुनुपर्छ ।

## **BE FIT IN THE USA:**

*Catherine Taylor Foster*

Have you noticed that after you arrived in the US, you gained weight and when you go back to Nepal for a visit, you lose weight? Why does this happen? In Nepal, the eating habits and foods are quite different from those in the US. For example, Nepalis eat twice a day, eat very little meat, very few sweets, very few snacks and get lots of exercise walking everywhere. In the US, we have refrigeration and supermarkets so food is always available in large quantities and variety. Also the US custom is to eat 3 times a day often with snacks in between meals and/or at bedtime. Newcomers tend to become overwhelmed with the available supply and kinds of food, are besieged with advertisements regarding foods to eat and often make food choices which they think will integrate them with the American culture but which may not be the most healthy for them. This phenomenon called “dietary assimilation” occurs with many immigrant groups when they come to America. (A study of “dietary assimilation” by Dr. Ilana Redstone Akresh, a sociologist at the University of Illinois, was described in a “Chicago Tribune” page 1 article on June 26, 2006.) When you are buying foods or selecting foods to cook, it is very important to look at the food packages where you will usually find a list of the nutrients in the food. Pay particular attention to the calories, carbohydrates, saturated fat and sodium amounts contained in each food. Also, note the listed serving size. A package of cookies might list the calories as 140 but that is for a serving size of 1 cookie not the whole package. Here is a comparison of some of the nutrients in a typical Nepali meal and a common American fast food meal. The Nepali meal of 1/2cup lentils (dhal), 1cup rice (bhat), 1/2cup cauliflower (kauli) and 1/2cup spinach (saag) would contain 449 calories, 90.7 grams of carbohydrates, a trace of saturated fat, and 144 milligrams of sodium (salt). Compare that with the common McDonalds lunch of a Big Mac, small French fries and a medium Coca Cola which contain 1020 calories, 135 grams of carbohydrates, 12.5 grams of saturated fat, and 1165 milligrams of sodium. Between meal snacks are very common in America. A Hershey candy bar with almonds (1.45 ounces) contains 230 calories, 22 grams of

carbohydrates, 6 grams of saturated fat and 30 milligrams of sodium. Three Oreo cookies contain 160 calories, 25 grams of carbohydrates, 2 grams of saturated fat and 190 milligrams of sodium. Better snack choices would be raisins (1 1/2 ounces) which contain 130 calories, 33 grams of carbohydrates, 0 grams of saturated fat and 10 milligrams of sodium or an apple which contains 81 calories, 21.1 grams of carbohydrates, a trace of saturated fat and 1 milligram of sodium. A calorie is a measurement of energy in food and energy that the body uses. One gram of carbohydrate yields 4 calories and 1 gram of fat yields 9 calories. In order for your body weight to remain constant, you need to consume approximately the same number of calories that you expend in your daily exercise. If you consume more than you expend, you will gain weight. Conversely, if you consume fewer calories than you expend, you will lose weight. It takes a deficit of 3500 calories to lose 1 pound of weight. In addition to monitoring your calorie intake, it is important to good health to not take in excessive amounts of carbohydrates (yields excess calories), saturated fats (which can form obstructions in your blood vessels and lead to strokes), and sodium (promotes fluid retention in the body and increases the blood pressure). In order for you to maintain your health, it is important for you to balance your food intake with your exercise. Walking is the best exercise: you don't need to join a gym, you don't need special equipment and walking to your destination might even save you some money instead of taking a bus or taxi. Walking is easier on your hips and knees than running or jogging. You don't need to walk for long periods of time in order to reap its benefits. Walking for 10 to 20 minutes twice a day is very good for everyone's general health. Continuing to include some very nutritious Nepali foods and making careful choices of American foods in your diet combined with walking or other exercise will keep you healthy and fit and able to enjoy your life and work in the United States of America.

Catherine Taylor Foster, Ph.D., R.N.  
Chicago Nepali Pariwar Executive Committee  
Peace Corps Volunteer Nepal 1996-98

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## SOLDIERS AT WAR

Adarsha Malla, Dublin, GA

Soldiers at War should be respected  
Because they are fighting  
For your rights, your freedoms and those who you  
have elected.

They all work hard  
If at war or at home  
Soldiers, reserves, doctors too.

So keep them in your prayers no matter who you  
are

And respect them and wish upon a star  
That they will come home  
Safe and sound and unharmed.

---

## TIME MACHINE

Adarsha Malla, Dublin, GA

A few years ago my pet duck and I were walking in my grandfather's field. Then we saw some smokes rising from a spot about 1000 feet away. My pet duck said, "I will go see what it is". So he flew and came back and said that there was a car with lots of bulbs and lights. He said it was safe so we walked over there gingerly.

When we got there, after what I saw I was like dang! It was a black Lamborghini with red flames and spinners!! When I opened the door it was amazing! The door was the kinds that come out and flip up. When I got in the driver's seat, my pet duck and I realized this wasn't any regular Lamborghini. It had three 25" flat screens, surround sound, a Wii, a PS3, and a map of the world, so I clicked on Hawaii. Then a computerized voice said destination Hawaii.

Then Bang! The next thing you knew we were on the shores of Hawaii!! Well my pet duck and I were certainly excited! When we tried to get some fries and take a walk on the beach, people were staring at

us like we were crazy. I wondered why they did that. One person pointed and ran. Then I looked and I knew why all those people were looking at us crazy. Well, wouldn't you if someday you were sitting on the beach relaxing and playing in the water and bang! A Lamborghini ended up right in front of you and one person and a duck hopped out??!! I know I would, so I ran back and looked to see what I could do. I found a button that said invisibility so I pressed it and it vanished! Then the people stopped staring and went back to their ordinary life. So my duck and me rented a speedboat and I let my duck drive a little. He was almost as good as me!! But, people started really getting scared so I went back to driving.

After a long day my duck and I set off for the Lamborghini, since both of us wanting to go back to home, sweet home. So we headed back for the car. Then I realized the car was still on invisibility! We couldn't find the car!!! I went frantic running everywhere and then again before you knew it my duck and me had run Splat into the car. I pressed all the buttons I could feel then the car came back as I sat and my duck flew in. We started the car and pressed Georgia then Dublin and then Bang! We were back home. I drove to the woods and hid the car there and went home to sleep. My duck wanted to go to the lake to flirt with the swans, but I told him I would take him to the lake tomorrow. So, when I got home I tried to tell my mom about my trip, but she thinks I watch too much TV!

Join Adarsha and his pet duck next time on their next crazy adventure.

*Note: Adarsha is currently a 7<sup>th</sup> grader and 12 years old. He wrote this adventure when he was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade.*

## BUDDHIST MISSION VISITS AMERICA BEFORE COLUMBUS

*Prof. V.G. Nair*

The early centuries of the Christian era were marked by intensive Buddhist missionary activity beyond the borders of India, Continuing the tradition of Ashokan missionaries, Buddhist monks from Ceylon, South India, particularly Kanchipuram and Central and Northern India were engaged in the early centuries of the Christian era in propagating the teachings of the Buddha in distant lands like China, Japan, Tibet, Mongolia, Burma and other countries. These monks carried with them images and sacred relics and also manuscripts of Buddhist scriptures.

In many cases they mastered the languages of the countries they visited and translated many Buddhist texts from Pali and Sanskrit into those languages. In this way Buddhist literature was translated into many Asian languages. The trials, tribulations and exploits of these pioneer Buddhist missionaries have been recorded in inscriptions and in the literature of the countries where they preached. Their missions abroad have left their imprint on the culture of the lands they lived in.

Although India is the birth-place of Buddhism and we have a vast Buddhist literature accumulated through centuries and handed down to us, we do not find in it any allusion to Buddhist missionary activities in lands beyond the Atlantic and the Pacific. But it seems that Buddhist monks visited also the Pacific Islands and America.

Chaman Lan and some American scholars hold that it was not Columbus who discovered America but Hindu immigrants from India. This ingenious theory is based on certain traditions prevalent in Central America and Mexico. But this history lacks support of literary evidence. We have, however at least one recorded reference in the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. and introduced Buddhism among the people there.

**HUI SHEN'S MISSION:** On the other hand, two American scholars and two Canadian scholars have brought to light the activities of a Buddhist mission to Central America and Mexico during the 5<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. The findings of these scholars are based not only on Chinese annals, but also on the traditions and religious customs existing in Central America and Mexico. It is a thrilling story: it adds another chapter to the history of Buddhism and ancient Indo-American cultural relations.

According to Prof. John Fryer of the University of California, a Buddhist monk called HUI SHEN in Chinese and four other priests who were originally natives of Kabul in Afghanistan visited Central America and Mexico in 458 A.D. for the purpose of preaching the message of the Buddha. The party split into two and separately reached Central America where they carried on their missionary activities for more than 40 years. Hui Shen, the leader or one of the members of the party returned to China in 499 A.D. traveling alone after a lapse of 40 years.

It is not known whether the party traveled from Kabul to China overland and to Central America by sea or came to one of the Indian ports from Kabul and thence set sail for the Pacific coast. It is presumed that the party first went to China from where they sailed to Central America. At that period, China was a noted centre of Buddhist missionary activities in Asia. Whatever might have been the route followed by the party, Hui Shen, on his return journey arrived at Kih-chow, the capital of Tsi dynasty, situated on the Yangtse. The traveller waited for three years for an audience with Emperor to report on his activities in Central America but he was unable to meet the Emperor owing to civil war then prevalent in the country. But in 502 A.D. Hui Shen met Emperor Wu Ti of the new Liang dynasty and told him all about his Buddhist mission to Central America.

**NARRATIVE RECORDED:** It appears from Chinese annals that Hui Shen was not a Chinese national and spoke only imperfect Chinese, and that Emperor Wu Ti treated him like an envoy from Central America apparently because of his alien nationality. Hui Shen presented the Emperor with curious articles, which he had brought, from Central America and Mexico. Wu Ti, who was a pious Buddhist and a patron of Buddhism, was much impressed with the narrative of Hui Shen and deputed one of the feudal lords, Yu Kei, to interrogate Hui Shen for details about his mission to America and to make a complete record of his activities in the strange country. This was accordingly done and Hui Shen's narrative was included in the Imperial archives of the Liang dynasty and handed down to us with the full authority of the celebrated Chinese historian Ma Tuan-lin.

In the course of his statement to the feudal lord Yu Kei, Hui Shen stated that a party of five Buddhist monks including him self went to America during the reign of Emperor Ta Ming of the Sung dynasty in or about 458 A.D. They carried with them images and sacred texts on Buddhism. The message of the Buddha was unknown in America. The mission was successful and they were able to ordain monks among the people. The party traveled along the Kurile and Aleutian Islands to Alaska. They started from Kamchatka known to the Chinese in those days. Hui Shen gave a vivid description of that country known in the Far East in Fusan, the customs and manners of the people and said that the country was 2,000 miles to 6,500 miles to the east of Kamchatka and also due east from China. The party apparently met the voyage in an open boat or canoe.

After a lapse of nearly 40 years the people persecuted Hui Shen, for some unknown reason, and when his life was threatened, he disappeared from the country. But he left some inscriptions on a rock. At Magdalena in Mexico, there is a statue erected to his memory with his name inscribed on it. There is evidence in Central America, both traditional and archeological to prove that remaining members of the party, who followed a different route, also reached Central America and carried on their activities there. Hui Shen returned to China alone and nothing was known about the remaining members of the mission.

This evidence from Chinese Buddhist literature supported by traditional customs, rites and objects of antiquity found in Central America extending all the way down to the Pacific coast from Alaska to Mexico and also in other localities lying inland, betrays Buddhist influence.

**RELIGIOUS CUSTOMS:** Referring to the wide prevalence of Indian cultural influence in Central America and Mexico, Professor John Fryer says:

The religious customs and beliefs of the nations of Mexico, Yucatan and Central America, their architecture, their calendar, their arts and many other things which were found by the Spaniards when they conquered America exhibit the most surprising coincidences with the details of Asiatic beliefs and Asiatic civilization. So much is this the case that those independent observers who know nothing of the story of Hui Shen are convinced that there must have some kind of communication between America and Asia since the beginning of the Christian era.

Edward P. Vining of San Francisco, who made a study of the subject, has pointed out thirty five remarkable coincidences to prove the existence of Buddhism and Indian culture in Central America and Mexico in the early centuries of the Christian era. In his opinion, such coincidences clearly go to prove that both Hindu and Buddhist religions had been implanted in Central America long before the Spaniards arrived there.

Another valuable piece of information regarding Hui Shen and his party comes from two Canadian scholars. Prof. John Murray Gibbon and Tom Mac-Innes have given the credit of the discovery of America to Hui Shen. According to them, Hui Shen crossed the Pacific in a Chinese junk. He reached Vancouver about 499 A.D. Professor Gibbon quotes a geographer of the time of George III who studied the problem of Chinese contribution to Trans-Pacific voyage. Mac-Innes say that Hui Shen passed the winter in the Island of Nootka Vancouver, where he left three monks to propagate Buddhism. Chinese coins of the Tsin dynasty were discovered there in 1876. Remains of Buddhist temples were discovered also in Mexico, in the state of Samoa on the Pacific coast and near the town of Uris in the same State, with a statue of the Buddha with Chinese inscriptions.

The facts that Hui Shen and his party came from Kabul and that he spoke imperfect Chinese suggest that he might have been either an Indian monk or a native of Kabul which formed part of India in those days. Kabul, which was also known as Cophen Kiplin, Kandahar or Balk was in Gandhara now merged in Afghanistan and was a centre of Buddhist activities. A famous monk of Kabul who went to China during the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. and translated many Buddhist texts into Chinese was Sanghadeva. Although Hui Shen's Chinese name is now known to us it is very possible that he was an Indian either from India or Kabul./.

***THE REALIST BUDDHIST, MALAYSIA, 1989***

***Thanks Quang Nhu Lydia Trong so much for your kindness in typing this article***

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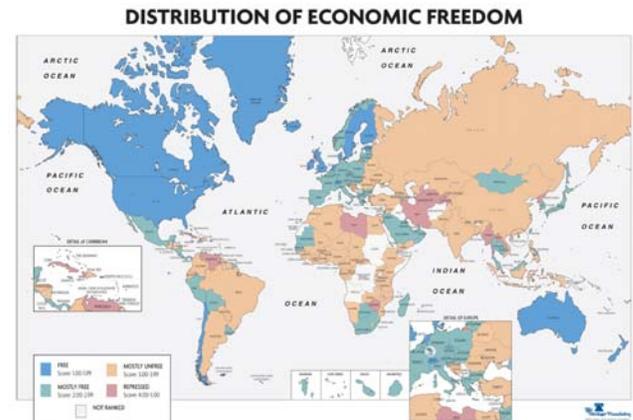
# Economic Freedom, Corruption, and Threatened Species

Ram Pandit

Economic freedom and corruption have economy wide impacts in a nation's growth including its environmental performance. Scholars have established a chain relationship between economic freedom and/or corruption to environmental performance in a country through per capita income: (1) more economic freedom and/or less corruption in government results higher per capita income in a country, and (2) increased per capita income increases the environmental degradation initially, which starts diminishing continuously after a certain income threshold is reached in that country.

Economic freedom (Figure 1) and corruption (Figure 2) across the countries have been linked to different forms of environmental degradation such as - deforestation, air pollution, water pollution and the results suggest that increased economic freedom or decreased corruption has positive effect in minimizing these environmental harms. Considering threatened species as a form of environmental degradation, this article explores the link between economic freedom and corruption with 5 groups of such species – birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and plants across 152 countries and aims to draw some implications for Nepalese context.

Percentage of threatened species in each country is analyzed to explore the effect of human population density, distribution, economic freedom, and corruption for each species group. A methodological concern which is referred as spill-over effect is considered in the analysis. This means that more economic freedom or corruption in a country could reduce or increase number of threatened species in neighboring countries more visibly than distant countries. Similarly, factors that cause species to be threatened, such as human population density and distribution, impacts species vulnerability across the border.



The cross-border effect occurs in two ways: species moves across the border because they don't care political boundaries and secondly, human activities in one side of the border impact species on the other end as well. For example, increased poaching on one side of the border directly impacts the same species in the neighboring countries. The economic freedom and corruption in a country are measured in index, where economic freedom ranges from 1 (free) to 5 (repressed) and corruption ranges from 0 (most corrupt) to 10 (least corrupt).

The results indicate that except for plants, there is a spill-over effect in the number of threatened species among countries. For example, if a higher number of mammals are threatened in Nepal there are higher numbers of mammals threatened in its neighboring countries or vice versa. In general, the number of threatened species in each country is influenced by the extent of threatened species of that group and its other determinants operating in neighboring countries. Therefore, empirical works need to control spill-over effect in cross-country comparison of environmental performance. The idea called smart-growth development, which is based on the belief that concentrating human population in few places or cities has beneficial ecological performance appeared true only for amphibians but not for others based on this

analysis. Similarly, it has been observed that threatened species are significantly higher in island countries than in mainland countries.

About the impact of economic freedom and corruption on threatened species, it is found that economic freedom has a significant direct (negative) effect on number of threatened mammals and plants in a country. If a country is not economically open or is ruled by centralized economy, more mammals and plants are threatened there. As the country become economically free, the number of threatened mammals and plants decline. This suggest that improved economic freedom increases the number of threatened species up to a certain threshold level of freedom and beyond that increase in economic freedom is associated with fewer number of threatened species for mammals and plants. The impact of corruption on threatened species is different than that of economic freedom. Increased corruption in a country is associated with higher number of threatened birds and reptiles but not with mammals, amphibians, and plants.

According to 2006 IUCN Red List of Threatened Species Nepal has 32 mammals, 34 birds, 9 reptiles, 3 amphibians, and 7 plants as threatened. To save these species from extinction Nepal has implemented different conservation programs including expansion of protected areas, species awareness

campaign, participatory conservation planning, and law enforcement. The trans-boundary approach of protected area system and the buffer zone concept of participatory conservation planning are some good practices that we need to promote in order to effectively protect threatened species from spill-over threats. According to Heritage Foundation and Transparency International, Nepal ranked 121 out of 163 countries evaluated for economic freedom and corruption. The economic freedom and corruption indices for Nepal are respectively 3.53 and 2.5 at par with Rwanda for both economic freedom and corruption. It suggests that Nepal has 54% freedom for economic activities but only 25% freedom from corruption. This scenario of limited economic freedom and wide spread corruption in the government has been a major obstacle in Nepal’s economic growth since long. Even in the context of threatened species conservation, one can suspect based on the precedence that the limited economic freedom and chronic corruption have negative impacts. Poaching and smuggling related stories revealed in national media and the corruption within the government beaurocracy are the supportive measures for such a suspicion. Regardless of the suspension, professional ethic, increased economic freedom, and least corruption in the government will be beneficial in minimizing number of threatened animal and plant species in Nepal.



CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX 2005

www.transparency.org

Ram Pandit

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Nepal Youth Association of Atlanta

Dear NAsEA/ANMA members,

As a sister organization and a good neighbor, Nepal Youth Association of Atlanta would like to wish you all the best and never ending prosperity in every steps of yours. NYAA also wishes best of luck to all the candidates of up coming election.

Our hats off to the hard working organizing team and the convention committee for making it happen.

Sincerely,

Nepal Youth Association of Atlanta

Nyaa07@gmail.com

[www.nepalyouth.org](http://www.nepalyouth.org)

**678-768-7625**

## **“LITTLE LIVES” IMPACTED THROUGH “TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY”.**

*Samir Upadhyay*

My name is Samir Upadhyay and I visited an elementary school in Bhaktapur on June 1st 2007. The school's principal directed me to Bhaktapur over the phone. I drove into the Bhaktapur Industrial Area compound where Ms. Principal stood at the entrance of a gulley waiting for my arrival. She greeted me with a beautiful smile as I exited the car. I returned the gesture. I followed her through the gulley to a small gate which I soon realized was the entrance to the school.

As I walked down a path along the wall, I started hearing children studying or otherwise making noises. Directly in front of me was a playing field and to my right were classrooms full of children of varying ages. I easily lost interest in seeing anymore of the playing field and I wanted to observe children in their classrooms. As I approached a classroom, the teacher, with a smile, invited me in. There they were, little kindergarteners some screaming and others reading. Although I don't remember my kindergarten years but I imagine it would have been something like what I was experiencing. In one voice, they greeted me with a “Good Morning, Sir”. Wow, where can you go in the US and experience that? Teacher explained to me that her classroom had the youngest members of the school. It was a moment I wanted to capture with my camera and so I did. I visited all other classrooms in the next 15 minutes. Of course I have pictures to prove it.

I later sat with the principal and asked her many questions to learn more about the school. I began with a question about total school enrollment for 2006 and 2007.

Principal: We currently have a total of 73 students enrolled this year which is 15 less than last year.

Me: How many staff / faculty members do you currently have?

Principal: 10

Me: What grades do you teach?

Principal: KG through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

Me: What is the mission of this school?

Principal: We are strategically located within the compounds of Bhaktapur Industrial Area so we can serve the workers that live and work within this compound. Most blue collar workers do not earn enough to afford an elementary school education for their children. Government schools do not provide elementary school education. Most of them wait until their children

are eligible to enroll in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade at a government school. This is where our efforts count immensely. We ask these parents to enroll their children in our school for a very small fee which is currently 1/5<sup>th</sup> of what they can expect to pay at other schools.

Me(I was impressed): How do you plan to use the computers and a laser printer donated by NASEA?

Principal: With thanks to all good hearted people of NASEA, we are very pleased to have these two computers for our students to use as a learning tool. We have hired a computer instructor. He has scheduled 2 classes per week to train our students on how to use a computer. We hope to gradually improve our student's computer skills over the next few months and years. Thank you!

Me: Do you have any other immediate needs?

Principal: Yes, we have several of them. Among many, we want to build a library for our students. Our revenue is limited therefore our resources are constraint. Your help will go a long way in making this project come true.

Me: Thank you for spending time with me and showing me around your school.

Principal: Thank you for visiting us.

With efforts that began within the NASEA community, we have delivered our promise to Laxminath School in Bhaktapur, Nepal. via transfer of technology project, NASEA committed two computers to Laxminath School in 2006. While weighing different options on how to deliver these equipment, I planned a personal trip to Nepal in May 2007. Soon after my decision to visit Nepal, Dr. Narayan Rajbhandari, NASEA's President, recommended that I purchase those equipment while I was in Nepal. This would avoid heavy shipping charges from the US. On my arrival in Kathmandu, I shopped around and found a store that would sell us what we wanted to donate and stay within our budget. I contacted the school and solicited their opinion on type of computer they wanted. When everything was said and done, on behalf of NASEA, I purchased two brand new computers and a brand new laser printer. The school arranged to pickup the computers.

That was one of the things we accomplished this year. I hope we don't stop here. I saw how real lives are impacted through transfer of technology. A small investment has impacted many little lives. Does it not make sense to continue these projects at other schools within under resourced communities?

~ “No one can do everything but everyone can do something.”

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## Kapil: An Exceptional Artist

*Suraj Raj Bista*

Inspired by Jackson Pollock and Pablo Picasso's art, Kapil Mani Dixit has an abundant passion for abstract painting. His recent art exhibition at ANA convention, Los Angeles was a great success, thanks to his abstract art on Hindu god Ganesh. Kapil put together 40 different abstract arts of Ganesh at the exhibition. The abstractness of a popular Hindu image pulled many people towards his exhibition in the LA convention. To a layman, his paintings could be confusing at first sight; but when observed carefully, the painting becomes lively. The mixture of vivid colors, media and texture produces a unique work of art, which keeps everyone amazed

However, Mr. Dixit's primary interest is figure drawing. Unlike traditional Nepali landscapes and deities, he is more inclined towards depicting the expressions and emotions of people. To show the best of his works, he has organized an exhibition in Nepal on August 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 at Holi Gallery, Lazimpat. The exhibition exhibits 20 different figure drawings. It is yet to be seen how it will be taken by the people in Nepal, which will be one of its first kind.

If you want to explore his artwork then I would suggest you to visit [www.kapildixit.com](http://www.kapildixit.com). There is yet to see of him.....



Here is one of the paintings I liked the most, since it was painted on a map of ancient Greece. When inquired about using a map as a canvas, Mr. Dixit said that he likes using different media on his paintings, and not just on a plain paper. One of the things he is affectionate is creating collage on his canvas by pasting papers with words that correlates his life and environment.



## THE VALUE OF LEARNING OUR OWN NATIVE LANGUAGES IN THE USA

*Dr. Harihar P. Bhattarai*

Social norms, values, and attitudes are coins that do not readily melt. Persistent Nepali attitudes toward the English language is an example of this maxim. Almost all parents of Nepali origin are first generation Nepalis in the USA, and they have been struggling to learn good English since their school days in Nepal. Since command in the English language is the key to the achievement of higher academic degrees and prestigious professions, one of the dreams of Nepali parents is to see their children speaking English as fluently and efficiently as other American children do. Some even motivate their children to speak only English and discourage or even humiliate their children when they try to speak their own native languages such as Nepali, Newari, Tamangi, Maithili, and so on. However, recent studies on language learning assert that children become academically more successful and socially more proficient when they learn more than one language. Here are some thoughts regarding the benefits of learning our own native languages in the USA.

1. It's undoubtedly true that there are numerous benefits for children who learn a foreign language along with their native language. There are no negative consequences of children expanding their knowledge of language. A common argument against children learning more than one language is that they have limited capacity to learn and, hence, that that capacity should not be occupied learning various languages. However, the human brain has tremendous potential to learn. Even an acclaimed scholar does not need to use more than 10% of his or her brain capacity. Moreover, it may appear that adding another class to coursework is overwhelming, but it actually improves the critical skills of our children, which is essential for excellence in education. It is easier to learn a foreign language along with one's native

language at a young age. Learning languages helps to increase listening ability, memory, children's creativity and critical thinking.

2. While learning their parents' native languages, our children will also gain an understanding of our cultures. Every language carries its own worldview. Some scholars hypothesize that perception of time, space, and matter are conditioned by the structure of a language. For example, words such as *jutho* (Nepali), *chokho* (Nepali), *hisi* (Newari), *binabi* (Newari) can not be expressed or translated as polluted, pure, beauty, and excuse me into English. Hence, children who speak and understand their own languages possess an additional means of considering and experiencing their surroundings. This language skill can be a bridge to connect them to Nepal and the key to a richer personal and cultural life.

3. Our languages help us to maintain our identity. Even after assimilating into the American culture we carry a "Nepali origin" tag. Nepali languages are vehicles to carry our norms and values. The pride and empowerment of the Nepali community relies on its languages. For example, their skills in Nepali native languages is an advantage in competitive American society, especially in the job markets related to Nepal and developing countries.

4. The benefits go beyond Nepal and Nepali culture. People who speak and understand more than one language often find it easier to benefit fully from travel and interactions with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Our children will be able to understand, respect and develop relationships with people from different cultures and backgrounds, and enjoy a wide variety of literature, music, theatre, art, and sports. They will be the true citizens of the globe in this era of globalization.

5. If we are really concerned about their English language performance then there is a fact worth noticing. Students with second language skills are likely to improve their communication skills in English, and develop a larger English vocabulary and a better understanding of the structure and grammatical rules of the English language. Also, learning a second language provides a solid foundation for learning other languages in the future.

Nepali languages are our prestigious heritage passed down from generation to generation. Once the lineage is broken we lose them forever. It is our duty to expose our children to our native languages when they are babies. We need to motivate them to speak and write in their kindergarten and elementary school years— when their brains want to learn. It is easier to learn a language at a younger age than when an individual is closer to adulthood. Passing on our languages is an imperative task. If we fail to perform our responsibilities, the day may not be far when a non-Nepali will be needed to teach our children to speak Nepali languages.

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## Where is Mandate?

*Tilak B. Shrestha, Ph.D.*

It is sad to watch political events and erosion of hard earned democracy in Nepal. It seems our politicians are agreeing to every demand of all the violent groups. However, where is the people's mandate to do just that? Democracy means each political issue must be first peacefully and openly discussed, people's mandate must be honored, and violence must not be allowed to dictate.

Nepal is to be divided and made federal. Where are discussions and the mandate?

The only Hindu country Nepal is declared secular. Where are discussions and the mandate?

Maoists are inducted into parliament. Is there no difference between bullets and ballots?

The issue is not which opinion you hold. But capitulating to violence and undemocratic way is. There must be rational and peaceful discussions on pros and cons of any policy, and its long term effects to all. All the views and interests must be set openly. And people should make collective decision through some kind of peaceful democratic system. The actual modality may be suited to the ground condition. A decision without public debate and people's mandate is not acceptable. Democracy also means not bowing to terror and violence. Compromising with violence in the name of peace does not solve the problem, let alone bring peace. It is like appeasing a wild tiger with a few morsels of meat. It will come for more and more. Then hyenas and lions will also demand their share. Violence leads civic society to totally different political trajectory. The core problem will be obfuscated and the outcome will be undesirable for both parties, let alone for whole nation. Because, the motivating factor will no more be inclusive nationalism, but fear and anger.

We must develop the core constituency of peaceful hard working citizens as the back bone of our nation. Let us respect the voice of the silent majority. Yes, let us think of people who do not do 'Chakka jam', but stuck in 'Chakka jam.' Are their silent voices to be

drowned by violence? The first job of any government is security of the nation. The second job is the law and order in the country, where peaceful deliberation and livelihood can take place. How appeasing every violent group will bring peace and prosperity? It will make Nepal only another Afghanistan and Somalia. What happened to our legendary brave army? Are they men or mice?

What about the interests of excluded minorities? Yes, the opinion and interests of minorities must be respected. However, we must have correct identifications and solutions of the problem. For example, recently the issue of Madheshi and Pahadi has been raised, as if our only problem is a struggle between Pahadi and Madheshi people. In which year Madhesh invaded Pahad or vice versa? How about between 'Nak chhuche' vs. 'Nak thepche' people? This is what many Rais, Gurungs, Tamangs etc. like to believe. How about high caste and Dalits within Terai? Men and women? Maithili Bahuns and Kumai Bahuns? The problem is the feudal system, where Shah, Pandey, Thapa, Rana, Jamindar, Jimuwal lords doling out to individuals for their loyalties and services; and the evolution of elite in the capital, and their culture defining national norm. The formation of elite is based upon the proximity to the power center, not ethnicity based.

Since we can take 1990 as the watershed when the feudal system is superseded by the democratic system, our political process must also reflect the paradigm shift. That is the analysis of our problems must be by looking at people as citizens with different attributes, not a faceless member of a subgroup. For example: Person 'A' - madheshi, male, dalit, Bhojpuri language. Person 'B' - Gurung, female, educated, Gurung language. Person 'C' - Newar, male, farmer, Nepal bhasha. Person 'D' - Bahun, female, educated, Nepali language. Then determine which sub groups and attributes are doing better and worst. Then identify the reasons. If we have the facts correctly the solutions also would become obvious.

What about the historical injustices? There are a few factors we must be clear about. First, almost all subgroups feel they are exploited. To put it only as a single dichotomy, for example Pahadi vs. Madheshi, is not correct. All the sources of friction must be addressed. That is, we also must address the issues of 'Nak chhuche vs. Nak thepche' in hills and 'High caste vs. Dalit' in Madhesh. The 'strategy' must be designed to uplift bottom groups, i.e. it must not be about group retribution. A recorded injustice must be taken as a legal issue, not political. The strategy must have robust political support, i.e. the majority of citizens should agree to it. The application of the national resource to address such inequities must be targeted and cost effective, i.e. a Madheshi Jamindar should not benefit from by pointing to the plight of a Dalit woman in Terai. It must be scientific and free from ideological prejudice, i.e. a male, Yadav, school teacher, Maithili speaker and living in Janakpur must be exactly that - a Yadav, a male, a school teacher, a Maithili speaker, and from Janakpur; not a bourgeois or a capitalist roader. Societal problems like caste and ethnicity, and low brow jokes like 'Pakhe, Madhise, Kathe, Dhero' must be addressed through education, cultural inclusiveness and social leaderships, i.e. it must not be made national political issues.

Maoists are proposing the ethnic division of Nepal, as if it will solve our problems. And a few one book intellectuals have subscribed into it. This is nothing but hypocrisy in their lust for power. How ethnicity fits in their 'proletariat vs. capitalist class struggle' model? It is nothing more than a ploy to use 'Janajatis' to weaken the democratically elected government. Let us look at the facts in the ground. How many 'Janajatis' died in the struggle vs. so called high caste? How many corrupt ministers, officers, and royalties were brought to Maoists justice? Which area is economically devastated? We really need to think through the consequences of such ethnic based division. It will benefit neither 'Janajatis', nor Nepal. We, especially 'Janajatis,' will be left with bigger problem. It will benefit only a few local petty chiefs. Do you really think Maoists believe in decentralization, democratic decision making, respect for cultural

differences, and real economic development? Look around the world for facts and think again.

In my opinion all these problems of exclusion and pockets of under-developments must be addressed keeping in view: 1. It must be within the frame work of progress of all the subgroups in Nepal. We must do it by soul searching the future vision of Nepal. 2. And it must not fossilize the issue of ethnic tensions for future generation.

Perhaps it can be addressed through following techniques:

1. Political technique of decentralization by geographic grouping, not by ethnic division. We have more than 100 ethnic groups. Will a federation of 100 plus states develop Nepal? How about Damai group living within the proposed Magarat state? Will we have a Damai substate within Magarat state, within Nepal? How about another Damai substate in another proposed Limbuwan state? How about a Damai state where all the Magaras, Limbus, Chhetris, Bahuns, Madheshis and Newars living? Let us think through the ethnic tensions, resource allocations, riparian rights, power devolution, economy of state, leadership formation and all the attendant issues. The ethnic division is the biggest blunder we will be committing as a nation.

2. Bolstering the concept of 'unity in diversity' by cultural zoning, grouped by ethnicity, language etc.

3. Targeted development strategy by allocating resource in promoting jobs and education to the bottom sub-groups. The definition of marginalization must be family income and education, not ethnicity.

4. Promoting inclusion by political participation of all the subgroups. All the political parties must be sensitive to ethnic interests. However, it is not a good idea to have political parties based on ethnicity. It can be done by promoting caucuses of different issues within all the political parties including ethnicity and language. Let the parties compete in national inclusiveness. Nepal is a conglomerate of many ethnic groups. The perceived exclusiveness of any party will render it automatically bankrupt. The goal has to be the inculcation of national statesmen, not petty ethnic

leaders. It will have same desired effect without developing unnecessary division and tensions.

5. Let us consider two more related issues: economy and integrity. Most of our current problems are due to the slow economic growth and the perceived lack of integrity in our leaders. The resultant hopelessness and frustration have created pockets of anger and revolts. Since we are between two giants India and China, we must calibrate our economic policies with their. One economic model both countries have successfully applied is to invite foreign investments and industrialization using local disciplined labor. We must learn it and replicate in Nepal. The jobs and economic progress will take care of most of the frustrations. In theory the political parties are supposed to present their economic and social vision, and compete for people's mandate. However, in Nepal such paradigm is secondary. The primary problem is the corruption in the political leadership. Therefore our civic body must air this issue in all the public forums and demand integrity from our politicians. The integrity

must be the first sacrosanct demand to be followed by other political issues.

Let us stand up and refuse any system thrust upon us through violence. Let us remember all the blood split for democracy. We must demand peaceful discussion and referendum on any of the important national issues including: 1. federal system vs. united Nepal, 2. Hindu rastra vs. secular state, and 3. joining parliament through violence. Last but not least, let us remember who are responsible for dividing our nation apart, and express our hurt silence through our donation and the vote.

Virtue defended, will defend. "Dharmo raxati, raxate."

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# Education Assistance Program

*Prakash B. Malla, Ph.D., Dublin, Georgia*

## BACKGROUND

Do you know only 49% of the people in Nepal are literate (UNESCO, 2004)? It is even more disturbing and saddening to learn that only about 1 in 3 Nepalese women can read or write. *UNESCO defines a literate person for Nepal as a person who is able to read and write short and simple sentences related to daily life in his/her mother tongue or national language with understanding and who is able to communicate with others and perform simple tasks of calculation.* As you see from the United Nations data that barely half of the population can read and write and the actual labor force that can contribute to the economy in a meaningful way should be far less than this number. It is impossible to attract domestic and foreign investments in manufacturing and technology related industries without a solid skilled workforce. No prosperity, peace, and sense of civic duties in people are possible in a country without basic education to a greater mass of the population.

The Nepalese Association in Southeast America (NASeA) has made education one of its top priorities for the coming years. To promote education and provide scholarships in Nepal, NASeA has established an **Education Assistance Program**. NASeA will act as a facilitator to those who are interested to help promote education in Nepal.

## **The Program**

### **OBJECTIVES**

The main objectives of this program are to:

- Provide educational assistance to students in Nepal.
- Provide educational materials to school libraries and laboratories in Nepal.
- Provide infrastructure support such as building schools, libraries, and laboratories in Nepal.
- Facilitate educational exchange program between Nepal and the US.

This program is currently focused at providing educational assistance to primary through high schools in Nepal. However, the program may be expanded to include university students in the future.

### **HOW CAN YOU HELP?**

Yes, we all know the literacy and education problem exists in Nepal. Although it is a first step, knowing alone is not enough. The next important step is how to bring about consistently measurable positive changes. Financial contributions are highly critical to make this program successful. Individuals or corporations can contribute in many ways. The funds collected will be used for **educational purposes only**.

#### **Why contribute through NASeA?**

- Your contribution is tax exempt.
- No hassle for you, since NASeA will coordinate and facilitate the disbursement of your funds per your selection criteria.
- Your contribution will be appropriately acknowledged

You can contribute to this program in the following ways:

#### **A. Individual contributions, \$2000 or greater**

The contributors will have an option of setting up a scholarship fund in the name of their choice, for example in the memory of their loved ones. These contributions will be invested and the income will be used to provide scholarships on a continuous basis. Individual contributions of about \$2000 (\$100 income per year) can support one school student in Nepal.

**B. Individual contributions, any amount.**

Every one is encouraged to contribute for this noble cause. Contributions can be made regularly, for example monthly or annual basis.

C. Adopt a child or a school

**An individual can also directly sponsor a child/school either selected by NAsEA or the contributor himself/herself. The contributor can pay the monthly or annual expenses incurred for school building, educational materials, clothes, tuition, etc. for one to several years.**

D. Corporate

Sponsor

**Corporate sponsors are encouraged to contribute partially or fully toward larger projects such as school buildings libraries, laboratories, etc.**

E. Institutional contributions (e.g., Federal Government, United Nations, other Non-Profit and philanthropic organizations, etc.).

### **RECENT ACTIVITIES**

With the help of NAsEA members, the education program has a good start. Currently we have several active educational projects in Nepal.

### **KANKU HIGH SCHOOL**

Kanku High School is located in Kanku village in Solu Khumbu District, about one day walk east of Solu Sallery. There is no road, telephone line or electricity in this village. The main means of transportation is by foot.

NAsEA helped to establish Kanku High School in 1997. NAsEA contributed \$1200 to get the school started. Recently additional \$1200 was raised under the leadership of Hari Dhungana, the past president of NAsEA and life member of NAsEA Mrs. Ganga Shrestha. Since the schools was established, additional \$1500 was



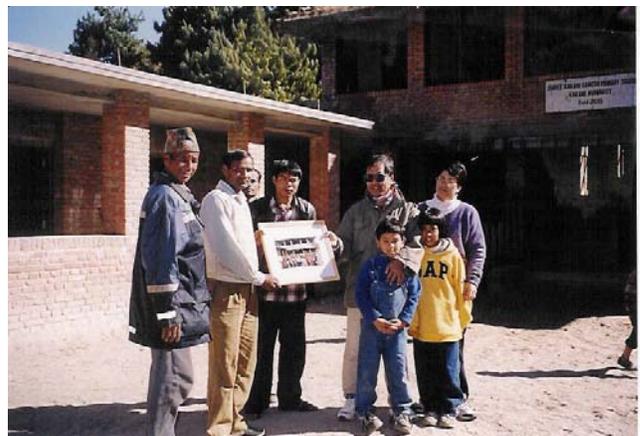
raised to support the school to continue its existence and pay the teachers' salary. Currently there are 15 teachers and about 500 students in the school. As per request of the school, the NAsEA Executive board made a commitment to contribute \$2,000 to support the needy students and for the very survival of the school until the government assumes the operating cost of the school in the future. This amount will be used to establish a fund for the school and only the earned interest from this fund will be used to support the needy students

### PAROPAKAR HIGH SCHOOL

Paropakar High school is located in Kathmandu. There are about 50 orphans studying in the school. NAsEA awarded a \$100 scholarship to one orphan student each year for 3 years. The scholarships were provided from the *Mr. Bhakta Narsingh Amatya and Mrs. Moti Nani Amatya Trust Fund* established by Dr. Ramesh Amatya in the memory of his parents.

### KAKANI GANESH MIDDLE SCHOOL

NAsEA has been sponsoring a teacher at Kakani Ganesh Middle School. This sponsorship pays the salary (Nepalese Rs. 24,000 per year) for one teacher. This is made possible from a fund established by Dr. Anju Malla. Kakani School lies in Kakani village, Nuwakot district, about 30 miles west of Kathmandu at an altitude of 6000ft above sea level. The majority of people in Kakani are Tamang. Among the people of Nepal, the Tamangs are one of the most under privileged ethnic group. To date you will hardly find any well-educated Tamang from Kakani. There was no school in Kakani area until 1977.



### INDIVIDUAL SCHOLARSHIP

Currently NAsEA is providing two scholarships to one girl, Ganga Gurung - 5 years old, and one boy, Deep Shrestha – 6 years old. The scholarships are comprised of \$100 per year to each of these students. Two of the young NAsEA members, Prerana Malla (13 years old) and Adarsha Malla (12 years old) recognized the importance of an early education during their visit to Nepal in 2006 and committed to providing scholarships to these young ones from their birthday gifts.



Deep Shrestha



Ganga Gurung

### SCHOOL BUILDING

In 2006, NAsEA contributed \$1400 toward the construction of a school building for Ananda Marga Special Academic Institution in Bharatpur, Chitwan. This school is primarily targeted to serve orphan and disadvantaged students. Fifty percent (50%) of this contribution was matched by one of the NAsEA members (the author of this article). The remaining portion of the contribution came from the NAsEA general education fund primarily contributed by NAsEA life members, Mr. Subodh and Mrs. Pratima Gautam.

### EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS –COMPUTERS AND PRINTER DONATIONS

In May 2007, NAsEA donated two new computers and one new laser printer to Laxmi Vidya Mandir English School in Bhaktapur. NAsEA Vice President for Information Technology, Samir Upadhyay, personally delivered these items. Laxmi Vidya Mandir is an elementary school for kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and serves the students from Bhaktapur Industrial Area. There are currently 70 students and 10 staff members.



**Laxmi Vidya Mandir - Bhaktapur**

*Please contact Prakash Malla at [mallap@bellsouth.net](mailto:mallap@bellsouth.net), if you would like to contribute or have suggestions.*

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Best Wishes From  
*Ishwor & Kamala  
Devkota*

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Best Wishes From  
*Suman & Marlene  
Silwal*

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## **FREE**

*Prerana Malla, Dublin, GA*

Green as fresh cut grass  
on the lawn of the world  
The piano is playing at night  
On dawns the new found light

Daisies fly  
as trucks rush by  
Stone Mountain stands on hard ground  
but I am flying free

## **My First Roller Coaster Ride - I Did it Four Times!**

*Prerana Malla, Dublin, GA*

As I got off the bus, I gasped. The park was filled with HUGE rides and lots of games. I rushed to the gate to show my park pass and entered the park. I was so excited! This time I was going to conquer my fear and ride the Cyclone. This is the third year I have visited the park and I have not ridden a roller coaster higher than twenty feet.

Unfortunately it was harder than just thinking I was going to get on the ride. My friends had to coax me into line. I was petrified with fear as the Cyclone rushed past me. One of my friends urged me to move on in line. Finally at the top, I started to panic. Should I chicken out, or should I ride the roller coaster?

I got into the seat and buckled in. My friend Hannah was sitting beside me and had ridden the ride last year. She told me I looked as if someone were pointing a gun in my face. My heartbeat increased as we went up the slope. As we were about to go over the peak of the hill, I looked forward and almost fainted. The ride was higher than I expected. I shut my eyes, dug myself into the seat and screamed! As we went down the hill, the G-Force pulled me three to four inches off the seat. I opened my eyes to see how my friend Hannah was, and she had her hands up in the air! I was surprised she was doing that because I was curled up as if we had a tornado drill at school. As the ride went on we whooshed by people in line. Some people

were waving, and some looked frightened to death as I was. As the ride came to a halt, I jumped out as fast as I could and ran down the stairs to exit the ride. I told myself I was never going to ride a roller coaster that big again. My friends were trying not to laugh at how frightened I was. They knew that the Cyclone was considered a small ride compared to all the other humongous roller coasters in the park.

My friends rode all the big rides they wanted and I waited alone. As I was calming my self down from shock, I had a feeling of excitement rise in me. I wanted to ride the Cyclone again. I couldn't explain the feeling at all. I knew that it was scary but I wanted to ride it again to have fun instead of being scared during the whole ride. After everyone was done we had plenty of time to go back to the Cyclone. It was after lunch so many people weren't in line. I jumped into my seat next to Alix and the ride started going. As we went up the hill I got the same uneasy feeling. I kept my eyes open as we went down the first slope and started laughing. I guess it was because I was enjoying the ride so much. I laughed throughout the whole ride. Alix even started laughing.

The second time on the ride wasn't so bad. I liked it so much I ended up riding it two more times.

*Note: Prerana is currently a 9<sup>th</sup> grader and 13 years old. She wrote this poem when she was in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.*

## **Welcome To Atlanta**

Best Wishes From  
*Gopal Shah*

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## ‘DHARMA - HINDUISM & BUDDHISM’

One definition of ‘Dharma’ (similar to, but not religion) is - a. the search for truth (**Satya**), and b. ways of spiritual growth (**Yoga**). Spiritual growth is transcending - a. first from individual ego, and then b. to the universal reality. Thus Dharma is mainly internal and personal issue. However, it also does express in external social level as - c. issues of social harmony, and d. cultures.

**Sanatana:** To wonder about ultimate truth and to strive for spiritual progress are universal phenomena inherent in humanity. It is not limited by geography, history or culture. Sanatana is such universal principles and ways of spiritual growth, studied and practiced around the world.

**Dharma:** It is a subset of the ‘Sanatana’ practiced by an individual or a group of people. **Hinduism:** The collection of all the Dharmas in the Indian sub-continent including Tibetan plateau. It is a geographic definition. It includes Shaiva, Vaishnav, Buddha, Jain, Sikh, Atheism (Charvak) and any other Dharmas evolved in the region. Dharmas mostly overlap. A Dharma practiced by one group differs from another merely by emphases in different methods or by cultural backgrounds. It is like going to college where each student chooses different but overlapping sets of courses to study. Dharmas, like different courses, are not hostile against others. Rather differences are recognized and appreciated - ‘Sarva dharma sambhava.’ However, it is not about blind acceptance of any doctrines. Each doctrine has to pass the test of - a. critical examination and b. time. Same principles apply in our perception of the non-Indic Dharmas. Dharmas are not rigid. On the way of spirituality many new ways are learned and many useless doctrines are dropped. Thus we have growth, not conversion. Most of the Hindus usually follow Dharma practiced in their family as a part of tradition or ‘Parampara.’ Thus, it is the collection of wisdoms from thinkers of all races, regions and times; and inherently multi-cultural, tolerant & self-correcting.

**Buddha dharma:** Dharma using methods within human faculty. Thus it uses only scientific and empirical techniques. Jainism is another such Dharma. Buddhism is a major break through within the long traditions of Hinduism. That is Buddha achieved Nirvana without depending on supra-humanity. Thus all of Buddha’s teachings and analyses are within rational self-examination of the world including one’s mind.

**Parampara:** They are cultures, not Dharma. Paramparas coexist, do not compete, and evolve. Similarly Caste system is an issue of social evolution, not Dharma.

**Search for truth:** The free examination and search for truth. The inquiry about the truth may be discussed within the framework of the following three paradigms.

1. **Scientific** - only objective methods. Most rigorous, but lesser scope.

2. **Empirical** - objective and subjective methods, within human faculty only.

3. **Theistic** - methods include faith and revelations. Less rigorous, but larger scope.

### Ways of spiritual growth:

Yoga\Tao\Zen\Discipline\Way. The way or practice of ‘Yoga’ leads to healthy body and mind; and ultimately to the salvation or liberation. There are many ways of spiritual journey. They are broadly grouped into four.

1. Way of love and devotion (**Bhakti**)
2. Way of selfless duty (**Karma**)
3. Way of self-realization (**Raj**)
4. Way of knowledge (**Gnan**)

**Issues of social harmony:** The insights, not social or legal rules, towards the social harmony. Justice is the first step toward harmony. The relationships are of two kinds - between individuals within a society, and between different societies. The secular issues like ‘democracy’, ‘socialism’, ‘human rights’ are also part of it. Insights e.g. -

*Truth always triumphs - ‘Satyam eva jayate’*

*Goodness comes out of goodness - ‘Om mani padme hum’*

*World is one family - ‘Bashundhaiva kutumbakam’*

*Many paths to the summit - ‘Sarva dharma sambhava’*

**Cultural mosaic:** The world mosaic of human dharmic\religious heritage. It’s evolution in different environmental, historical and philosophical backgrounds. The mutual appreciation between peoples of different dharmic\religious backgrounds and their colorful festivals.

**Sanatana:** The notion that Buddhism is different from Hinduism has come due to the misunderstanding of the nature of inquiry into the universal truth. The difference is the approaches taken by different dharmas

or sects within Hinduism, not the truth per se. After all truth remains the same, though it may be approached or understood from different perspectives. Buddhism, as pointed above, uses empirical means and is independent of revelations. Thus it gives more importance to Gnan yoga and Raj yoga, than Bhakti yoga and Karma yoga. That is all. If you check Theravada and Mahayana Buddhist sects, then they are close to Advaita and Dvaita schools respectively than between them self.

The greatness of Buddha is that he is able to bring many of the truths, which were considered purely a matter of faith and revelation, within the realm of rational deduction. That is why initially many Braahman-Pundits opposed him, and once they understood the importance of the Buddhist approach they recognized him as a new path blazer. His way of knowledge was indeed the ignorance shattering. Such height of spiritual innovation is not achieved easily.

**Buddhism and Vedanta:** The distinction between Buddhism and Vedanta is the approach they take, not the truth they seek. Buddhism takes the bottom up approach and relies on the available human faculties, whereas Vedanta takes the top down approach and relies on revelations in Veda. Vedantist would predicate their argument upon the primary reality. Whereas Buddhist would point out that it cannot be conceptualized and therefore cannot be basis of arguments.

Vedas reveal Brahman as permanent, eternal, impersonal, and attribute less. Brahman, the primary reality, is the cause of other secondary transient realities 'samsar' - egos, minds, bodies, thoughts, logic, perceptions, natural laws etc. Thus, a human cannot understand 'Brahman', because human ego itself is the transitory creation or manifestation of Brahman. However, human mind may comprehend Brahman in its two aspects, as a. observable physical entity and b. consciousness. Nirvana or liberation is the transcending from secondary reality to primary reality. This may be accomplished by shedding ego by practicing Yogas. Shankaracharya interprets the ancient texts that this truth can be directly experienced (Aparokshanubhuti - self realization) by the way of 'Bairagya - dispassion or renunciation', and the way of meditation 'Raj yoga.'

Now compare that with the Buddhist concept of Dharmakaya. Dr. D.T. Suzuki writes - "Dharmakaya is the ultimate reality that underlies all particular phenomena; it is that which makes the existence of individual possible; it is the *raison d'être* of the universe;

it is the norm of being, which regulates the course of events and thoughts. We do not have any transcendental entity called ego-substance. We all are one in the 'System of Being' and only as such are immortal. The one shows us the folly of clinging to individual existence and of coveting the immortality of the ego-soul; the other convinces us of the truth that we are saved by living into the unity of Dharmakaya. When the clouds of ignorance and egoism are totally dispersed, the light of universal love and intelligence will shine in all its glory." Is this Buddhist concept of 'Dharmakaya' different from that of 'Brahman'? Both of them are identical.

**Buddhism:** Most of the Buddhist statements would become clearer if we keep in mind that it deals only with available tools of inquiry. Thus, following Buddhist statements are made and valid within 'Samsar' or secondary reality only: I am enlightened. Enlightenment cannot be explained. I can show you the way, but can not make you enlightened. Every existing phenomenon is transient and has cause. They would cease to exist if the cause is removed. The Law of karma operates even upon Gods. Any given concept of soul or Dharmakaya is not correct. Anahata or there is no soul. If you take any individual then his or her each and every characteristic, physical or mental, is transient and has cause. If each and every characteristic is taken off one by one, by recognizing and removing the cause, then there absolutely nothing will be left. The reality of each and every egoistic attribute being extinguished cannot be explained nor even be conceptualized. For the lack of better word, we may call it enlightenment or Nirvana. Nirvana is bliss.

**Nepalese spirituality:** Nepalese spirituality is a blend of different sects of Hinduism. To illustrate a few, the guardian Goddess of Nepal 'Kumari' is always assumed by a girl from the Buddhist sect, though the king follows the Brahmanic tradition. Dvaita philosophers or Vaishnavs pay homage to Buddha as the incarnation of the Narayan. Advaita philosophers or Shaivas pay homage to Buddha by recognizing Shri Pashupati Nath as the 'Avalokiteshwor', and decorating as such once a year. Buddhism it self retains its Hinduism root 'OM' in its most repeated mantra 'OM, mani padme hum.' A perfect harmony between the three principal sects of Nepal, namely Buddhism (Buddha), Shaivism (Nilkantha) and Vaishnavism (Narayan) can be seen in the temple situated in the northern corner of Kathmandu, which we lovingly call 'Budha Nilkantha Narayan'.

- Tilak B. Shrestha, Ph.D

## COMPASSION

Monk Krishna Man Manandhar (Ugyen Sherab)

Former Chief Librarian American Library, Kathmandu.

The word compassion if you consult the dictionary - will give you several meanings.

Masters of the different schools have their own way to define the meaning of the word "Compassion". But it seems that compassion comes to mind when the word "Buddhism" is mentioned. Surely it is a commonly used term. But if we dwell deeply further into its meaning we uncover something that is understood by scholars.

In Nepal we have four renowned Dieties known as "Karunamaya" "Full of compassion they all live in four corners of the holy land located at Bungamati (Patan) Chovar (Kirtipur), Jamal (Kathmandu and Banepa (Out of Kathmandu valley)

They local devotees celebrate these dieties with big ceremony once every year. During religious festival the dieties (Karunamaya) are wheeled around the city on a chariot pulled by devotees. They are worshipped by both Hindu and Buddhists and represent the spirit of compassion offering blessings to relieve all beings from suffering. They are also believed as incarnation of Bodhisattva. Compassion its meaning - essence - spirit are described in many Buddhist scriptures.

Particularly in Mahayana Buddhism attention is more focussed on the spirit of compassion.

According to the Prajnaparamita Sutra it is said that All sentient beings are the cause for a Bodhisattva to give rise to the great compassion while the great compassion is the cause for the development of the mind and the Bodhi mind is the cause for attainment of Buddhahood. Therefore compassion is the prerequisite to a Bodhisattva for Buddhahood.

Herewith some examples of compassion as are exhibited by the four compassionate souls.

One night a temple devotee was meditating in the shrine hall - a thief sneaked in and stole a bag of rice lying on the table. As the thief was about to leave with bag, he yelled to stop - causing the thief to freeze. Devotee said when you want to go away with

bag - Why don't you offer a word "Thanks you to the temple, the thief offered Thank you word inattentively and left

A while later the thief was caught - After admitting to the Police what he had done. He was taken to the temple and questioned the devotee "Did this man steal anything from the temple? The devotee answered "No he did not" and further said that he of course took a bag with the "Thank you word" and we I thought that he was only borrowing the rice bag from the temple.

The thief was very grateful to the temple devotee for defending him. After serving his sentence for some period he left the stealing practice

Other three examples will follow tomorrow Monk Krishna Man

Example 2nd.

A Japanese monk was traveling to different places spreading Dhamma teachings. One day while on a trip he was trapped by a group of Bandits (Daka) who threatened to rob him.

At this critical moment tears shedding from the monk's eyes caused the Bandits to laugh "What a cowardly monk you are!" They said

In response Monk explained "I am crying because by this act your final destination will be the Hell" Therefore I am crying for you.

These words echoed the hearts of Daka Group (Bandits) and they were so touched by his compassion that they became his followers.

Example 3rd.

One fine day a peace walker got on a boat to cross the river. Soon after the boat departed, a soldier armed with a whip came running and yelling for the boat to return so he could get on. All the passengers objected to his call because the boat had already left the shore. Only the peace walker made a polite request to return the boat for soldier since the boat was not so far from the shore. Seeing - it was a request made by a peace walker the boat man kindly obliged.

The soldier saw the peace walker sitting on a boat seat. The soldier whipped him on his head and said "Get up I want this seat" The peace walker got up silently and offered the seat to the soldier with his head

bleeding. Nobody said a word throughout the journey. When the boat reached the other side crossing the river, the peace walker quietly washed the blood off his face

With this quieter scene shown by the peace walker the soldier suddenly felt ashamed for what he had done He sincerely apologised to peace walker who replied “ It is alright. Sometimes traveling becomes hard “

Example 4th

One day a Dragon was awakened from his sleep because many insects were biting into his body Knowing that he would crush the insects if he rolled around which would cause him to violate the precept of no killing

The Dragon tried his best to stay still despite the horrible pain he was feeling - Although he was an animal his compassion became so greater than that of a human.

How great is the power of compassion

The present situation of the world troubled by so many conflicts has caused our lives to be in constantly chaos. To deal with these problems Compassion is the best remedy. - Monk Krishna Man

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## SIX QUESTIONS - MANANIYA BHIM RAWAL

### Question 1: Secular vs. Hindu state.

We must have referendum to decide whether Nepal should remain a Hindu state or be a secular. Prachanda and Maoists members of parliament are not elected and have no mandate. The elected members of parliament are elected and sworn under the 1991 constitution. Therefore they get mandate only through and bound by it. The 1991 constitution is clear about modality of amendments. The democratic norm demands, at minimum, peaceful discussions and expression of people's mandate in some form. The issue is very close to the heart of majority of Nepalese people. It can not be a matter of horse trade between Prachanda and Girija. Only people can decide. Will your party support the idea of referendum to decide Nepal a secular or a Hindu state? Reference article: "Sarva dharma sambhava, not secular."

Rawal Jee: Yes, we have mandate. When the current interim constitution was getting written, there were people demanding secularism.

Tilak: Allow me to disagree. In all our revolutions - 1950, 1980, 1990 or 2006 the issue of secularism was never raised. In Nepal, we have no history of religious conflicts. In 2006, if there were 100 people demanding 'secular' state with play cards, perhaps by the stretch of imagination they may represent 100,000 Nepalese citizens. How can you say that they represent majority of people? Besides, where was the debate and voting on the issue?

Rawal jee: People's mandate was expressed during the historical mass movement. People's voice is always represented by their representatives.

Tilak: Exactly what is the people's voice and demands? Every body seems to push their agenda as if it is the people's voice and gifted by Janaandolan. Only way to ascertain people voice is to have some kind of referendum. Janaandolan was for democracy, against Ghosya mantris, against Maoist's violence, against King's autocracy, and for inclusive nationhood. But it is not for secularism or federal system based on ethnicity.

The elected individuals do represent people, but does not have unlimited mandate. All the elected parliamentarians are elected under and bound by 1991

constitution. The constitution is clear about Nepal being a Hindu state. They can change the status only with 2/3 majority voting. They have no mandate or right to declare secularism otherwise. They get mandate only if - a. the issue were discussed in public, b. the candidates have declared their positions, and c. people have voted them in. Moreover, the issue must be - a. discussed in the parliament, and b. voted by the elected members. None of them did happen. Is not so? Then why do you claim to have mandate? The declaration of secularism is illegal and not acceptable.

Rawal Jee: We believe we have mandate. Besides, the issue will be solved by the Constituent Assembly (CA).

Tilak: How CA will solve the issue? Will people have right to decide between 'secular' vs. 'Hindu state'? Suppose majority of Nepalese wants Hindu state, not secular; then how will the majority opinion reflect in the CA? If your party candidates are forced to obey the party policy of secularism, then all your party members as well as people supporting your party have to vote for secularism, against their will. Is not so?

Rawal Jee: All people will have the right to express their views on all issues including the issue of secularism during the CA election campaign. Furthermore the people will have the chance to discuss on it through their representation in the constituent assembly. No member of the party will be forced or dictated about any issue. It is rather matter of belief and principle of every party member.

Tilak: I appreciate your statement and hold you and your party in abiding by it. Please correct me if I am wrong in reading your statement. That is, your party will not have any policy whether Nepal to be a secular or Hindu state. Your party will not direct party members to have any opinion on the issue. Each party member is free to have his or her own opinion on the subject, explain it to the public, and ask for vote accordingly. Your party will simply go by the people's verdict on the issue. The party will work towards respecting and bringing up the people's voice on the issue; and abide by the majority decision. If this is the case, I have absolutely no problem and do support you with appreciation.

Also would you please lay out the scenario where Nepal will remain a Hindu state if majority of Nepalese want so in the Constituent Assembly?

Rawal Jee: There will be no referendum for people to choose between 'secular' or 'Hindu state.' People's opinion on this issue will reflect in the CA.

### **Question 2: Ethnic based federal system.**

It will be a historic blunder to divide Nepal in ethnic basis. We should have Nepal as a good example of 'unity in diversity.' That is, we must recognize the multi-cultures and multi-languages of Nepal as the national assets. The policies of 'decentralization' and 'empowerments of marginalized sub-groups' must be emphasized. However, it will be a major disaster to divide Nepal as federal states in ethnic basis. Will your party support the idea of keeping Nepal united? Reference article: "United Nepal."

Rawal jee: I agree that Nepal should remain as an independent, indivisible and sovereign country. The restructuring of Nepal should not be based on communalism and casteism. Communal harmony among the people should be protected and promoted. However, the rights of all communities should be equally protected providing them authority at the local levels i.e., through the federalism. The concept of federalism may has several aspect to be considered, e.g., population composition, culture, language, natural resources, geography, border, viability etc.

Tilak: Your statement is appreciated. It is all truisms, except the clause - "through the federalism." How did you come to conclusion that Nepal remaining unitary nation cannot address all the issues mentioned? How do you have mandate to restructure Nepal along federal lines, which as envisaged is ethnic based? Do you realize the long term consequences of such restructuring? You must spell out - a. your vision of the federal structure, b. the pros and cons of both unitary and federal structures, c. have peaceful discussions in public, and d. have referendum for people's verdict.

### **Question 3: Political corruption and corrupt ministers (Ghushya mantris).**

Our main political weakness is the corruptions of the elected leaders (Ghushya mantris). This is the main disease which brought the problems of Maoists insurgency and Royal coup. What is your party's program against corrupt ministers? Within party? In

the government? Against yesterday's Ghushya mantris? Reference article: "Integrity."

Rawal Jee: Yes, we are against corruption in all levels. Matter of fact, our party is proud to sponsor strongest laws against corruptions.

Tilak: It is always easy to say than to do. We have not seen even a single corrupt minister being punished. Please allow me to bring to your attention the following news report: "AFP (French News Agency) on November 3, 2001: Kathmandu - Swiss accounts of three senior Nepalese ministers, including home minister Khum Bahadur Khadka, have been frozen for their suspected involvement in illegal gold and weapons trade and drug trafficking in the Gulf region, a leading local vernacular daily reported. 'Naya Sadak' quoting high-level Interpol sources said that besides Khadka, accounts of minister for water resources Vijaya Gachhedhar and minister for information and communication Jaya Prakash Prasad Gupta were frozen." Will your party prosecute such cases?

Rawal jee: Yes, we will. The Commission for Investigation in Abuse of Authority (CIAA) has booked several ministers and cases are filed against them in the special court. We fully support the impartial investigation and action against the corrupt people.

Tilak: Your statement is appreciated. They say the proof of pudding is in tasting. We are all eagerly waiting to hear the good news of any ghushya mantris being punished.

### **Question 4: Maoists and politics of violence.**

Democracy means the 'peaceful discussions of political problems', the 'verdict of people through election', and 'not bowing to violence.' In that context how do you justify inclusion of Maoists into parliament and government? Are they elected? Is there no difference between ballots and bullets? Maoists are still not acting as a peaceful and responsible political party, even though that is the main agreement with the SPA. What plan does the SPA and your party have if Maoists do not want to be peaceful and continue their practice of violence and extortion? Reference article: "Where is the mandate?"

Rawal Jee: It has to be seen in a larger context. The eight party agreements has avoided civil war, attendant bloodshed, and brought Maoists into the main stream politics. Of course, in practical politics

every thing is not white and we do not claim so. However, our main goal is to keep the eight parties unity intact and hold the 'Constituent Assembly.' Once the CA is successful then the issues of politics and mandate etc. will be clear. The party getting the majority of vote will form the government assuming attendant responsibilities.

Tilak: That is great. But the current behaviors of Maoists show the bad faith in their part. It is not really a hypothetical question to ask what if they do not behave. Besides the tolerance of unruly behavior must pass certain bench mark. Murders and extortions cannot be considered as merely unruly behaviors. What if they would not allow the CA to be held peacefully?

Rawal jee: We are cognizant of the problems (Maoist violence). We have been bringing all these issues to attention of the Maoists leaders. Our party strongly urges them to respect the commitments made in the agreements and oppose any act of violence and intimidation.

Tilak: It is well and good to tell Maoist leaders of their violence. I do not think you need to tell them, nor it is the answer to the question. Question is what program your party has if Maoists or other groups continue their violence? Just polite request and Dandawat Pranam?

#### **Question 5: Economic development.**

Our main problem is the economic stagnation and lack of jobs. If we can create jobs for our unemployed and impatient youths, probably most of our social and political problems will be taken care of. For that, obviously we have to have: a. peace, b. clean government, c. disciplined labor force, and c. better economic policies. It also means better use of our internal resources and inviting foreign investments. If we look at China and India as the role models then creating climate for foreign investments becomes keys. Let us also not forget the flip side of the foreign investments like: a. environmental issues, b. social issues, and c. internal industries. What policies does your party have to address the complex economic issue?

Rawal jee: We are very much aware of the fact that the country is facing serious economic challenges. To meet these challenges, the country should be bring back in a normal situation of peace and democracy.

We do welcome any national or international investments and job formation.

Tilak: I appreciate it. Please allow me to suggest that economic development may take place along the quest for democracy and peace. It is not necessary to wait to have right conditions. Perhaps a broad policy statement may not be too early. Perhaps a think tank of economists, both party members and non-members, could be assembled soon to address the issue.

Welcoming incoming investment is good, but not enough. We need to aggressively invite investments. For that we need to have well thought out political and legal framework.

Rawal Jee: Yes, that is true. However, those issues will be addressed by the regular government formed after the CA election. Right now, given the situation, it is premature to make any policies.

#### **Question 6: Nation, roots and values.**

A nation is not just a group of people thrown together. We are Nepalese because of our shared roots, values and history. Let us try to understand the importance of it, and recognize that the present turmoil and corruption has partly to do with the erosion of Dharma. Let us not forget that the Dharma is not about superstitions and casteism, but about seeking truth and spiritual practices. If we do not protect our own Dharma then there are plenty of missionaries active in destroying it. How does your party address the issue of our Dharma? Reference article: "Dharma and politics." "Truth and Christianity."

Rawal jee: Religion is a matter of belief of individuals. That should be respected. Everybody has the right to religion. Our party respect that. No one has the right to impose any religion on the people. Politics and religion should not be intermingled. They should be separated from each other.

Tilak: Absolutely. It is what our beliefs and traditions teach us.

Rawal jee: Politics and religion are separate matters. State can not be itself a religious body. Whatever are the concepts and perception of the religion it should be a matter of personal belief and that should be respected by all. Nepal is a multi-religious country and every religion has the right to develop. Our party respect people's free will to pursue any religion but

we want to liberate the society from superstitions and beliefs harmful to society and the country.

Tilak: Absolutely. We should keep religion and politics separate. However, Dharma is not religion. The concept of secularism is relevant only to religion, not to Dharma. Because, religions are about mind controlling and interfering in politics. Dharma is about seeking truth and spiritual practices. Let us not confuse superstitions or casteism as Dharma.

However, we also must recognize our roots, values and the glue holding our nation. Here, we are not talking about imposing faith or religion. Nepal being a Hindu state does not mean a theocracy. In our earlier including 1991 constitutions there was not even a single sentence from any of our scriptures.

Rawal jee: In Nepal there is religious tolerance. People are respectful to each other. This tradition should be protected and promoted. Activities of disharmony are not in the interest of Nepal.

Tilak: Absolutely. It is our tradition and we proud of it. But the Christian missionaries do not buy your sentiment or mine. They come with the proposition that our God is no God, only their God is true God. All the Christians, no matter how evil, go to heaven. We, no matter how virtuous, will go to hell.

Dharma is about cooperation and mutual respect. Dharma teaches - 'Basundhaiwa kutumbakama' - world is one family and 'Sarva dharma sambhava' - there are many paths to salvation.

The Christian conversion is precisely opposite to that and is premeditated aggression against our culture. Here is the defining doctrine of Christianity:

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Acts 4:12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Timothy 2:5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus

John 3:16-18 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. Whoever believes in Him should not

perish but have everlasting life. But he who does not believe is condemned already.

They are trying every underhanded method to subvert and convert Nepalese to Christianity. As a national leader, how do you address the issue of te 'Christian conversion?'

Rawal jee: No one has to misguide, intimidate and manipulate the people. People's right to religion should be protected. Religions themselves compete among themselves and they have to establish their efficacy providing service to people and society.

Tilak: Yes, people's right to religion should be unconditionally protected. Yes, the misguiding and manipulation, especially toward conversion, must be addressed. Yes, we do and must appreciate selfless social services. No question about that. But the facade of social services designed primary to convert people must be addressed.

Rawal jee: Every religion and culture has its own tradition and roots. Society always moves on towards better situation. So the religions have to recognize the need of time and people. People have the right to practice religious rituals and uphold culture. It is not a matter of state practice. State and religion are separate sectors or entities.

Tilak: Of course, we must respect the traditions of all the religions and cultures. And every body has the right to practice their own rituals. However, we must understand the fundamental difference between Dharma and religion. Dharma interferes neither with other's practices nor with the politics. Religions always interfere with other's practices and with the politics. Please do read the history of Nepal and India in one hand; in another the history of Europe and Islamic countries. Perhaps a general knowledge of inquisition, crusade, holocaust, genocide in Americas, slavery in Africa, and current evangelism in Nepal might help.

Rawal Jee: Let me repeat, it is not the party's policy to defend a religion.

Tilak: As stated above, it is not really about protecting Dharma. It is about recognition of our own roots and values. These values and Dharma, though not visible, are the basis of our inner strengths. Matter of fact, Dharma is the prerequisite for our national 'progress', in any sense of the word.

Rawal Jee: Besides Nepalese are not only Hindus, but Buddhists also.

Tilak: That is not quite correct. Buddha dharma is one of the Dharma within Hinduism. And Buddhists are a sect among Hindus. I think we have problem beginning with the definitions. Buddhism is a Dharmic discipline using only human faculty, and independent of revelations. Hinduism is the collection of all the Dharmas evolved in the Indian subcontinent and Tibetan plateau. It is a geographical definition, not doctrinaire. Do not we all go to Pashupati, Changu Narayan, Swoyambhu? Do not we all go to all temples and monasteries?

Rawal Jee: My understanding is that Buddhist practice is different from Hindu practices.

Tilak: Not quite. It is a matter of emphasis. Buddhism gives more importance to Gnan yoga and Raj yoga, than Bhakti yoga and Karma yoga. That is all. If you check Theravada and Mahayana Buddhist sects, then they are close to Adwaita and Dwaita schools respectively than between them self. The Buddhism it self retains its Hinduism root 'OM' in its most repeated mantra 'OM, mani padme hum.' Especially, we need to note that Nepalese society is the composition of three main Hindu sects - Baudha (Buddha), Saiva (Nilkantha) and Vaishnav (Narayan). The peaceful union and coexistence is glorified with the temple in the north corner of Kathmandu valley - 'Buddha Nilkantha Narayan.'

Rawal jee: I am not a specialist in religion. What I can say that religion is a matter of personal belief. That should be respected. No one should be coerced and bring under wrong influence. Society should develop beneficial aspects and remove harmful traditions.

Tilak: I do not expect any body to be specialist on every issue. I respect your humbleness about your knowledge on Dharma. Perhaps you should talk with individuals more interested on the issue. However, please do not go around and say that Buddhists and Hindus are separate people, and Hinduism and Buddhism are two separate religions. That is simply not true.

Of course, it goes without saying that we should work towards correcting the bad social traditions in our society, like casteism, untouchability etc.

Rawal Jee: We do not protect or up hold a faith. However, Hindus must also compete with other religions. In Nepal there are cases of misuse of religion. For example, due to Hinduism, Cows are not allowed to be killed. This is an example of how Hinduism effects public laws.

Tilak: Not really. Since you have law degree, you must know the difference between constitutional directives and land laws reflecting local traditions, practices and sentiments. For example, in USA you can not run around nude or sacrifice a chicken in the public. Prohibition of such acts are not about limiting freedom, rather reflects local sensibility. Is there any of our scriptures quoted in Nepalese constitution? The prohibition of cow killing strictly comes under the ambit of land laws reflecting the local tradition.

Any way, let me ask you a question. As a secular state, will you allow cow killing in Nepal?

Rawal jee: It is not a question of allowing killing cow or not. One should not narrow the religious rights to that limited definition. It should be taken broadly in respecting people's right to religion. Every community should respect each other and should not provoke each other. Nepal's tradition of religious tolerance should be protected and further developed.

Tilak: Will that be 'yes' or 'no'?

Rawal jee: It is not a matter of giving answer in 'yes' of 'no'. One can not be simplistic in this sensitive issue. One has to be rational and logical. As I said, that will come under the ambit of religious tolerance.

Tilak: Thank you very much.

*Honorable Bhim Rawal jee of the 'UML' visited Atlanta, Georgia to present the political views of his party. Nepalese community held a reception to honor him and a question-answer session on May 13, 2007. In the program, among others following six questions were submitted to him. Rawal jee was gracious in giving following responses. It was my pleasure to have a conversation with him. The text is paraphrased.*

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