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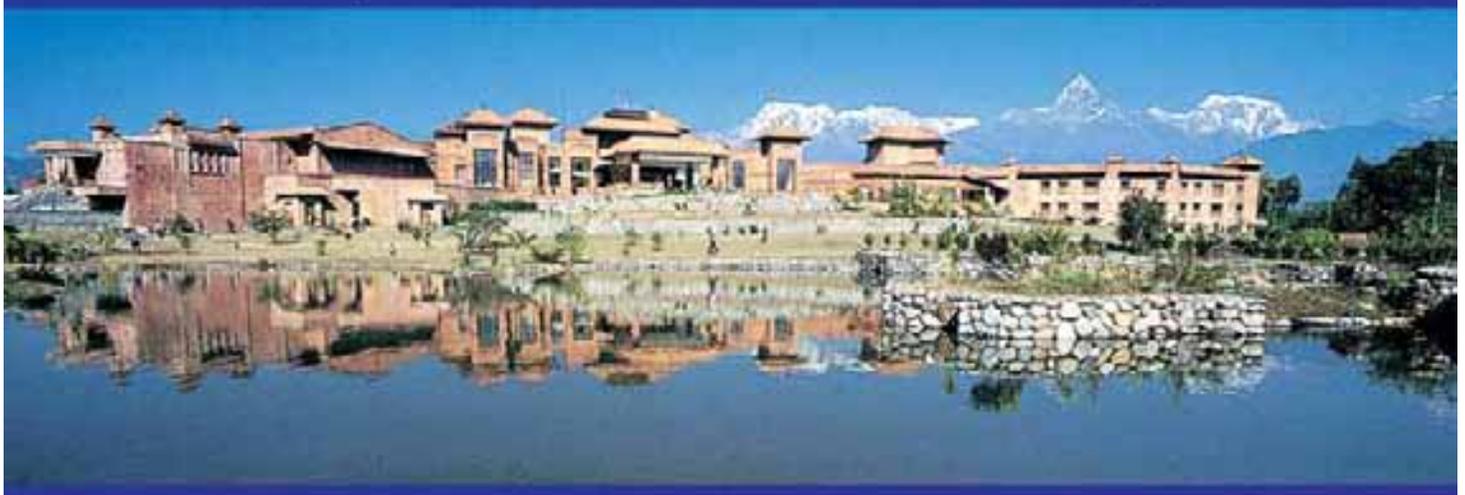
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Anubhuti Poudyal

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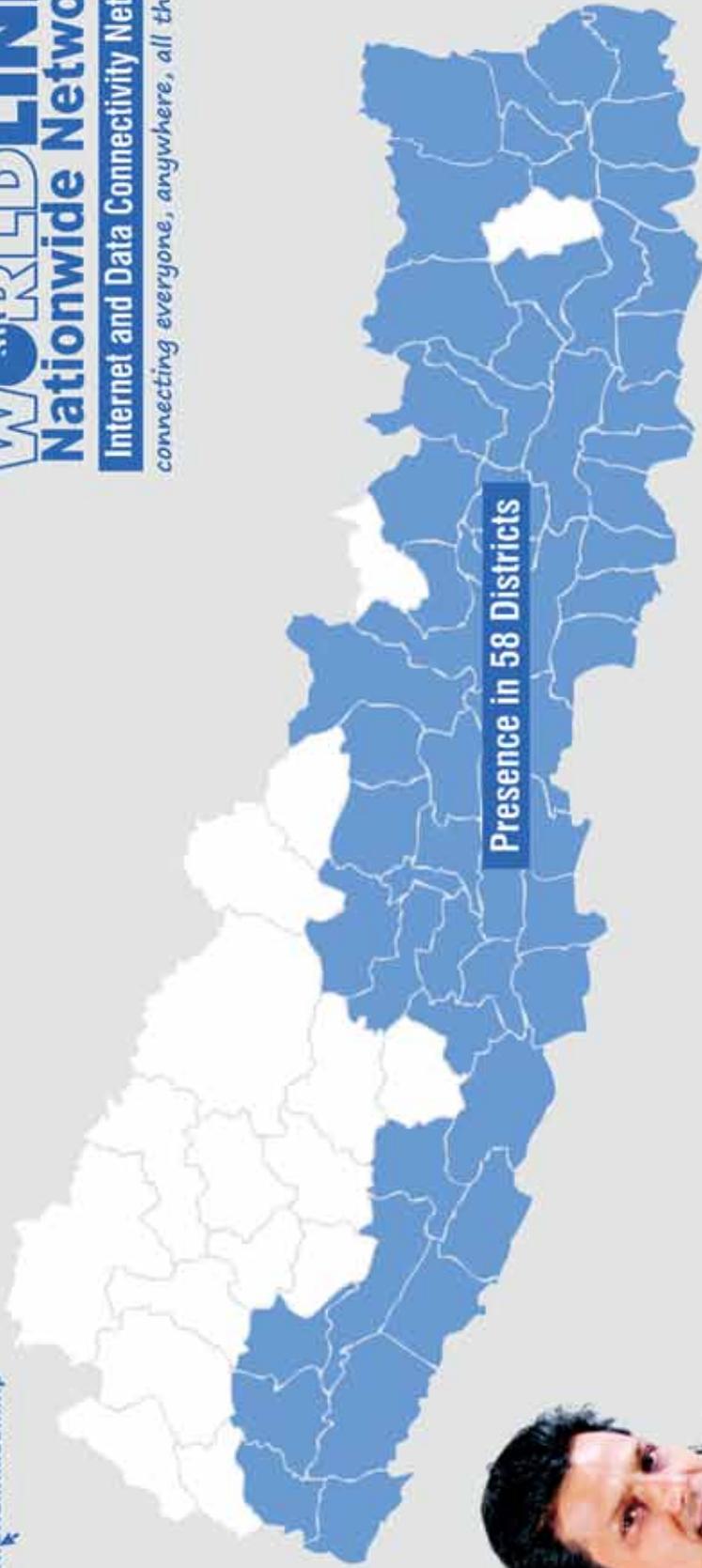


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GIVING

All of us love receiving gifts. From an expensive pen to a bag of fruits, from a shopping voucher at the local supermarket to a book, there is absolutely no limit to the range of gifts we give and receive. From the “rice feeding ceremony” as an infant to a death in the family, Nepali society has numerous occasions and as numerous norms as to what gift we need to select and give. These are irrespective of the purchasing power and across all communities. It does not have to be a celebration or a happy occasion at all to give gifts. There are perishables and non perishables gifts. It is only about what is appropriate and how we give it. The basic rule is “never go empty handed”. With the changing times and tastes the variety of gift shops that design, put together and sell them have also diversified. This issue of ECS will hopefully help you to understand the world of gifts.

At most airports there is prayer room. At hospitals there is a shrine for worship. It is quite obvious that people still believe that there are “unknown” higher forces that are in the control of the final result or the success or failure of a flight or particular treatment. The people of Kathmandu are no different when it comes to dental care. We have full confidence in our dentists; but we like to make a stop at the shrine in the heart of old Kathmandu, dedicated to the “higher power” that will help us avoid a tooth ache. Read more about the site in this issue. At ECS, we are all obsessed with the variety of foods we prepare for different occasions. While we often like to focus on the main meals and big feasts, we are taking some

time out to pay due attention to some popular local snacks. Many people believe that if we understand food, we can also understand their history and roots.

Nepal’s past and present is certainly reflected in the food we serve and eat here and now and throughout the year. In this issue of ECS we also turn our attention towards some spices and tea. No meal or snacks at any time of the day or year is possible without spices and tea in Nepal. Tea is a staple drink and a ritual everywhere. Often when people ask me how I was able to achieve a very difficult negotiation, I am of the habit of replying, “It took endless cups of tea”. Nepali tea is also doing well in the global market and the future looks bright. Many ECS readers have a weakness for good paper. Many will spend time and money whenever they come across good paper and our hand-made paper is a real treat for those who love to write, draw, design, wrap, package, and of course, give gifts. In this issue of ECS we shall look at our traditional Lokta paper and the more recent paper recycling activities and enterprises. We have a lot in store for you. Whatever you are doing this month, please make some time for the Nepali way.

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Ayurveda's popularity as an alternate form of medicine is wide and well regarded. Its influence on non-medical purposes such as diet and healthy living, however, isn't as readily seen or practiced. It is along these lines that a new company has been established in

Kathmandu - to provide top-of-the-line skin care products exclusively based on Ayurvedic prescriptions and formulations. Free of modern day industrial products such as chemicals and bleaching agents which do long term harm to one's skin, previously, such products tended to be homemade and in small quantities; while they were great for results, they weren't known for being easy on the senses or readily available; one certainly didn't think of these as high-end consumer goods. However, times have changed, and we now have a fresh, exclusive set of skin care products based on Ayurvedic teachings and prescriptions- featuring more than 20 different luxury beauty products for women and men of all ages, of all skin tone and feel, Laavanya Luxury Ayurveda has commenced business in the capital. Shweta Upadhyaya, who studied classical Ayurveda at VedikaGlobal- a Gurukul-styled Ayurvedic school in San Francisco Bay Area, US, has been working vigorously for the past few years towards getting Laavanya off the ground.

Laavanya has established two boutique stores- one in Lazimpat and another inside DS Collection in Sherpa Mall, Durbar Marg. According to Shweta, "the boutiques really crystallize our vision of what a great shopping experience for skin-care products ought to be." With samples available around a brass sink, visitors to the boutiques are encouraged to try out products and evaluate them before deciding to purchase, all over a cup or two of green tea if you so desire.

"We are launching Laavanya in the US this month", says Shweta who believes that Nepali products are of International quality and are able to compete on a global scale.

Manufactured and packaged exclusively in Nepal with most of the herbs and ingredients sourced locally from the Himalayan region, Laavanya products are ready-to-use for all occasions- whether for daily use, or during weddings, parties or other festivals.

Sisters creating art from cornhusk



Creating value out of petty objects makes a good entrepreneur. One of such inspiring entrepreneurs is Laxmi Nakarmi, proprietor of Sisters' Creation Perfect Corn-husk Handicraft, creating works of art from cornhusk. Nakarmi has been working in the handicraft industry for almost two decades and today through her organization, she has trained numerous women across the nation, 30 of whom help her run her organization.

Sister's Creation specializes in decorative accessories and souvenirs made from cornhusk. They provide cultural dolls, key rings, place mats, bags, gift cards and flower vases to outlets throughout the country. The items offered are original works of the organization's women and their dedication and level of attention to details can be seen in their culture dolls, where every doll has an accurate cultural reference.

Currently only providing to external outlets, Sisters' Creation has plans to open their own showroom in Mahapal. Expressing the future roles of the organization, Nakarmi says they hope to provide widespread vocational training through schools, and also provide learning educational items for schools.

Despite the tough business environment, Laxmi Nakarmi reasons her hard work by saying, "Times are tough, but I believe what we are doing is important; we are training and empowering women, we are promoting efficient utilization of redundant materials and furthermore, we are creating pieces to preserve our culture and heritage. Achieving all this from mere cornhusk is a motivation in itself."

Sisters' Creation Perfect Corn-Husk Handicraft, Saugaul, Lalitpur, 015540334



Village café: An experience beyond food

The menu, the ingredients, the dishes, even the cushion covers and furnishing uncompromisingly provides a complete Nepali food experience, but the village café in Pulchowk stands out for reasons beyond that. Village Café is an initiation of SABAH Nepal (SAARC Business Association of Home Based Workers Nepal), which is a non-profit organization working to empower women. Sabah Nepal has been working in Nepal for 4 years, recognizing skills of local women and incorporating those skills to create self-sustaining business models for its women participants.

SABAH Nepal today has 1200 members and the latest recruits to SABAH are local

women who have mastered cooking at home, and through Village Café such household skills are being transformed to income generating skills. Incorporating cooking skills of 27 local women, village café provides Newari food as it is made in Newari households. Besides being made by locals, even the ingredients are all Nepali, provided by various sectors of SABAH. The plates on which the food is served, the cushion covers, the tablemats - all made by SABAH members, utilize Nepali resources.

Despite the bigger purpose for which the café functions, the café in no way compromises the standard of food it serves. Using only organic ingredients, the café spells out authentic Newari taste in all aspects. Talking about attention to quality of the food, café claims to serve the best Yamaris in town.

For the ones who want to enjoy Newari cuisine at home or office, the café also recently started daily lunch delivery service, with different lunch sets for different days of the week.

The setting of the café, with welcoming layout filled with Nepal's own production and the adjoining SABAH retail outlet, featuring products from women's apparel to home furnishing and decoration accessories made by SABAH members in Nepal and other SAARC countries, The Village café provides a feast for senses beyond just the taste buds.

The Village Café, Pulchowk, Lalitpur, 01-5540712, 9849497016

HAN to go against closure

As the deadline to vacate land leased by seven hotels and resorts inside Chitwan National Park approaches closer, Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN) has urged the government to take back the decision of closing down the hotels inside the park.

The Nepali Government gave three years ultimatum in December 2009 to relocate the hotels based on the reports presented by National Resources and Means Committee (NRMC). The report says that the hotels and resorts inside the park are affecting the wild life and the ecology of

the park by deforestation for fuel and sound pollution by the use of power generators.

Seven hotels have been asked to relocate as the 15 years contract ended on June 15 2009. However, the government allowed the hotels to run in their respective places for an additional three years. Among the seven hotels, Tiger Tops is the oldest; it has been operating in the area for the past 15 years. Other hotels came into the area during the 80s and 90s.



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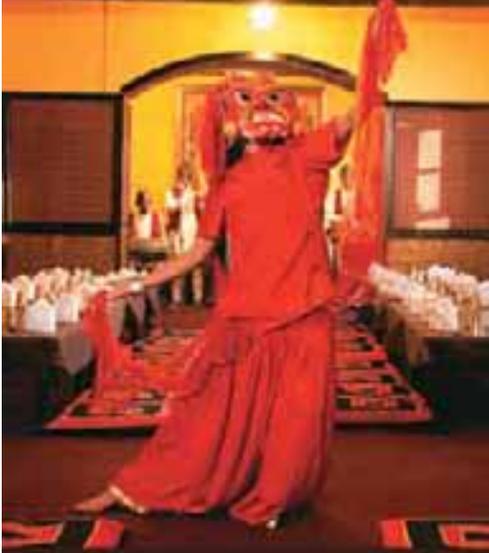
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Housed in a beautifully restored centuries old Rana palace with traditional Newari décor, Nepali Chulo restaurant spares no detail in letting customers relive the rich culture and traditional heritage of Nepal. The restaurant located at Lazimpat offers delicious Nepali and Newari cuisine with plenty of Aila. Regular cultural shows are performed with local dances and instruments, allowing guests to have a lovely meal as well as a wonderful show. It can accommodate up to 250+ guests where they can enjoy a lovely lunch & dinner with most authentic Nepali and Newari heritage.



NEPALI CHULO

Lazimpat, Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: 4418206, 4002009
Email: nepalichulo@mos.com.np

Rallying in White for Peace



A swarm of people wearing white had gathered at Durbar Marg to peacefully demand harmony and prosperity. Carrying the national flag, participants expressed their solidarity and slogans called for harmony between social groups.

The rally was held after the three day nationwide bandh. The event saw the presence of a host of organizations that

included Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI), Nepal BAR Association, Federation of Nepalese Journalists, Private Boarding Schools Organization (PABSON), Nepal Medical Association, Nepal Engineers Association and Nepal University Teachers Association. Many prominent faces like Sadichha Shrestha, Tenzin Bhutia, Nalina Chitrakar, Aastha B, and Subekchya Khadka were spotted at the event along with many others Nepalis present in their individual capacities.

The crowd swayed to popular songs from some renowned singers. Yogeshwor Amatya's melodious version of Siddhi Charan Shrestha's poem "Kyaru Ma Yo Desh Nimitta" was a moving statement of brotherhood among the rich cultural diversity that comprises Nepalis.

As the evening grew dark, the event ended with lighting candles.

Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory's Piano Recital



Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory organized 'A piano recital and workshop' by renowned pianist Anna Kijanowska. The Polish-American pianist has established herself as a multi faceted musician, smoothly transitioning among her roles as a performing and recording artist, pedagogue, coach, and advocate of contemporary classical music around the world.

The event started with some mind-blowing performances by KJC faculty members

Mayo Shimonishi and Jesse C Tamang that set the mood for the event. Kijanowska magnetized the audience with her charismatic performance.

The New York Times in 2007 proclaimed her as "an excellent young Polish pianist," whereas Brazilian critics have titled her as "the Tina Turner of classical music". As a concerto soloist, recitalist and chamber musician, she has appeared in major festivals in Europe, including the Kiev Festival and the Polish Composers Festival under the patronage of Henryk Mikolaj Górecki, as well as at the Quartet Program at Bucknell University and SUNY Fredonia in New York. She has collaborated on these projects with several other renowned musicians, including violinists Charles Castleman, Sharon Roffman, and Ayano Ninomiya of Ying Quartet, pianist Blair McMillen of the Da Capo Chamber Players, and jazz pianist Leszek Mozdzierz.

Fete De La Musique 2012

Fete De La Musique, a music festival, is going to be organized on 21 June to mark the International Music Day that will be followed by a series of other events throughout the week. AFK will organize for the third time the music contest for all the interested

young creative musicians below 25 on 22 June (Friday), 5 pm onwards at Alliance Francaise. The winners will get an opportunity to open for No Jazz, an International French band at Nepal Academy Hall on 28 June that will start from 6 pm. Similarly, 23 June (Saturday) will see Classical Music Program at Yala Maya Kendra, Patan Dhoka from 3 pm.

Breathtaking Odissi at 'Paramapara Vistaar'



By the time it was 6 p.m. the hall at Moksh was entirely occupied by interested audiences, both locals and expatriates. The anxiety had started to build up and with the increasing temperature of the room, it was getting difficult to wait any longer for the show to begin. But as soon as the beautiful sound of the ghungroos was heard, there was an abrupt silence in the air. Four beautiful ladies, dressed in elaborate attire entered the stage in a row and like children waiting for a magician's trick, we all held our breath for the serene Odissi to begin.

As the first performance by the troupe began, it gripped the attention of all the audience members. The symphony of the ghungroos and the movement of their body along with the recorded music being played was breathtaking. More profound were the expressions on their faces, which brought the stories of the lyrics to life ensuring that the words didn't matter. There were a total of five performances given; two were solo performances, two group and one duet. Another performance by the troupe was held in Army Officers' Club, Sundhara, on 9 June.

Miss Nepal's "Rahat Siraha"



The press meet held at Hotel Annapurna, by Miss Nepal 2012, Shristi Shrestha was in concern of the fire outrage that took place in Siraha. The fire that broke out on 15 May displaced some 1000 families. In order to help those who have lost their homes in the terrible disaster, Shrestha called out for a humanitarian movement 'Rahat Siraha'.

Rahat Siraha is a charity movement where all the money collected will go towards the people affected by the fire. Shrestha donated her prize money from the Miss Nepal title for this noble cause and asked fellow Nepalese to extend a helping hand to those in need. She mentioned that the most important things that are required there at the moment were food, clean water, clothing and medical supplies.

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As the evening grew dark, the event ended with lighting candles.

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Children's Art Competition on Green Themes



Hotel Annapurna has been taking forward their 'go green' campaign through a number of eco-friendly initiatives. Solar and LED lights in public areas, use of emails over writing notes in offices, discouraging plastic bags, and rainwater harvesting are a few among those initiatives.

Celebrating the World Environment Day, the hotel organized a children's painting competition on Saturday. Sadichha Shrestha, WWF Young Conservation Ambassador and Miss Nepal 2010, inaugurated the competition. Senior artists Krishna Manandhar and Gobinda Dangol were the judges. The children of the hotel employees were the participants, who were separated into different age groups. They were given an hour to finish their artwork on environmental themes. Shashwat Pandit, Subi Kandel and Swikriti Singh were the winners of the competition in the three age groups of five to eight, nine to 12, and 13 to 16 respectively.

Nepal Appreciation

In her statement, Nutritionist Miriam E Krantz recounts her arrival to Kathmandu, back when the planes were small and the hills, decorated with the rice paddies. Now that Krantz is retired, she focused on realizing her dreams of taking up the sarangi and painting. For the latter, she joined Kathmandu University's Center for Art. Nepal Appreciation is the novice artist's first exhibition, which showcases her gratitude and love for Nepal. The exhibition features still-life, portraits and landscape paintings, and a solitary abstract piece that the artist interprets as what sunshine looks like. The event was inaugurated by Kiran Manandhar, with an entourage of artists from Nepal Academy of Fine Arts.

Raghini's Exhibit

Solace International, an NGO that works with underprivileged artisans, is currently hosting Raghini Upadhaya's Nature Speaks, at its retail outlet in Lazimpat. The exhibition features 47 paintings, (acrylic

and watercolor) on the topic of ecological degradation. Given Solace's goal to promote eco-friendly products, Upadhaya's conscious effort to transcribe her concerns for Mother Nature fits in well in the boutique store. One might even say that the "eco-chic" store has been overrun with living gods and goddesses as they struggle to survive in their present day state.

Upadhaya's characteristic style flourishes with dynamic colors, thin lines that move viewers' gaze from one element to the other. But more commanding and engaging are the surrealist figures that stand in for divinities. Their aloof expressions are the focus of the paintings, as they remain vulnerable and beleaguered by detrimental activities of modernity, specially people.

What Upadhaya's paintings do is pit values against actions. The artist alludes to the karmic cycle; she wants the audience to understand the give and take that binds all ecological systems together. Furthermore, she couples these imageries of angry gods and desperate avatars (the values) with an active surrounding that is abundant in Hindu iconographies and reference to human impact (the action).



Collision on Canvas

One of the founding members and working artist of Kasthamandap Art Gallery, Binod Pradhan's seventh solo exhibition titled 'Collision' was exhibited at Siddhartha Art Gallery till 19 June. This was his third solo exhibition at Siddhartha Art Gallery. The exhibition which began on 5 June, marking the Environment Day was based on the subject of global warming and climate change. This collision of human greed and nature is the subject of Pradhan's work. Climate change and global warming concerns are viewed as part of this collision.

On the whole, the paintings depict Pradhan's concern over the environmental changes and how exploitation of nature on our part has boomeranged to haunt us all in the form of environmental disasters. His paintings on the canvases have free flowing colors creating amazing forms from his imagination. To get an insight on Pradhan's concern about the apocalyptic future, come and visit Siddhartha Art Gallery.



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what's on

things to do this month

MUSIC AND PARTIES

Asarai Mainama: A Month Dedicated to Nepali Music

Closing Date: 15 July (Sunday)
Time: 7.15 pm onwards
Venue: House of Music, Thamel

House of Music is bringing forward the best of traditional sound that Nepali bands have to offer. It is celebrating the month of Asar with the outstanding artists and their talents. 22 June will see Night, an innovative Nepali fusion band's performance. On 29 June, Rudra, Nepali folk-fusion band, led by Sarangi maestro Shyam Nepali will be on stage. On 6 July, Re Sa, Nepali eastern classical-fusion band, led by Tabala guru Nawaraj Gurung will be performing. Likewise, on 13 July, Rock Sitar, A Nepali rock-fusion band, led by Sitar maestro, Bijaya Vaidya (of Sur Sudha fame) will be performing. So all the music enthusiasts do come and enjoy the music and support the local artists.

Cover charge: Rs 300 (with a can of Tuborg beer)

Nepfest 3 Open Band Competition

Date: 25 August (Saturday)
Time: 12:45 pm
Venue: Fun Park, Bhrikuti Mandap

The time has come for all the metal heads to prove their worth. Romanov is coming up with an opportunity to prove it. Romanov presents NEPFEST 3 "AUGUST" Open Band Competition. The winner of the competition will have the chance to share the stage with legendary Polish Technical Death Metal Band "DECAPITATED" on 8 September. Along with that, the winning band will also get to celebrate the title with Rs. 5000 cash. The first runner up will get Rs. 20000 cash. Registration forms are available at Nepfest Office, Sanepa.

Registration Fee: Rs. 5000

MISCELLANEOUS

Cycle 8: Soulhealers

Date: 9 July (Monday)
Time: 11 am
Venue: Galleria CUC

After having done some very diverse themes in the past, Galleria CUC is back with another edition of their photography exhibition series. To recall themes of few recent ones: the fifth installment was Panchatantra, sixth was wildlife photography titled "Life" and the seventh featured photo stories about tattoo artists, self-portraits based on the Navarasa and lives of brick factory workers. They have not limited themselves to any particular type of storytelling through photographs and they have proved it with their latest series as well. The theme for this installment of the photography series is titled Cycle 8: Soulhealers and will feature heart-warming photographs of children in our everyday lives. The photography exhibition has been designed to reflect the lives of young children in Nepal. The exhibition will be opened for visitors on other days from 10 am to 7 pm.

Entrance: Free

Kids Dance Performance

Date: 21 July (Thursday)
Time: 11:15 am onwards
Venue: Salsa Dance Academy, Bhatbhateni 4420564

The groups that have been learning Kathak and Freestyle Bollywood Dance in the dance classes being done by Salsa Dance Academy will be showcasing their talent on 21 July. The session performance will be a short one, with each dance style group giving a performance on one song each.

Entrance: Free

Free Scholarship Competition

Submission Deadline: 15 August (Wednesday)
Workshop's Date: 18 October (Tuesday) to 27 October (Saturday)
<http://www.thecompellingimage.com/>

Kathmandu and Dashain Festival Photo and Multimedia Workshop, a free competition is open only to all emerging still and multimedia photographers from India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. The submissions will be judged by Panos photographer and TCI instructor, G.M.B. Akash, along with Corbis Images Photographer and TCI Founder, David Bathgate. From your «Student Area,» you will be able to upload your 12- to 15-image photo-story submission, along with a brief description of your submitted work and a short-form of your resume. To enter, sign up for a free TCI account and enroll on the free scholarship competition course. The winner (there will be only one winner) will be announced on 1 September (Saturday) on the TCI Blog.

The scholarship does not include accommodation during the workshop.

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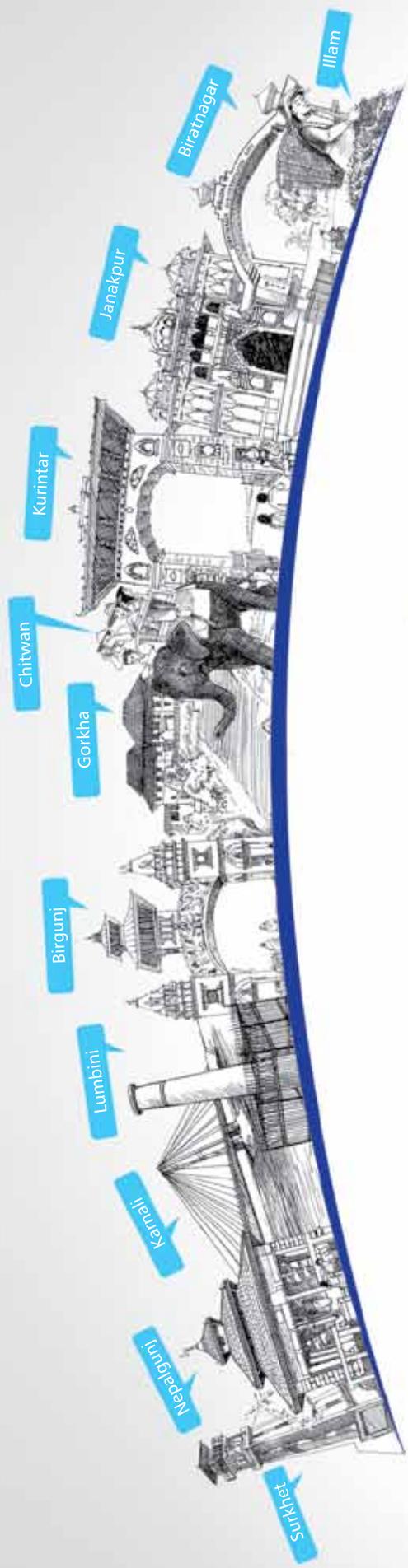
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LIVING IN NEPAL

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PEOPLE

Taking art out of the canvas

An artist who uses art for social change

Text By KAPIL BISHT

In the early days of her career, Ashmina was frequently asked which artist she wanted to be like. She says she always wanted to learn from other artists, but never to imitate them. “To become like someone else is to go backwards,” she says. “Artists need to ask themselves, ‘Who am I?’ The answer should reflect in the art.”

Ashmina never worked to live up to the traditional definition of art. In fact, she believes art needs to constantly evolve and adapt to stay alive. “If artists begin to enjoy their comfort zones, they die. Nothing new emerges if they don’t challenge themselves,” she says. Until recently, Nepali artists lived in a bubble, shielded from the reality of the times they lived in. “For a long time in Nepal art was something you hung on walls. It was almost interior designing,” she says.

Ashmina says the times in which she lives and the events happening around her influence her work the most. Hence, her work was never disconnected from social and political issues. When she started out as an artist, her seniors, mentors, and colleagues always warned her to steer away from them. “Nepalese art never asked questions,” she says. She decided she would. The Civil War was at its peak. Deciding she couldn’t be a bystander as the country plunged deeper into crisis she and a few other people organized a project called Bichalit Bartaman in 2002. Over a hundred artists and other prominent personalities participated in the event to draw attention

to the ongoing violence. “We wanted to take art out of the canvas,” she recalls.

The event was a huge success. Nepalese art seemed to have entered a new



Ashmina believes in being herself, something reflected in all her works

era. Although there were always people who derided this conceptual approach to art, refusing to even consider it art, many people liked it. “The civil war expedited the evolution of art,” says Ashmina. Although the Civil War wasn’t the only factor in this change, it prompted a few

artists like Ashmina to push the boundaries of art, to ask questions through it. “The Civil War was one of the things that contributed to the rise of activism,” she says. Ashmina was one of the stalwarts of activism – using art as a means for activism – in Nepal. During and after this violent period in Nepal, art gradually went from being an “elites’ tranquilizer” to a creative force.

The Civil War in Nepal, Ashmina says, not only changed Nepalese art, but people’s understanding of it. Ashmina used a variety of mediums, including drawing, painting, installation, live art performance, and sound in the numer-

“To become like someone else is to go backwards.”

ous events she performed and organized during this period. Art went from the bubble world of the studios and galleries to the real world on the streets. “Art became more accessible during this time,” Ashmina states. She remembers over 10,000 people witnessing one of her performances, which was held on Kathmandu’s streets, in 2004. “Many of those people had never been to a gallery,” she says. “They realized after that show how close art can be to their lives.” ■

Ashmina Ranjit can be contacted at ashmina@gmail.com. To learn more about her work visit: lasanaa.org.np and lasanaa.wordpress.com

Furandana

A light, healthy snack, Furandana is an easy-to-prepare Nepali delicacy.

Text By SHRISTY SHRESTHA

Furandana is a popular delicacy enjoyed over all of Nepal. This beloved food is a wonder snack having beaten rice as its core constituent. The dish is taken as lunch or an in-between-snack with tea.

A country of traditional living and of traditional eating, furandana is a combination of different local products which keeps the taste unique and fresh, somewhat representing the country we live in where people of different sects and background find a way to live in harmony.

There can be no Nepali who is not familiar with furandana. We are stocked with this snack consisting of nuts, seeds, lentils, peas, rice flakes, potato sticks and dry fruits. It is a flexible dish and is never made with fixed proportions. Each family improvises on the recipe. Although it consists of a lot of ingredients, it is relatively easy to make, with little skill and work. The ingredients are easily available at grocery stores and a stock of the furandana can be prepared and stored up to six months to be enjoyed later. ■

WHAT YOU NEED

1/half cups vegetable oil
 1/half cups rice flakes
 1/4th cup sugar
 1 teaspoon salt
 1/2 teaspoon of ground pepper
 1/2 teaspoon of cayenne pepper
 1/4 teaspoon of mango powder
 2 cups canned fried potato
 2 cups chickpea flour noodles
 1 cup fried split chickpeas
 1 cup fried yellow mung beans
 1 cup assorted spiced nuts
 1 cup fried peanuts
 1/4 cup roasted sunflower seeds
 1 tablespoon coconut chips
 8 dried red chillies
 1 cup finely chopped cilantro
 6 to 8 mild green chillies
 1/2 cup finely chopped garlic
 4 to 6 large clove of ginger, thinly sliced
 1/2 cup golden raisins
 1/2 teaspoon cumin seeds
 1/2 teaspoon ajowain seeds
 1/4 teaspoon brown mustard seeds
 2 tablespoon sesame seeds

HOW TO PREPARE

1. A frying pan with 1/2 cup of oil
2. Place the rice flakes in the pan with, sugar, salt, turmeric, pepper and mango powder.
3. Stir in potato sticks, chickpeas, mung beans, spiced nuts, peanuts, sunflower seeds and coconut.
4. Heat the remaining oil in a skillet over medium heat high.
5. When hot, fry the sliced chillies until red brown.
6. The rice flake adds to it.
7. In the same oil fry the cilantro, ginger, garlic, until crispy.
8. Remove from the pan, the oil soaked out and mixed this with the rice flakes.
9. Fry the raisins until they puff up and add to the rice flakes.
10. In the remaining oil, fry the cumin, ajawain and mustard seeds until they turn fully black and fragrant.
11. Reduce the heat, and add to it the sesame seeds until crackling.
12. Remove the spice, dry the oil, and add to the rice flakes.
13. The spices mix with rice flour properly.
14. Store immediately and store in an airtight container.

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Wasya Dya

Hope is a belief, and finds expression in the power of trusting. A walk through the valley can evoke some strangely familiar sights of such faith.

Text By SHRISTY SHRESTHA



ECS Media

Not even oral health escapes religious influences in Nepal.

Belief systems are perhaps the first medicines known to man, and whether they cause a difference or not is subjective. Compared with modern day medication, they seem strange and mythic. Rickshaw drivers wait by the Ikha Narayan (10), a small two-roofed temple. Its shrine houses a beautiful 10th-11th century four-armed Sridhara Vishnu, flanked by Lakshmi and Garuda. On the same road, continue through a



ECS Media

Each coin nailed here symbolizes doing away with negative energy.

busy Newar neighborhood to the next intersection, where the Kal Tol temple sits with its stacks of pottery. Toothache sufferers seeking a cure have driven hundreds of nails into a slab of wood here. Opposite, under a roof, a piece of wood is punctured with thousands of nails around a tiny gilded image of Vaisha Dev, the god of toothache. To plant a nail here is to get rid of pain by pinning down all evil spirits and influences. If this folk remedy doesn't work, the nearby lane is filled with dentists' parlors left and right. Their window displays of advertisements of dentures provide the medical approach. Some of them face the road, so all who wish can watch a tooth being extracted.

This neighborhood is called Bange-mudha - where bange means crooked and mudha means a log of wood or a wooden stool - after an important and legendary piece of wood of which the toothache deity's abode is only a fragment. It's a busy corner, as yet untouched by much sign of modernity. Porters frequent the small tea stalls here, some no more than a kerosene stove and a few glasses. Also called

Killagarh, the numbers of nails that are hammered represent the number of suffering teeth. Legend has it that Wasya Dya first came to Kathmandu to watch the dances of naradevi and stayed so long that he took root as a great tree. Today all that is left of the ancient tree is this gnarled section of wood, considered endangered.

There is another Wasya Dya in South Kathmandu, an indication, perhaps, of the rivalry, between the north and south. Shrines of faith that may seem strange to the modern eye, and yet familiar to the believer, stand out as landmarks of identity for many communities. A walk through these sites of religious importance is not just a tour of the curious and the notable, though there is plenty of that. The walks are strolls through a past that is alive in the present, a reminder of the cultural history of the valley and of the different but intertwined religious practices. Start somewhere that has faded into the background of your everyday routine. You will be surprised with what you did not know, or have forgotten about the space around you.. ■

Creating something out of nothing

Recycling paper is not rocket science. All you need is patience, some creativity and a lot of used paper!

Text By ANUBHUTI POUDYAL

Forest. Wood. Paper. Rubbish. The cycle pretty much ends there in most cases. There are always piles of used exercise books, books and newspapers stacked neatly gathering dust. Once ready, paper goes on a fascinating journey, carrying secrets of the world, words from the heart and thoughts in the head from the writer's desk to shelves, bags and hands of its readers. And to think that these same sheets of paper could be deemed as waste.

Subin, Srijana and JJ are three young faces I met when looking for people who thought recycling was not just useful but cool. "In our store, we have products that will interest those who love nature. There are products made out of scrap wood, newspapers and old paper," says

Srijana, one of the minds behind the Earthy store. Besides their other products, the store makes newspaper bags and visiting cards using recycled paper. What is striking is their Tree of stories, an entire tree put together by recycling newspaper to tell the story of tree - the irony! Recycling it seems, has been redefined these days by not just creating useful items but brilliantly innovative ones too.

Recycling produces items such as pen holders, photo frames, wrapping paper, jewelry boxes and decorative items amongst others and so on. In all cases, recycling is not limited to mere utilization of resources but more of giving new life to things that have been deemed useless. Today an interesting group of people are working together



The tree of stories at Earthy, is itself made out of recycled paper.



Recycled paper is not just eco-friendly but also classy and unique.

to create something that is not just business-oriented but environment-friendly as well. Some of these people working to create innovative paper products and recycled items are young faces, be it in places like Jamarko or at Earthy. They have an idea about the kind of products that can impress as well as inspire the masses to use and then, reuse them.

Next time you look for something to adorn your room or your friend's room, make sure you think out of the box and search for something that has its worth and purpose. You will not just find variety but new ways of displaying items by using recycled paper products. Create some by yourself too. ■

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Cardamom and Class

A Limbu Village and Its Extensions in East Nepal

Text By IAN CARLOS FITZPATRICK

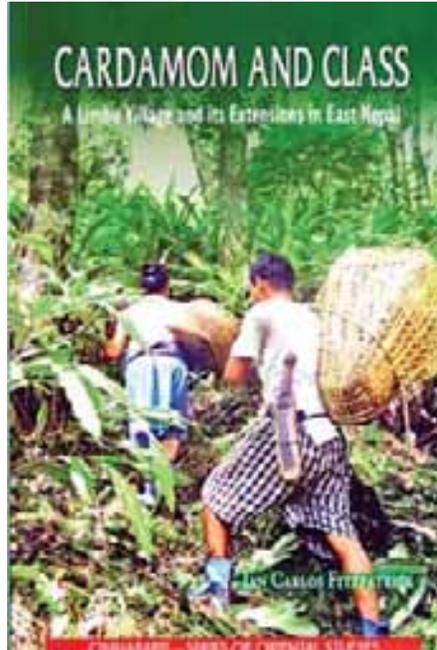
Reviewed By DON MESSERSCHMIDT

ETHNOGRAPHIC research in Nepal since the 1960s has resulted in a variety of books about the social, cultural, economic and political histories and contemporary situations of numerous caste and ethnic groups and communities. Many studies examine local circumstances within a wider context of national and international concerns. Some of the best of them deal with economic change, including the recent impact globalization, especially the opening of world markets to Nepalese products.

Cardamom and Class by Ian Fitzpatrick sets a high standard among such studies. It focuses in considerable depth on the political economy of members of a Limbu ethnic community, and close economic relations with several caste groups that have settled amongst them. It provides a thorough review of the influences of a relatively new cash economy based on cardamom production and how it has stimulated wealth accumulation in 'A Limbu Village and Its Extensions in East Nepal' (the book's subtitle).

Of most interest to non-anthropologist readers is the author's rich description of the life and times of Mamangkhe village. He analyzes how economic opportunities beyond traditional subsistence farming have significantly altered villagers' lives. It is, in general, a story played out in many Nepalese communities, involving the adoption of a cash crop (cardamom in this case, but tourism, military service, and remittance labor migration are analogous examples), and subsequent changes in local lifestyles and aspirations.

As a study of the 'political economy' of one community (and its extensions) *Cardamom and Cash* presents a fine example of how society creates wealth through the production and distribution of goods. The underlying direction of the book can be succinctly stated by saying that it is a political-economic study of how Mamangkhe village has



changed over time, keyed to the rise of the cash crop economy combined with a variety of external forces. By so doing, the author emphasizes the importance of moving beyond an analysis of caste relations (of many past ethnographies) to the development of economic class distinctions in society.

The book has six chapters plus an Introduction and Conclusion. The chapters deal with the Theoretical Context, Historical Context, Mamangkhe Village, Cardamom, Migration, and Ecological and Socioeconomic Change. The author highlights each discussion with in-depth case studies of specific villagers both of Limbu ethnic and of Brahmin-Chhetri and Dalit caste identities.

In the History chapter the author traces changes in the local Limbu economy from early hunting and gathering to subsistence farming, then to major dependence on a single crop followed (for some villagers) by a relatively rapid accumulation of wealth (first from cardamom, later from remittances). These changes have led to dramatic changes in the structure of economic

class relations within the community and (for some) to major out-migration and resettlement elsewhere.

The Migration chapter describes a situation common all across Nepal. Migration may be either temporary or permanent, and either national (internal) and international. Temporary forms of migration include moving for purposes of schooling and marketing, and for religious reasons (e.g., a pilgrimage). Permanent migration occurs for employment and, for some, for marriage purposes. The outside employment options include taking up government jobs elsewhere in the country (for a few) and foreign employment by many young people seeking significant earnings and remittances to increase household wealth. Migration away from the village to avoid the local impacts of the recent insurgency in Nepal has also been significant.

Permanent migration within Nepal has resulted in what some researchers call "dispersed settlements" well away from the original home community. Mamangkhe's main dispersed settlement migration is to Jhapa District in the lower eastern Nepal hills and plains south of the original village.

Cardamom and Cash is a thoroughly engrossing read for academic and non-academic readers alike, and a significant contribution to the cumulative ethnography of Nepal. ■

Vajra Publications (Kathmandu), 2011, 321pp. NRs. 1200. Illustrated. Tables, Figures, Maps, Glossary, Bibliography, Index and Appendices. This book is one in the 'Cinnabaris Series of Oriental Studies' from Vajra Publications. Other titles in the series are: *Shamanic Solitudes: Ecstasy, Madness and Spirit Possession in the Nepal Himalaya* and *The Ancestral Forest: Memory, Space and Ritual among the Kulunge Rai of Eastern Nepal*, both by Martino Nicoletti; and *Himalayan Mountain Cults: Sailung Kalingchok Gosainkund Territorial Rituals and Tamang Histories*, by Gabriele Tautscher.



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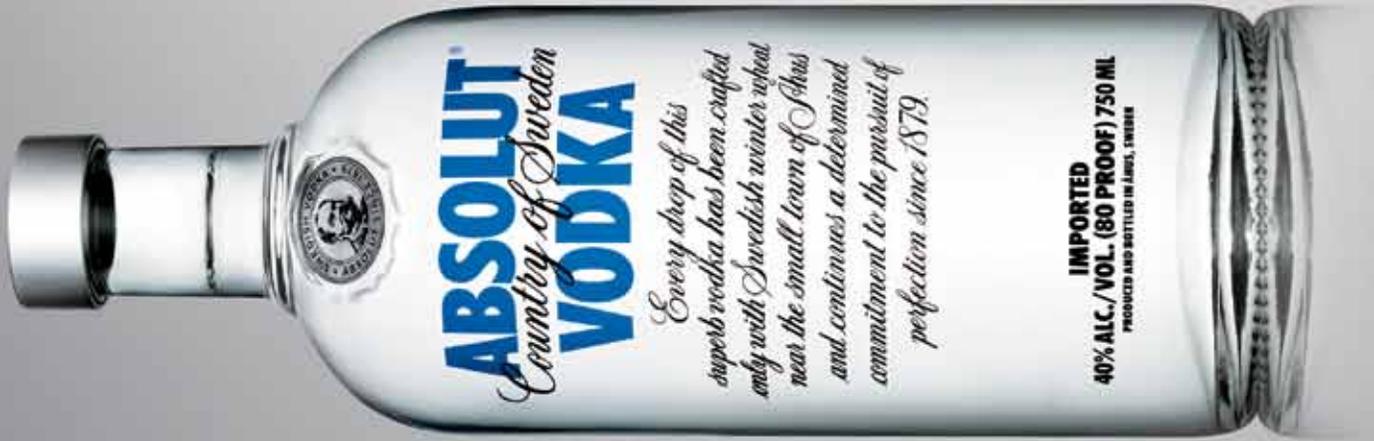
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Pashmina is a Nepali product that has garnered most international attention and popularity.



KOSELI

WITH LOVE, FROM NEPAL

Text By UTSAV SHAKYA, Photos By ECS MEDIA

One of the more popular t-shirts on sale in the ubiquitous, hippyish clothing stores in Thamel says 'My friend went to Nepal and all I got was this t-shirt'. It's always struck a chord with tourists, the shopkeepers say, and it's easy to see why. Buying souvenirs when traveling for your loved ones is a global phenomenon and so is buying a souvenir that your loved ones don't really appreciate!

Thankfully, that t-shirt does not do justice to what Nepal has to offer to whoever is on the look out for authentic 'Made in Nepal' products, commodities that not only look good and last a life time but are also representative of Nepal's culture, history and of how these factors have been integrated into modern Nepal.

Even though most people will call Kathmandu the cultural hotspot of the country, fact is that in a country with 102 different ethnic groups and 92 languages, one place can hardly do justice to what the rest of the country has to offer. What Kathmandu does a good job at however is at advertising the rest of the country and its traditions and cultures. So wherever you go in the country, the region will most likely speak its own language, practice its own unique culture and traditions and as a result of this, have their own art and crafts scene. Owing to the varied topography

across Nepal, and the region's sociocultural and historical influences, different regions also have their own cuisines and unique food items.

What does this mean? Two things - Firstly, that even though you might not find the 'Made in Nepal' tag on everything that is authentically Nepali, the country has a staggering number of things that you can choose from as souvenirs when you're traveling, not just abroad but also domestically. Secondly, this means there really is no excuse for that t-shirt.

THE HISTORY OF KOSELI

There is no recorded history of the tradition of Koseli as such. It describes the practice of presenting loved ones with a souvenir after one has come back from a trip. The souvenir in this case has to be something that is unique to the area. For instance, if someone were to be coming back from Bhojpur, a great Koseli item would be a khukuri, a short knife-like weapon used in battle by the legendary Gurkhas.

How the term got its origin and who started this tradition and why is open to discussion but one idea seems more plausible than others. Whenever people had reason (read: work, festivals) to hike up to the hills or move down into the Terai, they would take with them products that they could trade. These products would range

from food items - local produce such as fruits, vegetables and pulses to items such as fabric, tools, jewelry and the like. What grows in the Nepali terai - a variety of fruits and vegetables does not grow well or not at all in the colder climes of the hills and mountains. Similarly, the produce of the hills such as tea, cardamom, ginger, cinnamon are better than that grown down south. Such trade would take place in the village bazaars, make shift markets

...in a country with 102 different ethnic groups and 92 languages, one place can hardly do justice to what the rest of the country has to offer

where everyone would set up shop and sell their wares and produce. The tradition of also taking along a gift for people you knew in that area - something symbolic of your village or town or a small reminder of home for a relative who married and moved there perhaps - could have started in this way.

The tradition of taking along a koseli is still alive. A kilo of the very popular apples from Jumla, a small packet of local hand

Stone craft is most times an art form that is passed on from generations to generation.



rolled tea from Ilam, even a small brass statue from the numerous craft shops in Patan - all great souvenirs I have taken along when traveling within the country and abroad.

There was a time when friends studying in the U.S. would take along packets of sukuti (buff jerky), chewra (beaten rice) and Surya brand cigarettes for other Nepalese students who missed the local flavor. I don't know about the Surya cigarettes but I hear the sukuti and beaten rice are available at Indian stores in bigger American cities now!

A NEPALI CATALOGUE

Before you head out the door excitedly to go souvenir shopping, a good idea would be to first sit down and plan out what you want and what your options are. Planning in terms of the following would be a good idea:

Price - if you want something unique for a special someone, be prepared to shell out a little more than the usual. Smaller gift items are of course abundantly available. **Size** - souvenirs can come in all shapes and sizes, from small trinkets to large paintings; pick the most practical option keeping in mind how you're traveling. **Type of souvenir** - some souvenir items might be a bit tricky to carry on board a plane, for instance food items and even the khukuri. Make sure you know how to take care of this. Food items can be marked and carried in your luggage and khukuris need to have a bill of purchase to present to security personnel.

Let's start with clothing items. A Yak and Yeti t-shirt is standard fare but also available are authentic Nepali clothing items such as pashmina products and Nepal's traditional dhaka fabric. Made from the wool sheared from the underbelly of high altitude mountain goats indigenous to the high mountains of countries like Nepal and Pakistan, many pashmina producers still employ time-tested, traditional methods. Most of the work is done by hand by locals, making your souvenir a truly Nepali one. This attention to detail

also means that pashmina is expensive so don't hurry up and buy a cheap one; chances are it's a fake.

Dhaka on the other hand is inexpensive but owed to its own history, makes for a gift that is as authentically Nepali. Dhaka has been worn by Nepali men and women for centuries, by the men as a topi (cap) and by women as a cholo (blouse). It's also a fabric that is associated with formality as it forms a part of the national dress. If there is any fabric that is as much about the fabric as it is about

If there is any fabric that is as much about the fabric as it is about Nepali culture, Dhaka is it.

Nepali culture, Dhaka is it. Besides dhaka, people have also woven fabrics like Allo made out of stinging nettle, bamboo cloth and hemp here.

Jewelry follows naturally and this is where the women folk and perhaps even the men might go a little bonkers. In addition to the jewelry that is a part of Hindu culture such as the tilahari - a necklace that signifies marital status, different ethnic groups have their own unique jewelry. Based on what appeals to you, choose from a range of ornaments and their significance, from large pieces made up of beads and precious stones common in the Sherpa community to traditional Newar jewelry, usually of gold and silver, most often with precious stones and specific to occasions. Go hunting for Newar pieces in the older, brick paved alleys of Patan and for Sherpa pieces in and around Bouddhanath and Thamel. Pote shops abound in Patan's Durbar Square and also in Kathmandu's Ason chowk. Interestingly, the former are owned by Newari speaking Muslims; a cultural rarity that adds to the experience.



Nepali Dhaka fabric is perhaps the koseli item with the most sentimental value for most Nepalese.

The most popular souvenirs from Nepal are of course Nepalese handicrafts. Ranging from stone and paper to clay and precious metals, Nepal and specially its hilly enclaves have a rich history that is well recorded in books and museums. More importantly and to the delight of many a visitor, this history is a part of the present culture of the country. The great thing about Nepali handicrafts is that most if not all of these items are in daily use in Nepal from the stone and metal idols worshipped in temples to utensils used at home.

For stone and metal work, visit Patan, one of Kathmandu valley's three districts and the home of native Newars who have preserved and worked to promote art and craft that is a part of their heritage. For wood work and clay craft however, Bhaktapur is more popular, also home to Newars but increasingly a melting pot of cultures. Depending on size, detail of work and the time spent on the product - some pieces can take up to years to finish - prices can vary from a few thousand rupees to a few lakhs. (One hundred thousand equals one lakh) ▶

*Lhokta paper and products
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durable koselis.*



Most of the artwork has a religious theme to them, a result and proof of the impact of religion on Nepali culture and lifestyles. From Hindu deities such as the Ganesha, ubiquitously seen around the capital's streets and the Shiva lingam to numerous avatars of the Buddha, the gods are a dominating theme. Walk down from Patan Durbar Square to Sundhara (golden spouts) and take a right for wholesale shops owned by manufacturers.

Amongst the woodcarving community in Bhaktapur, the Shilpakar community can be traced back to the Indian states of Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh

You can even request to see the artists working on it, hands chiseling out shapes from slabs of stone and metal, using techniques and tools that have not seen much change. While the artists freely step on the metal and stone while sculpting, after the sthavana puja - a ceremony that breathes life into the rock or metal and transforms it into a deity, doing so would be considered sacrilegious.

For great wood work items as gifts, travel back in time to the city of Bhaktapur, 25 km east of Kathmandu. The place is teeming with artists who come from a long line of woodworkers. Although also consisting of many religious figurines, artists have branched out into more contemporary works too. Decorative pieces are also available, such as small decorative tiki-jhyas - traditional carved windows, but the most authentic work remains idols and imagery of gods and goddesses.

Amongst the woodcarving community in Bhaktapur, the Shilpakar community can be traced back to the Indian states of Uttarakhand, formerly Uttaranchal and Uttar Pradesh. Previously considered untouchable, the Indian leader-freedom fighter Lala Lajpat Rai found them to be highly skilled craftsmen and considered

their exploitation by high caste Hindus as extremely unjust. He worked towards having them officially recognized as Shilpkar in 1925 by the British government. The area borders Mahakali zone of Nepal's far western region to the east, possibly the entry point of modern day Shilpakars into Nepal. Amongst them, seek out if you can the work of master woodworker Indra Kaji Shilpakar, who comes from a family of artists and whose work has been

exhibited abroad. His home-workshop premises houses a small museum, to preserve skills passed down on him through generations.

Looking for something lighter than statues, perhaps a use-everyday item? Try products made out of lhokta paper, made from the lhokta bush (botanically known as *Daphne bhoola* or *Daphne papyracea*). Growing in the mountains of the country at altitudes as high as 3000m, it's paper is handmade using the inner bark of the bush. There's a list of reasons why lhokta products make for great gifts. Firstly, variety: notebooks (in all sizes and with creative, colorful hardcovers), wrapping paper, greeting cards, stationery packs (writing paper and envelopes) and even small boxes to stow away letters and cards are available. You can even get personalized business cards made for yourself or a friend - an eco friendly idea that's sure to be a hit in the boardroom. Secondly lhokta does not tear easily and insects are repelled by it so it lasts longer than commercial quality paper. Lhokta is also the official paper, still used for numerous official purposes.

An adopted koseli idea is the Tibetan carpet. In fact, the art form was brought into Nepal by Tibetan refugees. The



Mithila art, once limited to wall paintings, is now more mobile through paper paintings and other products.

art form has since then found a ready home here in Kathmandu, where it is still made using the same techniques. Tibetan highland sheep wool is knotted in characteristically Tibetan methods to achieve a distinctly Tibetan carpet, with depictions of dragons, phoenix and floral motifs. Checkerboard and amulet patterns are also common. The rugs were typically limited in color palette because of the availability of a few dyes, although the same is not true anymore. Another interesting thing about the Tibetan carpet is that while most carpets are produced for the purpose of floor seating, these are equally popular as wall hangings and saddle covers. The Ekantakuna area in Lalitpur, south of the Jawalakhel roundabout is home to the Tibetan camps, where one can find and converse with a lot of carpet makers. Buying carpets from these guys is also a good idea although, taking along a knowledgeable someone is a good idea.

NEPALI ART

Moving out of the city, most notable and popular in the Terai is the Mithila ▶



Paubhas follow strict guidelines from religious texts, although artists find ways to personalize each piece.

art form. The word Mithila comes from the region in which this art form is practiced, predominantly by the women folk of the village. Mithila was divided between Nepal and India in 1815 when the British East India Company and the Nepali government signed the Sugauli treaty, ending the second British invasion of Nepal during the Anglo Indian war (1814-1816). The art work itself, due to its historical and cultural influences is distinctly different from art found elsewhere in Nepal. Painted using fingers, twigs, and even matchsticks, the artists use a wide range of bright colors mainly derived from plants to scenes from the courtroom to daily lives in the region. The art work is characterized by geometric patterns and there are distinct paintings to mark important occasions such as birth, marriage and important Hindu festivals such as Holi. Typically, no space is left empty on a Mithila painting, artists will rather fill up this space with images of birds, the sun, the moon and plants such as the *Tulsi*.

Mithila art has traditionally been confined to the mud walls and floors of huts, one of the reasons why it failed to get as popular as other more mobile art forms. Today, they are also done on cloth,

hand-made paper and canvas - allowing them mobility and increased popularity and commercial value. Items such as bags, notebooks and fabric, all with Mithila art, all hand painted and thus unique, make for great ideas for a koseli.

Paubha and Thangka paintings, although also having to do with religious figures, are markedly different from Mithila paintings. For one, the cultural influences are Buddhist as opposed to the Hindu influences in Mithila work. Second, paubha paintings are done on canvas, using stone colors. Thangkas however, although confused many times with paubhas, are silk paintings with a strong Tibetan influence which unlike the flat paubhas have embroidery work on them. Thangka is a Nepali art form, exported to Tibet after Princess Bhrikuti of Nepal, daughter of King Lichchavi, married Sron Tsan Gampo, the ruler of Tibet who then imported the images of Aryawalokirteshwar and other Nepalese deities to Tibet. Both thangkas and paub-

Thangka is a Nepali art form, exported to Tibet after Princess Bhrikuti of Nepal, daughter of King Lichchavi, married Sron Tsan Gampo

has depict religious images: the paubha usually has avatars of the Buddha depicting scenes from holy texts while thangkas have high lamas and retelling of historical events and myths. Both have a quality that is pleasing to the eye and meditational to the mind. Both also require immense dedication to make, in terms of learning the skills and also devoting a large amount of time to the art form. Although there is room to experiment, strict guidelines have to be followed without which the painting would be rid of any significant

value. Both thangkas and paubhas can be very expensive and asking for expert help is advised.

A HISTORY OF THE ART AND THE ARTISTS

The fact that traditional art and craft are very much ingrained into the lifestyles of the people here is apparent when you realize that in many cases, their second names are a derivation of the kind of craft they are involved in. Take for instance the word Nakarmi, a surname that is common amongst the Newar population in Bhaktapur and which means blacksmith in the local language. The word is derived from two words Na meaning iron and Karma meaning work, or someone who does iron work. Similarly, Sikarmis were traditionally a caste of people who did wood work (Sni is the Newar word for wood) and Dakarmis did masonry.

Traditional artists and their families too have second names that correspond to the kind of craft they do. Chitrakar comes from two Nepali words chitra meaning an image or a picture and akaar, meaning shape. Chitrakars therefore, are people who belong to a caste that has traditionally engaged in painting and mask making. This art may mean painting a paubha, a religious Newari art form whose senior most artist in Nepal is Lok Chitrakar or other paintings and even photographs as shown by Bhaju Macha Chitrakar, an artist and court painter who traveled extensively in Europe with Rana era Prime Minister Jung Bahadur and Dirgha Man Chitrakar, one of the country's first photographers who used large format cameras and wet plates. Today the caste system can no longer be trusted upon to be an exact indicator of a person's occupation; it remains an important reminder of Nepal's rich heritage of art and craft.

THE WAY TO A NEPALI'S HEART IS THROUGH NEPALI FOOD

Locally speaking, the most common koseli ideas are food items. With eighty percent of the country still engaged in agriculture,

Metal koselis feature painfully handcrafted designs, which more often than not have a religious linkage.





Besides locals, Thakali cuisine is popular also amongst trekkers for the right mix of proteins and carbs.

it's no wonder that Nepal is home to a staggering variety of food items. The east of the country, Ilam specifically, is the country's tea district, producing unique varieties that are popular around the world. From machine made brands to hand rolled tea made by locals, don't leave Nepal without some samples. A visit to the rolling hills of Ilam, with tea plantations stretching out as far as the eyes can see is a real treat for the taste buds and also for the soul. Midway between the capital and Ilam is Hile, a sleepy town popular for tongba, a strong variety of liquor sipped warm out of a wooden flask, and which is made by soaking and fermenting millet.

In the central capital city, it's Newar cuisine that is most popular. Natives of the valley, the Newars have a spicy palate with a variety of buff dishes, vegetable curries, lots of pickles, beaten rice and salty pancakes made out of pulses. If you're visiting, a koseli idea might be to learn a few of their recipes, easily shared by locals, and to buy the unique spices that are mostly home-made. The best way to wash down a good Newari feast is a salincha (small clay saucer) full of aaila, local liquor made out of fermented rice. A Newar specialty (that has been

commercially produced and marketed abroad by Himalayan Distillery now), aaila's potent qualities have earned it the description of 'fire water'. Strong, home brewed Aaila has also been used traditionally used as ointment to cure muscle pains.

With eighty percent of the country still engaged in agriculture, it's no wonder that Nepal is home to a staggering variety of food items.

All of which makes it a great koseli item, to drink and to nurse any muscle pains the next day!

Moving westwards, the Thakali cuisine of the Thakali clan (originating in the Thak Khola regions of the mid hills) is popular with locals as a sumptuous, full meal cooked over a wood fire for authentic taste. A spoon of ghee (home made vegetable oil) adds to the taste and

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Shipping: If carpets and wooden statues sound like a nightmare to haul around, relax. Most prominent craft shops and even the smaller ones nowadays have provisions to have your large gift items shipped. Most shops also accept major credit cards.

Retail stores/producers?: While buying at large shops gives you a great variety of choices, it might also be a good idea to seek out shops that are also producers of these goods for better prices and more information about your gift.

Bargaining: It's commonplace in Nepal for customer (locals and foreigners) to bargain for a better deal so be prepared to haggle a little. However, be careful to not offend shopkeepers with ridiculously low prices. A lot of the goods are priced quite reasonably.

Teamwork: For foreigners and locals both, it's always a good idea to take along someone along who knows about the items. For someone who does not speak the language, he/she can act as translator and also ensure that the buyer gets exactly what he/she wants.

the unmistakable aroma of this cuisine. The best way to have a Thakali set is to get yourself invited to dinner at a Thakali friend's place; Tulachan, Hirachan, Sharchan and Gauchan are surnames of some of the Thakali community. No friends with those surnames? Not a problem, the capital has some great places to try Thakali cuisine.

The west of the country, considered most remote and also equally idyllic is home to arguably the best apples in the world. Apples from areas such as Jumla and Humla are unlike apples from anywhere else with great potential. Bite into one and you'll immediately realize how the high mountain air and terrain figure into the flavor of this fruit. So what do you do when you have apple trees all around but not too many people to enjoy it? Make marpha, nicknamed apple

whiskey, out of it ofcourse. Enjoyed warm and cold, it serves the locals well with battling the mountain cold, reasons why its made in most mountain areas where there are apples. Buy some or better still learn how to make it, although it'll probably never taste the same or as good as when you're enjoying it at the end of a tiring day on the trail, in front of a wood fire drying your soaked self!

GIVING A NEPALI GIFT

When chosen with care, knowledge and respect and for the right reasons, a koseli becomes not just a hastily picked souvenir, but a symbol of the country's rich culture, of its traditions, its mountains, hills, rivers and plains, its rich history and heritage of art, craft and architecture and of its people and a hospitality that is tied to Nepali values.

Buy what you will, and where, there are some common traits that your gift will have. Made by hand, using methods passed down over generations and traditoinal tools that stand out in a modern day workshop, defying the odds of finance, modern day techniques and machinery and shortcuts that save time, money and energy and most importantly, symbolising the best of Nepal – a koseli defies even time.

So go on, choose and pick, and present it to a friend, a lover or a parent but make sure to tell them about it, its history and its stories. And that this is not just a souvenir, but a gift of and from Nepal, with love. ■

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For more information on the GHT-CSCT, visit: www.thegreathimalayatrail.org, www.storycycle.com, www.himalayanclimate.org

WHERE TO BUY ?

Association of Craft products, Kupondole
Contact no: 4270721
Contact person: Revita Shrestha

T-shirts, Thamel
Contact no: 9851025084
Contact person: Maryas Archer

Handicraft Framings, Pulchowk
Contact no: 5534440
Contact person: Swoyambhu Ratna Dhakhwa

Bhodi Sattva, Babaarmahal Revisited
Contact no: 5523805
Contact person: Projwal Shakya

Cashmere House, Basantapur
Contact no: 4230975
Contact person: Shanti Lal Kothari

Creative Art Gallery, Thamel
Contact no: 4226090
Contact person: Sagar Maharjan

Deva's Arts, Durbar Marg
Contact no: 4224871
Contact person: Shishir Shakya

Exclusive Textile, Thamel
Contact no: 4422483
Contact person: Parminder Singh

Fewa Pashmina, Sanepa
Contact no: 5525940
Contact person: Purshottam Pokharel

Friend Handicraft, Umakanta Marg, Kathmandu
Contact no: 4495740
Contact person: Nirjala/ Shanti Shrestha

Himalayan Coffee, Patan
Contact no: 5531237
Contact person: Kiran Tamrakar

Himalayan Cashmere, Lazimpat
Contact no: 4415240
Contact person: Padam Pun

Himalayan Wood Carving, Kupondole
Contact no: 5528444
Contact person: Kabindra Tamrakar

Indigo Gallery, Naxal
Contact no: 4413580
Contact person: Jems/Rabindra Dangol

Jamarko, Jhamsikhel
Contact no: 9849245686
Contact person: Kritika Lacoul

Javana Jewelry, Babarmahal Revisited
Contact no: 4215334
Contact person: Bal Krishna Asarpati

Kalinta Gift Manufacturing Nagpokhari, Contact no: 4442437
Naxal, Contact no: 4442437
Contact person: Luca Corona

Khokana Stone Carving, Khokana
Contact no: 5591670

Contact person: Chandra Shyam Dangol

Khukuri House Handicraft Industry, Patan Industrial Estate
Contact no: 2222616
Contact person: Suraj Lama

Kokaine, Jhamsikhel
Contact no: 5527539
Contact person: Vandana Bharati

Lokta Papers, Ekantakuna
Contact no: 5546874
Contact person: Shiva Ram Subedi

Mahaguthi, Kupondol
Contact no: 5533197
Contact person: Sunil Chitrakar

Maiti Nepal, Gaushala
Contact no: 4494816
Contact person: Akriti Kharel

Master Weaver, Ekantakuna
Contact no: 5000734
Contact person: Pema Carpoche

Nepal Pashmina industry, Soaltee mode
Contact no: 4273292
Contact person: Sunil Shrestha

SAARC chamber craft village (WE), Pulchowk
Contact no: 5523768
Contact person: Sreeja Kibenja

Sana Hastakala, Kupondole
Contact no: 5555837
Contact person: Chandra P Kachhapati

Sandook gift shop, Jhamsikhel
Contact no: 5542062
Contact person: Reshma Shrestha

Sisters Concern, Saugol
Contact no: 5540334
Contact person: Laxmi Nakarmi

Siva Wood Carving, Manbhawan
Contact no: 5537085
Contact person: Shiva Maharjan

Susan Collection, KGH
Contact no: 9851035435
Contact person: Susan Shakya

Tara oriental, Lazimpat
Contact no: 4436315
Contact person: Lazimpat

Wild Earth Pvt. Ltd, Bansbari
Contact no: 4374100
Contact person: Gikmi Bhutia Sherpa

Wood craft, Manbhawan
Contact no: 5554708
Contact person: Kabindra P. Pradhan

Yala-art gallery, Kwalkhu
Contact no: 5536690
Contact person: Deepesh Shrestha

Master Weaver

The weavers who have mastered the art of carpet weaving.

TEXT BY ANUBHUTI POUDYAL



Photo by Pema Karpoche

How often have you walked into a shop and walked out with something much bigger than you needed just because you could not resist your temptation? Even if we would want - it rarely happens. Recently I walked into one such place that made me want much bigger and lavish than I intended to or even expected to buy. I am talking about my experience with Master Weaver at Jawalakhel, Lalitpur.

Master Weaver, as the name says it all, is a modern day avatar of the ancient

Grand Masters (Chenmola in Tibetan) of the Tibetan Carpet weaving art which flourished only in Gyangtse valley of Tibet for centuries. The art travelled south across the Himalayas into Nepal from 1959 onwards with the influx of Tibetan refugees who entered the country to seek asylum. The rest, they say, is a history.

The company is today owned and run by the second generation of the Tibetan Refugee family who pioneered privately manufactured business of Tibetan carpet in Nepal in early 1970s. Starting the

business from a humble setting of a few weavers for self sustenance of the family inadvertently gave birth to the modern day Nepalese Tibetan Carpet Industries of Nepal. The brand loved all over the world for its innocence, beauty, quality and versatility.

Master Weaver has one of the finest products of Nepalese Tibetan Carpets that the city has to offer. The company basically does custom-order productions for export to North America and Europe but it also takes great interest in doing the same for niche local customers



as well. The carpet patterns range from traditional, transitional to ultra modern and many with even borrowed designs from ancient Tibetan art or antique pieces which there by adds value to the pieces representative of the culture and history. There are also a wide range of sizes, shapes and patterns that you can choose from once you enter the showroom. Many people have an idea of what they want but are shown options much better than they imagined. The workers in the company are trained to work for quality rather than quantity which every piece of the company's product shows.

The company is also a member of CARE & FAIR which is a social service initiative against child labor and facilitating free clinic and ambulance services to the employees of carpet industry and disadvantaged members of the society. The company's management also makes it a point to provide education to all the children of the employees, hence fulfilling its corporate social responsibility to the fullest possible. Currently 36 boys and girls are sponsored fully into different schools.

The quality of products is also ensured by international quality certification (ISO 9001-2008) awarded by

The company's management also makes it a point to provide education to all the children of the employees, hence fulfilling its corporate social responsibility to the fullest possible. Currently 36 boys and girls are sponsored fully into different schools

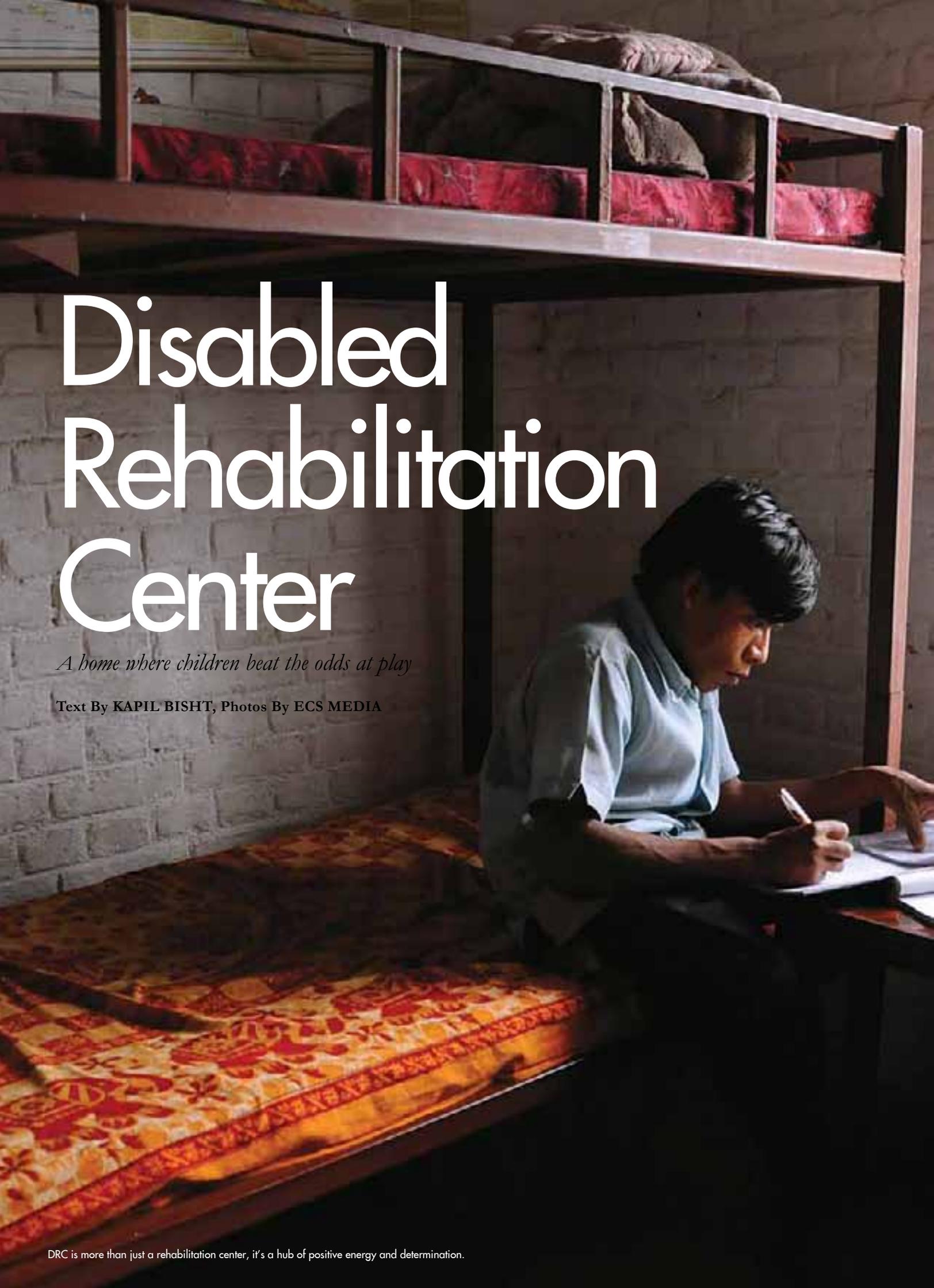
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You walk into a place and you walk out with a much different product than you had in mind. That is a way of saying you got something that was better than you imagined. It is the ability of

art to surprise. And Tibetan carpets in Master Weaver do that pleasantly and quite often. It will adorn your rooms with stories of history and patterns of present, blended together with uniqueness and craft you will not regret investing in. ■



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 www.masterweaver.com.np

A young boy with a physical disability is sitting on a bed in a dormitory, focused on writing at a desk. The room features metal bunk beds with red bedding. The boy is wearing a light blue shirt and is illuminated by a warm light source, possibly a lamp, creating a focused and studious atmosphere. The background is a simple, light-colored brick wall.

Disabled Rehabilitation Center

A home where children beat the odds at play

Text By KAPIL BISHT, Photos By ECS MEDIA



Two months ago a boy from my hometown with whom I had spent many evenings on the playground met with an accident, and in its aftermath, one of his arms had to be amputated. I felt uneasy going to visit him at the hospital. I had a stifling feeling: What could I say?

Upon seeing his emaciated body, I smiled feebly. Although heavily drugged, he returned a beaming smile. Within minutes, he got to reminiscing about our cricket games and joked about his rough handling by the nurses. In doing so, he not only lessened my burden - something experienced by anyone visiting a victim of a tragedy - but he did more; he prevented me from being uselessly sorry. In fact, he made me happy by being happy, by stoically giving my visit more significance than his own problems. He lost an arm, but none of his jovial nature, wit or his smile. Mentally, he's stronger than ever. Whenever I visit him, he has on display the secret of good living—enjoying life.

The Disabled Rehabilitation Center (DRC) in Gokarna, north of Boudhan-

ath has 56 children of a similar mettle. Not all of them however, have physical disabilities. About 25 percent of the children are there because they come from very poor families, or remote areas. “In taking in a child who does not have a physical disability”, explains Amrit Pudasaini, DRC’s secretary, “we give priority to children from the hills.” Irrespective of where they’re from, the long, double-storied DRC building is now their home and its inhabitants their family.

The idea of a rehabilitation center for children with physical disabilities was conceived by Tanka Tiwari, who himself had a physical disability. In 2002, he along with other founding members established DRC in Gaushala. When DRC opened, it had five children. During the first few years, the center changed locations constantly, mostly to meet the need for space to accommodate growing numbers of children. Finally, in 2006, it opened at its present location in Gokarna, with 32 children. Since 2002, more than 50 have moved on having completed their rehabilitation period and deemed capable of making it on their own.



With an ethic that encourages hard work and equal footing, children here have done consistently well at studies.

The numbers are not the only thing on the rise at the center; the majority of the children, even in the absence of advanced physiotherapy, or any other special medical assistance, rise to new heights, physically and mentally. Twenty-four year-old Wangchuk is the center's only resident with a mental disability and its greatest success story. He belongs to a very poor family from Solukhumbu and thus the center made an exception, taking him in at no cost. His progress has been exceptional. Pastemba Sherpa, the hostel in-charge, kitchen helper, and everybody's

"uncle" at DRC relates the healing effect the center has had on the boy. "When Wangchuk first came here, he salivated incessantly. He couldn't hold up a plate of food. He just sat around, too weak to even lift his head. Today he carries buckets of water, attends to various chores, and helps everyone out." Nearby, Wangchuk clapped his hands gleefully, as if to corroborate what Pastemba had just said.

One day, when it began raining, I saw Wangchuk rush out and collect the clothes belonging to the other children. When he opens the gate to

someone, he welcomes them with a broad smile and a Namaste — his ability to make people feel welcome and special is remarkable. He never forgets to shut the door behind you (his duty at DRC), or to request you to visit again.

THE STAGES OF REHABILITATION

When new children are admitted the goal is to get them to the highest level of physical well-being possible. "We try to treat the children's physical problems to the extent that health facilities in Nepal allow," says Amrit about DRC's treatment procedure. The belief is that children with disabilities need a good start if they are to be rehabilitated successfully. Physical well-being is one of the cornerstones of rehabilitation. Operations, medication and physiotherapy are all part of the treatment, which have produced wonderful results for some children, allowing them to do well in other aspects of rehabilitation.

All that is done for a child at DRC is done considering their future, and there is no better way of ensuring a better future than through education. DRC sends all its residents to school: some on scholarship, some on discounted tuition, and some directly supported by individual sponsors. It is not just about ensuring an education but giving the children qual-

...there is no better way of ensuring a better future than through education.

ity education. Only a few children attend special schools like Nawa Jeevan, which are for the physically disabled; the majority are enrolled in private schools.

In school, it is not the physical disabilities that set the children of DRC apart — it is their academic performance. “Disabled children here do better academically than those without,” says Amrit Pudasaini. He believes it is the environment at the center that accounts for this. Living with physically able children, he explains, develops confidence in the disabled child, leading to academic success. Last year, two girls from the center appeared in the SLC (School Leaving Certificate) examinations, one of whom passed and is now studying with a government scholarship. Three more will appear this

unlike the computer training, is open to non-residents who have physical disabilities, are orphans, or socially disadvantaged. Special priority is given to disabled women for the training in sewing and dress making. Many people have benefited from these training programs. Last year DRC trained 40 people, many of whom today run small businesses of their own, or are employed by others.

The final goal of DRC is to rehabilitate the children back into their families. In situations where this is not possible, the children are rehabilitated in the community, which means finding them a job in their community. If

considered, DRC has rehabilitated 18 children.

REACHING OUT

“There are around 200 applicants waiting to be admitted into the center, but every year only two or three children leave the center,” says Limbu, explaining the organization’s limitation and predicament. DRC, however, does not confine its services to the center’s residents; it reaches out to serve children outside the center. Currently DRC sends 55 children to schools and colleges. It also makes recommendations, negotiates discounts on school fees, coordinates for admission at schools in the area where the children live. DRC also helps the children gain access to health facilities. Liaising with hospitals and various organizations, wheelchairs, crutches, and other equipment are provided to those who need them. Arrangements have also been made with certain hospitals for providing special discounts on treatment fees. Over 70 non-residents benefit from DRC’s services. The organization’s mandate limits its concerns to the disabled, orphans, or socially underprivileged

There are around 200 applicants waiting to be admitted into the center, but every year only two or three children leave...

year. “There is no doubt that these three are going to be successful. All of them have been topping their classes,” says Uday Bahadur Limbu, DRC’s chairman, flashing a confident smile. Although children are no longer eligible to reside in the center after the completion of their SLC exams, they continue to receive help from DRC in the form of assistance in obtaining scholarships and admission into colleges.

The staff at DRC is aware that not every child prospers academically. Skill development is an alternative means of securing independence for those that do not show promise in academics. The center, therefore, runs a three-month training program in tailoring. There are also classes in computer skills. Acquiring a special skill gives the children the basis to succeed in the latter stages of the rehabilitation process. It also makes it easier for DRC to find jobs for the children. The training on tailoring,

both of these forms of rehabilitation are not feasible, jobs are sought for the children locally, in Kathmandu. So far, if the rehabilitation criteria of education, post-treatment rehabilitation, and skill development are



The heritage building they are housed in is a great symbol of the continuity they are trying to give to their work.



The DRC is one big, happy family, like any other Nepali one, looking to grow, looking for opportunities and looking to beat the odds at play.

individuals. But even those that are not physically or socially disadvantaged are helped through DRC's many training programs.

KEEPING THE ORGANIZATION ON ITS FEET

DRC has no permanent source of funds. It is dependent on individuals for donations of funds, food and clothing, and it counts on their generosity to pull them through. They raise funds through membership fees and a door-to-door collection program, the latter being their largest source of steady income. Sporadic and meager but welcome funds are also generated through the organization's international volunteer program, which allows international citizens to volunteer by paying a certain amount of money. Under this program the Hope and Home Volunteer Organization facilitates the services of international volunteers to DRC. The volunteers mostly help the children with their studies and join them in play, and are sources of what

most children love—photos. Many volunteers continue to raise and send funds from their home countries after leaving Nepal. More than 60 volunteers from countries like USA, UK, France, Germany, and Holland have come to work in DRC over the years.

OPPORTUNITY NOT SYMPATHY

Sympathy is the last thing Pudasaini wants for those with physical disabilities. "The children should not only be treated as objects of pity", he stresses. He believes they each need opportunity. "Create it!", he says passionately, alluding to the responsibility of the government and the society in creating an environment for the disabled to make progress as individuals. I ask him how that can be done. There are three steps, he says. First and foremost: availability of free treatment. Second: education. Third: employment. Pudasaini, and others at DRC are dedicated to paving the way for the disabled to achieve indepen-

dence. They expect the same from the government.

Pudasaini believes if the government was to look after the education and health of those with physical disabilities, their lives would change significantly. "If you treat disabled people, I believe about 30 percent can become able again", he claims. For that to happen, he believes all hospitals should provide cost-free treatment for the disabled. He does not believe reservation is the answer; a few seats here and there will not be effective unless complemented by others facilities. For example, reservation in a college for the disabled is laudable, but unless accompanied by a scholarship it loses its efficacy. "There are separate seats for women and the disabled in a micro bus, but how many times do we see women and those with disabilities occupying those seats? On the contrary, we see women standing", he says to explain his point. He stresses it is the society's perception that needs to change as much as the policies. Opportunities for the disabled are needed instead of public sympathy.

The children of DRC, like the nearby forest of Gokarna, the eagles wheeling overhead, and the relatively clean Bagmati flowing nearby, all symbols of hope for greenery, wildlife, and a clean city, represent the spirit of fighting the odds. While they wait for the people at the decision-making level to create opportunities for them, in their own way they provide us with opportunities to witness the power of the human spirit. ■

Nepal's Disabled Rehabilitation Center (DRC) can be contacted at rehab@drcnepal.org, or in Kathmandu phone 480.0867. You can visit their website at www.drcnepal.org. For more about the Hope and Home volunteer program for Nepal, see www.hopenhome.org/contact.htm

The author is a freelance writer who can be contacted at papercloudtree@hotmail.com.

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Fair Trade Group Nepal

The value of trading in traditional handicrafts

Text By EVANGELINE NEVE, Photos By ECS MEDIA

Recently dyed blue felt lies in the sun in the courtyard to dry, one lady cards wool by hand, another soaps a felt purse to set its shape. Fine art graduates sit at their computers working on new designs, women sit knitting and gossiping. On the ground floor, teams oversee the washing of the cotton on enormous machines, a woman sporting protective goggles fires some glass. Upstairs ladies in aprons are block and screen printing linen. One lady sits in silence as she cuts a delicate line into the clay mould of a bell. The courtyard seems deserted but in the rooms surrounding, people are working steadily. Walking round the resource centre of the Association for Craft Producers, it is inspiring to imagine all the effort and dedication that has led up to this point.



Pottery is one of the most popular handicraft items in the Nepali market.

FAIR TRADE GROUP NEPAL

The Association for Craft Producers is the founder chair of The Fair Trade Group Nepal, a group which, among other things, provides a platform for group members to discuss issues and share ideas and knowledge concerning fairly traded handicrafts.

At the time of the establishment of ACP in the early eighties, 'Fair Trade' was not a familiar term. During the eighties

numerous development oriented craft based organisations came into existence, many promoting fair trade practices in Nepal. By the nineties, although there was noticeable improvement in the work these organisations were administering, Nepal was still emerging from its years of political isolation. There was no common platform to deal with the various issues organisations were facing at a national level.

In order to combat the personal and political isolation she was facing regarding trading fairly in handicrafts, Executive Director of ACP, Meera Bhattarai joined The Pressure Group of Nepal. Unfortunately she discovered that the group addressed a rather more broad aspect of women's life, issues such as property rights, gender equality, legal rights, abortion rights and girl trafficking. Issues which were well and good but what



The workshop has a predominantly female team

Bhattacharai was concerned with was the crux of the problem of Nepal; economic independence. Bhattacharai needed concrete information such as how to resource raw material and how to organise a disintegrated workforce. Disappointed with the pressure group, she shared her concerns with an Oxfam representative. As a result in 1993, upon the invitation of the Oxfam representative a diverse group of people from different organisations gathered together.

Over the course of the next three years seven organisations discussed their mutual concerns and dilemmas. By 1996 when a certain level of understanding was established among them, the seven organisations formalised the NGO, The Fair Trade Group Nepal (FTGN) under the chairmanship of ACP. Presently there are seventeen members of FTGN. The group is now well known for its solidarity and members include

Mahaguti, Maiti Nepal and Janakpur Women's Development Corporation. With the inception of FTG Nepal various activities have been conducted to generate awareness about Fair Trade

quality products to customers and a fair income to producers. For the FTGN member organisations, though commercial success is important, it is the commitment to the welfare of

...though commercial success is important, it is the commitment to the welfare of poor, disadvantaged groups that is the overriding goal

amongst people. These include fair trade rallies, conferences and workshops, joint exhibitions and fair trade fashion shows. With the impact of fair trade, big business houses have started to promote social and corporate responsibility.

FTGN have been able to prove that the Fair Trade stamp does not necessarily translate as small scale. Trading in handicrafts can be large scale and sustainable, providing

poor, disadvantaged groups that is the overriding goal of their activities. FTG Nepal aims to raise the socio-economic status of underprivileged and marginalised producers and influence policy makers to be Fair Trade friendly. "I would like to see courses in Fair Trade in Nepal, they don't have vocational qualifications in our schools. Young people should take Fair Trade further," advocates Meera Bhattacharai.



Its a big team of women at the workshop.

THE ASSOCIATION FOR CRAFT PRODUCERS

ACP was established in 1984, its two priorities being, income generation and empowerment for women through handicrafts, and the preservation of traditional culture and crafts which are either dormant or at the point of disappearing entirely. At first, ACP's start up costs were covered by donors. Keen to function as a business however, towards the commencement of their fourth year in 1987 it was a fully self sustained, and profiting enterprise.

Leather at ACP is produced by Sarkis (traditional caste of cobblers) in Sindhupalchowk. Copper comes all the way from Palpa and paper is transported to Kathmandu from Charikot to list but a few sources of raw material. Over the years ACP has grown from an organisation which employed the services of 38 producers to a hefty 1200 producers to date; 1100 home-based and 90 in house. These in house producers are engaged in the preparation of the raw material, the development of the designs and the finishing of the crafts. ACP aims to provide design, marketing, management and technical services for low income, primarily female, craft producers.



Mira Bhattarai founded FTG Nepal, overcoming numerous challenges

ACP's progress has been impeded by the lack of technical knowhow, unavailability and raw material in the country and not being able to address the need of technical advancement. Despite this ACP has been able to expand its outreach and improve its service to its target group. One of ACP's achievements is that they have successfully managed to meet the ever rising cost of living in Nepal. In addition to fair wages, various social benefits are offered to the

producers; both the in house and home based. The detailed, producer welfare program includes such benefits as, a paid paternity and maternity leave, a month's financial bonus for Dashain, clothing allowance, a financial gesture towards the producer's children's education and a retirement fund.

ACP has succeeded in changing the traditional notion that craft can only be a pass time. It has proven that an organised work force of women with farm and family responsibilities, working irregular hours can be co-ordinated and turned into a fully competent and reliable work force. Trading in traditional Nepali handicrafts, if backed by integrated system is indeed sustainable. Unlike tourism where a bigger portion of the money is spent in the base country on preliminary travel arrangements, hundred percent of the profit from handicraft sales comes straight back into the country.

"You know people talk a lot about the economic value of handicraft. Through what we are doing these women are earning their own money, they are gaining confidence in themselves, they are making their own decisions, they are sending their children to school and buying food to put on the table. This is what we value." reflected Bhattarai. ■

DEGAA: SPICE AND RHYTHM

Text By EVANGELINE NEVE

You know the minute you step into Degaa that it is going to be good. A spacious, open room greets you when you walk up to the third storey - warm, wood-based décor, a generous sprinkling of traditional materials everywhere in the seating area, large windows that brighten up the space and to the right, a well-stocked bar. It's immediately apparent that a lot of care has gone into making the place comfortable and beautiful. What more could you ask for? And of course, there's no need to worry about the food—it is amazing, offering a selection of the traditional and the unique.

Degaa Resto-Lounge was begun by several Newar partners who saw the need for a place that would serve authentic local cooking in a classy environment. Starting with the successful Bhumi, they then opened Degaa two years ago, which has rapidly become well known for serving authentic Newari delicacies. Degaa means a shrine in Newari, and it's a place where divine meals are revered.

“We wanted to create the sort of place that we ourselves would like to come to,” said Upasana Shrestha. They truly seem to have succeeded. Degaa is beautiful and welcoming, items like their samaya bajji platter are best sellers, and the menu is filled with scrumptious names like bara, chatamari, aloo tareko, and more.

Not content to rest on their laurels, they have branched out into Nepali and Indian food too. Rather than rehashing the tired old dishes found on every corner, the management and staff worked together to search out unusual recipes from all over India, the kind you don't normally see on restaurant menus, and then tested them in their own kitchen until they knew they had a hit.

From kebabs to curries, a string of amazing creations have now debuted on their menu from this endeavor. You might recognize some things here—delicious tomato and coriander soup for instance, but why not get a little adventurous and opt for the hot cucumber soup?



Two new curries on the menu that have received a great reception from their guests are the paneer and prawn curry and the mutton or chicken with apricots. It's this melding of unusual ingredients in authentic curries that sets Degaa's Indian menu apart. And don't forget the popular new paneer hazarbi kebabs and tandoori prawn gulnar or the tandoori fish gulnar!

On the Nepali side, mo:mos are served and are of course one of the most popular items. But it's not only good food but also a good music that's to be had at Degaa: the restaurant has also begun a live music evening each Saturday that melds perfectly with the ambiance of the restaurant. And the good news is that they plan to turn this weekly music into a regular item.

And while you're at Degaa feasting on a curry or kebab and enjoying the music, if you'd like to relax with a drink, make sure to try one of their original aaila-based cocktails from the expert bartender, including the award winning Kathmandu Blues!

As their logo states: “Yeah! You will love it!” Just visit—I'm sure you will!

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Nike Kathmandu

Rooftops

The view from Kathmandu's rooftops is one that grows on you, a part of your every day that you learn to appreciate.

Text By DEBORAH MEROLA, Photos By ECS MEDIA



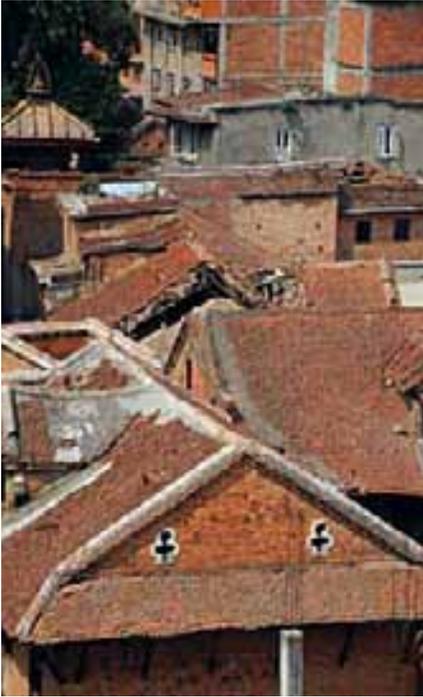
Attics like these are rapidly disappearing.

A favorite photo of mine is of a young Nepali woman wistfully looking into the distance from her perch on a high rock promontory. It was taken years ago when I was visiting the Gurung highland village of Vishnu Maya, the “Nepali Aama” of Broughton Colburn’s beloved book. The young

woman and I had struck up a special friendship in the few days I was in her village doing research for my theatre production of Nepali Aama. We giggled away like school girls one night at the sheer incongruity of my big blond presence sleeping next to her and other younger sisters on the mud floor. I treasure the photo as

a memento of that special trip, but now living in a third floor flat, I find that I have new images---like mental snapshots--of people gazing into the distances from their close by or far off rooftops.

In the peopled world of Kathmandu, filled with sights and sounds, I have become used to family members



The rooftops of Kathmandu are a random but beautiful mix of the old and the new, mirroring its inhabitants.

from the flat below suddenly appearing in our walk-through apartment on their way to the roof and early morning puja. I first thought the extended bell ringing was an alarm clock, but now recognize the sound as part of the ritual welcoming the gods again to our shared abode. The man bringing water also can startle as he seems magically to appear at the kitchen door and friends, too, just walk in. Perhaps in comic recognition of these surprises, my grandson and I have taken to hiding behind doors and jumping out at each other.

I fuss at the house kids as they run up to the roof and down and try out the banister as a slide. But their shouts are part of the natural cacophony of our daily lives with the guards at the next door NGO coughing and spitting in another morning ritual, the man selling fish ringing his bicycle bell and calling out what sounds like “Marco.” (I tease my husband who hates that loud children’s swimming pool game

of shouting out “Polo” from the inside rooms as the shouts of “Marco” continue down the street.) The vegetable vendors too, ring their bicycle bells, calling out “Tarkari!” Saffron robed sadhus wander by adding their shouts and tinkling bells. And there is a special night symphony of barking dogs, late arriving cars, the metal scraping of opening gates, the voices of guards talking around a fire, and wonderful guitar music drifting up from a party across the street.

After a year of living in the flat, with windows in every room and a kind of 360 degree view, I recognize our immediate neighbors, who appear and disappear in yards and driveways, at windows and rooftops, and mark their family’s life and progress. There is a new baby across the street, and the mother or brother lean or climb out of the window of the small porch of their servant quarters to hang up and retrieve laundry from the railings. This little family creates a peaceful pastoral scene as the father polishes the big black car marked “Press” to a fine shine, while the mother, seated on a

bright blanket on the cement, similarly makes her chubby baby glisten as she adoringly gives him an oil massage.

On a rooftop right off our side-facing living room and master bedroom, we have a dour neighbor who appears and can clearly look inside. Always unsmiling, he gives us a start as we look up from the couch to see him there. We signal that he is nearby and avert our eyes and, after what seems a respectable time, discretely close a few curtains. Directly off our back kitchen porch is another close rooftop and at meals I admire the bright turquoise and red clothes hung there. The other day, I was amused to see a man reading Fr!day with a cup of chiya poised on the roof edge. We are sorry that these neighbors are building another floor on top of the roof. Soon we will have a less clear view and need to look up to see their bright laundry.

Building is a constant in our neighborhood and we watched the addition of a room on the roof of the big white NGO, although none of the window panels and arches that decorated the lower floor windows



Laundry drying in the sun is a common scene on a Nepali terrace.



The winter sun draws men and women alike to take a bath on their terraces.

was added. Other buildings are going up at a distance and we look at the workers hanging precipitously from scaffolding and windows as they construct walls and paint window ledges. Like so much in Nepal, construction seems impossibly archaic, difficult, and yet human centered. Buildings go up, often in record time, without the fancy cranes and machine sounds of the USA, but gradually views become more hemmed in.

From the south facing window, we can view high up a woman who seems a kind of water sprite. She often appears bare shouldered with a towel around her taking a bath in the sunny space. At other times, she stamps up

and down in a circle like an Italian peasant woman pressing wine with her feet, maybe washing clothes hidden from our view. Regular as clock work is the gardener in the building right below us, who prunes his beautiful flowers and rolls the lawn. A man of the house takes his morning exercise in the small garden, circling round and round the yard and up and down the three floors of stairs like a well groomed hamster in a maze. Initially my husband and I found this funny, but I guess we too have been observed pulling back our kitchen curtains or standing by the window and drinking coffee with disheveled hair. One day the wife, whom I often had observed

We are sorry that these neighbors are building another floor on top of the roof. Soon we will have a less clear view..

getting in the car with the husband, waved to me and we now chat in a friendly way as we encounter each other in the street.

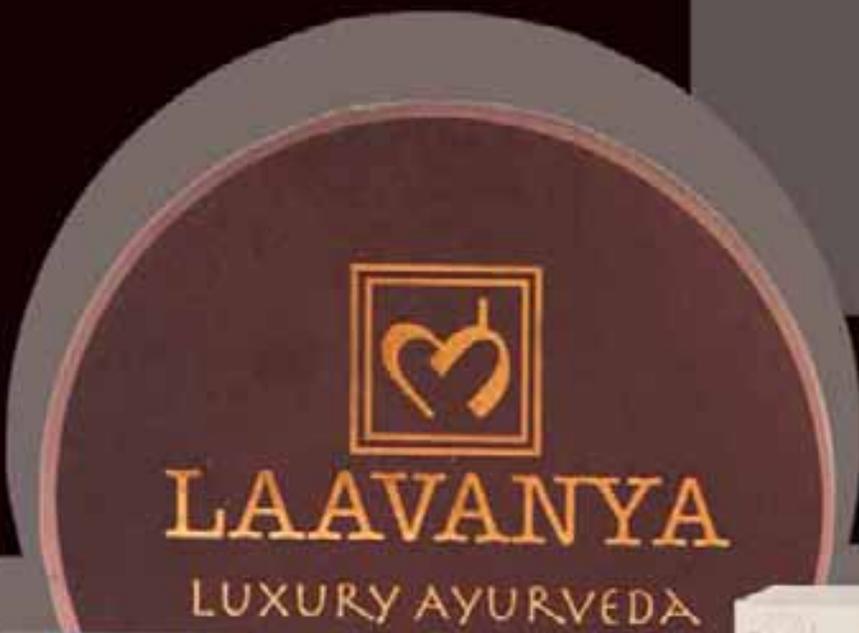
Surely the glory time for rooftops is Dashain when young men and boys flew kites from the top of so many of the nearby apartment buildings. From ►

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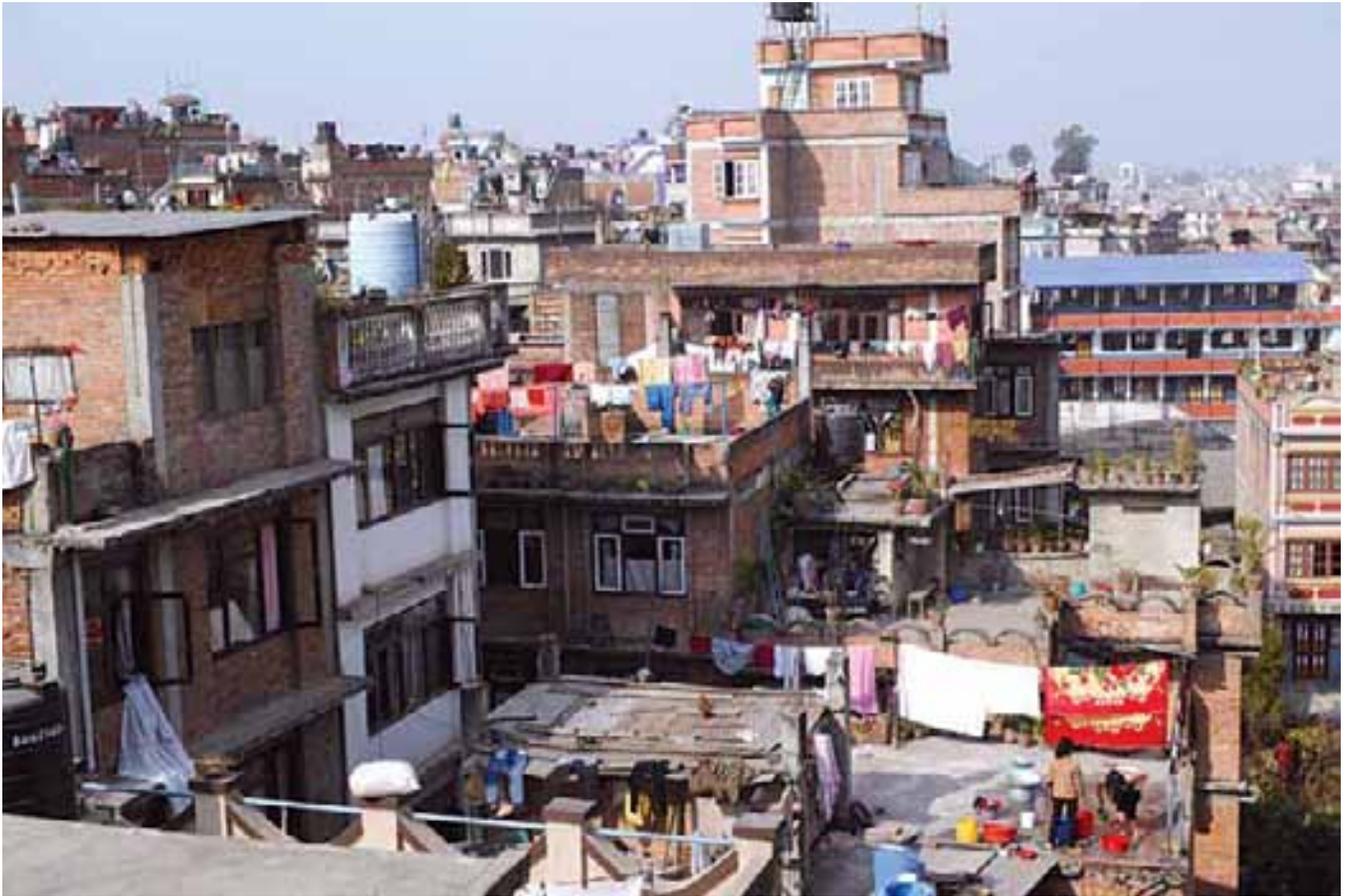
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Terraces in Kathmandu are very busy places, a scenery in transition nowadays.

our street facing windows, the boys would appear precariously balanced on sloped tile or railings of roofs, giving them a few feet advantage as they sent their kites far into the sky. I never saw the kite flyers acknowledge each other as competitors, but they must have been aware of their kites flying close to the others, crossing over strings, and disappearing into the blue.

Initially I was a bit irked by the communal living of Nepal, especially the smells (garlic and onions for Daal Bhatt cooking at 10 am), sounds (the grandfather talking in the stairwell, the TV), and sudden hallway appearances, but now I find it consoling. Perhaps because my husband is in the States for business, I like the

sense of people always home, always around me, and our glimpsed and shared lives. It seems wise to use roofs for water storage, solar heating, and clothes drying, and roof parties, flower pots, and prayer flags. I don't

**I like the sense
of people always
home, always
around me, and
our glimpsed and
shared lives.**

think I will welcome a return to the sterile environment of closed roofs and houses in the USA, with streets filled only with people quietly walking their dogs or passing cars.

The obvious suddenly occurs to me as I sit at my desk and look out to the horizon: there is another kind of rooftop in Nepal--the Himalayan mountains, rooftop of the world. Maybe we notice the bright banners of clothes, kites, and faces on rooftops by the practice of lifting our eyes to catch a glimpse of those snowy peaks, which also can suddenly appear and disappear. And I picture the most beautiful of human constructed rooftops atop the white hemisphere of the Boudhanath Stupa, a golden spire and the ever compassionate eyes of the Buddha looking down at us. ■

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1905

Nineteen o' Five in her vintage

*With a history as grand as the building itself,
Nineteen O Five has lived many lives and in many
different times.*

Text By DR. GEETI SEN



Some buildings possess a charm that derives from the ambience around them, a history written into the walls that breathes into the living present. Nineteen O Five in Kathmandu is such a relic from a hundred years ago which needs to be preserved. I see her as an old fashioned lady of grace, a little eccentric in her ways perhaps, but worth listening to with her remarkable stories...

On the pediment on front is inscribed the date of 1905, telling you her age. Surrounded by tall trees that are at least eighty to a hundred years old, you can see blue pine and purple jacaranda and oak rising tall behind the building. The place resonates with the orchestra of birds before sunset, with cackling geese on lazy afternoons when sunshine filters through creepers on to the verandah. Stories percolate of those who lived here such as the French writer Michel Peissel and the German architect Robert Weise with his family, of books that were written here like *Tiger for Breakfast* and others where it finds mention.

Nineteen O Five is built in the neo-classic style found in Rana palaces of the early twentieth century in Nepal. This hybrid style was described by Boris and others as 'Kathmandu Baroque' – which made it a distinct improvement over 'Punjabi Baroque' in India that muddles together Greek columns with French windows and Moorish arches. But Nineteen O Five is different from Rana palaces! There are no imposing facades with towering pillars and pediments, no glittering durbar halls with stucco decoration, and no inner courtyard so indispensable to Nepali and Newari houses. The building is smaller than Rana mansions with its intimate rooms, and a wide wooden verandah running the length of the front, graced with slender fluted pillars and wrought iron railings.

Unique in planning and layout, lightness and informality distinguish the place. For whom was it built by Rudra Shamsher Rana before it was given over to European writers and architects? Why it was built in this unique manner adds to its mystery. The

spacious verandah is as important as the interior rooms, so that the resident or visitor spends time taking in the environment of water and verdant landscape.

The building rises above water, with the approach across a wooden bridge – a romantic setting like the arched bridges found in Japanese woodcuts. And as in these woodcuts, an old bottlebrush like an ancient willow tree bends its branches

gracefully into the water. White geese strut around as though they own the place and wade into the water now covered with water hyacinths. By strange coincidence these geese find mention in Peissel's book as inhabiting the place fifty years ago! For some time though, they were replaced by forty-three Yorkshire pigs, squealing and snorting, when Boris decided to import them from his good friend the Maharajah



The bridge to the main building crosses over a small moat, with ducks swimming in them.

ECS Media



With a burgeoning concrete jungle outside its gates, the greenery at 1905 makes it seem like an oasis

Murali Ali

of Cooch Behar in eastern India, to set up Nepal's first piggery.

Those were the grand times of the legendary Boris Lissanevitch who came originally from Russia, via his adventures with Ballet Russe in Paris and Monte Carlo in the gay 1920s. Boris was placed in charge of the coronation of King Mahendra in the mid fifties and later the visit of Queen Elizabeth to Nepal, when he arranged the best amenities for ambassadors, visitors and press arriving from all over the world to what was then a medieval kingdom. The Royal Hotel became the venue for banquets for visits of Prime Minister Nehru from India. At that time the hotel grounds extended into Nineteen O Five, used by Boris for his own guests. Originally water enclosed the entire building extending around the front and sides. This gives a clue to its purpose – two rusted iron rings remain as evidence on the landing near the bridge. So the building was built as a place of retreat and relaxation, a 'Summer House' in the style of the British whom the Ranas liked to emulate.

Now that the Royal Hotel no longer exists, it has been rebuilt as the Election Commission Building and its premises sealed off with high walls and guards. For

awhile 1905 became the site for a Japanese restaurant, so appropriate with its water and bridges – after which it fell into disuse for years. But the demise of the old lady was averted once again. In 2004, Nineteen O Five was rented in 2004 by Shobha Rayamajhi who put all her energies into restoring the building to regain character and purpose. Renting the building transformed

For whom was it built by Rudra Shamsher Rana before it was given over to European writers and architects?

her life when she changed her career from being a consultant on Mac computers to becoming proprietor of a cherished restaurant. She furnished it with elegance in the interiors and a rustic feel to tables on the wooden verandah.

Shobha removed the water skirting the sides of the building, which she replaced with a garden with trees and giant plants - where dinner parties and evening concerts are held. The Farmer's Market

on Saturdays, a remarkable enterprise begun in May 2009 and now replicated elsewhere in the city, is a great meeting point. It is a festive weekly event where stalls sell everything from organic vegetables, avocados and strawberries to jams, Himalayan honey and juice and herbal teas to fresh breads and cookies. Françoise from France brings his farm produce of sausages and smoked ham while next to him the Italian sells parmesan cheese, and further along is Eva from Poland roasting delicious fresh chicken. The Yoga Ashram offers fresh yoghurt, milk, ghee, brown rice, and the French monk sells pasta, potted herbs et al to keep his orphanage running.

Some activities of the legendary Royal Hotel have spilled into Nineteen O Five – today it has become a regular haunt for expatriates and Nepalis who find the verandah and the bar the ideal place to relax. Not an elite club or a night club, it possesses the quality of both. For some who gather there is a sense of belonging to a fraternity that extends beyond cultural divides. Yoga classes are held in the evenings; Tai Chih exercises, and now the meditation classes are about to begin.

Every enterprising adventure has a life span. The dream that was the Royal Hotel closed in its time. Nineteen O Five is threatened by being bought over by a bank, to be rebuilt as another building in glass and concrete. Will the grand old lady now over a hundred years old, with her charms and popularity, await the day when she will be demolished? Or can something be done to avert this? ■

How I started 1905

Proprietor Shobha Rayamajhi of the 1905 building and restaurant reminisces about the early days of this amazing oasis in Kathmandu

Ten years ago there were not very many restaurants. Not in my wildest dreams had I thought that I would run a business, let alone a restaurant! When I discovered the 1905 property though, it felt like a jigsaw puzzle; I discovered the entrepreneurial side to me along with my passion for old buildings and an enthusiasm to work independently. Right away I was interested in setting up a business on this then-neglected piece of amazing property. The results of that labor of love, stands today for all to see.

Even though my skills in running a restaurant were very minimal at the time, with my entrepreneurial streak, I took this opportunity very seriously and learnt a lot from trials and errors. Being an IT graduate, I went ahead and learnt the trick of the trade in business as well as structured my business from the bottom up; I couldn't have learned the lessons I did here at any academic institution anywhere in the world.

I slowly brought back life to the musty and stuffy, dilapidated property. The stale and smelly water was drained out and trucks of trash and debris were removed from the man-dug pond, which was once a swimming pool for many expats. The natural landscape concept helped inhabit aquatic plants and animals around the property.

The inscription 1905 (the year the building was built) was found in the old building, thus giving the name to 1905 Restaurant in Kantipath. The premises



The 1905 building today is very much a lived-in space, bustling with people and lush greenery.

are also known as Bahadur Bhawan. The palace itself was called Char bhuje with four corners on the roof. The 1905 building was made for the Rana family as a summer house .and the building is just a small part of the huge Rana family palace.

In the beginning I was bit apprehensive, since it was not the best time for many businesses. But later everything became interesting and challenging especially when I met and shared many happy stories of this property with Mr. Michelle Pyssel, the author of Tiger for breakfast, who had visited Nepal after decades.

The 1905 restaurant now serves many locals, expats and tourists. Our breakfast and lunch menus cater to healthy eaters who need to go back to work quickly, along with appropriately selected meat and fresh, hand-made pasta dinners. The restaurant's serene premises also host Pranamaya Yoga and Tai Chi classes.

To promote local farmers, we started the unique, weekly Farmers market (Every Saturday:9 am till noon) which we started three years ago. It has become one of the best places to get fresh, organic produce such as hand-made cheese (chèvre, mozzarella, feta, French), baked goodies, jams, honey, fresh milk and much more. ■

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Text By BIBBI ABRUZZINI

Somehow everyone, sooner or later, visits Ason. Throughout the centuries, it has been hosting innumerable traditional jatras, political manifestations and events, functioning as a fundamental social platform in Nepal. In Ason we breathe the past and the present of the country. If only these walls could speak, they would unveil the story of how Kathmandu has grown and changed since its inception.

Not for nothing is Ason considered the historical, cultural, religious and commercial center of Kathmandu. Ason literally means nearby in Nepal Bhasa (spoken by the native Newar community). Its six-road junction is where everything converges: wrinkling faces savoring chiya, devotees praying, motorbikes zigzagging in and out of the crazy crowds that throng the area each day, people, objects, and buildings, all constantly communicating, shaping each others' behavior and representation. ■

The text and photographs is a product of participants from a Photography Workshop organized by the School of Creative Communications, Kupondole. Bibi is an Italian citizen who works as a freelance writer for European journals.



Suman Shrestha



Adhrita Shrestha

Clockwise from left: People on a rush - public moving towards own destination while vendors are persuading them to buy their product; People offering puja on the occasion of Seto Matsyendranath Jatra (procession); Rudralal Gautam, who makes tea for a living has been delivering tea around Ason bazaar for the last 14 years; The Annapurna Ajima temple sees a large number of devotees each day. Here it is seen in the rear view mirror of a motorbike; A vendor brings his produce all the way from Thimi in the traditional way.



Manoj Shrestha



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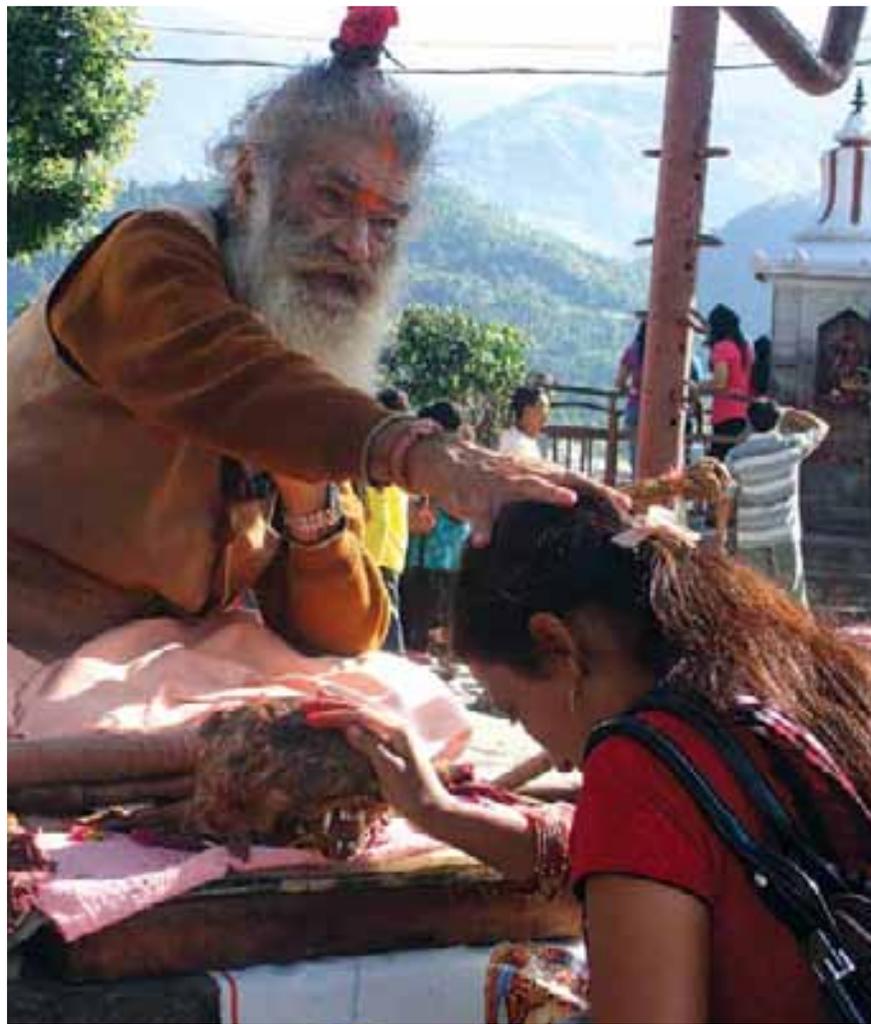
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Kancha Vayu Pooja, the resident tantric makes performers
dance to traditional tunes
E: kc_balaram008@yahoo.com

THIRD

Sushant Tuladhar
Asan, Ward 30, KTM
People throng to catch a glimpse of the holy bathing
ceremony of Seto Matsyendranath in Janabahal, in the older
parts of Kathmandu.





Consolation

Prasant Shrestha
Panauti-5, Kavre
An old Hindu man, taking a ritual bath,
supposed to have healing and purifying values
at the confluence of Triveni ghat in Panauti.

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A tourist lights butter lamps at the premises of
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Young In the Far West

Text By UTSAV SHAKYA, Photos By HARI MAHARJAN (ECS MEDIA)

In the morning at about five, I collect firewood from the forest. In the winter, it is really cold. It is fine now in the summer. I go to the forest with my friends, and sister. My brother stays at home, he is too young. My mother is busy with her chores in the morning, making food for us all and fetching water from the water tap down the hill.

I go to school with my brother and sister at eight. The school is half an hour away from our home but it would probably take you an hour. It's a nice walk down the hill through forests and across a stream. No, we do not stop to play in the morning in the forest but we do in the afternoon when school is out. I love going to

school, our teachers are students who studied at the school before so they are nice to us. Sometimes we don't have books and we need to borrow or share. I have never come first in class. The first prize is three notebooks and two pens. I love reading stories in Nepali, and science. I hate maths.

Opposite page:
Children grow up fast in the far west. Here, a young girl helps her parents sell vegetables on a small bridge in Jumla town.



Right:
Two girls greet passing trekkers just before Daava pass, a scenic pasture-village before Neurighat.

Below:
At a school in Jumla, a little girl takes directions from her class teacher. The class teacher too studied at the same school.

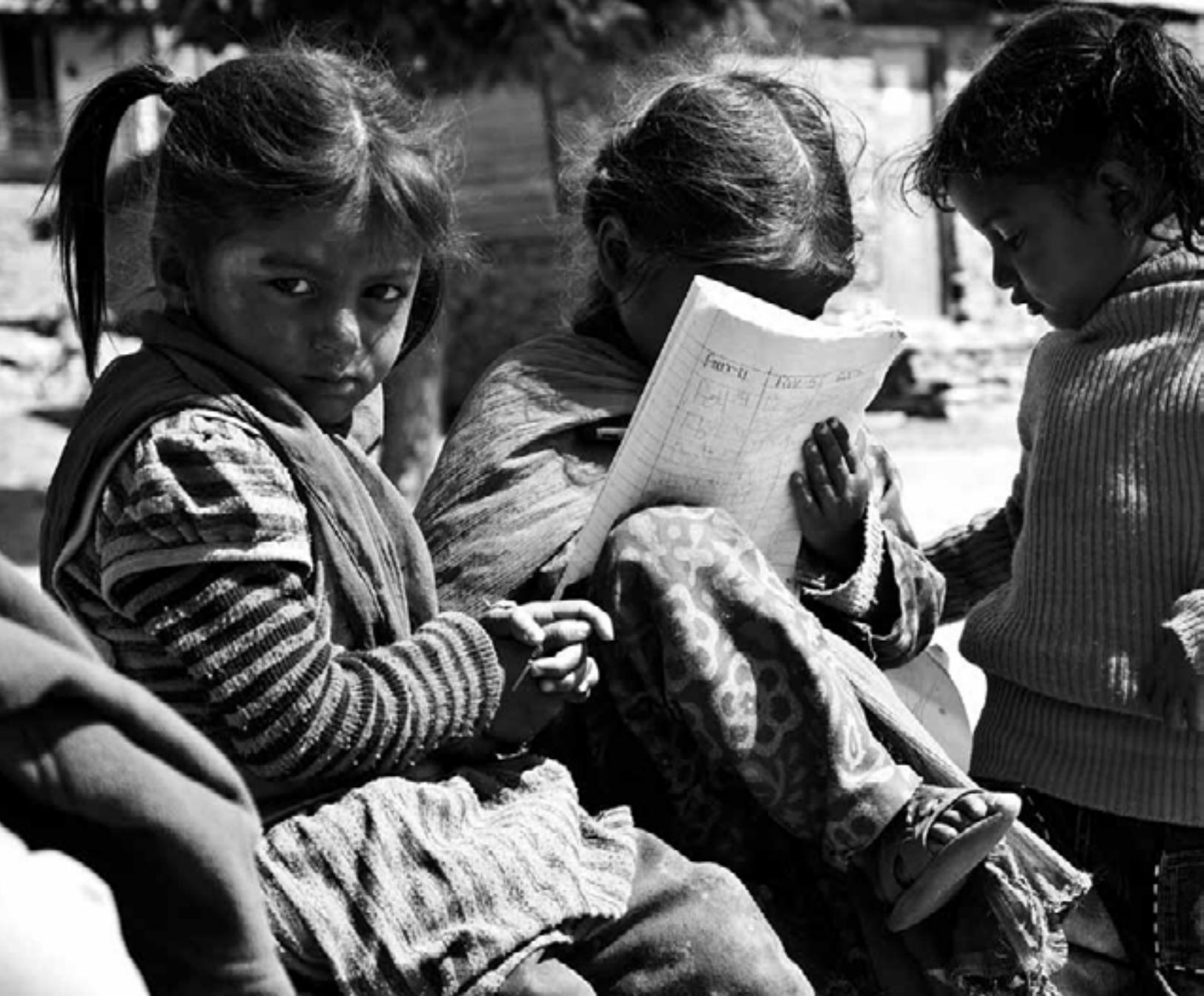




Above:
Young girls do most of the work in the villages, but find time to pose for a passing camera.



Right:
Many places in the far west seem trapped in time. In Jhyari, two little girls stare shyly at unfamiliarity.



Above:

Students in Jumla bask in the sun and take in some important lessons. The school lies in the base of a towering hill and a river runs just outside its boundary walls.



Right:

A young girl carries her sibling in Jhyare, a village of 30 odd homes, all joined together by wooden ladders.



Above:

Just before Daava pass, a pastural village stop on the way to Rara lake, two girls stop chat up trekkers.

Following page:

Before Neurighat, a young girl finishes school to run to the forest to collect fodder for her livestock.







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SPECIAL FEATURES

Eating in Kathmandu (and Lalitpur too!)

A run down of great restaurants in the valley that serve authentic and delicious local Nepali and Newari cuisine.

Text By EVANGELINE NEVE, Photos By ECS MEDIA

Delicious, varied and fresh, this Samaya Baji set plate just cries out to be eaten!!

Food Courtesy: Utsav Restaurant



For such a small country, Nepal has some pretty great food. And despite the proliferation of restaurants that cook other countries' food, and cook it well, most Nepalis I know still prefer their own food, which is as it should be. Part of keeping a country's traditions alive is when local cooking is everyone's daily habit, not just special occasion fare.

While dahl-bhat-tarkari is undoubtedly the bedrock of Nepali cooking in many parts of the country, there is a lot more variety than that to be had—and there are also amazing and interesting local dishes to be found outside the valley, and I think each trip should be a chance to experiment with what's good locally. I have fond memories of the cold potato achar with yoghurt that I was served at the home of friends I visited in Ridi Bazaar, Gulmi District. Tasty and refreshing, I've never seen it before, or since, and I have no doubt similar treats are to be found in most places in Nepal. And of course there's mo-mo, but that would call for an article in itself, so for the purposes of this one we're setting it aside, though I, like everyone else in the city, have my own favorite hole-in-the-wall mo-mo joint that I frequent religiously.

Some of the best local cuisine I've had has been home cooking by my Nepali friends, there's no double about that, but luckily there are also some great restaurants here in Kathmandu that provide authentic

versions of home cooked favourites. And the number seems to be growing, great news for any foodie.

If what you're looking for is the full experience, in a traditional setting with great staff and service, Bhanchha Ghar in Kamaladi (4225172) and Bhojan Griha in Dilli Bazaar (4416423) are two of the best I've found for a great dahl-bhat-tarkari, high-end and full service. The former is, in fact, one of the first Nepali restaurants I ate at when first coming here years ago, and while I only discovered Bhojan Griha last year—years too late, I might add—it was fantastic. A perfect, complete Nepali meal at its best, with fantastic atmosphere and friendly, competent staff, set in a historic old building, the residence of the royal priest 150 years ago. The rooms and hallways just exude history there. Local music and dancing happen most nights at both locales, and the atmosphere manages to be both classy and relaxed, making for a very enjoyable evening.

If you're looking for a place that's a little more day-to-day, look no farther than Thakali Bhanchha in Thamel (4701910). To be found at the corner of Z Street, just upstairs, this is a simple place, understated and clean with pleasant staff too. Despite being in the heart of the tourist area, it's mostly filled with Nepalis, so you know it's good. Their fixed non-veg khana comes on authentic copper plates with a choice of three curries—mutton, chicken or fish. Of course I chose the latter, and it was great, a nice change from the other more usual ones. The



Food Courtesy: Utsav Restaurant

A full perfect Nepali meal - who could ask for anything more.

other highlight for me was a dish of chicken, potato and phing. It was reminiscent of some Bhutanese food I've had, yet with a taste all its own, and something I could most certainly eat every day. Badal and sukuti (wild boar and goat) also featured on the menu, in various incarnations—fried, boiled and chilli. I also had Can-champa, which I ordered primarily because I'd never heard of it before. When your plate arrives, it might look a little dry or unappealing if, like me, you'd never seen it before, but don't be put off—these fried buckwheat treats are crunchy on the outside and soft and fluffy inside. They'd be perfect as a snack with beer, and it was great fun to find a Nepali food I've never had before. I'm getting hungry just looking at the pictures I took! If Anthony Bourdain ever came to Nepal for his travel and food show, No Reservations, and I was in charge of planning his schedule, I'd bring him here for sure! (And to that hole in the wall mo-mo joint, and in fact to just about every place on this list!)

No article on Nepali food could be complete without writing about Newari food. And while I have always felt that the best I've had was in Newari homes—is there anything better than good home cooking?—recently I've

come to find some restaurants that are also doing fantastic things to bring authentic Newari flavours and delicacies to restaurant eating.

Degaa Resto-Lounge in Kumari-pati (5008679) is a place that provides an upscale atmosphere while remaining true to its roots: among the new Indian menu items can be found all the Newari favourites: Samaya Baji Set, chatamari, bara, aloo tareko and more. With a lovely professional bar, it's a great place both to enjoy a delicious full meal or to relax in the evening with drinks while munching on delicious, well made local treats. And they have a line of cocktails made with aila, the potent traditional alcohol, in case you want to go local with your drinking as well as eating. It's a great combination!

For more Newari food, simple and authentic, look no farther than The Village Café in Pulchowk, in the lane just on the side of Laxmi Bank. This small garden restaurant is lovingly and rustically decorated, and the menu is exclusively Newari and very reasonably priced. The brainchild of SABAH Nepal, it's been only a year since the idea began and just six months since they've started serving food. Newari women who were already good cooks were provided with

training in cooking commercially, and in addition to dining the restaurant now provides food delivery, catering, training, stalls and retailing. A really great side to this is the ingredients are all grown on farms belonging to the cooks and their families and other group members, and it's all natural and organic, so what you're eating is a real full circle meal—food both grown and cooked, not by professionals, but by local farming families. Some more good news is that no msg is used in any of the cooking, a boon for those allergic or health conscious.

And everything is delicious! I had the Samaya Baji plate, a generous portion of goodies, of which the bara was a delight, light and fluffy. I supplemented my order with the mushroom chatamari and one of my favourites, aloo tama, the thick, deliciously tangy soup made with bamboo shoots, potatoes and beans. The Village Café is also one of the few places I've ever seen yomori on the menu—they claim to have the best in town!—And while I'd tried the "black" one before, with sesame and molasses inside, the "white" yomori with coconut and condensed milk was a new flavour experience for me. I'll be coming back here!

I'm sure that anyone reading this knows that attempting to write an article about the best places to sample Nepali food would be impossible: it's both a matter of personal taste and luck in finding the right place. I know that there are many eateries, large and small, still out there that I haven't found yet, and you likely have your own favourites that have gone unmentioned here: that's part of the joy of living in Kathmandu, there are so many great places to eat and I am always looking forward to what I have yet to discover. So while this article can give you some suggestions of what to try, it could never be definitive. There's a lot more great food to find or re-experience, so get out there and start eating! ■

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Borrowed and nurtured

Tibetan carpet weaving was borrowed by the Nepalese but it has made it its own by helping preserve an art form that originated centuries ago.

Text By ANUBHUTI POUDYAL, Photos By ECS MEDIA

Tibetan carpet weaving was borrowed by the Nepalese but it has made it its own by helping preserve an art form that originated centuries ago.

“The lotus pattern has a story. It tells us that it is possible to outgrow where we belong to. It is possible to come out of dirt. Though your roots are in it you can still have a strong stem that comes out of the mud and eventually blooms without a speck of dirt, beautifully, independently. It gives you the meaning of life, like many other patterns in the carpets,” says Pema Karpoche.

Master Weaver means the most experienced of the weavers; the person who has the expertise and the ability to weave most skillfully with years of practice and a prodigious ability to create masterpieces. The story goes back to the early 1970s when the Tibetan refugees came to Nepal. With time in hand and options to pursue their skills in a new land and assistance from governmental and non-governmental agencies, private manufacturing and sales of Tibetan carpets was done at the only carpet weaving center at Jawalakhel Refugee Camp in Kathmandu. The process started when a handful of masters who brought their skills from Tibet, trained other weavers to create a group that could weave their way into transferring Tibetan skills to the Nepalese, hence giving birth to the Nepalese-Tibetan carpet industry.

Pema Karpoche, a second generation of the Tibetan refugees, runs Master Weaver with a different approach,

although the essence of the place has hardly changed. It is still exceptionally personal, albeit a much larger enterprise. The basics remain the same, quality over everything else. The processes - from the wool to the dye to the actual act of creating carpets - remain the center of everyone’s attention.

While the story jumps from the first generation of the refugees starting a humble enterprise to the second generation expanding it, international exposure to the Tibetan carpets was received at a much earlier state. The carpet started its venture into European markets among other internationally renowned products like Persian carpets, but still managed to attract a huge clientele and many admirers.

What makes Tibetan carpets so rare? - Their quality, dye, workmanship, sculpting their aesthetic beauty. The high quality of the carpet comes from its wool. Himalayan sheep wool is used in making Tibetan carpets that have a quality much different from the wool even in the international market. It is a much refined, smoother and rarer form of wool that is used as the foundation to create a super carpet.

The lotus pattern has a story. It tells us that it is possible to outgrow where we belong to.



Tibetan culture crossed political and physical boundaries to come to Nepal

The color or dye used in Tibetan carpet is either Swiss chemicals or natural dyes, used wisely and with an exceptional expertise to create colors which are not just pretty but important in portraying the meaning of the carpets, which we will discuss later.

People working the ingredients are just as important as the ingredients. Lifeless objects are just that unless given meaning by human imagination, brought to life with an ability to change the imagined, into tangible colors, shapes and sizes. Carpet weaving requires not just weavers but experts who know the meaning of their art and their ability to bring these arts to the world.

Sculpting includes the cutting up of the patterns in the carpet at the end of the weaving process to give it a much sharper look. Tibetan carpets are different from regular carpets for their intricate work. The precision of sculpting the edges off the pattern to make them more vivid is one of the biggest challenges and beauty of the carpet-making processes.

Finally, the aesthetic beauty of the carpet, by the combined efforts of everything mentioned above is what matters eventually. It is an accumulation of everything, including the raw materials, hard work, skills and the age-old legacy of weaving brought through generations to the Nepalese market today and eventually into the international market where it has made its mark.



Tibetan carpets use a wide array of colors to come up with vibrant designs.



Some designs are more popular and sell more than other such as this dragon motif

Like any other art form, it has its own intriguing history. That is what adds the glamour factor that some claim might be missing in the description given so far. Tibetan carpet-weaving started long back in the 7th century AD as proven by excavations done around the Silk Road. This is the reason its distinct weaving pattern and technique differ from that of carpets and other fabric in neighboring India or even China.

The story begins in a village named Gyantse, which was known for its craftsman and skilled artisans. The village's masters, revered for their skills, were invited to the homes of aristocrats where they stayed for months weaving a single master piece of a carpet, an object of great pride to the owner. In return, the master weaver would receive gifts and special treatment akin to that reserved mostly for religious authorities and other aristocrats. Over time, the skills were transferred from generations to generation, despite non-existent written records and detailed proof of the art. As discussed, in the 1970s, the skill moved from the Tibetan plateau to Nepal through the families of the refugees.

"The lotus flower signifies purity. The entire carpet consists of a pond

with a lotus. There are meanings to the signs and patterns. A tiger, for example, signifies strength and dominance and is therefore used to welcome bridegrooms at weddings. Symbols like dragons and phoenix are representative of the region's culture of art and thus holds a special significance in Tibetan carpets

as well. The colors are equally important. Traditionally, if you see an orange, red or yellow carpet, it surely belonged to monasteries. Other colors like blue were and are used mostly by laymen," shares Pema.

Pama knows as much as he does about Tibetan carpets for three reasons.



People from all ages are in the business, some not really for the money.



The texture of the Tibetan carpets is a distinct feature of the art form.

The first is due to his interests in developing his own business over a generation with the support of his family. Secondly, he is genuinely interested in the processes of the carpet making as well as the various significances of the profession for him as a Tibetan. Third, he is a great art enthusiast who has a collection of art beyond carpets in different forms adorning his rooms. With all these combined, he runs a business that has treasured this borrowed art and has transformed it into a modern and unique delight.

Having known the history, art, patterns, colors and expertise of Tibetan carpets, one question still remains. What makes Tibetan carpet stand out in the international market then? “There are three patterns in Tibetan carpets. The first is traditional that has been present in carpets for years now. Second is transitional, where we borrow patterns from different traditional art and put them together to create a new design and third is modern, where the designs are new and more suited to the client’s needs. This ability to form

designs and patterns which are new to the changing needs of the people keeping in mind the actual essence and representation of the art, is what makes it special,” says Pema.

Carpets which have made their way into the international market have a character, as some put it. They represent something integral and they are not mere accessories but a form of art. They have history. A room with ordinary carpets might look bright and spacious but a room with a unique carpet with patterns, once used in the palaces of royalty will definitely receive greater accolade. Tibetan carpets have all that but also an ability to incorporate the contemporary influences into historical art through quick but not too many drastic changes so that they fit modern spaces better, all the while holding true to their original character. Tibetan carpets, as Pema puts it, “are a blank canvas looking to be painted even in modern times”.

All these qualities and these carpets are gaining extended exposure in international market, most recently in United States of American,

to the delight of businessmen and art lovers and in Pema’s case both. “There aren’t many books on Tibetan carpets though the history is intense. It is an art form that could be lost if not preserved,” shares Pema.

Looking at the carpets spread out in a huge hall at the Master Weaver store, it is difficult to decide which carpet stands out. Look closer look and you still don’t have an answer. Maybe that is the beauty of art. The more you look, the better you understand and the better you understand, the more you respect those years of practice that made the master weavers and the incidental and accidental channels that brought the art from the villages of Tibet to the lives and homes of Nepalese people and others around the world.

There is a story in every corner of every place we inhabit. But imagine having thousands of stories of a time since past, of a weaver with patience, the laughter of those who lived and prayed and created art, of colors that were once revered and of you creating your own memories around such an object that has such a personality. It becomes more than a story then, it becomes a legacy. ■

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Green Gold

Exploring Nepal's Tea Bonanza

Text & Photos By PAT KAUBA



Local pickers of Shree Antu in full swing for First-Flush season

Heavy Swaraj trucks pull into the compound of the large army-green corrugated factory, hauling bulks of timber and coal. Workers move with purpose as overhead clouds take on similar tones. Ponies traipse in and out, being led by firm hands from unknown points in the surrounding cloud-covered verdant hills—they carry loads of green gold, *chiya patti* or tea leaves as we would say.

Smiles are worn strongly on faces as the 15 odd days of tea's best time known as first-flush season is in full swing. For this, pickers take only the first two to three leaves from the delicate tips of their tea-bushes. Now lines of people and horses move throughout the hills delivering this truly Nepalese taste.

CHIYA PATTI GALORE

The factory in question is Nepal's largest orthodox tea producer: Ilam Tea Producers Pvt. Ltd. of Shree Antu, just

a stone's throw away from India and their world renowned tea production area of Darjeeling. When in full swing, the factory and its peak time staff of 117 people process 50,000kg of fresh tea leaves per day, delivered to them by the 400 odd families of the area—all of which grow tea.

Om Kafley, the factory's Vice Manager informs over cups of delicious fresh brewed tea that each year the factory has seen demands grow by a staggering 15-20%, with the bulk of their product going to their marketing house in Kolkata, ready to be shipped out further again. Om goes on to explain that before the factory started in 1998, everything was going over the border to India. With these tealeaves and the arrival of the factory, the area's standard of living has increased, thanks to good earnings (39NRP per kilogram delivered), road construction to facilitate transport, and, schools to educate the young.

YEE-HAW!

As their horses and carriers bring in their loads under threatening skies I am taken indoors to see how this machine works and produces its gold, recognized as world class and a truly Nepali product.

Ilam Tea Producers of Shree Antu produces seven different qualities of tea, but everything starts at one of the long weathering traps that begin taking out the leaf's moisture—working 24 hours per day. Next comes the rolling table and dryer machine, followed by sorting, grading and finally packaging. The perfect tea is dried for 16 hours says Om and from 100kg of fresh leaf only 22 kg comes out when dry.

Finally it is the turn of men in white coats in the laboratory to check and verify that what is on the label is what is in the packaging.

As we move through the darker bowels of the plant, we are introduced to a

time warp of machinery, massive instruments used for rolling and sorting the countless multitude of leaves, harkening back to the days of the British-Raj and the East India Company. One wonders how often the maintenance man has to be called to repair them?

COAL TO THE FIRES

I never imagined tea in such quantities, worked by teams with shovels, making and moving mountains of Nepal's pride—all of which is provided by local producers as opposed to companies—using mainly organic practices. The piles of tea grow as the varying qualities are separated. The first quality is an obvious dried leaf and as the quality decreases so does the shape and size of the rigid crisp leaves, finally coming to a fine green powdered flour, which will be used in filling teabags.

Flow is the constant feeling within the factory. Machines are constantly rolling, making it impossible to hear one's own thoughts. And, whenever the lights of Shree Antu go out, within minutes the sound of the factory's mega-generators bellow throughout the surrounding area keeping the production's flow alive—there is no rest for this green-gold.

Om guides us into the very pit of the factory where two huge furnaces burn at staggeringly high temperatures, reminiscent of the engine room on the Titanic. I'm taken aback when told that 800,000kg of timber is used a year to dry the tea leaves and that's before we mention the coal that is mixed with it too. This all keeps a line of trucks in the day to deliver the necessary fuel.

A SEA OF GREEN

Last year Ilam Tea Producers Pvt. Ltd. produced and shipped a whopping 1,300,000kg of dried tea leaves from here. It is explained to me that the trees in Shree Antu produce better flavors in their leaves than those just across the border in Darjeeling as they are only 20/30 years old, while those in Darjeeling are about 100 odd years old.

The price of a kilogram of Darjeeling tea is about 1,000Nrp whereas Shree Antu's is 200NRP per kilogram; maybe this answers why the demand is high and still growing. Each year as the numbers grow so do the staff-members at the factory - I even met workers who had been working here for the last 12 years.



(Up) A worker levels out fresh tea leaves on one of the factory's 24 weathering-traps, (Down) Nepal's green-gold packed and made ready for shipping to Kolkatta.

Om goes onto explain that since tea bushes really dislike too much moisture—such as rain—that the factory closes for three to four months per year. During the rainy season, picking becomes impossible, both for the plants and those working the steep terraced landscape that Ilam is famous for.

RIDE 'EM COWBOY

As we left, we were presented with the factory's and the land's best quality tea to remind us of our journey and this beautiful land. The ponies now freed

of their heavy burdens galloped past us with smiling riders as they moved on to collect their next round of green-gold to deliver. The time was right and the harvest ripe and even though it was raining cats and dogs, there was very little that could slow the riders and their ponies down. As we would say back home, it's best to make hay while the sun shines. ■

Pat Kauba is a freelance writer and photographer with a love for unique places and tastes. You can follow author at: patkauba.jimdo.com.



High Altitude Fashion

*There is something about pashmina that says comfort
and luxury better than any other fabric*

Text By ANUBHUTIPOUDYAL, Photos By ECS MEDIA

Times might have changed but the story remains the same. There are but a few things that a girl's closet must have. They say you need great perfume, a pair of really expensive sunglasses and among those priced possessions you smile at each time you open your closet doors, there has to be a Pashmina. It could be a shawl, scarf or if you are lucky, even a sweater. But the elegance and beauty of this product has made hearts stop for quite some time now and by that I mean more than 2000 years.

HERE AND AROUND THE WORLD

The Persian region was known for its pomp and glamour, be it in carpets or its flamboyant architecture. So it isn't surprising that when it came to the ultimate in clothing, they were the first to use the word Pashmina as in Pashm meaning wool. Anything expensive tends to become unique when there is a great story associated with it. Such a story, of one of the finest products of clothing the world has seen, starts from a humble environment up in the Himalayas before it caught the fancy of the world and traveled to the fancy showrooms and fancier closets of the lucky ones.

This billion dollar industry in Nepal starts from the harsh Himalayan villages of the country, home to the high altitude mountain goat, known locally as a Chyangra. Like a lotus flower blossoming out of mud, pashmina with its many qualities has its origins in these modest areas – which would be on the opposite end of the luxury spectrum

when it comes to consumer goods. This fine fiber is then collected, sorted and through a long process woven into clothing of exquisite quality.

Pashmina wool might have changed but a little over the last thousand years, but the business of Pashmina has seen drastic changes. In Nepal, the annual export of Pashmina was worth NRs. 1.65 billion in 2010-2011 as compared to NRs. 1.29 billion in 2009-2010. The increase in exports has its own story but before this, it is important to note when the glory of this fabric was lost and then regained.

Traditionally, the idea of using the finest fur from the high altitude goats to weave warm articles of clothing was rather natural for human survival. Soon, its rarity and grace made it an aristocratic demand and it remained that way for some time. It wasn't until the 1990s in Nepal that the actual potential of Pashmina was noticed in the international market. With larger demands, more and more people took Pashmina into their professional lives. As a result the industry boomed and by the end of the 20th Century, it was proving to be one of the biggest contributors to placing Nepalese products in the international market. The word cashmere was popular in the international market for Pashmina as they approved of it and not so quietly indulged in products made by this unique. But the haphazard boom, as we know now was short lived.

What goes around comes around; sometimes with quite some more mo-

mentum. The pashmina market was booming but due to lack of proper branding, and a fair registration system, the world saw two distinct set of Pashmina; only one was worth what it claimed to be. "Fake pashminas made from synthetic material were as abundant as the real ones and international and national buyers were reluctant to trust the sellers and suppliers for the lack of authenticity in the goods," says Shrenik Kothari of Cashmere House. As a result, the legacy of this regal Nepalese pashmina was badly affected. Not surprisingly, the international exports plummeted drastically hitting the Nepalese market hard.

PASHMINA TODAY

While the entire industry's future was implicated by fakes and the international market lost both faith and patience in Nepalese pashmina, the concept of creating a brand name was finally generated. In 2011, under the name Chyangra Pashmina, Nepalese producers re-started the international trade of pashmina hoping it would restore some credibility to the products. So far, customers and businessmen have all endorsed the brand name with little reluctance and great relief. But is it too late?

"One of the biggest drawbacks of our government is its inability to create a brand for Nepalese products in the international market. We saw something similar happening in the Nepalese carpet industry boom and it happened with pashmina too, almost collapsing both



Colored looms are imported from China for various designs



Dyes being soaked in pashmina shawl

the industries. Today, after years of such disaster, we have a brand name. But the international market is very competitive. It might have been too late,” shares Anin Rajbhandari, owner of Tara Oriental Store.

So we look at the market today and wonder how things are. The good thing about being hit bad is that most times, it shakes up people who have gotten a bit too comfortable in their comfort zones. It’s during challenging times like these that we get to see the entrepreneurial side of the Nepalese, who find innovative ways to market products they have faith in and know will regain their one-time market position again. So even with the political turmoil, Rajbhandari shares, “We are creating designs on our own today. We need more designers who can be involved in this industry. We need creative people.”

Pashmina was an aristocratic thing but today’s time has more people with that kind of purchasing power. The

international fashion world requires an innovative approach towards providing to the needs of the people. People are smart about money today. They know how and when to spend and how much at that. Diamonds are forever and pashmina is an indulgence. But when many people can afford it, there are other things which matter along with quality.

“We need quality. But today we need designs as well. If we produce good but similar products, customers might buy one but they won’t keep coming back for the same product again and again. Our focus today is to make customers fall in love with the quality but along with it, it is important to keep surprising them with new designs and patterns,” says Anin Rajbhandari.

GOING FUTURISTIC WITH PASHMINA

There is no doubting the fact that Nepali pashmina has the ability to define a global trend. We have artists and the materials to create some of the finest products

the world has ever seen. There are a few reasons why Nepalese products have a world reputation. The first is history; there is a difference between creating a well designed product and creating something that has a cultural value to it. Pizza for instance is bread and cheese if we do not associate it with Italy. Similarly, Pashmina is just a piece of cloth if we leave out its history and reasons for the designs out of it. It could be just another piece of art with a little thought and much labor.

Secondly, we have prodigal artists who can incorporate traditions into fabrics and then work on creating something contemporary as well. This quality makes it difficult for any international brand to compete with Nepalese products. No one can make our products better than we can. And thirdly, the quality and trust that people catering to the world want to put in our products. Despite the fact that we had been a brand, or rather been brand-less, at some point in the past years, there are still customers willing to give us a second chance, should we work towards assuring them of the quality. This is because those who recognize quality appreciate the work that goes into a pashmina. With the new brand name, the industry can only work hard and stay optimistic about the future of pashmina.

So far, Pashmina has been promoted as just a brand. It is high time we present it as a piece of art. Tibetan carpets, paper products of Nepal and Thankas have their share of demands, but it is only when we consider it as a piece of art that their true significance is understood and appreciated. Pashmina fabric is very fine, it keeps us really warm and is surprisingly light. But it is also one of the oldest products in Nepalese culture. It has creativity and designs that came from the minds of artists who have learnt from their ancestors and then incorporated their own to it. That one pashmina article, travels across the Himalayas and down the hills, from bruised hands to creative ones before you set your sights on it. Pashmina should not just be presented as something that keeps us warm, but a fantastic historical and cultural entity which makes winter but an excuse to wear a pashmina. ■

Find pashmina items at:
Tara Oriental, Lazimpat, Cashmere House,
Basantapur Plaza, Fewa Pashmina, Jhamsikhel

Lokta Paper Craft Close to Nature

How many times, have we come across the beautiful lokta paper? Several times indeed. Every visit to a government office calls for signatures and finger prints in these fine sheets. I, for one have always loved them for their fabulous texture and the way they feel against the skin. As interesting as the paper looks, so is the story behind it and the industry that popularized it as a house hold name. Lokta is in fact an indigenous plant of Nepal. Botanically known as Daphne Boula or Daphne Papyracea, it is found at the altitude of 6500 feet to 9500 feet from the Sea Level. The bark of the Lokta is used as the raw material for the purpose of making paper. From harvesting Lokta's rough stem to making delicate products such as paper flowers, bags, cards is a long process. Hard work, dedication and a lot of creativity goes into bringing the final products to the market. Lokta Paper Craft is one of such manufacturer, that has devoted itself in making paper crafts, which is locally famous and globally known. Located at Ekantakuna, Jawalakhel, Lokta's showroom is situated opposite the big tree



called 'Kharibot'. The store is not difficult to locate. Established back in 1990, this paper-making industry has been honest to it's work for more than a decade. Registered under the Nepalese Government of Small Cottage Industries and a member of Federation of handicraft Associations of Nepal (FAHN) and Nepal Handmade Paper Association (HANDPASS), they offer a range of original, high quality paper and its crafts in traditional design. The intricate details put into every product and the traditional aspect that is kept alive in each of them is what makes Lokta special. The showroom is stacked with plenty of handicrafts and one can only wish so much to get out of there without picking up at least one item. Providing every imaginable lokta crafts, starting from the colourful wrapping papers, which are available in a more than 100 colours and design, to elaborate

lampshades and photo frames, this small industry has grown in itself. The dazzling paper crafts, be it tiny notebooks, detailed photo albums, classy gift boxes or subtle paper bags, are made with great skills and precision. Lokta being one of the strongest fibre used in paper making, the products are durable as well. The store has not limited itself to lokta crafts, it has out done itself with handicrafts such as pashmina, woolen items, hemp, felt products, traditional puppets, tibetan incense, toys, traditional miniature couples, landscape paintings, thankas, and many more. Pashmina and Dhaka shawls, Nepali caps, mufflers and other unexpected attires. It can also be a destination for those looking for home decors such as cushions and decorative pieces. In case, you don't like what you see, you are most welcome to place any custom design orders. Nepali and Tibetan musical instruments are available here too. You picking up a lokta product is a small contribution from your end to minimize waste and help uplift someone's economic standard as well. Visit the store and feel closer to nature. If you like it bring nature to your home. Use Lokta Paper, Be Close To Nature



Custom Order Wel-come

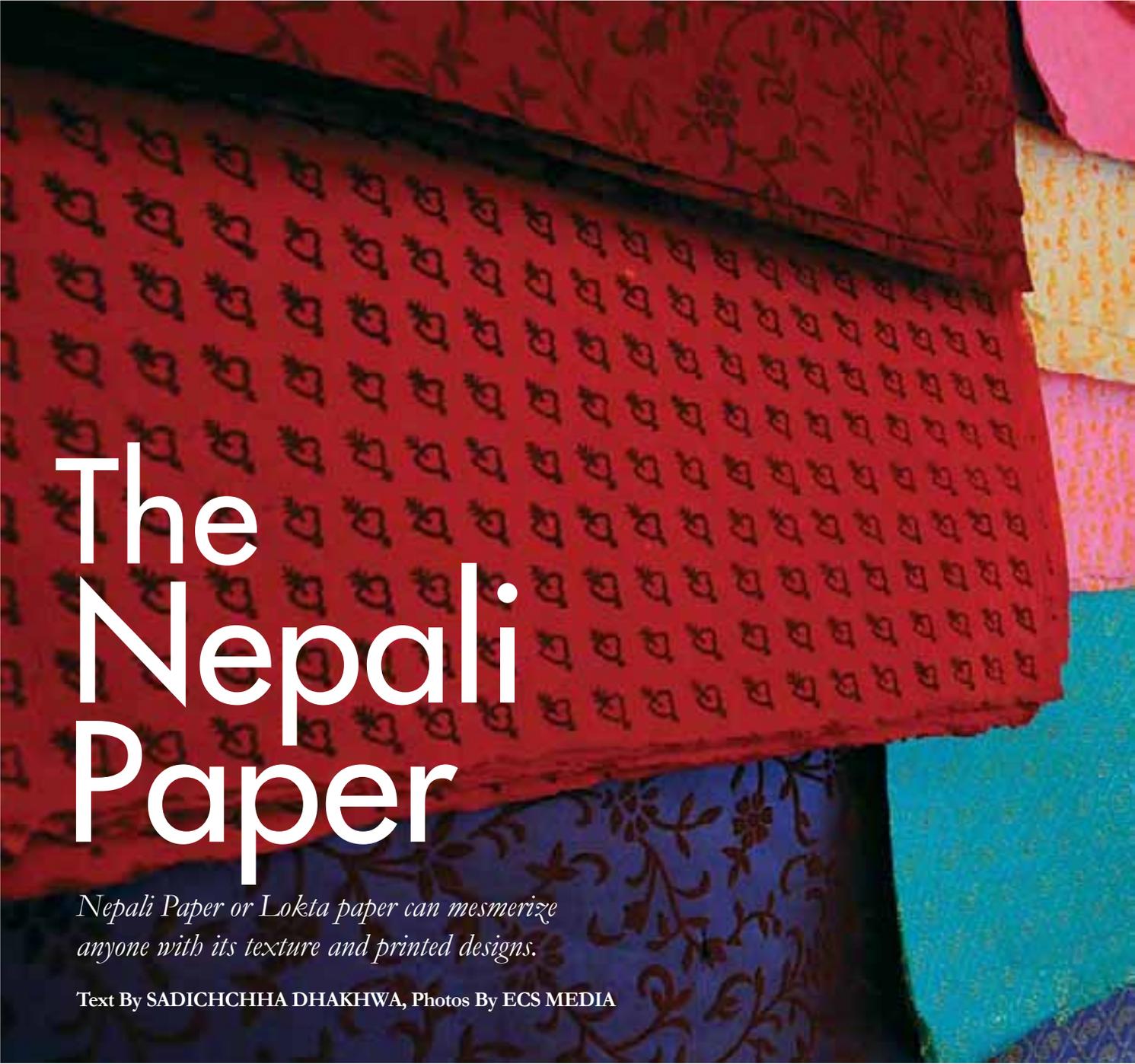
LOKTA PAPER CRAFT

Manufacturer and Exporter

Out-let

Tibetan Camp Road, Ekantakuna, Jawalakhel, Patan, Tel: 01-5546874
 E-mail: lokta@mos.com.np, url: www.nepalpaper.com
 Shopping: www.craftsfromnepal.com

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The Nepali Paper

Nepali Paper or Lokta paper can mesmerize anyone with its texture and printed designs.

Text By SADICHCHHA DHAKHWA, Photos By ECS MEDIA

Lhokta comes in a plethora of colors and patterns to suit every requirement.

The famous Nepali paper-printed designs on the slightly rough textured handmade papers are a delight to the eyes. It is beauty that gladdens; a pride of the handicraft industry of Nepal. A love for dyed paper and unique, printed designs capture the glances of any passerby. Your eyes droop over the paper lampshades on display at a store, or you walk into a craft shop and your hands find themselves running over the covers of a notebook. Nepali paper – a style of papermaking passed down over generations has become a sought after Nepali product.

In a world with a growing demand for handicraft, the widely known 'Nepali paper' has seen an increase in demand over the course of 3-4 years. Exporting handicrafts is a strong source of revenue for the Nepalese economy too. When it was starting out, the industry was mostly noticed by foreigners. More recently however, Nepalese too have become curious about traditional arts and crafts.

The Nepali paper is made from a plant known as Lokta – the *Daphne Cannabina* and *Daphne Papyrcea* – a

bush that grows naturally in the Himalayas at altitudes of 6500 to 9500 feet above sea level. These plants grow and thrive under coniferous and broad-leaved forests. They mature to a height of 10- 15 feet with the leaves growing 2 – 4 inches long. The flowers of this bush are white and have a sweet scent. The plant is harvested by hand without destroying the land - the Lokta plant regenerates itself and can be harvested again after 5-7 years. The outside cover of the plant is removed and the inner fibrous bark of the plant is used as the raw material to make the Lokta paper.



(Up) Because of its strength, lokhta has found numerous applications from bags to photo frames, (Down) There is no dearth of innovative ideas amongst people working with Lokta.

The fibers are then boiled and turned into pulp. This water soaked pulp is beaten down to breakdown the fibers into smaller pieces to create the fine material that makes the paper. The longer the pulp is beaten for, the finer the paper becomes. After the pulp is well prepared, a wooden frame with a wire mesh is used to spread the pulp evenly across the frame while being dipped into a pool of water. The excess water is allowed to drain out and the frame alongside the paper is allowed to dry in the sun. When dried, the paper can be dyed in different colors. The paper can

be made in different thicknesses too, such as the thin 10 grams to the heavy 80 grams. This style of paper making has been passed on through generations and has been used for purposes such as official documents to Tibetan manuscripts.

This paper is then used in a various range of products. The papers are dyed and printed in different colors and designs. These papers are then used for other products – in the creation of handcrafted items such as notebooks, file holders, photo frames, lampshades, bookmarks and

cards, jewelry box. “The demand for crafted items have increased over the past three years and now we don’t have to sit and wait for foreigners to come by and buy these products,” says Neeraj Madan from Anokhi. Nepalis too have started to visit these stores to look out for innovative decorations and special stationery items.

Like any other handicraft items, these items too are exported to countries abroad. These products have known to be exported to countries such as USA, Germany, Japan, France, Italy, amongst others. ■

The preservers of Nepali Craft

There is something about pashmina that says comfort and luxury better than any other fabric

Text By SWOSTI RAJBHANDARI, **Photos By** ECS MEDIA

Candid conversations with some of the most senior and popular traditional artists bring to light the challenges and success stories of Nepali artisans. Traditional Art - the very terminology denotes art that has been handed down from generations to generation, an inheritance that Nepalese so treasure. Through the centuries, parents have trained their children, preparing them to take over their ancestral skills and pass it on to future generations. However as time and technology take giant leaps forward, new generation have away to seek newer pastures. Where then does this leave the traditions and art forms of our forefathers? To find out more, I went on to talk to six families –working with stone, wood and metal traditional art forms – to know what their ancestors made, what they do nowadays and what their progeny has in mind.

Sudan Shakya

comes from a family practising traditional metal handicraft.

Profession: Art collector, dealer and businessman



Businessman Sudan Shakya deals in antique artifacts.

“I am not a traditional artist, I was never interested in the tedious work it entailed. My father too did not pursue the same profession as my grandfather. Only my youngest uncle and his family are still in this profession,” says Sudan. Like his father, he chose his own path, studying Economics at UCLA. Having tried his hands at various other professions, he finally settled as an Art Collector and

Dealer. He along with his business partners presently own art galleries in Shanghai and Singapore.

According to him, traditional metal work has reached its peak, but the inability to produce in bulk is a major drawback. The future seems a little bleak for the sector as commercialization is leaving behind important aspects of the skills such as iconog-

raphy and spirituality. However there still are a few high end clients who do not compromise and invest heavily in good work.

His grandfather received royal patronage from the late Shah king Birendra and was commissioned to make a pair of lions, which were presented to Queen Elizabeth II and the king of Spain.



Tejesh Man Shakya at his workshop with his father.

Tejesh Man Shakya

comes from a family of traditional metal handicraft

Profession: Artist and Art Educator

After the death of his grandfather, Tejesh's father was engulfed by the responsibilities of the profession at a very tender age unlike Tejesh who was self motivated yet needed his father's persuasion to join a BFA course. The father and son duo then worked with the same processes as their ancestors, bringing changes to the style, which have worked to their benefit. "Being academically sound, I have been able to improvise on the equipment and material we use like replacing hard coal with soft coal, using kerosene kilns and I am now working on a kiln lined with fire blanket.

The mould making processes have also been improvised; all these techniques aids in time consumption and economy.

Some of his notable works are installed at La Rouche Surforon, a Buddhist monastery in France, another monastery in Switzerland, one in Germany, at Jyatha Baha Vihar in Patan besides other private collections.

Tejesh goes on to emphasize the lack of knowledge about art and craft as the main problem. Art is something that has originality and craft is something that is repeated; this

demarcation has been overlooked by major art and handicraft associations. The copyright policies have not been implemented either. According to his father, a lack of rules and regulations, and support from the government is a major drawback in the growth of this industry. China needs Shakya artisans, but the outflow of fake Shakya artisans has led to a curtailing of this demand too. He is however happy that one of his sons will be taking over the family work and that with education, he is giving it a fresh lease of life.

Lok Chitrakar

comes from a family of traditional ritual painters and is the country's foremost paubha artist

Profession: Traditional Pauba painter, also runs Simrik Atelier - a training institute for pauba painters



The master painter is an internationally renowned name when it comes to paubha paintings.

Coming from a family of traditional ritual painters who have been painting the Nava Durga masks in Bhaktapur for almost 100 years, Lok Chitrakar was absorbed into the profession. He made his first professional painting at the age of 13. Chitrakar has an intimate understanding of stone colours and mortar, and believes that one cannot achieve the same lustre with chemical colours. He seeks to preserve the same art environment and techniques of the past.

Chitrakar has painted the walls of Patan's famed Golden temple and his paubhas adorn the houses of numerous patrons nationally and abroad. His work has travelled to countries like India, Pakistan, USA, China, Finland, Singapore, England and to museums in Japan.

"Art is a tradition in Nepal, it is an intangible heritage. It gives us an identity when we go abroad. However at the government level, art has been badly neglected and there should be changes

at the policy level to understand and promote art as living heritage.

Although he sees a bright future in this profession, Chitrakar is saddened to say that not a single person of the Chitrakar family has trained under him. Even his children don't seem to be following in his footsteps. He says that they are free to choose their own profession, but is sad at his inability to hand down his ancestral wealth to the next generation.

Amit Raj Shilakar

comes from a family of traditional stone carving-artisans who moved on later to wood carvings

Profession:

Contemporary artist with a background in traditional art



Wood carving artist Amit Silakar at work in his workshop with his father.

Amit enjoyed carving on wood as a child. He made most of his toys and so the intimacy developed. Having completed a BFA in sculpture, he has developed a better understanding of technicality thus improving his efficacy at work. He has branched out with his artistic experiments and experiences to metal, stone and contemporary furniture. He works on traditional wood carving only on orders since the recent shift of wood carving projects to Bungmati in Lalitpur even though the

artisans there do not have a history in this profession but work for less. Like other traditional artists, he also feels that the value of taste and price is diminishing. Amongst other projects with his father, he has made carved wooden doors and windows for the Supreme Court, Royal Nepal Academy and a wooden stupa for the Nepal Pavilion in Germany in 2000. On his own he has made a 5 feet seated Buddha for the Taiwanese monastery in Lumbini and another of the Tara

(Buddha) for Thailand and also on for the conference hall of at UN office in Kathmandu. Lack of national patrons and cheaper work is replacing skilled, carved pieces, says the father. However he is happy that one of his sons has decided to carry on with the family tradition of woodcarving and is incorporating his own to the art form too. On the other hand, Amit is optimistic having shifted to other media as the traditional itself is not enough for sustenance.

Dharma Raj Shakya comes from a family of traditional stone carvers who made the Mahabodha temple in Patan

Profession: Artist



Dharma Raj Shakya at work

Being involved from a small age in assisting his father for pocket money, Shakya got into the profession gradually. He has a BFA degree from Lalit Kala Campus where his father was a teacher.

Being academically educated, Shakya decided to change the style that his ancestors followed, of the Malla era, where motifs and iconography were exaggerated and proportions were not given emphasis to carve realistic and proportionate figures like that of the Licchavi or

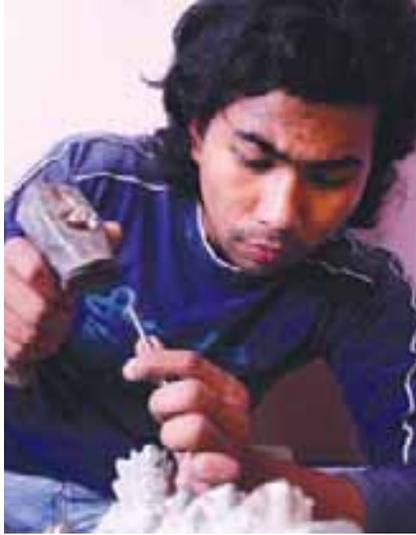
the classical period of Greek art. This was appreciated and also won him much acclaim. About ten years ago, against his father's wishes, Shakya came up with the idea of commercializing this art, scaling it into something bigger and hiring assistants and not only working for orders. Since then he has shifted to Patan Industrial Area, with a team of 21 assistants and has lent his profession a more commercial flavor. He has completed many projects individually and also with his father such as the stone relief

of the mountains at Syambhunath temple, stone works at the Hyatt Hotel and Ashta Martika statues inside the Akash Bahirav temple in Indra Chowk. Raw material has been a major problem he says. Earlier stone was quarried from Hattiban, but new rules do not allow this. The future he feels is very bright, as there is an increasing demand. He has two daughters who are too small to choose their professions; yet it worries him whether they will carry on the family tradition or opt for different careers.

Rabindra Bajracharya

is a 5th generation
stone carver

Profession: Stone
carver



Stone carver Rabindra Bajracharya works on a stone sculpture.

Amit enjoyed carving on wood as a child. He made most of his toys and so the intimacy developed. Having completed a BFA in sculpture, he has developed a better understanding of technicality thus improving his efficacy at work. He has branched out with his artistic experiments

and experiences to metal, stone and contemporary furniture. He works on traditional wood carving only on orders since the recent shift of wood carving projects to Bungmati in Lalitpur even though the artisans there do not have a history in this profession but work for less. Like other

traditional artists, he also feels that the value of taste and price is diminishing. Amongst other projects with his father, he has made carved wooden doors and windows for the Supreme Court, Royal Nepal Academy and a wooden stupa for the Nepal Pavilion in Germany in 2000. On his own he has made a 5 feet seated Buddha for the Taiwanese monastery in Lumbini and another of the Tara (Buddha) for Thailand and also on for the conference hall of at UN office in Kathmandu. Lack of national patrons and cheaper work is replacing skilled, carved pieces, says the father. However he is happy that one of his sons has decided to carry on with the family tradition of woodcarving and is incorporating his own to the art form too. On the other hand, Amit is optimistic having shifted to other media as the traditional itself is not enough for sustenance.

Uttam Raj Shakya

comes from a family
of traditional wood
carvers. His grandfather
was the Chief
Coordinator of the
Farmaish Bibhag at the
Rana palaces

Profession: Wood
Carver



Artisan Uttam Shakya's approach to his workstands out amongst the other artists of his generation.

Pressure from his father and from great artists like the Late RN Joshi to carry on the family profession was strong enough to convince Uttam Raj. He soon two major projects, one of them making wood carvings for the Vajra Hotel. Graduating from Lalit Kala Campus in 2036 B.S., he emphasises that his knowledge of drawing gives him an edge over other wood carvers. Adopting new technology, he worked with his father in renovating various temples ruined by the 1990B.S. earthquake, building the Aksheswor Maha Vihar at Pulchowk, and various other wood carvings for prominent locations like the Soaltee Hotel, the Narayani Hotel, Hotel Shangri-La and the Annapurna Hotel. He says he works

only on orders as stocking wood carvings is a bad idea for their huge size and also become large pieces tend to get deformed when not stored well. His biggest concern is about his family heritage not being passed on after him as his four children have chosen other professions. Still, he sees a bright future as the demand will never cease and thus, work will continue!

After talking to these families, I noticed that although there is a shift from traditional art forms that have been practised by some families for decades, there are others taking over too to keep the art forms very much alive. Also because there is a steady demand for such high quality craftsmanship, there will always be a career in this

for artisans who can work smartly and creatively. The improvisations that have been brought about in the art form – in techniques, tools and raw materials used and even in the structure of the workshop all seem to be necessary adaptations that ensure longevity to crafts that many fear will cease to exist in the near future.

As long as there are young artists who pick up where their elders left things and bring their own styles, influences and talent to the table, traditional art forms will be safely preserved. What is necessary now is the recognition and proper promotion of such important parts of our heritage; the sky is the limit for the collective talent and ideas of the new crop of Nepali artisans. ■

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CRAFT RIGHT NOW

IN THE STUDIO: Bringing forth new designs
CRAFT IT YOURSELF: The art of making paper
REVIEW: Battle of the crafts

FHAN's encouragement for social media

A one day seminar was organized by the federation of handicraft association, Nepal, on the 7th of June to discuss about the procedures of market expansion through social networking sites and the Internet. In the event, the speakers discussed about the ways of utilizing social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Openentry, LinkedIn and many more to reach out to the customers living within and outside Nepal.

Welcoming the participants, the chairperson of the association, Bikash

Ratna Dhakwa briefed about the continuous efforts made by FHAN and encouraged the handicraft entrepreneurs to take benefits from the use of the information technology that can play a lead role in expanding the Nepali handicraft business. He also encouraged the use of the association's website, www.nepalhandicraftmarket.com. Giving light to the event, the member and coordinator of information and technology for FHAN Shuva Govinda Tamrakar talked about the important accomplishments achieved by the association in the past few years. A total of 35 participants involved in different genres of handicraft were present in the event.

Arniko: Skateboards from Nepal



Nepal's wooden crafts represent the inherent craftsmanship passed down from times beyond written history, and Western mechanical skills represent modernity and the reality of life today. Combining the two almost exclusive fields is Arniko Skateboards, integrating Nepalese woodwork on skateboards.

Arniko skateboards are the creation of Marius Arniko Arter, a Nepal born Swiss native. Having come back to Nepal after finishing his degree, Arter combined his passion for skateboarding, carpentry and his deep connection to the land by producing skateboards in Kathmandu with some friends from St. Gallen, Switzerland.

The decks are produced in their own factory in Kathmandu using FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified veneer wood. Craftsmen from Patan

then engrave the decks with Nepalese artistry. Complete skateboards come with Bennett axis and wheels.

Besides skateboards, Arniko also has a clothing and accessories line, offering T-shirts, hoodies, jackets, pants, beanies, bags and scarves. Arniko products are not only available in its Thamel outlet but are also exported to Switzerland. Arniko's goods are provided through a number of outlets in Switzerland and are also available online, making Nepalese craftsmanship global in an unforeseen way.

www.arnikoskateboards.com

Arniko Shop Kathmandu
Sagarmatha Bazaar, Mandala Marg,
Thamel, Kathmandu
+977 985 102 5084

10th handicraft trade fair organized



Federation of Handicraft Association of Nepal (FHAN) will be organizing 10th Handicraft Trade Fair from the 22nd to the 26th of November later this year in co-operation with NTIS program. Support from Federation of Nepal Chamber of Commerce (FNCCI), Micro Enterprises Development Program (MEDEP), Federation of Nepal Cottage and Small Industries (FNCSI) and other products associations and district handicraft association will be expected for the event.

The event will be organized to promote Nepali handicraft products and to create a platform for professional buyers and sellers to meet in order to establish business relation. The organizers are also looking forward to developing the event as the business hub for the handicraft entrepreneurs of the SAARC region as participation from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri-Lanka, Maldives and Bhutan is expected.

A total of 250 stalls showcasing Nepalese Handmade papers, Leather products, Natural Fiber products and many more products will be present in the event. 8th Craft Competition with live demonstration will also be held on the same event. The organizers expects over 300,000 spectators from different walks of life and a turnover of Rs. 5,00,00,000 (five crores) during the event.

Bringing forth new designs

An effort to incorporate traditional motifs into traditional wear

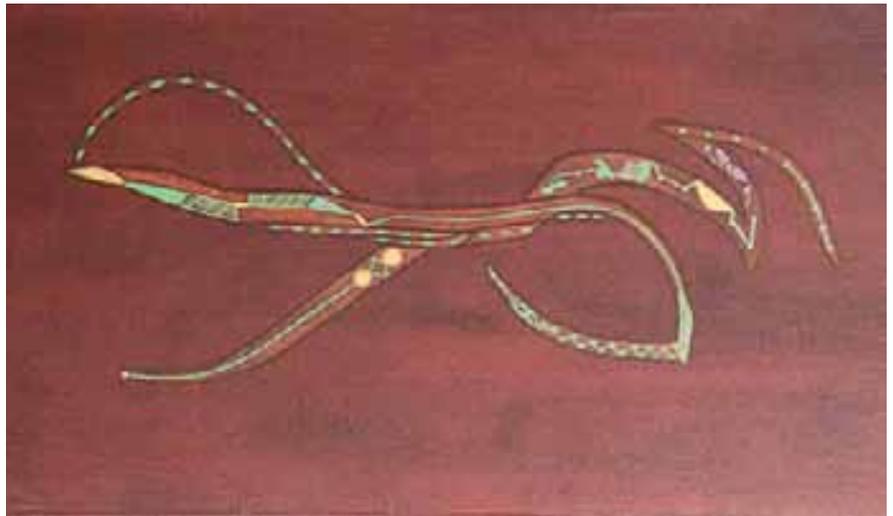
Text by Sadichchha Dhakhwa

After her time in Manhattan, New York, the artist Keepa Maskey has devoted much of her time into fine arts. Growing up in an art-based family helped her come in terms with the fine arts-world. Influences from her family pushed her into exploring different aspects of art. Although primarily based into visual arts, she also shares her interest in literature and traditional Newari dances. She has worked using various media including acrylics and oil paints and pieces of mixed media using Georgia O’Keeffe and Cassette as her inspirations.

Maskey has engaged in two styles of art - conceptual and decorative. A theme she has consistently focused on for her conceptual art is women’s issues. She has been involved in projects and groups such as Global Women Project and Adhikaar. She claims that the urge to take such deep interest in this global issue is intuitive and personal. “As a child, I was fascinated by the struggles of women. I feel that that they have a lot of say,” says Keepa. She exhibited a work based on women’s issues last year as a compilation of videos based on poems and performances with the theme ‘Domestic Violence.’

Her decorative works included works based around traditional jewelry. This was the inspiration that started her current work on saris. Maskey showed some of her art pieces based on jewelry to Susan Shakya and hence sprang the idea of incorporating traditional motifs into the sari. The aim of this project is not only just to promote art but also to encourage women to wear saris. She wishes to convey a positive energy and attitude towards the culture and a wish to rekindle with the past. Working along side her childhood friend, this project has seen success even as it is in progress.

With the help of Susan Shakya, Keepa Maskey has brought this new



Maskey’s work displays influences from Newari art and craft.



The artist’s many interests are reflected in her work.

concept to life. She works on different fabrics, chiffon, georgette, crape and silk. The colors applied on to the saris are not conformed to the colors that are worn everyday. This concept branches out into contemporary art forms while keeping sight of the demand. The paint is applied directly onto the fabric using the screening method.

Maskey regrets that she has not been able to explore many Nepali traditional art forms. She recognizes the importance of developing a traditional view and engaging cultural aspects and wishes to explore these forms. She wishes someday to be recognized as more than just a Nepali artist and hopefully make it in the international level, adding that, “Artisans are the wealth of the country.” However, she claims that despite their skills, due to the lack of concepts, the artists have been forced to work on their own. In the upcoming year, she wishes to do another exhibition based again on her recurring women’s issues theme - an issue that is close to her heart.

Some of Keepa Maskey’s work can be viewed at Susan’s Collection at Kathmandu Guest House premises, Thamel.

The art of making paper

Paper making is an ancient craft that's unbelievably simple.

Text By SADICHCHHA DHAKHWA, Photos By ECS MEDIA

I love the grainy touch of handmade paper - beautifully crafted with printed designs and earthy colors. Walk into a handicraft shop and you will find a range of products made using such paper - from notebooks to

photo frames to jewelry boxes. With the help of Handicraft, I visited a factory to learn the process of making 'Nepali' paper. So get ready with the following items and make your own paper!

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Lokta (Daphne bush) plant
- Water
- A frame with a wire mesh



1



2



3

PROCESS

Step 1: Strip the Lokta bush to skin the outer covering of the stem of the plant.

Step 2: Soak in water for 4-5 hours.

Step 3: Boil the plant for a couple of minutes to make a pulp out of it.

Step 4: Beat the pulp so that the pulp is thinned and there are no thick pieces left. The longer it is the beater, the finer the paper becomes. This is done for a total of 3-4 hours for a finer quality.

Step 5: Take the frame with the wire mesh and dip it into a pool of water. Take Lokta pulp and spread it around evenly on the wire mesh with your hands.

Step 6: Carefully drain the water around the edges and leave it out to dry in the sun.

Step 7: When dried, carefully remove the paper from the mesh.



4



5



6

NOTES:

To whiten the paper, add bleach into the water.

If you want a different color, use dyes to color the paper. If you are making thicker paper, the dye can be applied after the paper is dried and leave out to dry again. If making a thinner paper, add the dye into the pulp itself.

The process can be carried out using recycled paper such as old newspapers and used school notebooks.

SHOPPING



BGK 182 Silk Bag-L Rs. 365
 BGK 183 Silk Bag-M Rs. 183
 BGK 184 Silk Bag-S Rs. 162



BGS 793 Stripe Bag Rs. 480



CLC 1015 Tea set Rs. 1209



FLX 1000 Horse Toy Rs.1200

FLX 1002 Yak Toy Rs. 1280



- a BLB 101 Printed Bed Cover-Single Rs. 1286
- b BLD 104 Duvet cover w/duvet-Single Rs. 3797
- c BLP 118 Pillow case Rs. 200
- d CCI 128 Cushion Cover 26"x26" Rs. 433



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Battle of the crafts

Either you go from shop to shop or make a stop at the SAARC shop to find all shops in a single shop!

Text By NIMMA ADHIKARI



The shop displays a wide array of Nepali handicrafts, the best that Nepal has to offer.

The anticipation of an ecological catastrophe must have been the lesser concern when plastic was first invented. Soon it found to everything from forks and spoons to decorative items and medical devices. The introduction of plastic has changed our lives from the generation of artistry to the present generation, one of non-sustainable use of resources.

With the news of plastic debris accumulating in our landfills however, the earlier privilege toward objects made out of natural materials has regained prominence. This turn of events has given local handcraft artisans a hope to

change their lives back to normal and for others, a passion to re-craft the world. And SAARC Chamber Craft Village (SCCV) has assisted the local handcrafters and manufacturers of unique goods made from materials found within our territory to make a way in the market.

A not-for-profit company, SCCV provides a platform for small scale manufacturers, most of who are women, to showcase their products in Pulchowk. The first retail outlet by SCCV was launched in July 2008 where it endorsed handicrafts produced by South Asian Women Entrepreneurs. With the simple aspiration of promoting women's

handicraft products from all the SAARC countries, the store at present showcases products from over 60 handcrafters. The items available in the outlet vary from pure leathers goods, pashmina and cotton bags to bead accessories, handcrafted jewelries and paper crafts. Apart from the handicrafts, SCCV also helps promote organic food products and toiletries.

Home accessories like hand embroidered bed sheets and Nepali carpets are some of the eye candies of the SAARC shop. Knitted items, Mithila culture inspired products, wooden and leather toys are also available in the shop catering to the taste of people of all age groups. The shop also proudly displays products made by the Rautes, the nomadic ethnic group of Nepal, whose major survival skills include hunting and gathering as well as bartering handcrafted wooden products with crops.

SCCV, of course, is a one stop solution for all it has to offer but more than that, it is a helpline. It strategically helps small scale manufacturers sell their way through the modern market that is hugely dominated by mass machine made products. The SAARC shop helps us find our roots that traces our existence way back to the times when days were good and nights even better. ■



Handicrafts on display offer utility goods to home decor items.

Beads and Bags



15 SBS-17 Patch S Bag 1,595.00



1	SBS-16	Purse Big	1,090.00
2	SBS-31	L. Purse	870.00
3	SBS-29	Wallet	800.00
4	SBS-5	Purse Big	725.00



10	KJB-5	Mala	365.00
11	KJB-28	Wire Bangle	105.00
12	KJB-18	Ring	60.00



13	NSU-133	Necklace	3,320.00
14	HM-1	Earring	655.00



9 KJB-16 Bracelet 135.00



5	SBS-12	Big Madal Bag	1,670.00
6	SBS-4	Moon Bag	1,235.00
7	SBS-2	Flat Shopping Bag	945.00
8	SBS-1	Big Ladies Bag	1,235.00



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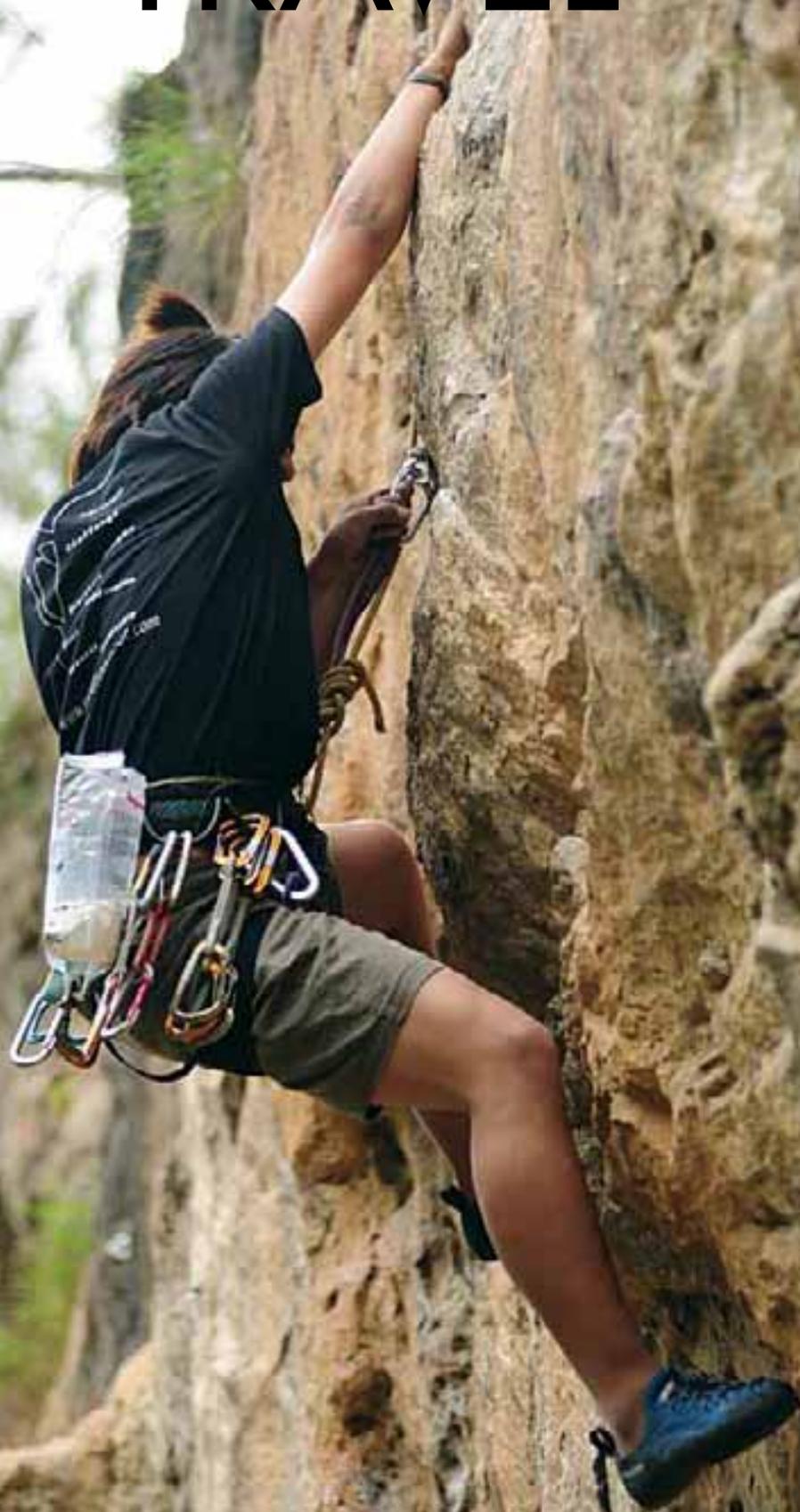
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TRAVEL



TRAVEL NEWS

TRAVEL REVIEW: The ultimate trekker's spot
PEOPLE ON THE GO: A mountaineer and more
TRAVEL DIARY: One with the hills

Air sports companies to stop services early



Pokhara based ultra light operator, Avia Club has announced to shut down the services it's been providing for this year. The shut down notice came a month ahead of its usual monsoon closure sighting low tourist turnover as its major reason.

In the past years, the club suspended flights during the months of July to August at the peak of monsoon. Due to the cancellation of visits made by tourists, the club came to a closure on the 10th of June. June was regarded as a good season for business till last year but this year due to the political instability and bandhs, the number of flights decreased by 75 percent. Following the shut down, the pilots have left the country for vacation abroad.

President of Nepal Air Sports Association (NAAA) Rajesh Bamjan said that the situation was similar with paragliding as well. Out of 18 paragliding companies, only 5 or 6 are still operating while the remaining has shut down services due to the lack of tourists in the area.

First Bangladeshi woman on Everest

Nishat Mazumder set the record of being the first Bangladeshi woman to ever scale the summits of the 8,848m high, Mt. Everest. She set foot on the summit on the 27th of May, Sunday. Prior to this, she has successfully climbed the summits of 2 other peaks standing higher than 6,000m. In a press conference held in Lalitpur, she expressed her willingness to climb the peak again if time would be favorable for her in the near future.

Mazumder, having been denied from basic education and forced into early marriage said, even girls can achieve anything if given equal opportunity and

education. She further expressed the need of girls' empowerment from a very early age to build up their confidence.

By profession, the 31 year old, Mazumder, is a government employee back home. She scaled the summit of a mountain for the first time back in September 2006 and later obtained proper training from Darjelling mountaineering association in 2007. She has also scaled the summit of Mt. Mera of the Khumbu mountain range. Mazumder was accompanied by a fellow Bangladeshi mountaineer, MA Mohit who also happens to be the first Bangladeshi to scale the summit of Mt. Everest.

FNF's Debut Event 'Sat-Raft' Concludes

Sukute Beach, 9 June



Sat-Rat, a rafting experience at Sukute Beach Camp, Bhote Koshi was held on Saturday. Faces and Figures (FnF), the organizers debuted with a successful event, filled with thrills on water, enthralling ambience of the natural beauty of the location.

Three buses full of participants left Sorakhute at 7 a.m. for Sukute.

On arrival, breakfast was served and everyone was set to raft. Starting 8 kilometers from the camp, the thrills on water ended at the beach camp after a ride through the waves. Lunch was served just when it was needed, after the unforgettable rafting and swimming. Then the actual beach party started, with music to set the mood and games of beach volleyball.

FNF pulled off their successful debut event with sponsorship from Nepal Ice and Magic Moments and support from Equator Expeditions, Nepal Tourism Board and TAAN. According to Utsav Joshi, Marketing Manager of FnF, the organizers look forward to hold more such recreational events in the future to promote domestic tourism and attract foreign tourists.

The Advent of Adventure



There are things that are always meant to be – things that fit, ought to fit and will rightfully fit when someone makes the effort to try and make them fit. Until it happened, the Himalayan Outdoor festival was an idea – something that could possibly fit. Once it did happen, it left everyone asking the question why something that fit so naturally and should have happened a long time ago had never till yet happened.

It was and is the pioneer outdoor festival in Nepal. For a country like Nepal, it was something just waiting to happen – something that would not create something new but make people realize what was present all along.

The festival was an eye opener about the potential and possibilities of so many things that could happen in Nepal and the reality of much that is already happening. The races were spectacular, to say the least, the downhill track designed to incorporate everything from tricky twists and turns to acrobatic jumps! Even for those who were not competing in any of the major events, there was lots of entertainment – for people who like doing adventurous things, it is like a mini Disneyland with a myriad of activities to try like a bouldering wall, the slackline, ice-axe pull-up, rope climbing, flying fox, zip lines run mostly run by the Nepal Mountaineering Instructors Association who also had a interactive stall about mountaineering. From the Last Resort, the horizontal bungy was a big hit.

It started with a night uphill mountain bike race and the screening of a movie about climbing called 'The Sharp End'. The second day started with a yoga session and then moved on the main events.

It wouldn't be a festival without music and to see to that, Joint Family and Lyrics Indy took the stage. The party afterwards went on 5 am the next morning.

FANTASTIC NEPAL HOLIDAYS

Nepal is a dream destination for many travelers. It has been featured in many must-do lists, as “one of the 50 places to see before you die” by BBC Holiday, “Top 10 countries to visit” by Lonely Planet and “one of the best countries for adventure destinations in the world” by National Geographic Adventure Magazine. Hordes of foreigners come to Nepal every year to trek, raft, and immerse themselves in a culture that is totally alien to their own.

While we bask in the pride of being in such a gifted country, how many of us have actually dared to travel beyond the confines of the Kathmandu Valley? Even living in this adventure playground, most of us still have not broken free from the security of home and the ever popular golden triangle of Nagarkot-Chitwan-Pokhara.

In comes Fantastic Nepal Holidays, a destination management service provider that caters to the needs of the Nepalese tourists. Fantastic Nepal Holidays is trying to push the boundaries of activities available to domestic tourists. Introducing a trip to Macchapuchhre Base Camp, be back in time for dinner in Pokhara. Sounds outrageous? That’s because it is – an outrageous adventure of a lifetime. This trip is a paragliding trip that starts from Sarangkot and ends in Lakeside, Pokhara, but with a visit to the most beautiful mountain in between!! Or you can try your hand in tiger hunting. Not in the zoo that Chitwan has become, but in the pristine jungles of Bardiya where nature guides take you deep into the tiger areas for some fine shots. With your DSLR, of course. Not a conservationist? You can

try your hand at hunting some wild bandel in Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve. Forget the swine you get at the local meat store, imagine a barbeque high in the mountains with some boar you shot yourself!! (It’s perfectly legal, with the necessary permits arranged by Fantastic Nepal Holidays). Fishing is a sport gaining popularity with Nepalese anglers, trying to bag 10 kilo Golden

back, where all the client has to do is relax and enjoy the trip.

As a destination management service provider, Fantastic Nepal Holidays claims corporate groups as a big part of their clientele. They manage travel logistics for corporate groups, with full service for hotels, transportations, and even management of meetings and conferences. In the

“the fact that we offer both holiday and corporate packages confuses some of our clients. However, we are the experts in Nepal, and our professionalism surpasses any niche activity.”

Mahsheer in the icy Himalayan waters.

The Ultimate High is an offer unique for Nepalese. It is a test of your spirit, climbing a real life snow clad 5,400 meter mountain. Tharpu Chuli in the Annapurna area is a challenging mountain, but moderate enough for beginners. What the guys at Fantastic Nepal Holidays say is, “if people all over the world come to climb our mountains, why do we limit ourselves to trekking to the base camps? Summiting one of these Himalayan giants (it’s higher than Mt. Blanc, the highest mountain in Western Europe), with a view unlike any you’ve seen before. Come join us for bragging rights none of your friends can trump!!”

Continuing their belief that Nepalese tourists deserve all the respect and facilities lavished upon foreign guests, Fantastic Nepal Holidays has designed special packages for Muktinath Darshan, one of their bestsellers. This 4 Night 5 Day package takes you in style from Kathmandu to Pokhara, Jomsom, Muktinath and

corporate sector, they add fun filled team activities to staff retreats, so that participants have fun and the company benefits from training imparted to their staff.

Says Mr. Ranjitkar, one of the directors of Fantastic Nepal Holidays, “the fact that we offer both holiday and corporate packages confuses some of our clients. However, we are the experts in Nepal, and our professionalism surpasses any niche activity. We have a carefully selected team of travel consultants and vendors, and together we implement both corporate and holiday events with flawless execution.”

Here’s a toast to domestic tourism at its best!!

Fantastic Nepal Holidays
127 Milan Marg, Teku, Kathmandu.
trip@fantasticnepal.com
www.FantasticNepal.com
Tel: 01-6227859, 4246534, 4227751

The Ultimate Trekker's Spot

Rum Doodle has gained much of its reputation as a place of celebration for trekkers.

Text By SADICHCHHA DHAKHWA

What's in a name? asked William Shakespeare. When it comes to the celebrating after conquering the Himalayas, Rum Doodle is a name that is not missed. Started in 1979 by Estan Arbinton and Tek Chandra Pokhrel, Rum Doodle has made its name as the spot for after parties for trekkers who have returned after their Himalayan adventure.

Rum Doodle is named after the fictional mountain with a height of 40,000 ½ feet, standing taller than any mountain in the world. The name comes from a hilarious fictional and well-acclaimed book, 'The Ascent of Rum Doodle' by W.E. Bowman first published in 1956.

The trademark of Rum Doodle- without any doubt- are the plywood footprints that adorn the walls and the ceiling of the place creating a special place for those who seek adventure. This tradition started back in 1982 when Sir Edmund Hillary visited the restaurant. He was asked to sign on plywood that is currently on display on a wall behind a sheet of glass. This marked the first of the collection of signatures and



The signatures at Rum Doodle makes climbing Everest look deceptively easy.

mementos of adventures. The plywood changed its shame into a collection of the footprints and today, 30 years later, the count of the collection of these footprints are over 20,000. Almost all the footprints collected over the years are on display with the exception of a few that have aged over time. Trekkers leave their mementos here in forms footprints on plywood as a form of celebration of their victory.

The Everest Summiters Club is an exclusive club for those who have scaled the highest mountain in the world- Mount Everest. Those who have successfully conquered this mountain gain access to this club and are featured into the footprints. Since 2000, Rum Doodle started keeping records for further references.

This restaurant in Thamel is a popular spot for dining those looking to dining out. It has seen many famous and experienced mountaineers since the opening. Some names that ring are Rob Hill, Sir Edmond Hillary, Apa Sherpa to the US President Jimmy Carter. Yog Bahadur Rajbhandari, the manager of Rum Doodle explains, "This place is popular among trekkers. The travel agencies book a meal at Rum Doodle in advanced when there are people interested in trekking. Most come after their adventure trips, but a few groups come before their adventures."

The name, Rum Doodle has seen many positive remarks since their opening and has been featured in different publications and in the Discovery's 1996



Besides the obvious draws, the legendary restaurant is also spacious location to kick back and relax.

documentary. The place has also been mentioned in 1985 issue of Newsweek Magazine as one of the best drinking places in the world. It has also been presented the 'Valentine Award of Excellence' on October 9, 1989.

Rum Doodle is a place of celebration combined with good food and a welcoming atmosphere for any who steps into the restaurant. The menu - mostly continental with a few Indian dishes - will fill any hungry stomach with a finger-licking experience. It is a place to have an enjoyable meal alongside famous mountaineers and adventurers. ■



Sir Edmund Hillary's post summit signature is one of the highlights at Rum Doodle's collection.

To well-deserved weekend:

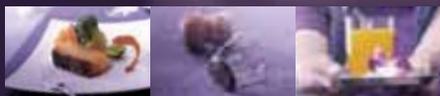
 *Reclining seats and cocktails*

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A Mountaineer and More

Known for the first Briton ascent of Mt. Everest, Doug Scott is a man who loves mountains and mountain people.

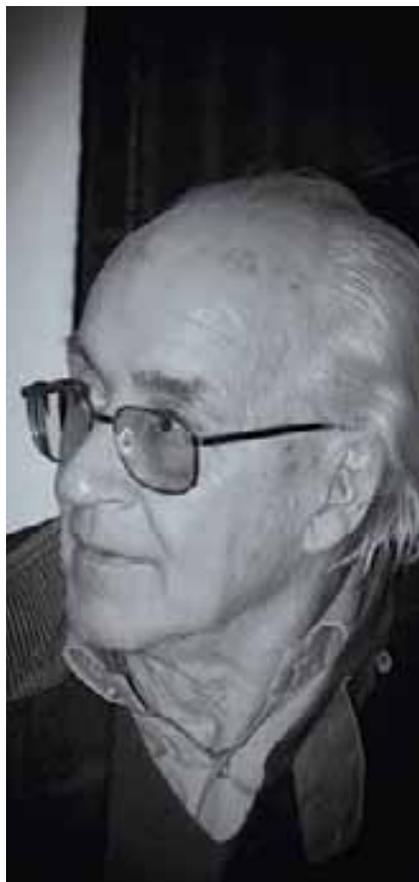
Text & Photos By NIRAJ KARKI

The lure of getting to the top of Everest has tempted many mountaineers and by now, a fair number of people of climbed Mt. Everest. There are stories of men and mountains, and most stories despite being marvels of human endurance end in just the bits about climbing.

Doug Scott's story is a different one though. Apart from his historic ascent of the mountain, the first ever by a Briton, which was accompanied by Dougal Haston, he is one man and mountaineer who has loved mountains, lived in them and given back just as much to the mountains and the mountain people.

He is certainly known best for the Everest ascent that he climbed from the south west face – the hardest route in an expedition led by Sir Chris Bonington. His other climbs, all lightweight alpine style have been equally impressive and he has survived 8 days of crawling down Baintha Brakk in Pakistan (dubbed The Ogre, affectionately) with two broken legs, conducted the world's highest unplanned bivouac, climbed the Seven Summits – the highest peaks on all of the seven continents and much more.

For the climbing community he is a true mountaineer and has been awarded the Patron's Medal of the Royal Geographical Society, served as the president of the Alpine Club, awarded the Lifetime Contribution Award at the 2011 Piolet d'Or awards in Chamonix, received the title of Commander of the Most Excellent



Mountaineer, humanitarian, a friend and benefactor to Nepal, its mountains and it's people

...he is one man and mountaineer who has loved mountains, lived in them and given back just as much to the mountains and the mountain people.

Order of the British Empire (CBE) to name a few.

For Nepal, he has a kinder, gentler face – a mountaineer but more, so much more. A man who has spent much of his in the mountains and found much affection for the unrecognized heroes - the porters of Nepal. After climbing over 40 Himalayan summits, including Everest and Kangchenjunga he started taking an active interest in the welfare of the mountain people recognizing their part in the success of his climbs and that of all other walkers and climbers who enjoy the peaks and high passes of Nepal.

His contributions for the communities of the porters this day has turned into actions that have touched and helped lives of all the mountain people and Nepal, overall. He started Community Action Nepal (CAN), which mainly operates in the Middle Hill Regions of Nepal from where the majority of the porters originate.

He spends a great deal of time working as the Operations Director for CAN but he also finds time to give lectures about his climbs which are inspirational and powerful to say the least.

There is an utter simplicity about him, in the way he continues all the work he does for Nepal. When talking about CAN and all the good things that have come out of it, he says that as humans, to do good and positive things is - natural. He believes we are capable of good it and we should rightly do good things. It is easy to believe him. ■

SUMMIT VILLAGE LODGE

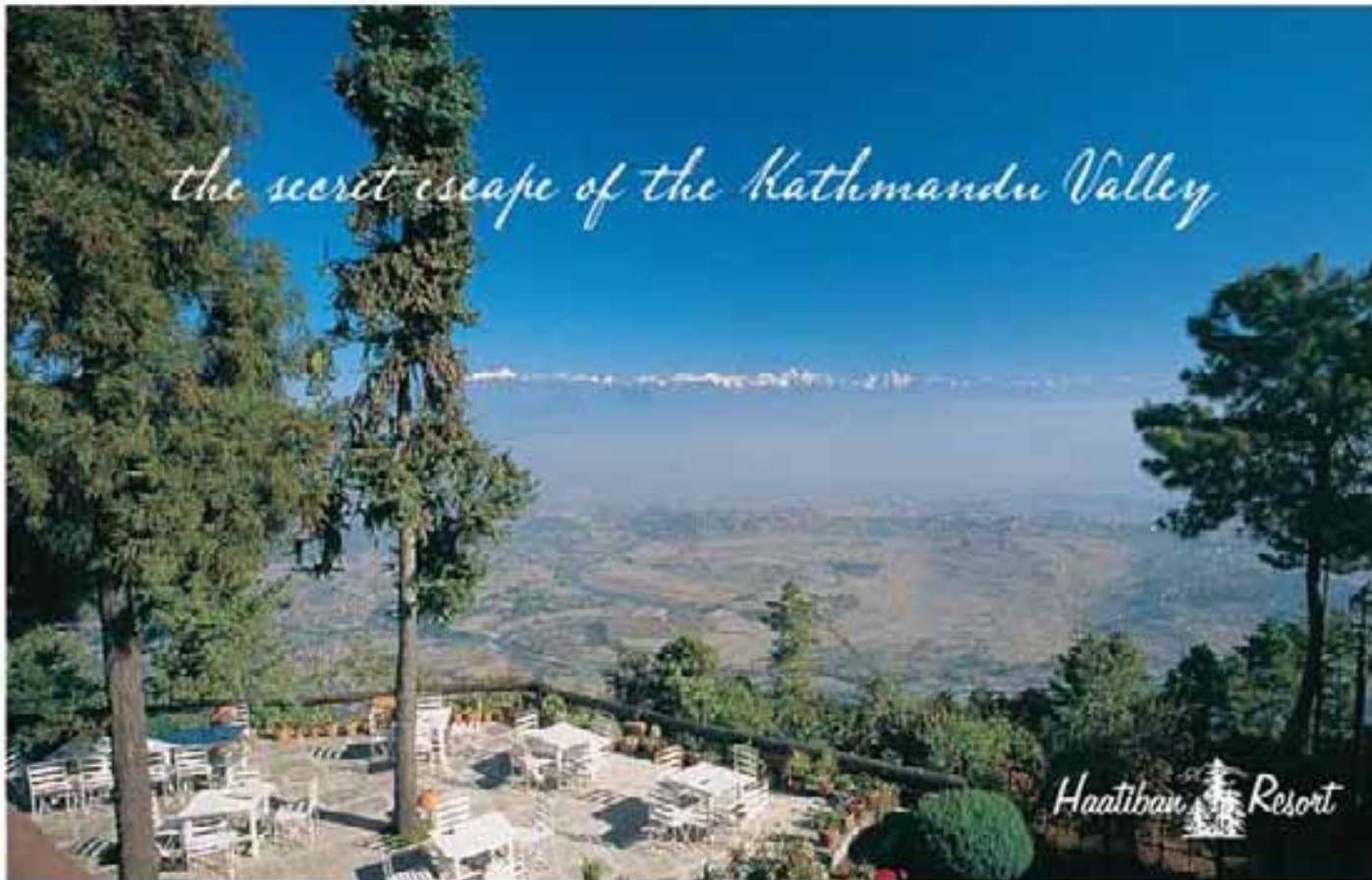
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One with the hills

When you leave a part of yourself somewhere, you look for reasons to go back to be one again.

Text & Photos By ANUBHUTI POUDYAL



A clear stream making its way across dreary rocks

As It was pitch dark as we tried to make our way from Riverside Resort to Lama Hotel in (name of place) half past six, I thought. Not a bad time to get out of your home in Kathmandu. In the middle of Langtang National Park however, half past six is almost midnight. We were walking in a line, occasionally calling out random names, waiting for someone to shout out a reply as we looked for that one light - a hotel. Any light would mean we were out of the woods and back in civilization. It seemed to take forever.

If you are visiting Nepal, any well traveled Nepali or even someone who hasn't, should tell about Langtang National Park when you ask about Nepal's must-visit destinations. One can get the information online and on any good book on trekking in Nepal. That

however would be like reading about France and merely picturing the vineyards. What is beyond those 'vineyards' is something you have to experience for yourself.

I don't know when we decided on taking motorbikes, but we did. The journey started before the bikes though. It started with buying hundred rupee woolens caps to trekking pants and jackets. Shopping for a trip to Langtang in December: "Are you sure you want to go now? It must be freezing. Go in the summer," said someone for the hundredth time. We were sure. We wanted to start our 2012 amidst the hills and if we were lucky, amidst the mountains.

ON THE TRAIL

It's a good group. There are seven people, all in their 20s or early 30s. There

is someone who has been to Langtang before – he's the guide. There is an adorable couple. There is an enthusiastic pilot and a teacher who is always taking care of everyone. There is the best friend who is polite and generous. And there is the youngest member of the group who is always talking. But the first rule of trekking- there are no individuals when you walk. Four bikes and seven individuals: one unit.

Just like we had been warned, the road from Dhunche was tricky at night. It would have been cold; on a bike it's almost freezing. We moved together and sang as night fell when we finally reached our last stop - Chilime Hydro-power Guest House in Syaphru Besi. We slept before midnight on New Year's Eve that night, due to exhaustion and also because we were starting trekking

early the next day. The next day, we woke up to the sight of a stretch of hills. The view I thought, especially because it was a new year's morning, was breathtaking. I had the very same thought every morning for the next eight days.

The trip started from Kathmandu and ended in Dhunche, Rasuwa; the trekking itself only starting from Syaphru Besi. We reached Kanjing Gumba on the fourth night, not realizing the beauty of traveling in the 'off-season' until much later in the trek. Traveling around New Year's time turned out to be a great decision. There were other good decisions too; they feature later in the story.

You turn primitive when you walk for a long time. You leave behind things that filled your head when you were in the city. Cell phones don't work and there is no Internet. You think about work for the first few days but then slowly those thoughts leave your head as well. Your basic instincts like hunger, thirst, exhaustion and exhilaration fill your days and you can feel toxins seeping out of your system. The trance of absolute freshness that fills your lungs with each breath of pure air, and the smell of earth - that is what makes trekking addictive.

During December-January, the period of extreme cold, the actual owners of hotels and resorts in the Langtang circuit leave their places to the locals. These locals, who rely on agriculture for most of the year take charge of the hotels but have to give a major portion of their earnings in those months to the owners. This however, has worked quite well for the people on the circuit, for otherwise they are left with little to do in the winter. But it also means they have to work harder as even though there are lesser tourists, they still have to pay off the hotel owners. Another reason we were lucky was because we didn't just meet the locals but spent at least a day with them at each place we went. They had their stories and their dreams. The money we spent was going to the Nepalese who were not into business but were a part of the already present culture of the region. We didn't meet people who ran business. We met people. That again, was as primitive as it could get.

The constant walking heated the body but our faces were exposed to very cold air. It was between these bouts of



Frozen river with glorious mountains behind

cold wind and brilliant sun that we saw it. Higher up the hills, vegetation became scarce, it was there amongst the huge bare hills that we saw a huge antelope. It took a while to locate it but we did. I remember all of us sitting on a row of stones toying with the idea of taking off our woolen caps because of the simultaneous cold wind and hot sun watching it. We hadn't showered in days and the place had absolutely no greenery. For the first time in my life I realized that true beauty comes from that part within you that defines your sight. You don't see beautiful things. You interpret them as beautiful. I still don't know what struck me the most about that day, but maybe that is what beautiful is - the inexplicable.

When you begin your walk towards normalcy, with every step you are left nostalgic. You have felt more in those few days than you did in years. In Langtang, at a temperature well below 0 degrees Celsius, you discover corners in your heart that you never knew existed. It isn't about the place anymore. It is about what becomes of you when you are in that place. The mountains you moved towards are something you are moving away from and before you know it, you see the first vehicle in a week. You are back.

The best things in life are the ones you define for yourself. You have not read about it somewhere or heard about it from someone else. It is there in front of you like a blank canvas waiting for you to paint over it or not paint it at all. Trekking isn't just a walk or a time to bond, although it can be that too. You take oxygen inside you at places you didn't

know existed and that knot you've felt inside you all your life suddenly loosens up and you realize that life is only as complicated as you want it to be. You miss a small number of people and you realize their importance. You realize how insignificant most technology is, and how easily you can survive without television. Music can be heard in different forms no matter where you are and the beauty has nothing to do with clothes or accessories. It has everything to do with that lesser walked trail and the children follow you without understanding what you are saying. It is about washing your face with ice cold water and ending up with tiny pieces of ice on your chin and a friend removing it without having to talk, as if it were the most natural thing to do. And it is about understanding the significance of fire.

I always thought Tom Hanks' lost at sea character in *Castaway* was sad. But I am not sure anymore. I wouldn't want years of solitary confinement on an island. But I wouldn't mind a few days' retreat from life. On our way back, we were all quiet. In just about a few minutes, we'd be back to where we 'belonged'. There would be college and there would be flights. There would be business and family. But I don't think anyone of us will ever, fully belong to the city anymore. Anyone who's had a taste of the hills leaves a part of himself there. You keep going back to meet that part of you. And you never really feel complete anywhere in the world, until you do. ■

ECS COURSES

In order to improve the skills and knowledge of your household staff, ECS offers the following courses this month. Please let us know if you are interested in enrolling your staff for these courses.

Phone: 442.6439, 98510.07.900

Email: ecs@infoclub.com.np or services@ecs.com.np to book a place.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Many excellent staff are registered with us, including cooks, guards, gardeners, maids and drivers. Our list is constantly updated. Interviews are carried out at our office to help resolve language problems between our clients and the staff. If you are looking for efficient and reliable staff, please come and discuss your requirements with us and don't forget to register your staff with us before you leave.

INTERVIEW FEE: Rs. 1,500 **PLACEMENT FEE:** Rs. 2,500



NEPALI LANGUAGE CLASS FOR FOREIGNERS

ECS Services has been supporting foreigners to learn the Nepali Language (speaking, reading and writing) for many years. If you would like to learn or improve your Nepali vocabulary, please call us. Group or individual classes are available.

BASIC ENGLISH READING & WRITING

FOR HOUSEHOLD STAFF

Our clients and their staff often face problems when not communicating face to face. If your staff could read and write memos or notes, things could be easier for you. We present this reading and writing course that will enable your household staff to read notes/memos, write simple sentences, and take telephone messages. This will also help your staff to get employed after you leave. This is a two months course, 5 days a week, one hour a day. **FEE:** Rs. 8,000

BASIC ENGLISH LANGUAGE

FOR HOUSEHOLD STAFF

Our English class for household staff enables them to communicate with you in simple English. Language structures are taught along with vocabulary that is related to household matters (for daily use). Oral communication skills will be emphasized in this course rather than reading and writing skills. This is a one month course, 5 days week, one hour a day. **FEE:** Rs. 4,000

NEPALI LANGUAGE CD

The revised ECS Nepali language CD is now available. It gives you the chance not only to listen but also to practice your Nepali along with the CD. We feel that this improved CD will help you learn the Nepali language more effectively. A booklet comes with the CD. **PRICE:** Rs. 999 (including booklet)

FOOD HANDLING & HYGIENE

FOR HOUSEHOLD STAFF

ECS is organizing food handling and hygiene course for your household staff. If you are unsure whether your staff is aware about hygiene then this is the ideal course. This hands-on class includes daily hygiene, importance of hand washing and preparation of fruits and vegetables. We will teach them the proper way of cleaning - tables, windows, kitchen floor and bathroom. We will also teach them how to take care of a refrigerator. We will discuss how illness is spread and why the corner and behind the door is important to clean. We intend this course to help your staff to clean the house properly. Two days course, 1p.m. to 5p.m. **VENUE:** Maharajgunj

SPECIAL COOKING

FOR HOUSEHOLD STAFF

ECS cooking course is an opportunity for your maid or cook to improve his/her cooking skills. At the end of this course, participants will be able to work as a cook independently and can even organize a small party. The course content includes information on different food items for practical cooking and will also make them aware about kitchen hygiene. We teach them how to prepare Indian, Chinese and continental items, as well as basic Western cooking techniques like simmer, sauté, etc. We will also discuss how to organize a kitchen, to prepare menus, cutting techniques, steps for serving food during small and big parties. We will also teach them how to keep food and the kitchen hygienically clean. This course helps them improve their skills so your staff will not only serve you better while you are here, but they will find it easier to find a job when you leave. Duration of course: 6 weeks, five days a week and two hours a day. **VENUE:** Maharajgunj **FEE:** Rs. 15,000

FRENCH COOKING COURSE

Participants will be able to cook the following items.

- 1) Vegetable pastries
- 2) Nicoise salad
- 3) Cheese soufflé
- 4) Chicken with tarragon sauce
- 5) Chocolate pudding

DATE: 29th July 2012

TIME: 1.00 pm to 5.00 pm

VENUE: Maharajgunj

FEE: Rs. 1,200

INTERNATIONAL COOKING COURSE

Participants will be able to cook the following items.

- 1) Fried chicken drumstick
- 2) Vegetable casserole
- 3) Rice noodle with chicken salad
- 4) Tortedillas
- 5) Pineapple Cake

DATE: 26th August 2012

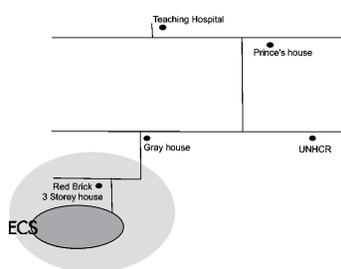
TIME: 1.00 pm to 5.00 pm

VENUE: Maharajgunj

FEE: Rs. 1,200

ECS

Maharajgunj, Kathmandu
Phone: 442.6439/98510.07.900
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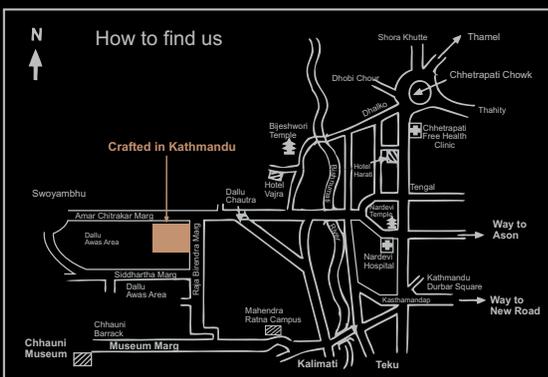


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Mountains on the Mind

Text & Photo By DON MESSERSCHMIDT

Ever been to Himavat? Of course you have - it's an older, alternative name for the Himalayas. Reading and writing about Nepal requires understanding mountain words. So does trekking, for the guidebooks and maps are littered with mountain terms. I've always thought how much more enriched and rewarding travel in high Nepal would be if trekkers (especially foreigners) knew more place names and their meaning.

For starters, here are a few mountain area terms commonly found on maps, and a few others, with their sources and meanings (their *mul* and *matlab*, that is).

Himal, *Himala*, *Himalchal*, *Himalaya*: Over a century ago the British colonial wordsmiths Henry Yule and A.C. Burnell wrote in the *Hobson-Jobson* dictionary that the *Himal* is "properly *Himālaya*, 'the Abode of Snow'; also called *Himavat*, 'the Snowy'; *Himagiri* and *Himaśaila*; *Himādri*, *Himakūta*, &c...." They attribute the first use of the modern term '*Himalaya*' (in English writing) to Reginald Heber (1783-1826), the Church of England's Bishop of Calcutta. It appears in his *Indian Journal*, published posthumously in 1828.

The 14 highest Himalayan peaks, all above 8,000 meters, are listed here in order of their height. Several of them straddle international borders and eight are all or partly in Nepal (in bold): Everest, K2, Kangchenjunga, Lhotse, Makalu, Cho Oyu, Dhaulagiri, Manaslu, Nanga Parbat, Annapurna, Gasherbrum-I, Broad Peak, Gasherbrum-II, and Shishapangma. Some names have special meaning. *Kanchenjunga* is the 'Five Treasures of Snow' (in Tibetan). *Cho Oyu* is the 'Turquoise God' (Tib.). *Dhaulagiri* is the 'White Mountain' (Sanskrit). *Manaslu* is 'Mountain of the Spirit' (Skt.). *Nanga Parbat* is the 'Naked Mountain' (Urdu). *Annapurna* is the



Clear view of the mountains from Kyanjin Gumba

'Goddess of Harvest' (Skt.). *Gasherbrum* is the 'Beautiful Mountain' (Balti). And *Shishapangma* viewed from the north looks like a 'Crest above the Grassy Plains' (Tib.), but it is also a 'Holy Place' known to the Nepalese as *Gosainthan*.

The root '*him*' in *Himal/Himalaya* is derived from *hiun* (*hiū*), meaning 'snow'. *Himmat*, 'courage', comes from it, so that '*himmat bandhnu*' means 'to be of good courage' - necessary if you want to trek high or climb a peak. '*Himmat*' is also used as a man's name.

The suffix *-giri*, as in *Dhaulagiri*, is a Sanskrit term meaning 'mountain'. It also occurs in *Nilgiri*, the name for three icy 'Blue Mountain' peaks that rise high in the east over Jomsom, in Thak Khola, Mustang District.

Lower down, many of the foothills are of mountainous size. The midhills are the '*Pahar*', meaning a 'hill' or 'mountain' area, and one who dwells there is a '*Pahari*'. The hill areas that butt up directly against the Himalayas are the '*Lek*', and their inhabitants are called '*Lekhali*'. It is often said in Nepali that the mountainous *Lek* is far off in *durgam chhetra*, denoting a remote area or (holy) place. In common usage it implies a difficult locale where only the most robust mountain people live.

The high *Lek* has many sheep/goat, cattle and yak grazing lands, called *kharka*, literally 'pasture' or 'meadow'. There are numerous named *kharkas* on trekkers' maps. If you arrive at one during the summer grazing season you are likely to find one or more shepherd huts called '*goth*' (rhymes with boat), and some *gothalos* (shepherds). You'll also be confronted by livestock guardian dogs (*kukur*), the largest of which are the famous '*Bhoté kukur*' (Tibetan mastiffs).

Many a hilltop or ridge is called '*danda*', such as *Bahun Danda*, '*Brahmin Hill*', in northern Lamjung District of central Nepal, on the old trail to Manang. And a place to worship the mountain goddess is a '*deorali*', usually on or near a '*bhanjhyang*', a pass over a *danda*. The highest mountain passes are usually called '*la*' (Tib.), as in *Thorung La* on the popular Round Annapurna circuit trail.

This is a small sampling of mountain of terms from the Nepal Himalayas. Now take to the trail and enjoy your trek! ■

Note that Nepali terms are spelled many different ways on maps and in guidebooks. Yule and Burnell's classic '*Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive*' was first published in 1886 and updated in 1903. There are reprint editions, but original copies of both versions are collectors' items. The '*Hobson-Jobson*' is a fascinating sourcebook with over 2,000 entries, including etymological citations that date to some of the earliest literary sources from the first European contacts with South Asia. Two dictionaries used for this essay are R.L. Turner's '*A Comparative and Etymological Dictionary of the Nepali Language*' (1931), and R.L. Schmidt's '*A Practical Dictionary of Modern Nepali*' (1994). All three of these dictionaries (and others) are accessible online at dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries.

The author is a regular contributor to ECS Nepal magazine, and can be contacted at don.editor@gmail.com.



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Decision-making

Text By ANIL CHITRAKAR

Once in a while, we take great pride in the decisions we made. At other times we wish the decision was simply made by someone else. Some of us have the luxury of making simple (black or white) decisions while others are struck with making very complicated (grey) decisions. These decisions also have long term consequences beyond the immediate results or impacts. While some decisions seem right at that particular moment, new information comes up proving us wrong in the medium and long term. This is why we like to consult others and occasionally resort to an advisory committee or advisory board to help us decide.

Our heritage is full of anecdotes and stories that help explain the most complex issues such as the art or science of decision-making. This particular tale is about a father-son team that ran a village laundry business. They owned a donkey that helped carrying the clothes load in and out of the settlement. As the story goes, one day, the father, son and their donkey were making their way through the market place to collect a new load of clothes to wash when they come across a group of people sitting idle under a tree. They laughed at the father and son and commented on how stupid they must be to lead the donkey along without them riding on it. What a waste.

The father and son consulted and decided that the father should ride the donkey. A few paces down the lane, they come across another group. They sneered at the father and remarked how unkind he must be to allow his son to walk behind the donkey. This was not the way to treat a child....The two consulted again and this time decided that the young boy should ride the donkey. A little further on, they met yet another group of people who commented on how disrespectful the son must be to ride the donkey while his father walked. The two consulted once again for a bit



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longer period and decided that the best thing to do would be for both of them to get on the donkey.

This time they came across a group of people very angry that the donkey must be suffering under the weight of the two riders. They remarked that they had never seen such unkind people with absolutely no consideration for the beast of burden. Having listened to all these people, the father and son lead the donkey to the edge of the town, and decided to drop it off the cliff.....

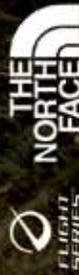
In May this year, instead of getting a constitution, we threw the whole

Constituent Assembly out; and many are still trying to figure out what really happened? Politicians in this country have many advisors. Every ministry, department, project has numerous advisors, local and international. So many people advise Nepal on the best course of action to write a new constitution, end poverty and attain lasting peace. We travel to foreign countries for “study tours” and come back with so much advice....all of this would be justified if only we could make decisions. We need decisions that will get us all to a peaceful and prosperous Nepal.



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Hai Koernal and Tishy Garmoa. Using the gear in Patagonia, Argentina. Photo: Tim Komaru

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