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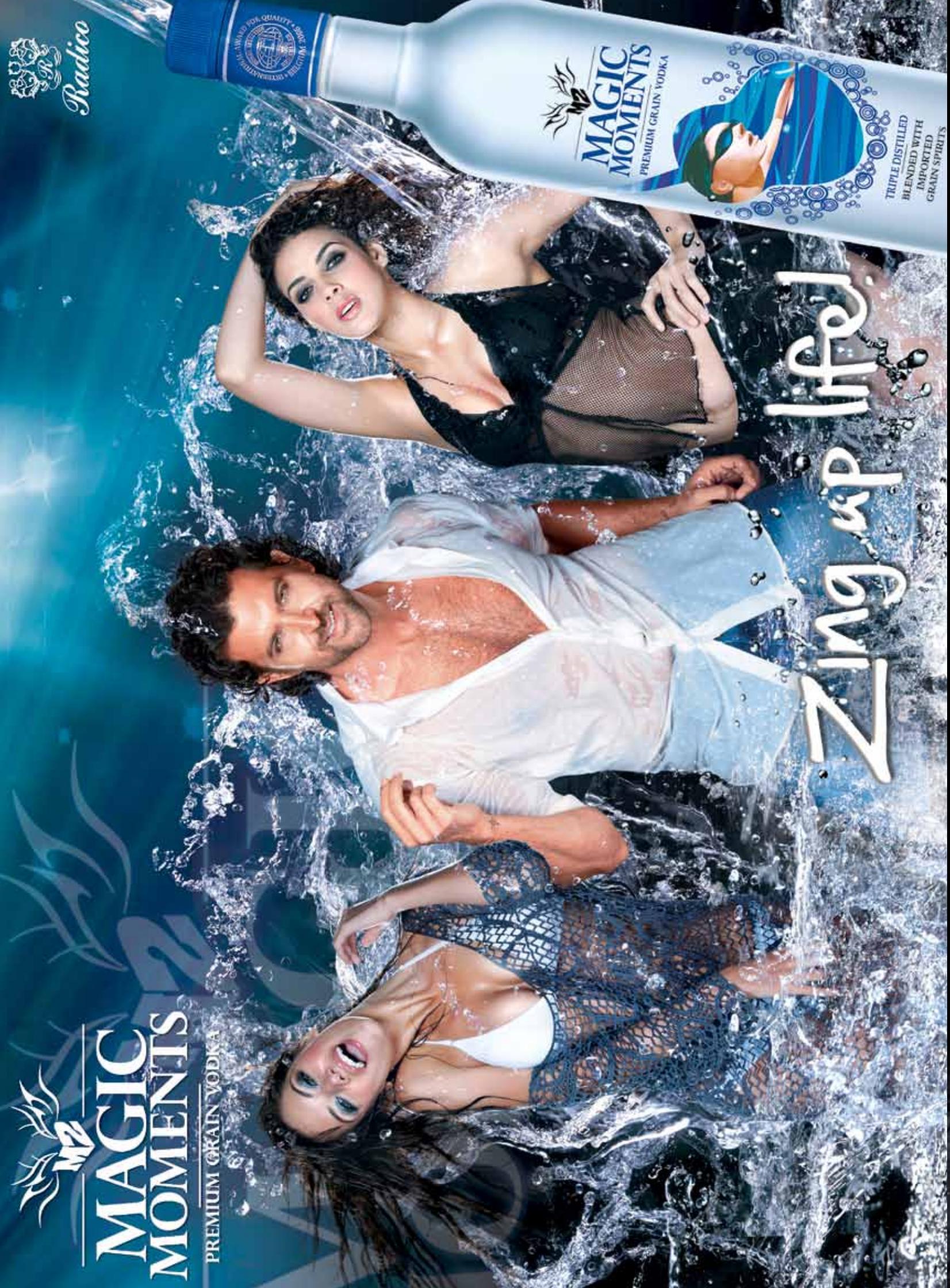
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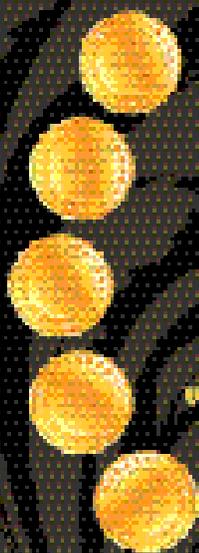


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೨೩ನೇ ವಸತಿ ಪ್ರವೇಶ
 ೨೦೨೨-೨೩



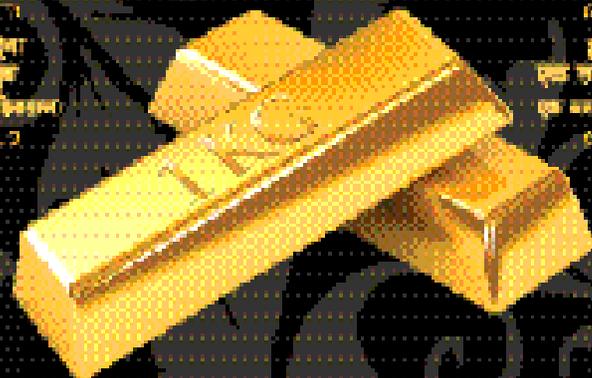
ಖರ್ಗೋಲಪುರವು ವಾರ್ಷಿಕ ಸ್ವಾಧಿಕಾರ ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪನೆ ಮತ್ತು ಪಾವತಿಯನ್ನು:

೧. ಒಂದು ಕಿಲೋ ಸುನ್ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ
೨. ಒಂದು ಮಾತ್ರ ಅವಕಾಶ



೧. ಸ್ವಲ್ಪಮಟ್ಟಿಗೆ
೨. ಒಂದು ತೆರಿಗೆ
೩೦ ತೆರಿಗೆ ಸುನ್
 ಒಂದು ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪನೆ (೧೦ ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ)
 ೨೦೨೨-೨೩

೩. ಸ್ವಲ್ಪಮಟ್ಟಿಗೆ
೪. ಒಂದು ತೆರಿಗೆ
೫೦ ತೆರಿಗೆ ಸುನ್
 ಒಂದು ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪನೆ (೧೦ ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ)
 ೨೦೨೨-೨೩



ಪ್ರತಿವರ್ಷ ಒಂದು ತೆರಿಗೆ ಪಾವತಿಯನ್ನು ಮಾಡಿ, ಒಂದು ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪನೆ ಮಾಡಿ ನೀಡಿ.

ಪ್ರತಿವರ್ಷ ಒಂದು ತೆರಿಗೆ ಪಾವತಿಯನ್ನು ಮಾಡಿ, ಒಂದು ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪನೆ ಮಾಡಿ ನೀಡಿ.

೧೦ ತೆರಿಗೆ ಸುನ್
ಪ್ರತಿವರ್ಷ

೩ ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ ಒಂದು ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪನೆ
 ಪ್ರತಿವರ್ಷ ಒಂದು ತೆರಿಗೆ ಪಾವತಿಯನ್ನು ಮಾಡಿ

೧೬ ಸಾವಿರ
೧ ಲಕ್ಷ ರೂಪಾಯಿ

೧೦ ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ ಒಂದು ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪನೆ
 ಪ್ರತಿವರ್ಷ ಒಂದು ತೆರಿಗೆ ಪಾವತಿಯನ್ನು ಮಾಡಿ

ಪಕ್ಕಾ ಪ್ರವೇಶ



೧೦ ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ ಒಂದು ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪನೆ ಮಾಡಿ, ಒಂದು ತೆರಿಗೆ ಪಾವತಿಯನ್ನು ಮಾಡಿ ನೀಡಿ. ಪ್ರತಿವರ್ಷ ಒಂದು ತೆರಿಗೆ ಪಾವತಿಯನ್ನು ಮಾಡಿ, ಒಂದು ವ್ಯವಸ್ಥಾಪನೆ ಮಾಡಿ ನೀಡಿ.

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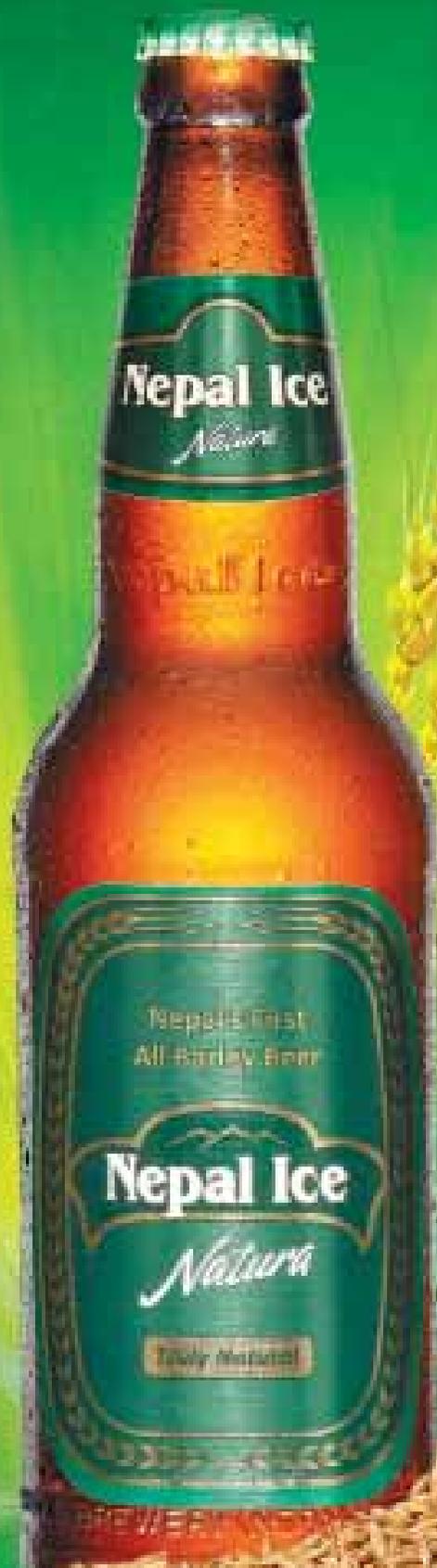
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By Paribesh Pradhan

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Dawa Steven Sherpa shares what he learnt from trekking across the country for 99 days and Anil Chitrakar opines on how to build up on this success.

ON THE COVER

Mules carry loads up the winding trail from Jumla to Mugu District in Nepal's remote midwest.

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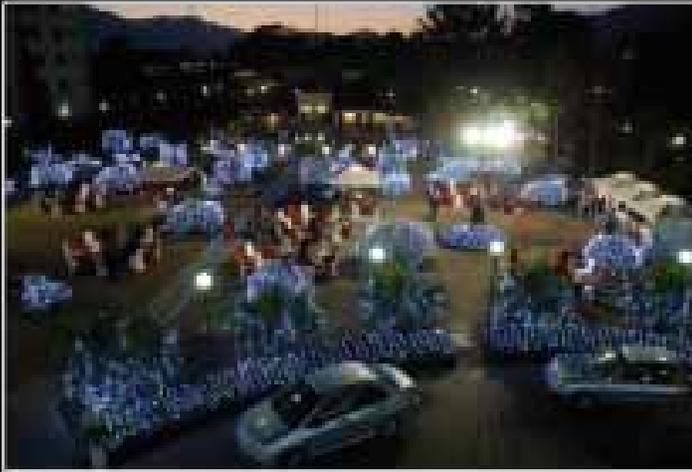
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ECS Media

CUPS OF TEA

There seems to be no problem in Nepal that cannot be solved by having endless cups of tea. The response to any situation seems to culminate in this most common Nepali habit of, "let us have a cup of tea". It is then only logical to understand why there are so many tea shops in this beautiful country. Talking of the natural beauty of Nepal, it is with great pride and joy that we saw the climate smart celebrity trek led by our very own Appa Sherpa complete 1555 kilometers of the Great Himalayan Trail in 99 days. The GHT as a concept, and as an aspiration for many, is here to stay and ECS will do its part to continue to bring stories and images in the months and years ahead. It is anybody's guess to figure out how many tea shops will be opening up on the GHT in the next ten years.

As the importance and value of Kathmandu's globally unique heritage sinks in, it is wonderful to see restoration of some key monuments. The Jana Bahal in the heart of Kathmandu and Hiranya Varna Mahabihar (Golden Temple) in Patan are getting some well deserved attention and a facelift. Both these sites are great attractions to local and foreign visitors. The best times to be in these monuments are early in the morning so that you can observe some of the rituals as well. We must make sure that these built and living heritage is preserved for all generations to come. Please contribute to such efforts in any way possible.

Getting around Kathmandu and for that matter, any city in Nepal, can be quite an experience. One thing we all will learn very quickly is that the shortest distance between two points

is "not a straight line". If one takes it in the right spirit, it can be quite an efficient way to get around, affordable and a great way to make new friends. The trips will have some elements of surprise each time as well. In order to address the issues of air quality and congestion in the Kathmandu valley, mass transit will be the only real solution. There simply is no land available to widen roads. As it is, too many trees have already been "sacrificed". It is also really heartening to see the growing popularity of bicycles and the voice to create cycle lanes is getting louder by the day.

The Peace Corps, one of the most popular institutions among the Nepali people, is back after a short break. We would like to welcome them and hope to hear of and see the continuation of the wonderful hands-on and grassroots work that they did in the past. The spirit of volunteerism is what the world needs today to tackle some of society's toughest problems. In this issue of ECS we bring you stories about Muktinath, the popular pilgrimage site in the Kali Gandaki valley, the insights into maps, glass blowers and their products and many of our regular features. Whatever you do this month out for the Nepali way.

Anil Chitrakar
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The company is offering unbeatable bank financing interest rate at 9.75 % per annum (lowest interest rate offered in its segment), free Apple iPad 2, free car accessories and free road tax. This offer started from the 18th of April is valid for a limited period. The offer is applicable on the newest models of Volkswagen Vento, and New Polo.

The VW Cento New Polo was showcased September, NADA Auto Show 2011 and the official sales started from October 2011. The Volkswagen New Polo has won numerous accolades and was coveted "WORLD CAR OF THE YEAR 2010" among others.

Third Heritage 'Run for Heritage Conservation' Marathon



Nepal Investment Bank Limited (NIBL) held the third NIBL Heritage Marathon on 5th May 2012. The theme for the marathon was 'Run for Heritage Conservation'

and was aimed to raise 10 million to assist the restoration project of Bhai Degah Temple located at Patan Durbar Square. This annual marathon is a joint platform to promote health and corporate wellbeing and to raise funds for heritage conservation.

Originally a three-story structure, the Bhai Degah temple collapsed in the 1934 earthquake. It was a means to raise fund for the restoration of this structure. The project is undertaken by Sanskritik Sampada Samrakshan Samuha and overseen by Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust (KVPT).

NIBL has been involved in heritage preservation since 2002 after the n=donation of Rs 1.5 million for the restoration of the Kaal Bhairav statue at the Hanuman Dhoka. It also raised 2.5 million from the Corporate Heritage Marathon to support the restoration of Sundari Chowk at Patan Durbar Square.

NIBL is also involved in Corporate Social Responsibility activities such as sponsoring the cleanup expedition to Mt. Everest, Extreme Everest Expedition (EEE).

Coca-Cola launches "Shake up your Senses" Campaign

Coca-Cola recently launched its summer refreshment campaign, 'Shake up you Senses' aimed at amplifying the strong teen connect that the brand enjoys. This campaign integrates refreshing energy and fun appealing to teens.

This campaign is a 360-degree communication program which includes thematic television commercials, radio jingles, print ads and hoarding. A range of on-ground initiatives including in-store and on-ground activations of youth hangout zones complements the communication effort.

Coca-Cola has always tried to express a refreshing and positive view of life. This campaign's aim is to remind people that

the drink is always there to offer the small moment of fun and refreshment when you need it. The B-Boying performance on the campaign was enjoyed by over 3000 spectators in Fun Park, Bhrikuti Mandap at Ides of March on 31st of March 2012.

According to Shadab Khan, Country Manager for Nepal and Bhutan for Coca-Cola, "Teens are the most demanding audience as far as creativity is concerned and in the way they engage with brands. They demand to interact and participate with brands and be a part of the conversation. With this campaign we are inviting teens to 'Have a Coke' and 'refresh and energize' themselves and those around."

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Kathmandu 2nd Corporate Football Tournament



Corporate Management Solution Nepal Pvt. Ltd organized the Kathmandu 2nd Corporate 5 A-side

Football Tournament 2069 at Gattaghar Football Ground, Madhyapur Thimi Municipality from Baishak 23 to 24 2069.

Due to the response from the organized tournament last year, it is a competition organized between various sectors including corporate houses, banks,

financial institutions, media industries and others. The aim of this event was to provide an opportunity to all corporate people to enjoy a sport and to relax and enjoy. The event also featured musical programs, DJs, food stall, games and attractive prizes and gift hampers.

32 teams participated in the event and the games were held in two days. The first day included the league matches and the second day included the quarterfinals, semifinals and the final game. It was played on knock out basis. All participants reviewed T-shirts, lunch and a token of love.

Additional Ambulances for Nepal Ambulance Service



Nepal Ambulance Service (NAS) started out with two ambulances, it has now five state-of-the art ambulances under its wing. With the addition of the ambulances, the capability to deliver high quality service and instant service has increased significantly. NAS is currently operating through its ambulance stations situated at Sitapaila, Maharajgunj, Gaushala, Kamal Pokhari and Satdobato.

NAS responds to 24 hours emergency calls directed at 102 in coordination with the Dispatch Centre. When a call is received the Dispatch Center analyses the location of the caller and dispatches the ambulance closest to the area.

NAS has provided its service to 2220 cases with 8 delivery cases. This is the first time Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) were trained by experts from Stanford University and Patan Health & Science Academy.

NAS has been able to add three additional ambulances with the help of donors. It is a non-profit initiative dedicated towards providing high quality and effective ambulance services and hopes to spread its serviced around the country.

BoK's Chetanshil Yuwa Bachat Yojana'

Bank of Kathmandu Ltd. launched "BoK Chetanshil Yuwa Bachat Yojana" on the 25th April 2012. This campaign is targeted for the low-income youth aged 10 to 22 with features such as low minimum balance, free lockable piggy bank and highest interest rate amongst its savings products. The bank will ensure easy access of the products through the product related services at few selected venues like schools in addition to the bank's branches. Although piloted earlier in Attariya, Surkhet, Bhaktapur and Gongabu, it will be available in the 43 branches in the country.

BoK Chetanshil Yuwa Bachat Yojana' was launched as a part of YouthSave

project. YouthSave is a multi-country learning project that investigates the potential of savings accounts as a tool for youth development and financial inclusion in developing countries. YouthSave, supported by the MasterCard Foundation is being implemented in Nepal, Colombia, Kenya and Ghana from 2010 through 2014.

This project aims to value the saving habit among the youth and also in the fulfilling of the bank's corporate social responsibility towards the youth.

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- Sungava: hand crafted products from girls with learning difficulties
- Haribol Ceramics: hand crafted terracotta vases, accents and decoratives
- Pratula Raj Bhandari: hand crafted wooden household utilities and accessories
- Milan Sherchan: hand made dried flower/ leaves art, cards and decoratives

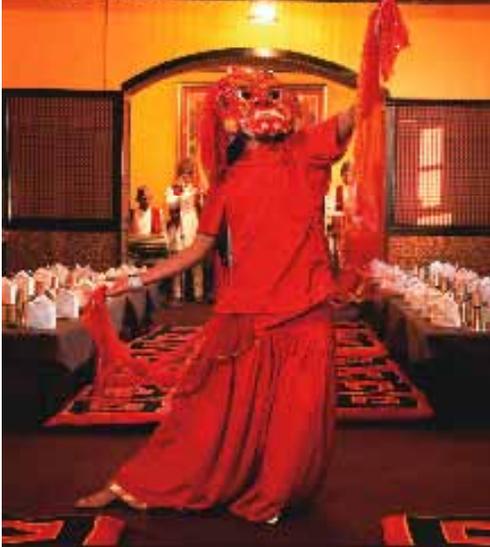
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Housed in a beautifully restored centuries old Rana palace with traditional Newari décor, Nepali Chulo restaurant spares no detail in letting customers relive the rich culture and traditional heritage of Nepal. The restaurant located at Lazimpat offers 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

A Talk by Sakti Burman



ECS Media

A programme hosted by the Indian Embassy at Kathmandu, together with the BPK India-Nepal Foundation and the Siddhartha Art gallery. Sakti Burman is the legendary contemporary artist, of Indian parentage, living in France for the last 50 years. In his paintings we can see an amalgam of the west and the east, of reality and mythology, the conscious and the subconscious! His avid use of figures of Hindu mythology in compositions of European backgrounds, evokes the look of weathered frescos in vivid colours transporting us to a dream like world of beauty and grace. Burman's influence by French artist of the likes of Pierre Bonard and Henri Matisse, both artists of the mid twentieth century of Modern art can be seen in his paintings, where he extensively uses textures and the marbeling effect achieved by blending colours with oil and water enhancing a

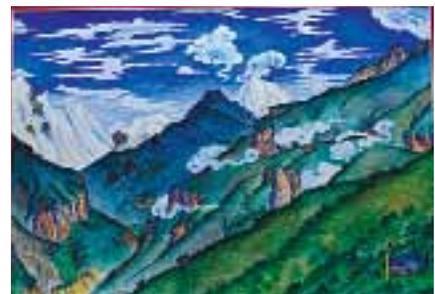
fresco like appearance. Burman went on to narrate events of his life that were crucial in making him what he is today, talking about his childhood, college years and even of his present insecurities, and I was completely taken aback by his earnest nature, friendliness and humility.

The evening at the Yak and Yeti was graced by H.E. Jayant Prasad, the Indian Ambassador to Nepal, accompanying Burman was his wife Maite Delteil, and a significant presence of the Nepali art fraternity— students, budding and established artists seemed to be all under one roof. Some prominent figures present were Kiran Manandhar, Prof. Abhi Subedi, Madan Chitrakar, Gopal Kalapremi, Ragini Upadhaya, Asmina Ranjit, Sujan Chitrakar, Asha Dongol, Lok Bahadur Chitrakar, Sujan Chitrakar, Geeti Sen, Sangita Thapa and many others. (Swosti Rajbhandari)

Connecting with Khumbu Valley

The opening ceremony of the exhibition of watercolor paintings by Bhiksuni Jamyang Wangmo, a Spanish-born Buddhist nun, writer and painter was held at Park Gallery, Pulchowk. Held on 27 April, Friday at 4:30 p.m. the paintings of the exhibition reflect the mountains and flowers of the sacred Khumbu Valley. Khumbu Valley is a land of powerful spiritual and healing energies. With the pure wish of benefiting beings in general and the Khumbu Sherpas in particular, Wangmo has captured the beauty of the landscapes and the wild flowers. The paintings also portray enchanted places, fragrant scent of flowers and

rhododendron bushes. The main aim of the exhibition is to help develop loving kindness, compassion and respect for nature and all forms of life in everyone who gives a glance to the paintings.



Exhibition by Sumeru Art Village



An art exhibition in the memory of former Honorable Member of SAV (Sumeru Art Village), Barbara E. Cook was organized on Saturday at Susan's Collection, Kathmandu Guest House, Thamel. SAV organized the exhibition named "Garland of Sacred Arts" that lasted till 8 May (Tuesday). The event was inaugurated by Bhim Shakya at around 5 p.m. The art works by different artists displayed at the exhibition are made of copper, gemstones, silver, lime stone, polychrome, crystal, oil colour, black stone, and various other mediums that reflect ancient Nepali styles and traditions.

Sumeru Art Village is a non-profit, non-governmental organization established with an aim to create a common platform for the artists to preserve and promote Nepali tradition and culture. It organized the exhibition to bring forward the professionals to give their hard works an exposure to all the members of the society. Their art works, rather than just being used for international markets should also be given attention by the Nepali society. Keeping this in mind, the exhibition was open for anyone interested to check it for free.

Nepal Water Expo 2012

An event compiling a photo exhibition, water documentaries, and water related technologies was organized at Direction Exhibition and Convention Center, UWTC, Tripureswor on Friday. It started at 11 a.m., welcoming students and others interested in water related issues.

The three day event was jointly organized by GPA (Global Peace Association) and Direction Nepal. Competitions on issues like waste management, ground water management, master-plan for river bank management, etc. were also held at the event. With the theme "Water Sustainability for Peace and Security", the participating associates from various institutions like Padma Kanya Campus, Tri Chandra Multiple Campus, Centre for Integrated Urban

Development, Smart Pani, International Development Enterprises Nepal, Global Peace Youth Corps, ICIMOD, Solid Waste Management and Technical Support Centre, etc. exhibited their ideas and technologies related with retention, reusing and recycling of water resources. Documentaries related with climate change, glaciers and mountains of Nepal, their degrading conditions and possible solution to such problems were screened at the event.

International Jazz Day Celebrations



The first International Jazz Day was celebrated by members of the Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory at Moksh on 30 April, the date proclaimed as "International Jazz Day" during the UNESCO General Conference in November 2011.

Organized by UNESCO in collaboration with UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador and jazz legend Herbie Hancock, International Jazz Day hopes to, in the words of Director-General of UNESCO—Irina Bokova, "display the power of jazz to enhance the human message." "It speaks a language of freedom that is meaningful to all cultures", she added. As such, with countries all over the world commemorating International Jazz Day from New Orleans, the birthplace of Jazz, and other major cities like New York, Paris and Moscow, Kathmandu too had its own celebration of music.

The event started with a slight delay but this only served to increase the anticipation of the waiting audience members. The band strutted into full swing, wasting no time in belting out hits by the multiple-Grammy decorated Pat Metheny as well as a host of other jazz legends. Given the lack of preparation time as well as the minimal publicity, the turnout was by no means overwhelming but everyone who did attend enjoyed a casual and relaxed night of improvised tunes and jamming.

Near Summit Hotel
 Sanepa Height Patan, Nepal
 Phone: 5547940,
 E-mail: fewapashmina@gmail.com

Under the Bodhi Tree

The exhibition at Siddhartha Art Gallery, titled 'Under the Bodhi Tree' brought together the work of 12 artists who travelled to Lumbini and spent 2 weeks for inspiration for their pieces. This exhibition envisioned the creation of an artist's approach to Buddhist philosophy.

Each of the artists had their own styles and expressed it on the canvas. Displayed over two floors, with the common theme based around Lumbini, the exhibition displayed a personal approach to the Lumbini experience. A few works reflected a serene approach towards the theme while others tried a more contemporary approach to the topic. Despite the differences, the works reflected a personal touch to the approach.

Each artist found their voice with their display of work. Artist Samundra Man Singh Shrestha tried earthy tones of sand and yellow with hand gestures of the Buddha. His approach seems to highlight the inner peaceful self of the enlightened one living a rather simple life. Another artist, Sagar Manandhar used a different approach, with a white contour of Buddha and an abstract approach to the subject. Sunita Rana used the motif of the lotus into her work with subtle illumination effects using yellow contrasted to the brown in her work. Each of the 12 twelve artists had their own style basing their work around the same theme of approaching the Buddhist philosophy.

The proceeds for the sale of the painting are to be utilized by the Lumbini Development Trust (LDT) to plant trees for the Million Tress Project under the Green Lumbini Initiative.

Photo Exhibition of Rare Images of Nepal

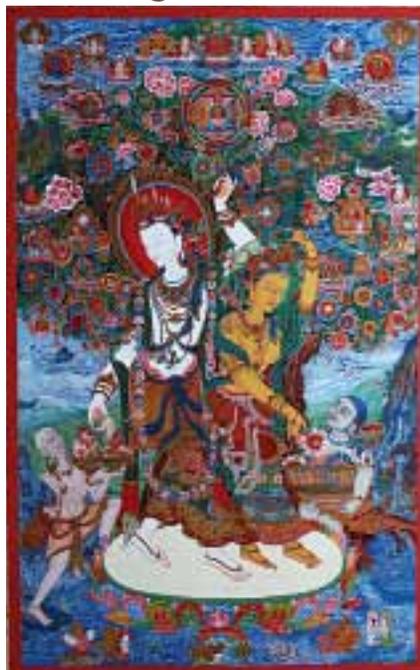
A photo exhibition titled 'Historic Images of Nepal' was held in New Delhi. The photographer, Kiran Chitrakar put up a collection 100 rare photographs taken over three generations - himself, his father and his grandfather. The Russian Ambassador to India Alexander Kadakin inaugurated the exhibition.

The images were a reflection of the gradual transformation in Nepali politics and society at various points in history including photos

of the Rana Family and their meeting with the British and the American Delegates, a picture of the area around the Singh Durbar 70 years back, and of Tenzing Sherpa and Edmund Hillary after scaling Everest.

This exhibition showcased the legacy of the Chitrakars on their history linked to photography.

An Exhibition by Sumeru Arts Village



The Exhibition Garland of Sacred Arts was an attempt to promote and develop the traditional arts of Nepal and to promote the artists working with traditional methods. Organized by Sumeru Art Village, Pradip Shakya as the exhibition coordinator with the help of Susan's Collection as the workshop coordinator, this event was held at Susan's Collection at Kathmandu Guest House. It comprised an exhibition to traditional art works from 5th May till the 8th and workshops on Paubha paintings conducted by Lok Chitrakar and Clay sculptures by Pradip Shakya from May 6th to May 8th.

This exhibition was held to build the foundation to conserve, promote and develop Nepali art and culture. Works of 100 artists are put on display with a range

of techniques and mediums including wood and metal carvings, repose, canvas, lost-wax casting technique, paubha and filigree working around the theme of religion and philosophy. This event was designed to promote the hidden treasures of Nepal and to display the splendors of Nepal and the artists. It was dedicated to the memory of Ms Barbara E Cook who contributed to promoting the traditional arts and artist, preserving and developing and promulgating the splendor of Nepali Arts in USA.

A Photo Exhibition of Ancient Nepal



Nepal into Ancient Future -50 Black and White Images opened its exhibition at Patan Museum on 6th May. The photographer Edvige Dell'ambrogio black and white pictures showcase the people in the simplest of images with a distinctive touch of reflection on life. Taking time to view these pictures reflect the journey into Nepal and its roots to the ancient times. In a time of digital photography and even with the liberty of technology, these black and white images reflect a rather simple time of life. Filled with juxtapositions, the photos present a message of the present day projecting the feeling into what is yet to come.

There are opposites of everything - a yin to a yang, a good feeling to a sad one. There is still however still hope. These photos instill no matter how small, a fragment of hope for what is yet to come. From city scenes to distinct places, the pictures are worth the time. The exhibition was inaugurated with the help of Shyam Nepali and his band followed by the Rudra band who put on a show at the courtyard of Patan Museum. It was an effort to help the underprivileged children and providing them with music instrument to nurture their talent in the classical arts.



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what's on

things to do this month

SPLASH FEST '12

Date: 2 June (Saturday)
Time: 10 am onwards
Venue: Godavari Village Resort
www.water-football.com

Summer is unbearable this year and it is too warm to play any sports. However, there is a new game in town which is cool and fun. It is time to splash it off at the Splash Festival '12 with Water Football, a cool and splashing twist in the game of football. The fun will be topped up by various other entertaining factors like live music, DJ sessions, wide range of drinks, foods and a lot of exciting games.

There are three sets of games designed for the event. They are Corporate Participation, Knock Out Set and General Play Set. Corporate Participation is open for total of 8 people (4 players, 1 org representative and 3 supporters). Along with an unbeatable package, they will also get a Rs 5000 worth of banner display of 3 X 5 ft. For any corporate team that wants to participate, they can simply call in at 9841269716 or 9802020099. But if you aren't in the corporate list, don't worry, half of the day is focused on open play where teams will be registered at the venue itself. Open play will be divided into Knock Out Set and General Play Set. No pre registration is required for either of them.

Participation cost: Rs 20,000 (corporate), Rs 1000/per team of three (Knock Out Set), Rs 1200/ for two teams (General Play set)

Tickets: Rs. 1499 (inclusive of beer, buffet lunch and pool facilities), Rs 400 (one shot of vodka and 50% discount on Water Football game)

MUSIC AND PARTIES

The Red Carpet Night

Date: 1 June (Friday)
Time: 8 pm to 11 pm
Venue: Alfa House, New Baneshwor
9803801302

Platform 977 is up to gathering Nepali celebrities, models and embassy executives for a celebrity event. The event will include ramp walk, alcohol sampling and many more with a purpose of social networking. The event will conclude with dinner.
Entrance: Rs. 1500

Fete de la Musique 2012

Date: 21 June (Thursday)
Time: 3 pm onwards
Venue: Khula Manch, Ratna Park,
4241163/www.aliancefrancaise.org.np

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.

MISCELLANEOUS

Himalayan Outdoor Festival

Opening Date: 1 June (Friday)
Closing Date: 3 June (Sunday)
Time: 11 am (departure)
Venue: Hattiban Resort

himalayanoutdoorfestival.com

If you want a three day break from your routine life and enjoy some time away from the hassles of the crowded city, do register for the Himalayan Outdoor Festival. It is a three day celebration of adventure sports, and live music. Some attractions of the event are ice-axe pull up, acrobatic paragliding show, live music, mud run and many more.

Storytelling 101

Opening Date: 1 June (Friday)
Closing Date: 13 July (Friday)
Time: 9 am to 12 noon (Mon, Wed, Fri), 4 pm to 6 pm (Sun)

Venue: photo.circle HQ, Jhamsikhel
Photo.circle is bringing to you another chance to brush up your photography skills. Storytelling 101 is a six-week introductory course on visual storytelling. It is designed for entry-level photographers who wish to begin producing photo stories. Targeted for beginners, the course is based on DSLR functions and the participants will be required to have a DSLR camera. Opened to 15 participants, the application deadline is 5 pm, 27 May, Sunday. More informations regarding the course and the application form is available at www.photocircle.com.np/workshops/storytelling-101/.

Course fee: Rs. 12000 + 13 percent VAT (5 percent discount for my.photo.circlemembers)

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LIVING IN NEPAL

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PEOPLE

From atop a taller hill

With accolades coming from all over for his film Journey to Yarsa, Deependra Bhandari has become a busy man, traveling abroad often for screenings.

Text By NIRAJ KARKI

You've obviously travelled a lot to have found such a remarkable story, tell us about your childhood. I've always had a travelling streak. When I was small and I had to look after our goats I had this impulse to go to the top of a hill and then find a higher one. I remember being told from the top of that one you can see this. That feeling excited me and I just wanted to keep exploring that feeling.

How did the idea of doing the movie come about?

I was actually working for another movie idea about the traditional hunters in Rukkum's Maikot inside the Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve. I had to abandon the idea because hunting is illegal. But that is when the idea of doing a movie about Yarsa came about.

How long did it take to make the entire movie?

It took about 3 years in 3 different trips. The first time I went there, I stayed there for a month. At that time a piece of Yarsagumba used to cost 2-3 rupees. I did most of my planning and research then. The second time I trained some of the locals to carry equipment and also chose characters to focus on for the movie. I chose Punimaya Kami and 2 other Magar families who packed everything for the Yarsagumba collection. The third time I went on my own to get the final footage with Punimaya's family.

What was it like managing finances for such a massive solo project? Filming in a place like Rukkum is terribly expensive. After the second filming trip, I wasn't satisfied with the footage I had. I was determined to make another trip and focus on Punimaya and her family. I approached many friends and organiza-



ECS Media

A relentless traveller, Dipendra Bhandari brings his enthusiasm of journeys and stories into his movies

tions including the NTB, UNICEF and for good and bad reasons, I ended up using the savings and selling gold that my wife had set aside for our daughters 2nd year ceremony. On the last trip for the shoot, I was a one-man team doing both the audio and video - I didn't use a tripod at all and that shows quite clearly in the way the movie is filmed.

When did you realize that this movie would go to such heights?

A lot of people told me that the movie was great - even from the beginning, Rupa Joshi from UNICEF who supported me immensely told me what this movie could become. But it was when I met Kanak Mani ji and showed him the raw footage that I felt I had something really good. He never seen its equal in Nepal.

So what about Journey to Yarsa now?

I've taken the movie to many film festivals - I've just returned from Al Jazeera and I've also been to Toronto, Malaysia, Qatar and many more. The movie is going under post processing again. Made for specifically Film South Asia - too narrative which has been criticized by many people. Also with the support I am getting, I should be able to redo the film and it better. 

For more on the film: www.journeytoyarsa.com

Sauni, euta chiya

An integral cultural element in Nepal, tea is an unrecognized, often taken for granted part of our lives.

Text By NIRAJ KARKI

Were it coffee instead of tea that people drank in Nepal so religiously, AMTs and Starbucks, if opened would do extremely well here. Nepal, with tea producing places like Illam, however, is a tea country. The best teashops in Kathmandu have neither Darjeeling, Assam, Ceylon nor Earl Grey on their menus – actually, they don't have menus at all. They don't have herbal, fruit or green teas either, although lemon teas are available (not iced ones though).

These teashops serve chiya – the humble cup (or as it usually served in-glass) of tea. These modest places are scattered across Kathmandu and miss mention in guidebooks because there is nothing touristy about them although, the many conversations that happen here over glasses of tea and small eats probably reflect the truest picture of Nepal. A world of their own, with no fancy crockery, they are like havens almost, refuges from the smaller worries of everyday.

It is only a matter of water, sugar, tea leaves, milk and the occasional spices. That is all it takes to make chiya – best when drunk with good company anywhere. Tea is a focal point for gatherings in many cultures and Nepal is no exception. Parties and get-togethers certainly revolve around alcohol, as do occasions when people want something special. For everyday things however, for all that is important but not celebrated, the unrecognized hero, the thing we all consume, love, cannot do without and yet take entirely for granted – is tea, a simple cup of tea.

It is no wonder that there are tea breaks. Tea is as synonymous with enjoying the little moments in life as can be. An excuse for a conversation, taste, flavour and warmth at the end of a long tiring day and a definite lifesaver in the cold of winter – tea is a wonder



Teashops have a life of their own, a constant when all else is changing around them.

An excuse for a conversation, taste, flavour and warmth at the end of a long tiring day and a definite lifesaver in the cold of winter – tea is a wonder in more ways than one.

in more ways than one. Part of being Nepali is the inherent longing for tea even in the summer.

In the same way that tea is a part of our lives, teashops are an important cultural element in Nepal. Throughout the changes that Kathmandu and Nepal have seen, teashops have persevered – they stand by the road, the little shop tucked away in the corner or one of the numerous cafés in front of colleges and offices.

With so many restaurants, bars and cafés around, it is easy to forget the joys of tea. It doesn't take much to remem-

ber it though, watch people drink a cup of tea – labourers, workers and officials sipping tea during the breaks or better still, drink a cup of tea in the evening, around dusk when the city takes its first few restful breaths. Drink a cup of tea in one of the many squares – in Patan, Bhaktapur or the Kathmandu Durbar Square and take in the surroundings. In so many ways it is like a journey back into time. The courtyards, the squares – they were places for people to come together and share their days and conversations – all over simple cups of tea. ▽

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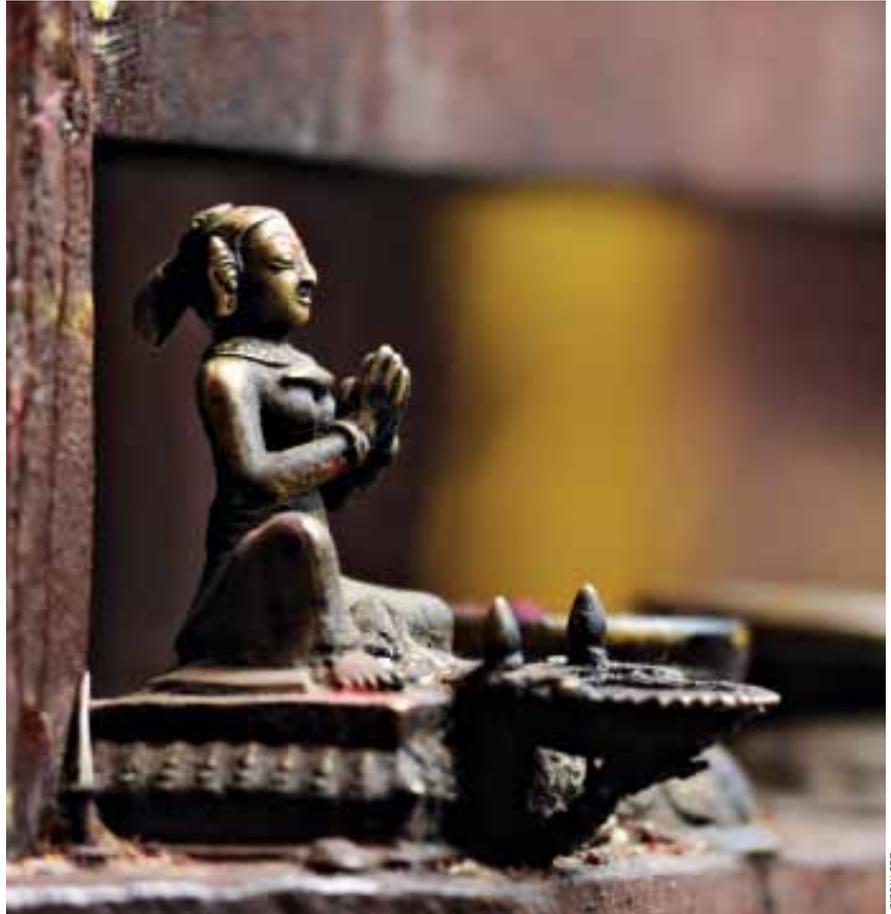
Text By SADICHCHHA DHAKHWA

The Hiranya Varna Mahavihar, also known as the Golden Temple of Patan, is one among many Buddhist monasteries in Nepal. Situated on a busy crossroad in Patan, the entrance to this monastery lies in Kwalkhu, guarded by two intricately carved stone lion figures. Recognized by its centuries old traditions and heritage, the Golden Temple is a pride for Patan residents. Its distinctive pagoda architecture and the gilded roofs have made it a must-see sight.

Built around the 12th Century AD after being commissioned by King Bhaskar Verma, the heritage site is dedicated to preserving the delicate work of the craft men of old. The monastery is also going through a renovation to withstand the trials of time. Surya Man Shakya, who is currently an advisor to the committee dedicated to preserving the monastery describes this work as “a process rather than a project.” It can be presumed that this part of the renovation makes up only a small part of total future renovation plans.

Over the past three years, the site has gone through different phases of renovation work focusing on different aspects of the temple. This phase specifically deals with the main building and the different decorations and the art related to it. There will be no major changes to the original designs or architecture. If anything, the project aims to renew the beauty of the place.

Renovating the Golden Temple - or Kwa Bahal as it is referred to by local Newars - is especially difficult. There are very few who understand the architecture and the designs of the building and only those who belong to this specific 'Sangha' (a religious group) are allowed to work on the project, adding to the complications with the project. Because



Golden Temple, a landmark in Patan is undergoing a massive renovation

the Golden Temple has preserved the traditional values that have not been hindered by growing modernization, no modern experts have been allowed to participate. The funds too have come mostly from those who are a part of this specific sangha and share a personal relationship with this place. The current phase is predicted to take one more year before moving on to a different part of the temple.

This unique heritage site is among the few places in Nepal that have not lost sight of ancient traditional cus-

toms passed down over generations. The renovation of the Golden Temple only deals with the physical aspect of the centuries old heritage. Those who are working on this project believe that this project will not only preserve the splendor of the site, but also aim to help younger generations to stay connected to their heritage. The changes in the outside world have not had an effect on the integrity of the traditions preserved within the walls. The practices within the Golden Temple have remained authentic with barely any changes. ▢

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An authentic bus ride

One of the best ways to see Kathmandu and meet its people is to take public transportation around the city

Text by CHRIS CZARNECKI



ECS Media

Public transport in many ways is a microcosm of the country, its people, its culture and its many idiosyncrasies.

Suddenly the front of the bus was illuminated, I could make out the silhouettes of those sitting up front as sparks shot to the ceiling of the bus' interior with no regard for whom they settled upon. The conductor was wielding a long metal pole – not unlike a cattle prod. Crammed into a window seat above the bus' rear axle, I was shocked by what I saw. It would not be long before I realized that what I was witnessing exemplified the daily adventure that is Kathmandu's public transportation system. The bus was dead. The conductor had the center console propped open and he was fiddling with the vehicle's inner-workings. The driver tried to start the bus. Nothing. He tried again. Nothing. The third time was a charm, the ignition caught, we were on our way.

For the past three months, I have received a crash course in navigating this lively city by bus, mini bus, and tuk tuk as I commute daily across town from Patan to Baluwatar for work – well, almost daily when you take into account the notorious bandh. What have I learned in this crash course? I have learned that public transportation in Kathmandu is

confounding; it is perplexing; it is frustrating; and it is my favorite part of the day. There is perhaps no better way to see Kathmandu's plethora of neighborhoods than through the windshield of a tuk tuk, and perhaps no better way to get to know its people than having two of them sitting on your lap in a mini bus.

No two bus trips across town are the same in Kathmandu. I can vividly recall the strain building in my forearms

An integral cultural element in Nepal, tea is an unrecognized, often taken for granted part of our lives.

one January morning as my entire body hung out of the door of the bus hoping that the driver would maintain sufficient distance from the telephone poles. I can unfortunately recollect the taste of another man's hair as my face was jammed into the back of his head. I remember, also unfortunately, the pain in my buttocks as my left leg supported the full

weight of two men in an overcrowded mini bus. I can still feel the “what do I do now” sinking of my stomach as I stood in the middle of the road halfway to Budhanilkantha next to our bus with the flat tire, and again as I stood in the middle of Durbar Marg after the driver of our tuk tuk decided that he simply did not want to drive any further.

However, through these public transportation adventures, one detail sticks out in my mind above the rest: the kindness of the people I have encountered. I have been invited to the home of a local tour guide, and I have been invited to Sikkim, India. Many conductors have informed me where to get off the bus and many seat-mates have told me the truthful cost of a ride. I have seen people pick one another up off the floor after sudden violent stops, and I have seen young men give up their seats for elderly women. I have seen people help one another load and unload luggage, sacks of rice, even a goat, and I have received more smiles than I can count. These days, as I cruise by the endless lines of motorcycles and cars waiting to fill their tanks with petrol, I think to myself, perhaps I'll keep riding the bus. ▽



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The Glory of Nepal

A Mythological Guidebook to Kathmandu Valley
Based on the *Nepala-Mahatmya* & *Himavatkhanda*

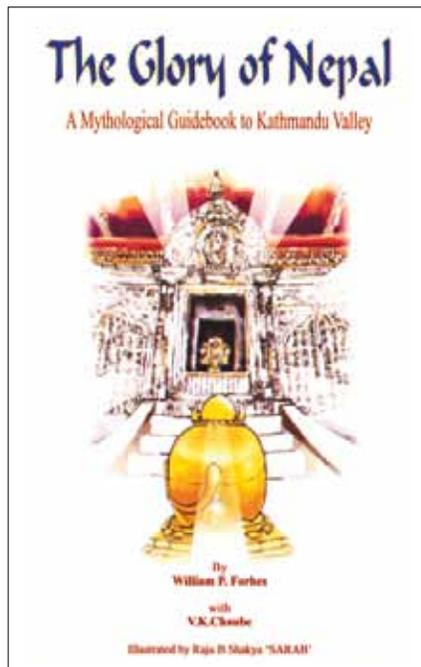
Text by WILLIAM P. FORBES, with V.K. CHAUBE
Reviewed by DON MESSERSCHMIDT

Do you have any idea how many sacred sites are located in the Kathmandu Valley? Have you ever wanted to go out and discover a few of them? If so, then this amazing guidebook will help you discover the religious basis of the Hindu holy sites. The authors, William P. Forbes with Vijay Kumar Chaube, have done a great service by translating the relevant literature and interpreting the sacred qualities of the Kathmandu Valley.

The main source of their work is the *Nepala-Mahatmya*, part of the historical Puranic literature in the Sanskrit language, the root language of ancient Hindu religion and culture. The *Purans* describe the great events of Hinduism and of South Asia's mythic foundations. They are a major part of the old Aryan scriptures revealing the Himalayan abode of the gods and the Vedic dharma. In addition to the *Mahatmya*, parts of *The Glory of Nepal* are translated from a companion Sanskrit text known as the *Himavatkhanda*.

Nepal is known for mountains great sanctity, for the birthplace of the Buddha at Lumbini and of Sita, World Mother and wife of Shri Rama, at Janakpur, for the source of many great rivers and the location of many Hindu holy places. Amidst all its wonders the ancient *Nepala-Mahatmya* presents "a solid background for comprehending the religious and cultural beliefs and assumptions of mythological Nepal."

In nine stories, *The Glory of Nepal* addresses three main issues: ■ Why the Himalayas are holy, ■ Why there are so many temples in the land, and ■ The origins of Hindu religious belief. The book's nine chapters answer these questions: (1) How the Himalaya Became Holy, (2) How Human Beings Discovered the Wonderful Powers of



the Himalaya, (3) How Shiva, as Pashupati, Settled in the Sacred Valley of Nepal, (4) How Vishnu Appeared as Changu-Narayan, and How the Great Goddess Settled as Chandeshvari in this Sacred Valley, (5) How the First Human Pilgrim Came to this Sacred Valley, (6) How Ganesha Appeared Here as Suryavinayaka, (7) How Shri Krishna Saved the Sacred Valley When it was flooded by a Mighty Demon, or the Victory of Pradyumna, (8) How the Moon Came to the Sacred Valley and Regained His Lustre, and (9) How Bhringi, as Bunadhya, Circumambulated the Sacred Valley and Got Back His Divine Powers. It is in Chapter 9 that we learn how to find the sacred sites and shrines. It also spells out how pilgrims should comport themselves ■ what and when to eat, where and how to sleep, what rituals to perform, what mantras to receive.

The step by step guide to visiting the valley's many sacred sites begins

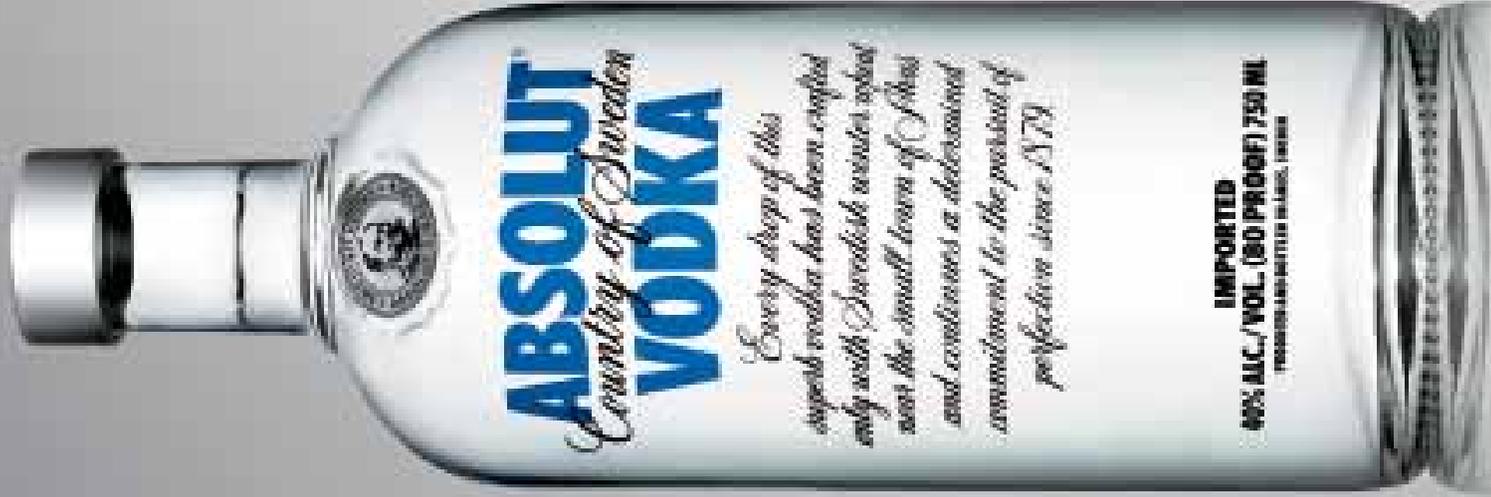
on page 202, followed conveniently by the 'Location of Places Mentioned in the Story' (in order of appearance), which makes it all the easier to follow, story by story, site by site.

In a personal commentary, Forbes describes the personal journey that led him to translate and interpret the ancient writings about the valley's sacred places. He writes that at first he could find no explanation for the sanctity of the Himalayas. "Nobody," he writes, "seemed to know the how or why of it." In his subsequent translations of the ancient literature, he eventually "found some explanation, although not a 'scientific' one, of the unusual presence that the Himalayas seemed to possess... It also seemed to give me a more concrete notion of their influence on me since I had moved to this beautiful valley in their lap."

Forbes also accessed the translations and commentaries by many authorities, including Nepal's venerable Yogi Naraharinath, and Muktinath Khanal, Kedarnath Sharma, Helga Uebach, Horst Brinkhaus, Jayaraj Acharya, and others, as well as detailed religious geographies and encyclopedic dictionaries. It's a well-sourced guidebook.

The book also has a Map, Glossary, Bibliography, Forbes' commentary entitled 'How I got a Life from the *Nepala-Mahatmya*', and a 'Summation' by Chaube. It is recommended for anyone wishing to delve into the sanctity of the Valley and to set out on their own pilgrimage of discovery. ▢

Pilgrims Book House (Kathmandu), 2000; ISBN 81-7769-027-2; 292 pp., with illustrations by Raju B. Shakya. William ('Billy') Forbes lives near Syambhunath and may be contacted at swayambill@gmail.com.



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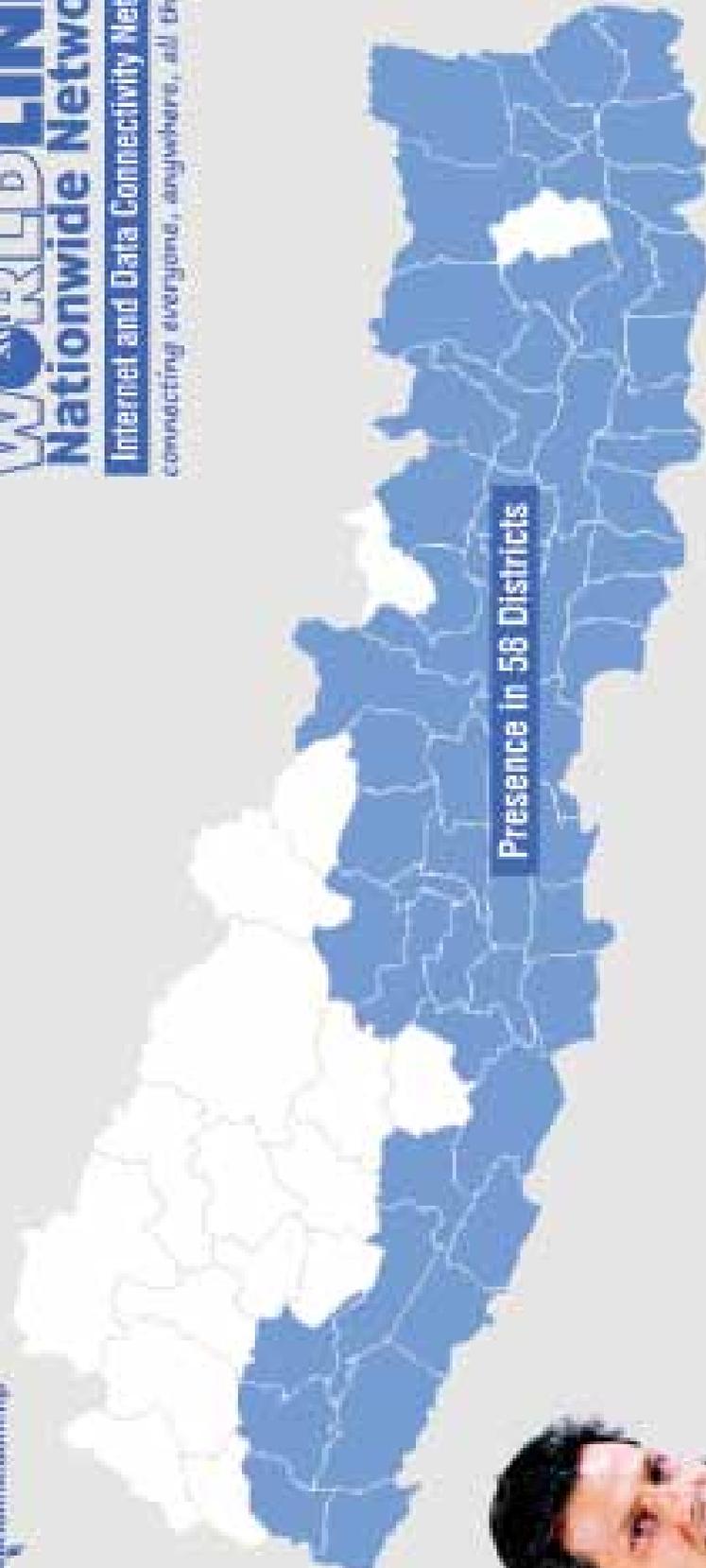
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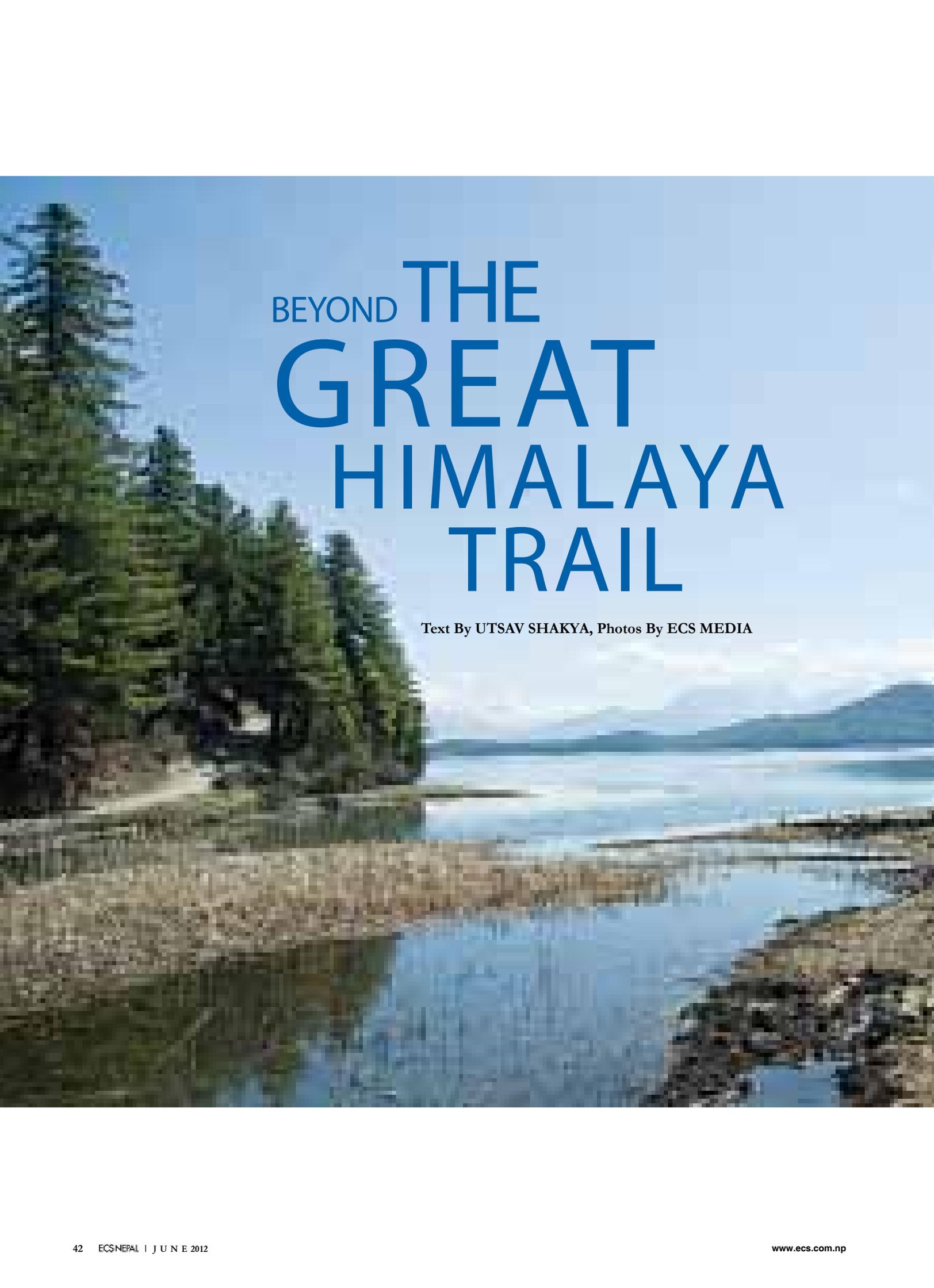
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BEYOND THE GREAT HIMALAYA TRAIL

Text By UTSAV SHAKYA, Photos By ECS MEDIA

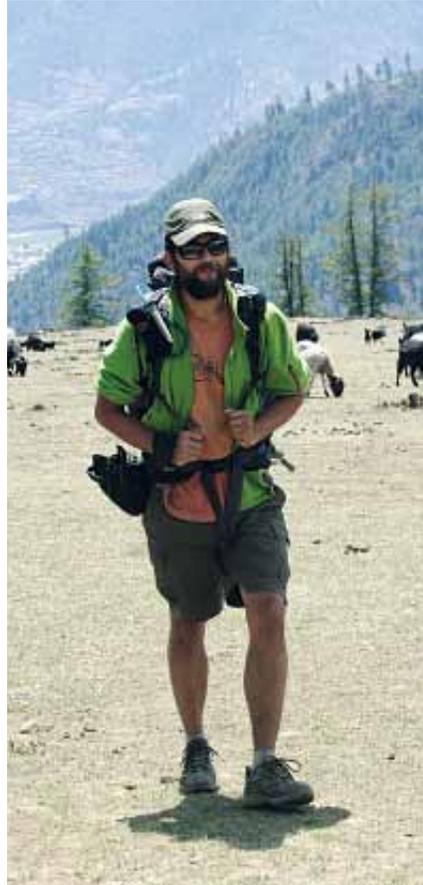


Rara lake in Mugu district is one of the many scenic highlights on the trail

The idea of joining the Great Himalaya Trail-Celebrity Smart Celebrity Trek (GHT - CSCT) team for four odd days on the western leg of the trying east to west Great Himalaya Trail came as a welcome surprise to me. I had been working at my desk copyediting too many stories for too many days and the thought of some outdoor activity sounded like music to my ears. I said yes without a second thought, thinking, it was just that, a few days out to meet and greet Mother Nature. It turned out to be much more.

THE GREAT HIMALAYA TRAIL

SNV's Great Himalaya Trail Development Program (GHTDP) calls the trail "...a network of existing treks and trails which together form one of the longest and highest walking trails in the world." ▶



Apa Sherpa (left) and Dawa Steven Sherpa (right) were co-leaders for the GHT - CSCT.

The ten sections of Nepal's GHT, 1600 km in length, is not a sum total of all the trekking trails that the country has to offer but rather a connecting trail that shares routes with most major trekking trails and merely touches others. The website for GHTDP mentions that the idea for the GHT came in 2006, when the Dutch development agency SNV and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in Kathmandu floated the idea of developing a connecting trail from east to west Nepal. Connecting the

trails from Kanchenjunga in the east to Api-Saipal in the far west, the idea was to open up remote trails to trekking enthusiasts and also to promote tourism as an important part of the villagers' income source.

In 2009, the idea took shape as Robin Boustead walked the entire 1700 km trail in sections (also documenting it with GPS coordinates) starting in September 2008, officiating the GHT. Until 2010, only Robin had done all sections of the GHT. Then in February of 2011, Sunil Tamang, 20 set a new record as

the youngest to have trekked from Kanchenjunga to Rara Lake. Back in 2009 however, the GHT was still a radical idea that few had heard of and lesser had actually tried.

Thousands of kilometers away in Europe, also in 2009, Prashant Singh, Director at Himalayan Climate Initiatives, Dawa Steven Sherpa, Managing Director at Asian Trekking, and social entrepreneur Anil Chitrakar were also talking about the GHT as they visited 10 countries in Europe, spreading the message of arresting the effects of climate change in Nepal. This was also when they realized that their message was incomplete in that they did not have detailed information about what exactly was happening in Nepal due to climate change. Because of a Time magazine cover entitled "Tragedy of the Himalayas", Nepal was in the forefront in the global media. There was a lot of sympathy for Nepal but more importantly global concern because it was already understood in many circles that the tragedy in the Himalayas was not something that would only affect Nepal and the Nepalese. It is also a moral issue for the western world as Nepal is suffering from problems that the world contributes to every day.

Dawa who had successfully scaled Everest in 2007, had set up the Eco Everest Expedition with a primary objective to bring down and dispose garbage from expeditions that were polluting the region to a large extent. Prashant had met Dawa when the former was associated with WWF/Nepal. With a common interest in the environment and climate change, the two wanted to do something else besides the work they were doing through development agencies.

When the western world started asking about what they could do for Nepal, the need to find real, practical answers arose. The somewhat radical idea of walking across the country they realized would give them the answers they and the world needed for the real work to

It is also a moral issue for the western world as Nepal is suffering from problems that the world contributes to every day.

start. Apa Sherpa had been associated with ICIMOD before as a Goodwill Ambassador and had taken their message of fighting climate change to the summit. Known by many as the 'super Sherpa', Apa dai, who had climbed Everest an astonishing 21 times, added an element of celebrity to the team. Apa and Dawa would be the co-leaders of this massive expedition.

Saurav Dhakal, a journalist at Kantipur, Nepal's leading media house joined the team as British Council's International Climate Champion. SNV added photographer Samir Jung Thapa as the fourth member of the core team. The only two women on the expedition were Elizabeth Fox, a travel writer for Asian Trekking who has worked at ICIMOD as a Program and Information Assistant and Linda Bezemer, Tourism Product Development Advisor at SNV Nepal who was blogging every day on the trail. Paribesh Pradhan, who joined the team a bit later on the trail, is working independently to produce a climate-ologue in the form of an e-book. Paribesh, whose trip has been funded by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, was also researching on education. The supporting crew for the trek comprised of experienced porters and cooks, two of whom had been on the trek from the very start. In total, the entire team including the porters and cooks had, between themselves climbed Everest a staggering 42 times.

The logistics of the trip were supported by organizations such as DfID, SNV and Nepal Mountaineering Association with apparel such as shoes and clothing supported by The North Face who have worked with Dawa before.

“IN THE MORNING A MAN WALKS WITH HIS WHOLE BODY; IN THE EVENING, ONLY WITH HIS LEGS.” - RALPH WALDO EMERSON

My sentiments exactly, during and after completing an uphill between Cheere Chaur and Naurighat that I deemed high-



Saurav Dhakal (left) and Samir Thapa (right) completed the core GHT - CSCT team.

ly unfit for city legs. It was my first day on the trail and going against practicality, I had had a heavy lunch. Sitting on the terrace of a mud house overlooking an expansive pasture that rolled down into the valley that was Jumla town, I was in a good place. The first few hours of the first day had been easy and I thought this was representative of the rest of the trail. It was not. Before lunch, the scenery had been lovely, our pace great and the conversation flowed wholeheartedly as it can only flow between new acquaintances. I struck up a conversation with Dawa as we climbed a slow, winding uphill to Cheere Chaur.

Six feet tall with a Hemingway moustache and beard combo going on Day 87 of the trek, Dawa looked nowhere like a Sherpa, mostly because he is part

Belgian. A Business Administration graduate, he was on his college football team in Scotland and traveled around the country competing with other colleges. He was now traveling over his own country, trying to find the answers to some very important questions.

Dawa's idea to document the stories of climate change that the team comes across and to spread awareness about adapting to climate change and promoting tourism as the most viable path to get started on towards this goal. A team of trekkers merely passing by villages actually identifying climate change effects and spreading awareness on adaptability sounded too optimistic. Questioned bluntly, Dawa agreed, answering, "From the experiences some members of our team and I have had, we can differenti-



Jumlis - local Jumla folk perform the Hudke dance to welcome the GHT team to Jumla

ate between climate change and natural disaster to a certain extent. However, yes, we cannot be a 100% sure, which is why we have a research team following us on the trail. Based on our data, they will visit these specific homes in specific villages and follow up on our work.” An example of this is a glacier they came across at Kambache in Kaski District at 2500m. It was later verified by glaciologists to be a snow field and not a glacier. Rising temperatures caused the snow to melt and disappear, making it quite obviously an abnormality caused by climate change.

Hanaa Singer, the new Country Representative for UNICEF/NEPAL was walking alongside us this entire team, listening to our conversation. An athlete in her other life, Hanaa had been skeptical about not having trained for this trek

but she seemed to have been bluffing as she kept pace with even Apa. I asked her about UNICEF’s association with the trek. Her expression was if to say, ‘I thought you’d never ask!’

“It is children who are hit the hardest by the effects of climate change,” said Hanaa, the effects meaning in this case poverty, malnutrition, healthy mental and physical growth and even deaths in the family. In the mid and far western regions, the average malnutrition rate amongst children is a staggering 40% while their height to age ratio is very critical too. Verified by more examples on the trail than we would have liked, the core team shares these concerns. Hanaa wants awareness regarding adaptability to climate change to be integrated into the school curriculum adding that if



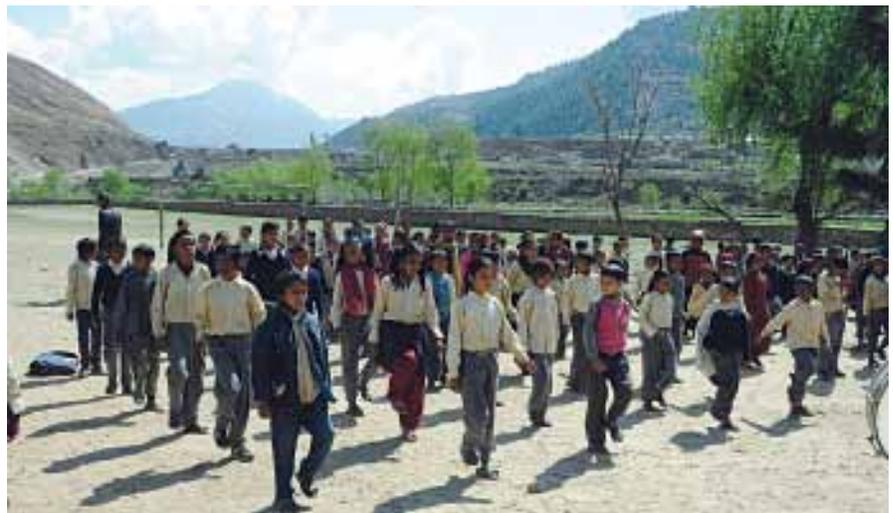
Even in a small village, everyone has their own chores to complete.



tourism were to flourish here, she tells me, it would mean extra income for the family, which would result in a change in the child's health, nutrition and general wellbeing.

Earlier in the morning, I had been walking with Samir for a bit. As surefooted as a Sherpa, Samir comes from a background that has a lot to do with the outdoors - hunting. He's chosen his own path out in nature though, having helped travel agencies find trail biking-friendly country and even training elite forces from Dubai in high altitudes. Trekking is not new to him, which is why a Sherpa porter praised his strength saying, "Samir sir ko duita mutu chha (Samir sir has two hearts)."

His ideas regarding development in any field: be it battling climate change, promoting tourism or spreading awareness about both are rather pointed. "As long as these blue number plates are in the country, there will be no progress," he says, implying the presence of the numerous donor agencies and international non-government organizations that have spread like wildfire in the country. Hanaa understands this sentiment when I mention it to her later, saying, "Absolutely, this is true. The Nepali people have to take charge of their problems."



Clockwise from top left: A young girl heads to the forest to collect firewood after school; people in Jumla produce and enjoy their own tobacco; students practise the march past drill at a school supported by UNICEF/Nepal in Jumla

Besides the adverse effects of climate change on children, the team is also making a conscious effort to promote the GHT as a way to bring in tourists to the most remote corners of the country. The general belief is that tourism has immense potential in raising the financial status of people living in these rural areas, which in turn would put them in a better position to deal with and prepare against climate change. Prashant shares

the same view with me in Kathmandu. One of the year old, not for profit organization's objectives is also this, that tourism is the most adoptive field through which the Nepali people can improve their financial standings and thus get at a better position to adapt to climate change.

Apa recounted his own story as he probably had at many other venues on the evening of the day the GHT team



At dusk, Rara becomes a surreal sight, almost asking you to reflect on things.

arrived in Jumla. At the felicitation program organized that night, Apa in his characteristic modesty, talked about how his summer home in Langmoche village, was swept away when Dikcho Taal, a glacial lake burst. This misfortune translated into early hardships in his life. Although funded by a Danish trekker to study at the Hillary school, Apa quit after a few years simply because he had to earn to feed his family. Starting as a porter, he climbed ranks to become kitchen staff and then scaled Everest for the first time. Soon he had climbed Everest 16 times and had become somewhat of a celebrity. The five times he climbed Everest after that has been for various causes. This also meant he could now afford to take care better of his family, now settled in the U.S. and educate his children. The point Apa was trying to make- he explained later to me in a hotel

room in Thamel after finishing off the GHT in 99 days and before setting off to Everest Base Camp again for another Eco Everest Expedition - was that tourism enabled him to come up in life and that if he as an uneducated villager could make it, others could too.

Sharing his experiences from the trail Apa stressed on education again when he talked about locals doing well owing to Yarsagumba in neighboring districts. "I feel sad however that children are missing school to go pick yarsa," he said. One of his life's regrets is that he did not have the opportunity to study. "Education is everything," he added, his tone serious. "When I have to speak in public, when I have to answer questions thrown at me that have big words, my lack of education haunts me." He has put his money where his mouth is too by providing support for infrastructure and supplies for a

school in his home village of Thhame. The Apa Sherpa Foundation also has education as its main agenda and from this expedition also, he aims to provide more support for the school.

We reached Rara lake in Mugu district on our third day. Legs stiff from the last two days of strenuous trekking, Rara's beauty and serenity rid us of our fatigue. Before we got there, Saurav and I walked together, leaving behind the village of Jhyare on the mud terraces of which we had camped. Working with video to capture stories about climate change for his blog, Saurav has helped the team prepare for the media, taking the mic at conferences to present the team and their experiences in the best possible way. His hope is that the stories on his blog at www.storycycle.com will reach out to a wide audience, one that will be able to relate better to his real people

stories, with climate change as almost just a pretext.

Of all these different personalities on the trek and their own stories, Paribesh's journey perhaps, in its naked emotionality, seemed most personal. After his grandfather, Krishna Chandra Singh Pradhan, an imminent author and educator passed away in 2010, Paribesh had it in mind to do something that would be a fitting tribute to someone who had such a looming presence in his life. Although his trip didn't start with this intention, the sort of in-depth view he would get about the education system became his tribute to his grandfather's life and an integral part of his campaign Trek to Educate which will sponsor the education of needy children. "Education is the most important base for any kind of change. Without education, it is useless to talk

of sustainable change," he exclaims, one evening in Patan, before setting off to Taplejung.

A MAN'S TRIP

At Daava pass on the second day of the trail to Mugu, Dawa is feeding his newly acquired white, Tibetan Mastiff Carbo. Saurav's sipping on some black tea with black pepper while Apa returns from a casual stroll around a local's house where lunch is being prepared. The other members of the trip are at various stages on the trail.

Dawa: "What are you researching on sir?"

Apa: "Toilet research sir, turns out its locked."

This exchange pretty much sums up, at least for what little portion I saw of the trek, the sense of camaraderie amongst the guys on the team. Dawa and Apa

have known each other from before and Samir has been good friends with Dawa since childhood. Saurav was a new acquaintance for them, as was Paribesh, but one could hardly tell from the way each would always be pulling each others' legs. Even Apa, who Paribesh called a 'gentleman', because of his habit of asking after everyone on the expedition, was not spared of their good-natured pokes.

Exhibit A: After going without a shower for a number of days, Apa takes 40 minutes in the shower before setting off from Jumla. This delay means he joins the trekkers later on the trail. It is enough for the other guys to make fun of why he took so long. One guess is that Apa was checking out how sculpted his already lean body has become. All this time, Apa just joins in, a hero for the country and the world, just another guy hanging out with like minded friends here.



Left: An innovative water channel to operate a small home made contraption that refines rice grains locally known as a *pani ghatta*.

Right: Locals bathe the sheep before shearing their wool to sell in the market.

Exhibit B: When Paribesh seriously notes that Apa is a man and the rest of the team just boys, Dawa intervenes with, “Speak for yourself, you might be a boy. I’m a man.” Samir however takes the prize for keeping spirits high within the team. When kidding around, he somehow gets away with crude jokes aimed at everyone from Apa to even the ladies.

The trip is also very much a boy’s trip (no pun intended) not only owed to the guy humor and street language that can be expected between men who have been together for more than three months but also due to the rugged character of every day out in the quickly changing terrain of the trail. At his Asian Trekking office in Thamel, which was responsible for the logistics, gear and expertise for the

trek, Dawa recollected some of the trying days on the trail. “Tashi Lapcha Pass at 5800m was challenging as the weather was really rough with a strong wind that had blown away many a roof and broke down hundreds of trees. We were 100m away from the pass but the Sherpas deemed it impassable so we camped on a small ledge. The wind was so strong that Samir and I, who are both six feet, had to stretch ourselves like a bow to keep the wind from surging under our tent and blowing us away.” Even in the face of such harsh experiences though, the team managed to find a lighter side. The morning after the storm, Apa, Dawa and Samir remember panicking for a bit when they didn’t see the tent

where the Sherpas had camped. All that remained was a thick blanket of snow. Just when they were starting to believe that the Sherpas had been done for, the ground started to move and one by one, each porter crawled out. The poles that support the tent had broken and in their tiredness no one had bothered to put it up again, choosing instead to just sleep with the snow piled up on the tent that had fallen on top of their bodies.

LIFE IS A JOURNEY

Before setting out to finish the initial sections of the trail that he had yet to complete, Paribesh Pradhan updated his Facebook status with a solemn one-liner: “Suddenly it feels like life is a long walk beyond 1555 km.”



A late evening view of Jhyare village in Mugu District, a few hours before reaching Rara lake.

Having joined the GHT-CSCT team for a mere four days between Jumla and Mugu Districts and seeing and experiencing what was but a fleeting glimpse of life on the trail for them, I can only imagine the kind of life changing experience the Great Himalaya Trail can be for anyone. Forget the jaw-dropping sceneries the team saw and camped along for much of the trip and the GHT is still an amazing trail, winding up, down and across a 'tiny' country and letting trekkers experience the real Nepal.

The Himalaya Climate Initiatives (HCI) website clearly defines the objective of this massive undertaking as “an outreach and publicity event to raise awareness for the effects of climate change on the Himalayan ecosystem and people, to promote pro-poor sustainable tourism as a potential climate adaptation tool and position the Great Himalaya Trail as Nepal's sustainable tourism product, contributing both to poverty alleviation and economic and climate resilience of local communities.”

Prashant adds to this some figures: “60-70% of Nepal's area is made of up of National Parks. Considering the developing nature of the country, this is quite an achievement. On top of this, all of the 2300 glacial lakes and the world's highest mountains fall within an imaginary line.” This line that cuts through from east to west of the country goes through most of the villages, mountain areas, forests and ecosystems that are experiencing the effects of global changing. He likes to call this line, which is essentially the GHT, the frontline of climate change in South Asia. It's a bold statement, a possibly true one too but one that is only meaningful if HCI and any and every climate change crusader works towards giving it any purpose beyond being just that, a bold statement.

For me personally, climate change seems to take a backseat when I reflect on my time on the trail. I suspect that for each member of the trip, from the experienced to the novices, the leaders



The terrain and scenery on the trail varies from lush green hills to snow-capped barren dry hills.

Tourism is the most adoptive field through which the Nepali people can improve their financial standings and thus get at a better position to adapt to climate change.

to the porters, the trip was, in varying degrees, about finding answers that satisfied their own personal questions besides the ones they were trying to answer for all those that climate change in the Himalayas would affect. Because this much is true for any trek and for any trekker who comes on board with an open heart and an inquisitive mind, that trekking is a metaphor for life, and even thought you learn much about many things, like life, at the end of the day, you learn the most about yourself.

If anyone who joins a 99 day expedition for 3 days and comes back thinking he knows what he saw and heard and is thus in a position to draw conclusions based on this, the right name for that person is a fool. There is no judging what these people have accomplished, there certainly is no way to have them recall all that they saw or have them

show us all that they recall. This is but the start to a long and perilous journey that they have chosen to embark on and the 99 days on the trail are, as Anil Chitrakar mentioned at the end of a felicitation program speech in Kathmandu, “the end of the beginning.” The world and certainly the country will take notice of what and where this journey takes these people, their initiative for climate change and its effects on the world, on the long walk called life, beyond the 1555 km. ☺

The author would like to thank UNICEF/NEPAL for supporting the trip. Many thanks to Apa Sherpa, Dawa Steven Sherpa, Saurav Dhakal, Samir Jung Thapa, Paribesh Pradhan and the rest of the team for allowing us to tag along and be a part of the GHT-CSCT and for being such gracious hosts on the trail.

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

Camping by the Rara Lake was one of the highlights of the GHT trek



Great Himalaya Trail Exclusive

ECS NEPAL brings you exclusive recollections and reflections on the Great Himalaya Trail - Climate Smart Celebrity Trek by Dawa Steven Sherpa and Anil Chitrakar.

LIFE'S A JOURNEY

Text By DAWA STEVEN SHERPA

As I sit here now in Everest Base Camp, soaking up the first rays of the sun and look out of my tent at the colourful prayer flags fluttering gently in the breeze, I reflect on how life has been such an amazing journey this past year. Speaking to the all the members of our team who walked on the Great Himalayan Trail, I feel that we have all ended the journey as different people than when we started.

Apa Sherpa, or Apa Dai is we all call him, is of course the most elderly of us and remains the only one whose character has remained largely the same: calm, modest, humble and wise. He is a man of few word but his actions speak volumes. Not having had the opportunity to go to school beyond the 2nd grade, he realises and greatly values the need for children to get a proper education. We could visibly see Apa Dai`s spirit drain when he would see children carrying big loads on their backs. It reminded him of his own difficult childhood and the reality that many of these young souls would not be as lucky as him and were trapped for life.

I have known Apa Dai for more than a decade and we have spent many months together on expeditions and treks. I know that deep inside, his proudest achievement is not that he scaled Mount Everest 21 times, but that he has managed to give his children the education that he never had. In recent years, he has taken his mission further and raised funds and resources for the school in his native village of Thame. Having walked the length of Nepal, the only thing that has changed in Apa Dai`s character is that he is even more determined to do



Two times Everest summiteer Dawa Steven Sherpa

something about educating Nepali children. On the trek, Apa Dai`s favourite moments were when he would chat with young pupils on their way to school. His message was always the same; "Study hard and you can be a great person. You can help develop our country."

Saurav Dhakal is the second member of our 4-man team. He is an accomplished journalist in one of Nepal`s top television broadcasting companies and a "British Council Climate Champion". It was in his capacity as the latter that he became a member of our epic trek. I only got to know Saurav a few weeks before we left Kathmandu. Having planned the trek in minute detail for two years, my sole focus was to put together a strong team who would be able to operate in the toughest conditions. Simply put, Saurav was not a trekker and I feared that he might test the

safety of the whole team and jeopardise the objectives of the trek. How wrong I was!

Saurav turned out to be the strongest in character. For the first month, he was always at the back and many times arrived into camp after dark. He had blisters and bruises from his new boots and his muscles would often painfully cramp in his sleep. It must have been a hellish experience for him but through it all he never complained. He grit his teeth and walked through the pain. By the end of the expedition, he was one of the fittest and fastest in the team. As for the fact that he was a "stranger" to the team, it turns out the saying "strangers are just friends you haven`t met" is very true. Saurav has an open mind and an innate ability to listen. He doesn`t make judgements but simply asks the right questions to make yourself come



Scenery on the western section of the trail

to the right conclusions and the right course of action.

A few weeks before coming on the trek Saurav's wife became a mother to a beautiful baby boy. They named him Arambha -beginning. On the trek, we talked about what it is to be a man and many times discussed our own relationships with our fathers. One day near the end of the journey in the far west of Nepal, I found Saurav staring at a young mother playing with her little baby. I asked what the matter was and he said, "I am missing the most important months of my son's life." Saurav had become a father!

Then there is Samir Jung Thapa, our eccentric photographer with a passion for life. A tall, thin man with a huge heart, Samir was the spark in our group. Samir is a free spirit that pursues his object of desire to the end. While we would be satisfied with capturing any pretty image, he would often walk hundreds of meters off the trail, get down flat on the ground and get the perfect angle. This is what makes him an outstanding photographer.

Samir's technical prowess in his field is undeniable but I sometimes felt his carefree nature kept him disconnected from his subjects. Over the three months that we walked, it seemed to me that Samir started to understand the power behind his lens. Recently, when the Seti River flooded, Samir was immediately on the phone with me and said, "We were there and we talked to the people there

that this sort of thing could happen. We have to do something." Samir got on a bus the very next day and trekked up to the disaster zone with his camera. He now plans to do an exhibition of his photographs to raise funds for the victims. Samir is no longer a silent observer but an impassioned activist.

As for myself, the trek has been an incredible journey of learning. I have an opinion on pretty much everything and I admit that I can be arrogant and impatient with people, especially strangers. On this journey of a thousand miles, we met thousands of people from different backgrounds, beliefs and motivations and I greatly value the opportunity I had to interact with them.

On the trek my teammates have been my biggest teachers. Apa dai taught me to be humble no matter who I speak to. Saurav has taught me to listen with an open mind and Samir has taught me to enjoy the little details in life. As I sit here this morning, a month after finishing the GHT, listening to the crackling voices of my climbing team on the radio reporting that they have reached the summit of Mt Everest, I now realise more than ever that the journey truly is more important than the destination.

END OF THE BEGINNING

Text By ANIL CHITRAKAR

The successful completion of the climate smart celebrity trek across the

Great Himalayan Trail (GHT) marks the end of the beginning. The fact that a team led by Appa Sherpa took on the challenge and completed it in 99 days, sends a message of leadership and inspiration at a time when Nepalis are seeking positive change and yearning for some positive news to energize everyone, especially the young. The trek also helped highlight the need to work as a team, to emphasize sound management and to set goals higher than one self.

Moving forward, the information, images, stories, consultation outcomes etc. gathered by the trekkers will now be compiled into outputs that will not just make it easy to share with the public but will also form the basis for a short, medium and long term investment plan for the Great Himalayan Trail. The clear pillars or major areas of investment will be

- To help establish and sustain climate smart communities along the GHT
- To ensure investments for infrastructure, economic activities, social services and general connectivity from east to west Nepal, and
- To enable "zero carbon" tourism and related activities that will generate revenue for the long term management and conservation of natural and man-made assets along the GHT. This will include both the tangible and intangible.

The Himalayan Climate Initiative (HCI) thanks everyone who has contributed to this unique endeavor that is sure to have lasting impact on the people and natural resources that are extremely vulnerable to climate change. We are also aware that the price of inaction will have far reaching negative impacts far away from the GHT. ▢

Twenty one times Everest summiteer Dawa Steven Sherpa was co-leader of the 99 day-long Great Himalaya Trail - Climate Smart Celebrity Trek.

Anil Chitrakar is Chairperson of the Himalayan Climate Initiative (HCI) which organized the trek.

Sequoia and Sal

A tale of two trees

What can we say of the most majestic trees, Sequoia of California and Sal of the Terai? Big, large, great, fantastic? The adjectives quit and run.

Text By AMULYA RATNA TULADHAR

Sequoia, or the California Redwoods, is between 350 to 370 feet tall. This is three times the height of Sal, which is 120 to 150 feet tall, or this is one and half times the height of Dharahara, or 200 feet of Bhimsen's folly in Sundhara and twice the tallest statue of Shiva at Sanga Bhanjyang at 143 feet!

One would wonder, as in the case of a giraffe that, this means a lot of pressure to pump blood fifteen feet up to a giraffe's head. How does the Sequoia send water 300 feet vertically up? A one-horse power 1500-kilowatt pump can barely pump 60 feet or seven stories up to our roofs, how do the trees manage?

When I was a graduate student at Virginia Tech, I used to measure the 'blood pressure' of White Pine for my thesis. Just before dawn at four, I would drive my 6-cylinder Chevrolet truck to the open cast coalmines of the Appalachian mountain bordering West Virginia. There I would excise the branches of the selected 8-year old pines and insert them into an air tight container and slowly squeeze the leaves with calibrated nitrogen gas pressure just like a doctor slowly releases pressure from the sphygmomanometer to measure our systolic and diastolic pressures.

The pressure at which sap would ooze out of the cut branch would be the water



Sal trees line the border of a community forest in Dharan. Small branches and twigs from the forest are used to make briquettes while leaves contribute to compost fertilizer.

stress or negative pressure of the pine. In our vernacular, this is the measure of thirst or 'suction pressure' with which pines suck water from the roots to the tops of trees and foliage. Sequoias can suck up huge volumes of water and nutrients from deep loamy soils at valley bottoms to the tops of trees, 100 feet for Sal and 350 feet for Sequoia. In one year, a California Redwood can add one millimeter of growth to its cambium or

living cylinder of tissue three hundred and fifty feet tall and fifty feet in girth, adding up to a ton of live wood growth per year and can constitute thirty seven thousand cubic feet growth of volume for a single tree.

Our Sal used to be among the tallest and largest trees of Terai. Quoting from an 1874 publication of Sir Dietrich Brandis, the father of Indian forestry imported from centuries of scientific

forestry in Germany to manage British India forests, J. S. Gamble wrote in 1899 that, the “Nepal Terai has Sal, 100-150 feet tall with girth 20-25 feet and first branches at 60-80 feet.” By 1909 however, Upendranath Kanjilal in Forest Flora of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh noted that Sal seldom attained more than 80 feet height and 6 feet girth. In my 30 years as forester of Nepal, I have yet to see a Brandis dimension Sal in Nepal, not even in the inner recesses of the protected areas of Chitwan in Kasra and the ravines of the Siwaliks, which I scoured for evidence of radio-collared tigers while working for the Smithsonian Tiger Ecology Project in 1978.

Where have all these majestic trees gone? Sequoia, which are old, old trees, two to three thousand years old, date back to the time of Siddharth Gautam, the Buddha of Kapil Vastu, even before the birth of Christ. Some of the Nepalese oaks are 400 years old and have recorded in their tree rings, the global effects of pollution emanating from the Industrial Revolution of Europe since 1700. Sal can be 150 to 200 years old, enough to have seen Jung Bahadur Rana romp around elephant hunting in Karrah Khola of Hetauda for fun and reprieve from the perennial conspirators who were out to kill him in Diamond Shumsher Rana's 'Seto Bagh'.

The sequoia that reigned supreme knew of the Red Indian natives that crossed the Bering Straits in the Aleutians from Asia to America, centuries before white man Columbus bungled into West Indies, later named America, in 1492. Several centuries later, the Gold Rush arrived that brought the white cowboys and prospectors streaming from the East Coast to California, the West Coast, and so began the demise of Sequoia.

In Nepal, Sal or Sakhuwa was the tree Maya Devi leaned upon to give birth to Buddha on the way to her maternal home in Tilaurakot. So was born the Kshatriya royal lineage of the Shakya, after the etymological root of the tree



Tall sequoia trees provide some much needed shade in the forests above Rara Lake in Nepal's mid-western district of Mugu.

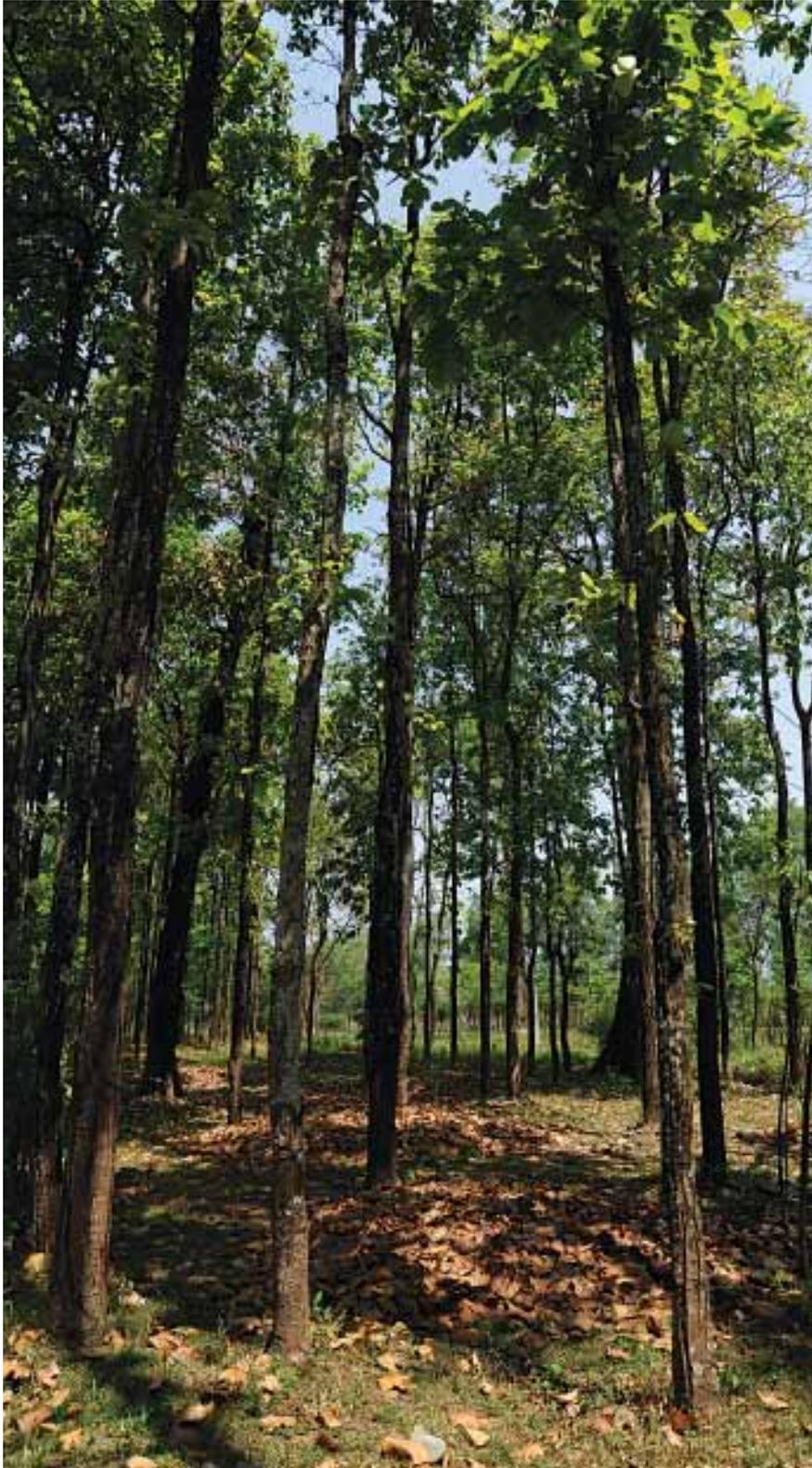
Sakhuwa, in whose kingdom they ruled until internecine royal warfare drove them to flee to the mountainous refuges of Kathmandu Valley.

“In the 1840s, when American settlers arrived in Northern California, the redwood forest amounted to 2 million acres of virgin old-growth trees. Loggers began cutting the trees with axes or handsaws to make houses, barns and railroad ties. By 1920-30s, the introduction of logging machinery, chainsaws and Caterpillar tractors increase the speed of logging and old growth redwood forests began to disappear. Most forest became owned by timber companies which carried out clearfelling, and now with 96% of redwood forest gone, only about 90,000 acres remain in patches of protected land,” lamented a Sequoia tree climber in The New Yorker in 2011.

In Nepal, the secretive 8-mile thicket or Charkoshe Jhadi with malaria and tigers were an effective defense against enemies except for brief periods in winter and for the autochthonous Tharu tribals who had genetic immunity against malaria. But, after the 1816 debacle,

when forests no longer served as effective bulwarks against the modern artillery and the more insidious ideas of modernization, the Sal forest started to assume economic importance for the British. After the 1857 Indian Sepoy Mutiny, the handful of British officers, their artillery and their mercenary local soldiers realized that they were too ill equipped to handle simultaneous insurrections over multiple Indian cities. Had it not been for Jung Bahadur galloping in uninvited to tame the Nawabs of Oudh, British Rule of India might have collapsed. So the Ranas were rewarded with a tract of Nepal Terai west of Butwal, the Naya Muluk, as a token of the eternal gratitude from the British.

More than the valiant buffoonery of Jung Bahadur is the role of Nepal Sal in consolidating the British Empire in India. From the early twentieth century, the British dispatched Collier and Smythies to scout for Sal extraction routes along the rivers draining out of Nepal Terai and to covet the Rana government of the hard, big cash value of large-scale Sal export. The Ranas readily ►



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Thin and super tall, sal trees and thus forests such as these have a history that is as tall as the trees themselves.

bought this idea, railheads were established in river outlets to India, and one of these, the Collier's railhead, can still be witnessed today in Bardia National Park. Sal was felled in massive quantities, hauled by bullock carts, dumped to the rivers and floated to booms to flatter terrain railheads from where these logs were transported to British India with the highest concentration of people and agricultural lands, the Oudh province or Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The British built a network of rail line along much of the Nepal border primarily for the strategic purpose of whisking their artillery at short notice and dispatch time to quell any uprising before they gathered steam to overwhelm the ruling but fewer numbered colonialists. Richard Tucker, an environmental historian and some doctoral scholars have back calculated the deforestation by multiplying the volume of each rail sleeper and the mileage of rail line.

What appeared as a strategic tool to suppress insurrections served as a disaster relief adaptation for rushing in food supplies in times of frequent famines. Kingsley Davis, a demographer, has documented the steady rise in the population of India following the large-scale reduction in mortality after the railroads, contrary to all the bad things we say about the British. In Nepal too, despite the bad things we say about the Rana lust for power and the shameful palace shenanigans of the Shah kings then, the increased overall national stability and relief from frequent wars, overall increase in food production from new technology foods such as maize and potato translated into steady - though slow by current standards - rise in the population of Nepal, from 3 million when Prithvi Narayan Shah took over to 5 million by the time Rana left office in 1950, 200 years later. "Tera santan le danda kanda dhakun" or 'May your posterity populate the hills and vales of Nepal': the exhortation of P.N. Shah had come true. △

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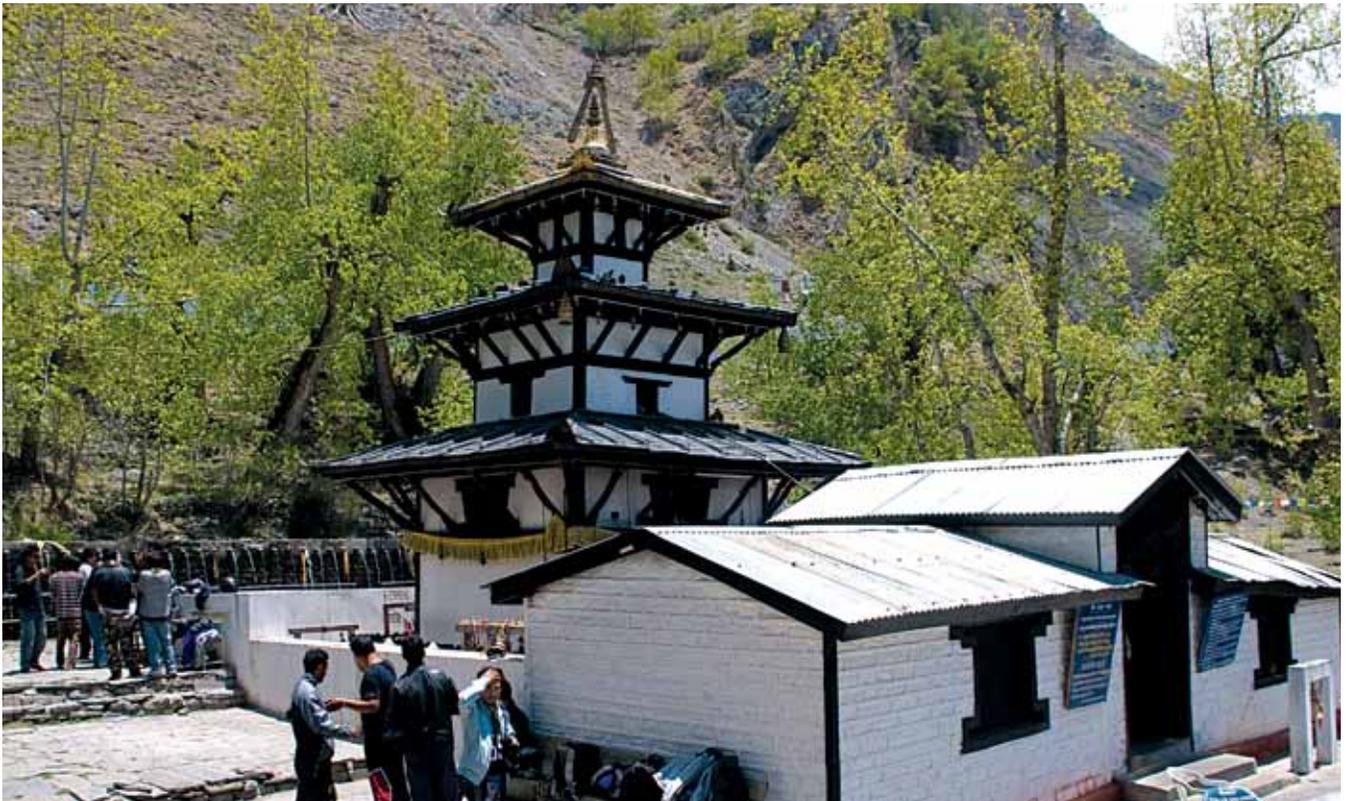
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Muktinath

A place of pilgrimage in the Himalayas

Text By SUSAN M. GRIFFITH-JONES



ECS Media

A popular trekking trail, Muktinath also draws a lot of trekkers every year.

The eminent religious historian Mircea Eliade once said, “The choice of holy space is not random but found and identified by the help of mysterious signs”.

This is absolutely true of the well known sacred site of Muktinath that on a superficial level may be seen as roughly a thousand square metres of temples, shrines, burial stupas, prayer wheels, natural springs, sacred trees along with

other natural and man-made features imbued with supernatural characteristics reflecting both Buddhist and Hindu principles. Yet on a more abstract level, it may be interpreted as a working example of different religions sharing the same space with mutual respect.

Lying nestled at almost 4000m above sea level in the Trans-Himalayan district of Mustang, which is topographically part of the Tibetan plateau, Muktinath

is one of the most famous pilgrimage sites in Nepal. For centuries, a major caravan route between India and Tibet has run along this dry and desert-like Trans-Himalayan upper path lined with caves that bear testament to another era of inhabitants.

To reach Muktinath from the plains, one must leave Pokhara, the nearest city to the Annapurna mountain range and the bright green rice fields of the val-

leys and foothills, behind. Subsequently spanning jungle and pine forests one passes through the Kali Gandaki, a huge, deep channel that cuts between the Annapurnas and Dhaulagiri, to emerge on the arid heights of the Tibetan plateau at an average of around 3000m.

For centuries the territory of Mustang was a secluded and secretive place, unknown to the outer world at large, a forbidden land where modernity and exploitation of the environment had had very little or no impact. Until 2006, the only way to reach the place had been to walk or to take a 20-minute flight from Pokhara to Jomsom, which is practically another one-day trek from Muktinath. Helicopters also fly directly to the site from both Jomsom and Pokhara, but now a convenient road connects Pokhara to Muktinath and there are many jeeps and buses passing along the rather primitive road that parallels the Kali Gandaki river.

Yet as the conventional rigmarole of modern and ancient ways of pilgrimages defines, both tourists with their cameras and backpacks as well as practitioners of Buddhism and Hinduism traditionally walk this arduous trail, a five to seven day journey from Beni on the lower Kali Gandaki. For the pilgrim it is mastering the road itself that will mean arriving at the sacred destination; for the tourist, it is a marvelous sight to wonder at.

The pilgrimage site of 'Muktinath', which is translated as 'Place of Salvation', is around 2000 years old, but the mountains of 'Muktishetra' - 'Salvation Field', which encompass the immediate area around the Muktinath valley and a little beyond, stem back about seventy million years to the Jurassic Period when this area was the seabed of the ocean of Tethys before the Himalayas rose.

Sources of many holy rivers such as the Ganges, Gandaki, Yamuna etc.

flow from these mountains to India and for this reason, the area was always regarded as a holy land during the Vedic periods. Later when Buddhism entered Tibet from the 8th century onwards, the local people of border areas such as Mustang, who are of Tibetan origin also started regarding Muktinath as the site of Avalokiteshvara (Chenrezig) and the tantric teacher, Guru Padmasambhava.

After Moghal influence started to increase in India both Hindu and Buddhist scholars began taking refuge in the Himalayas, thus the pilgrimage sites of this mountain range became more widely known. Traditionally both Hindus and Buddhists have their definitions and myths related to Muktinath.

A sacred Hindu temple made in a Nepali/Hindu pagoda style is situated at the top of the Muktinath valley and defines the place as its main feature. Even though there had already been some sort of a temple made of clay here prior to this, the ▶



Susan M. Griffith-Jones

The upper parts of the Muktinath Valley in the winter (November)



Susan M. Griffith-Jones

A pilgrim making offering dance at Muktinath temple

present one was constructed around 1814 CE and renovated in 1929 CE.

For Hindu pilgrims, the central meaning of Muktinath is the veneration of their god, Vishnu. A four-armed statue of this deity that Nepali and Tibetan Himalayan Buddhists simultaneously worship as the compassionate Buddhist deity Avalokitesvara or Chenrezig, is contained within this temple. Another major attraction for Hindus is the possibility of receiving 'darshan', pure vision of the deity.

Some legends suggest how Vishnu, wishing to appear in this world in a form that could easily be worshipped and maintained by his devotees, took the form of sacred black stones or ammonites containing the fossils of prehistoric sea creatures, an extinct mollusk that once lived in the waters covering this region, their spiral shapes coiling into the stone's centre. These particular stones are only found here in Mukti-hetra and should be left wholly intact with their inner designs hidden and thus power, unbroken.

Buddhist pilgrims have always been attracted to the simplicity of the place, where all five elements meet in harmonious effect. Water is universally associated with sacred sites and having special qualities here, is drunk by both Buddhists and Hindus in plenty. Muktinath is mentioned in Tibetan sources as far back as the 11th/12th centuries and is known locally as 'Chumig-Gyatsa' - 'One Hundred and Eight Waters' due to the 108 water pipes that circumambulate the main temple in a semi-circle. Water from the natural source behind the complex gushes from taps shaped as boars' heads.

In 'The Clear Mirror', the Buddhist pilgrimage guide to Muktinath, amongst many other pieces of information, one reads that Mahasiddhas (great holy men) from India planted their walking staffs here that grew into poplar trees despite the high altitude and harsh weather conditions.

The traditional caretakers of Muktinath are around thirty Tibetan Buddhist nuns and in addition to the Hindu temple, there

are three Buddhist gompas (temples) on the site. Under the altar of the 'Jwala Mai - Temple of the Miraculous Fire', natural blue flames burn. Originally there were three flames, one appearing on water, one on stone and one on earth. The latter expired around 50 years ago and for locals it is an ominous sign that things are changing. Here Hindu pilgrims venerate their god Brahma, who is believed to have set the water alight as an offering to Muktinath.

Guru Padmasambhava, the great Indian Mahasiddha and one of the key figures to establish Buddhism in Tibet is believed to have visited Muktinath on his way to Tibet in 8th century AD. A formidable statue of him, reputedly made by his own hands, still stands in the Marme Lhakhang temple, another of the Buddhist gompas on the site.

Situated just below the complex of Muktinath is the dharamshala of 'Rani Pauwa' - 'Queen's Resting Place', now an expanded village of lodges and hotels for tourists. Its main feature is an old building that was once the quarters of royalty when they came to bathe in the sacred waters of Muktinath that provides resting space for pilgrims enduring the hard trip to Muktinath from all over Nepal and India.

Some make pilgrimage on foot from as far away as Southern India, whole families carrying their stoves and food for miles on end, weaving a chain towards their final destination. Rising at the crack of dawn, they prepare morning tea, do puja with many brightly coloured pigments of chalklike paste, sit in quiet meditation and bathe in the pools in front of the temple.

However, no matter who they are and where they come from, one aspect unites all people to this place, a unique energy of pilgrimage, of having endured many trials to reach it, of gathering the courage to continue to the end where some kind of relief, salvation or transcendence from the day-to-day sufferings of general life may await them.

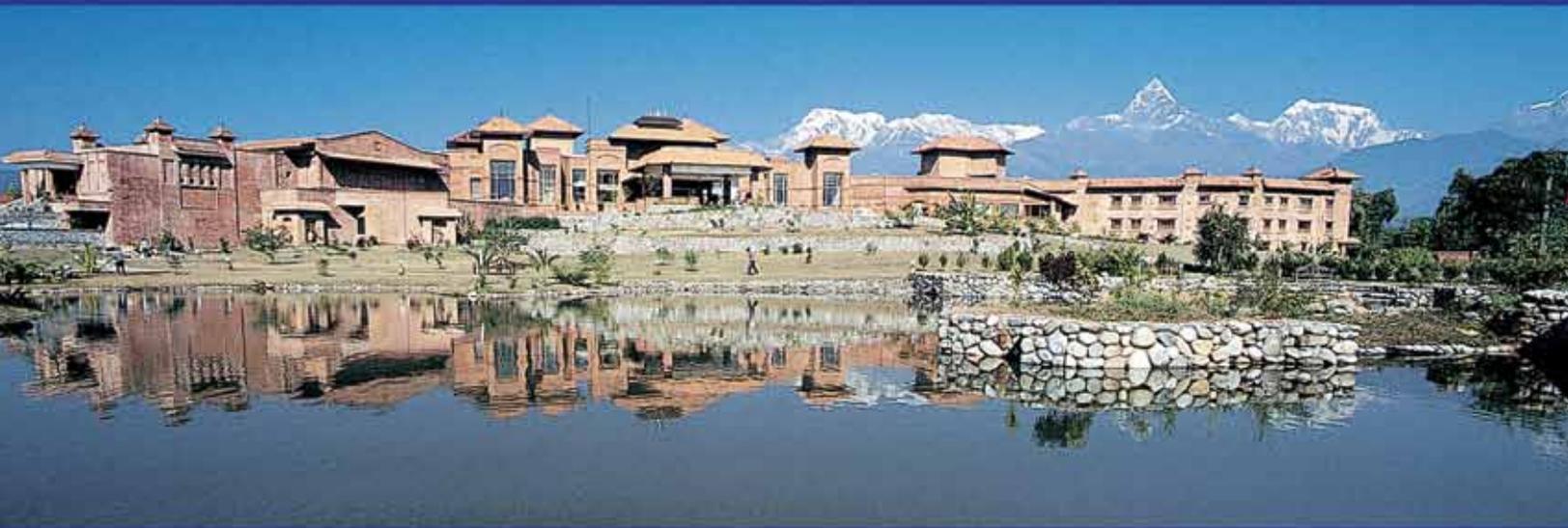
For the general aim of pilgrimage, in styles both modern and ancient is to overcome the obstacles of the journey and reach the destination. ▢



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LOW ALTITUDE ADVENTURE

A journey of two Sherpas from mountaineering guides to watchmakers.

Text By KAPIL BISHT

In 2009, Sir Ranulph Fiennes, the renowned English adventurer, became the oldest Briton to climb Mount Everest. While in the Mount Everest Base Camp another idea struck him. Even for a man who has earned a reputation for carrying out seemingly impossible plans (Ran has run seven marathons on seven continents in seven days—just five months after suffering a heart attack that required him to have double bypass surgery) the idea was absurd. He approached his friend, Michael Kobold, a watchmaker, with the idea to train two Sherpa men to become watchmakers. The two Sherpas that Ran had in mind were Ang Namgel Sherpa and Lakpa Thundu Sherpa. They were the guides for Kobold and Ran respectively on that expedition. “If Thundu and Namgel don’t have to climb this mountain anymore, their families surely will

sleep better at night,” Ran said. Michael Kobold, the founder of Kobold Watch Company, agreed.

Ang Namgel Sherpa and Lakpa Thundu Sherpa were both from Khumjung, in the Solukhumbu District. They had become guides on Everest more out of necessity than choice. Belonging to poor families, not many doors were open to them: Namgel could not continue his studies after passing the SLC examinations; Thundu had dropped out of school before reaching the secondary level. Namgel had an uncle in the mountaineering business and he persuaded Namgel to accompany him on expeditions. Although a novice in mountaineering with no alpine training, it took Namgel only a year before he attempted an ascent of Big E. Namgel successfully climbed Everest in 2006, aged 21. Namgel was soon going on

expeditions on Everest during springs. He spent autumns on other mountains, scaling Mount Cho Oyu (8,201 meters above sea level), Mount Manaslu (8,156 meters above sea level) twice, and Ama Dablam (6,812 meters above sea level) four times.

Thundu was similarly gifted. He started out as a trek guide. But in 2000 he found work as a cook for an expedition at Base Camp II, which is situated at 6,200 meters above sea level. The sardar of that expedition sensed that Thundu had what it took to climb Everest. The following year Thundu was given a chance to climb Everest and he successfully reached the summit from the north side. He was 28. In 2002, he climbed Annapurna I (8,091 meters). He has scaled Cho Oyu and Manaslu twice, and Ama Dablam an impressive seven times.

Between them, Namgel and Thundu have climbed Everest an astounding 16 times.



The Sherpas find themselves settling well to a completely new lifestyle in Kathmandu



The watchmaker with explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes and Michael Kobold

Between them, Namgel and Thundu have climbed Everest an astounding 16 times (Namgel nine times and Thundu seven). But they are equally formidable as a team. The duo's last expedition was in 2010. They were in Tibet to climb Shishapangma (8,013 meters above sea level). Unfortunately, they had to abandon the climb due to bad weather.

But it wasn't their climbing prowess that set them apart from other climbers. In 2010, a year after his successful ascent, Michael Kobold returned to Everest. He was accompanied by his wife. Namgel and Thundu were the couple's guides. The couple made it to the summit. But on reaching base camp, Kobold's wife made the mistake of not changing her clothes before sleeping. Because her clothes were drenched in sweat, hypothermia set in. Although Namgel and Thundu hadn't slept since setting out with Kobold and his wife for the summit over 24 hours ago, they kept a vigil for hours to look after Kobold's wife. By the time she finally felt better again the Sherpas had not slept for over 48 hours.

Soon after their selfless act, Kobold invited the altruistic duo to the States to train at the Kobold Watch Company

facilities in Pittsburgh. In March 2011, Namgel and Thundu flew to the U.S. to begin their training in watch-making.

Michael Kobold remembers their anxiety about traveling outside their country for the first time. "We don't feel safe traveling without you," Namgel and Thundu told Michael over the phone after receiving their visas for the U.S. Kobold traveled with them to the States. Flying for the first time ever, the Sherpas had brought along food with them for the trip. They had also brought prayer flags, prayer wheels and other paraphernalia that they would usually carry while climbing. "It occurred to me," Kobold wrote of the sight of the duo with all that stuff on the plane, "that Namgel and Thundu might erect a puja pole in the cabin and set off the smoke detectors with a juniper fire before take-off."

Child-like on the plane, the Sherpas proved precocious craftsmen once they began their training at the Kobold's Watch Company in Pittsburgh. Kobold knew the two were gifted watchmakers when they assembled a watch by the end of their first week. Namgel and Thundu astounded everyone with their speed. When I asked them about this feat, they were humble. "It was difficult in the be-

ginning," says Namgel. "Some tiny part would spring out from the table and we had to then look for it." The duo trained at the Kobold Watch Company, completing a two year course in 11 months.

Now, they run a shop in Kathmandu, at Baber Mahal Revisited. Talking to them in this quiet room, I couldn't help but wonder how they felt about their new lives. "Our families are happier now," said Namgel. They spoke excitedly of the cities they had visited in the U.S. "In California there is greenery year round. Pittsburgh gets snow like our village. But we didn't see mountains there," said Thundu. Although they are cheerful about the prospects of making and selling watches, their love for mountaineering remains. "Sometimes in the climbing season [spring] I miss climbing mountains. Climbing was dangerous but it was also fun. We were always on the move. We met a lot of people and made many friends," says Thundu.

Namgel and Thundu have brought back a few watches they assembled in the States. The watch - named Himalaya - bears the 'Made in Nepal' mark. Kobold only makes watches with automatic winding mechanism. Their watches are very expensive, with a starting price of \$3,500. Namgel told me that they had already received two orders for the watch, which they will begin making soon in their shop in Kathmandu. Making expensive watches and selling them in a country like Nepal is a daunting venture. But Namgel and Thundu are relaxed and confident. Theirs is the same optimistic and determined attitude that has come to be associated with Sherpas since the first expedition marched into the Everest region. They may be working in lower altitudes than they have been used to but their sights are once again set high. ▽

The quotes by Sir Ranulph Fiennes and Michael Kobold have been taken from the Kobold Watch Company brochure. Namgel and Thundu can be contacted at namgel@koboldwatch.com and thundu@kobold-watch.com respectively. The writer can be contacted at papercloumtree@hotmail.com

Tales from the trail

A trekker on the Great Himalaya Trail recounts some of his memorable parts on the trail.

Text & Photos By PARIBESH PRADHAN



Getting lost in the forest on an empty stomach was just one of the many adventures on the trail.

On March 23, 2012, after walking 19 kilometers from Lamsung, the Climate Smart Celebrity Trek members led by Apa Sherpa arrived at a small village called Chhentung in Baglung district. We walked through a long stretch of rhododendron forest and crossed the Jalja La pass at 3404m. This is also where we entered the Dhorpatan Hunt-

ing Reserve. What was remarkable about Jalja La pass was the view. One could see mountains like Dhaulagiri, Gurja Himal and the Annapurna range aligned together to form a magnificent landscape, perhaps even more spectacular than the view from Poonhill. At least that was my impression and the general consensus among most of the 21 members of our team.

There is one more bit of trivia about the place. Back in the insurgency period, the Maoist combatants had used this place to camp before they attacked Beni. Locals told us stories of how the Maoists had marched through this route in thousands to launch their offence. We thought this was a part of our history - an important event. We decided to call it the Guerrilla Trail. This is of course unofficial, just for namesake.

Right after crossing Jalja La pass, the topography and landscape or the trail changed completely. After rhododendron forests, we were now walking amidst arid and pasture landscapes. There was no sign of human settlement except for a deserted house. The locals in Lamsung village had informed us that we would not find any villages in between. We carried with us lunch packs consisting of a packet of biscuits, Tibetan bread and two boiled eggs each.

After walking for almost 2 hours from the pass, the trail led us to a pine forest in the Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve. The journey was getting exciting primarily because of the variation in the landscape we were seeing within such short time spans. None of the members in our team had trekked here before and this place had various elements of surprise with wonderful scenic beauty. However, much to our dismay, all this changed when the greenery of the forest started to turn

grey and trees started to resemble huge, ugly matchsticks standing desolately. As we walked further down, it started to become clear that this was due to a forest fire. The fact that there was no sign of any re-growth in the forest indicated that this was more or less a recent event. What was sad though, was that this trail of ashes and burnt pinewoods continued for almost an hour. Roughly speaking, this forest fire had destroyed about 3-4 km of forests on both sides of the trail. This is because on an average, we walk 4-5 km per hour on a plain trail. When we reached the next village called Gurja Ghar and later Chhentung, I inquired about the forest fire. None of the locals could give me a convincing answer as to what sparked the fire. Some said it was the Maoists, others said it was the police during the insurgency, and many said they weren't aware of the forest fire, something that had occurred merely 2-4 km away from their villages. At this

point, I felt that something wasn't right. Perhaps, it was the locals themselves that had started the fire to claim the land.

We arrived in Chhentung at dusk. It was probably around 6 pm and we had already walked for more than eight hours. Our two Sardars (the leader who handles the logistic arrangement for the team) got busy looking for accommodation and a site to camp. After dinner at eight, we had retired for the day by nine.

After having spent the night in Chhentung village in Baglung, we planned to reach a village called Thakur in Rukum. On inquiring, the locals told us that we could take a shorter route thus bypassing Dhorpatan village. As always, we started at 8 am in the morning and requested the locals to show us the way which one man finally agreed to. He was in his sixties and had a hard time catching up with us. He abandoned us in less than 2 hours when we reached Chhentung pass at 3712 m. We were on our own now.

The terrain was unique. No sign of life here – just some dwarf rhododendron forests with patches of snow. At some places, these patches were more than knee-deep. It seemed like a pasture, a habitat for Blue Sheep but there were no traces to indicate any such activity. At one point, all of us got lost in one of the dwarf rhododendron forests. The strange thing was that we could all see where we had to go but we couldn't find a trail to get there. The snow and the web of rhododendron trees distracted our course and some of us including Saurav (Dhakal, British Council's Climate Champion) and I had to skid on the snow to reach a regular trail below. Dawa (Steven Sherpa, co-leader of the trek who has climbed Everest 2 times) and Samir (Jung Thapa, professional photographer) took the high route.

After walking for more than four hours from Chhentung, we finally sat down at a random spot to have our lunch. Like the day before, today was also a pack-lunch day. The food was more or



Parts of the trail are harsh, on the body and on the mind.



There are rewards for your hardships on the trail, some of them as breathtaking as this one.

less the same except for some slices of Yak cheese, a luxury at that point.

Until then we had not seen anyone on this trail except for the old man who had deserted us. The trail started to go up to another pass after lunch and by half past two we were up at Phagune pass at an altitude of 4161m. This was the highest point we had been at since we started in Barabise on February 24. Even the team members who would usually run ahead were feeling the altitude and were now falling behind on the trail. Soon after the pass, the trail started to descend down into a gorge, which to me felt like a no-man's land. After trudging down for about an hour, we came to a fork in the road. It was already past four at that time and we had no clue where Thakur village was. The group ahead had already taken the trail that went down, so the remaining crew followed them. Much to our distress in the darkening hour, the trail turned out to be dead end. The group that went ahead started to

return upward on the slopes. It was at this point that I realized rhododendron forests and snow cover are only good to look at and not to walk on. We reached the top of that mountain at quarter past six when we finally found a bigger trail. As the sun started to sink into the distant mountains, our trail also began to go downhill. There were eight members including Apa, Dawa, Samir and Saurav who were 40 minutes ahead of us and by the time we were fixing our headlamps for the downhill, they had already reached the base and radioed us saying that they found two houses (which turned out to be lodges) there but Thakur must be only 15 minutes away according to the map and our GPS location.

They then decided to go ahead to find the destined village. The remaining 13-member team reached the base at half past seven. At that point, we lost all radio connection with the leading eight members. At last contact, they had said that they were still walking and that there was no sign

of any village in sight. Hence, the thirteen of us decided to camp there. Luckily for us, one of the doors of the house was open. It didn't take us long to find out that this was actually a lodge but there was no one here. We took refuge there, all thirteen of us tired and hungry and since we didn't have any proper food, we slept on a Mars chocolate bar, two digestive biscuits each and two gulps of water.

The next morning, we started to walk after having a bar of Kit Kat. After walking for an hour, we found the place where our eight members had camped. They had already left the place. After walking for another hour, we stopped at a very small village to have tea where some locals informed us that the two houses we had slept over at was the Thakur village we had been looking for. The irony of the Great Himalaya Trail! △

Paribesh Pradhan joined the GHT - CSCT with an interest in the environment and education. His writings will initially take the form of an e-magazine.



A MIDWESTERN CONTINUUM

Text By UTSAV SHAKYA, Photos By ECS MEDIA



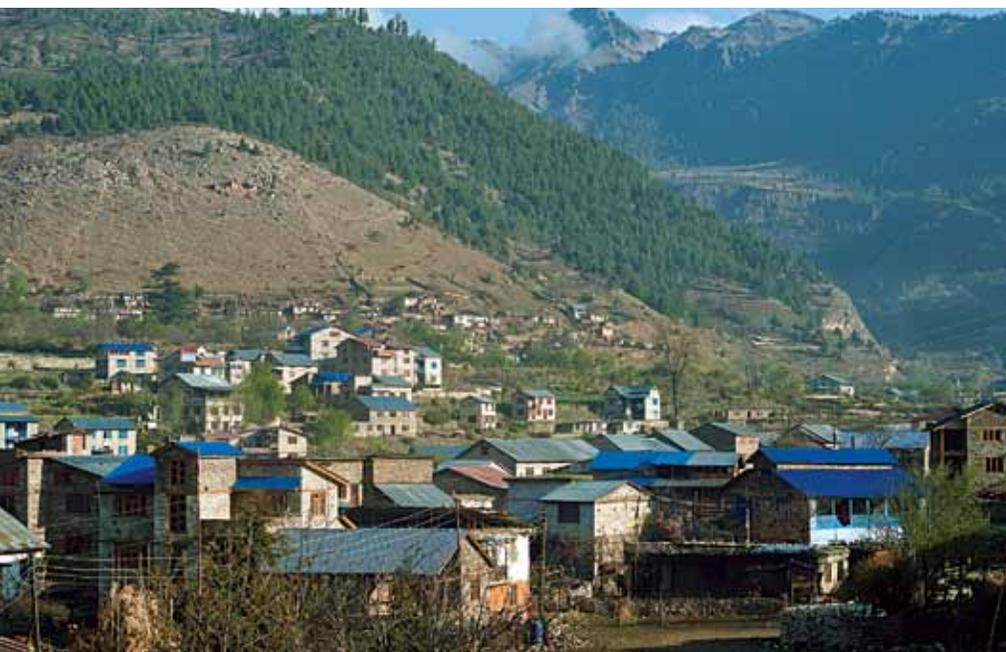
Everyone who has been to Jumla talks of how it's a different world out there. So naturally when I flew to the Midwestern town this April, I was almost expecting (without letting anyone in on my thoughts) an ancient civilization complete with their own language (which they had to an extent) and no sign of modern living (wishful thinking).

Walking into Jumla Bazaar, complete with buses, DVD shops and general stores that sell (almost) everything I use back home in Kathmandu, this was not the kind of culture shock I had prepared for (packets of chewing gum, Kit Kat bars etc). Jumla is a town in transition, on the way to becoming a city.

We had joined the Great Himalaya Trail - Climate Smart Celebrity Trek for a few days, between Jumla and Mugu's Rara lake, mainly to see how the perils of climate change are translating into the lives of children in remote parts of Nepal. With lack of proper nutrition and having to move schools to avoid being in the way of landslides, climate change is a reality here. Taking adaptive measures and using climate smart tourism to raise financial conditions is a great way to prepare these communities.

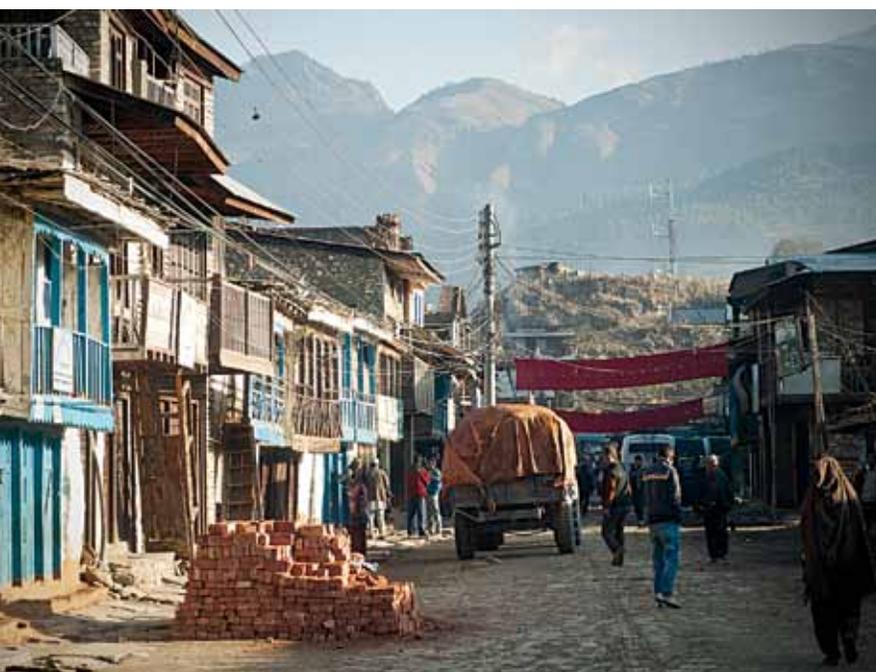
Rara on the other hand is every bit the dreamy place visitors advertise it to be. In April as Kathmandu locals did away with cardigans and jackets, there was snow on Mugu's hilltops and the water was extremely cold. The lake was also extremely still, inducing in all who looked into it an unexplainable serenity. Looking into the waters, I marveled at the fascinating gradient of colors that it displayed; the Rara was different for people looking at it from different places.

The next day, as our plane flew over the Rara, I saw the sky and clouds as well as our tiny little plane, reflected perfectly in its pristine blue waters. For that moment, sky and earth became one, a thought-bending continuum that seemed to put our minds into a reflective mood. ◻





Opposite page: (Clockwise from top left) Night view of Jumla; new constructions in the old town; rapid urbanization on Jumla hills; an elderly Jumli seeing to her chores; Facing page (clockwise from far left) Firewood still fuels a Jumli kitchen; moving firewood from forest to kitchen; atop a temple in Jumla Bazaar; construction goes on after lights out; Jumla Bazaar - CD shops, temples, restaurants and general stores; Jumla's local produce, fresh off the fields is a nutritious delight



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FIRST

Bipin Bajracharya, Chhetrapati

Fight for food: An Indian pond Heron fighting
for food at Taudaha, Kirtipur



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SECOND

Tayju Sayami, Swyambhu
Cooling off in the water to escape the harsh summer

THIRD

Karen Conniff, Godavari
A lovely red caterpillar munching on plants





Consolation

Minnat Joshi, Ekantakuna

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Artem Zhushman, Russia
A view of the fields in Langtang District



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SHANGRI-LA
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While You Were Sleeping

Text By UTSAV SHAKYA, Photos By WALLACE WOON

A melting pot of cultures, people, dreams and aspirations, Kathmandu is not just the cultural and economic center of the country but also a state of mind. It is not just a physical destination but also a destination in people's minds representing all that is developed, cultured and progressive about the country. Who makes Kathmandu all it has come to represent? Each of us who call Kathmandu home and love it for all it means to us.

All day, each day, for the entire week, month, year we see life in the city move ahead full steam. Policy makers, artists, engineers, writers, entrepreneurs, fathers, mothers, lovers, children, priests walk, run, commute across, around and through the city, adding to this phenomenon. As night falls however, it all seems to quiet down, at least for a few hours as the city sleeps, or does it?

Hardly. Rather a different demographic populates the city after dark: people who work night shifts, working people for whom the absence of light hardly makes much of a difference, and a good number of insomniacs. As you sleep, these are the people that keep the city breathing, readying it for yet another day, yet another dream, yet another life.

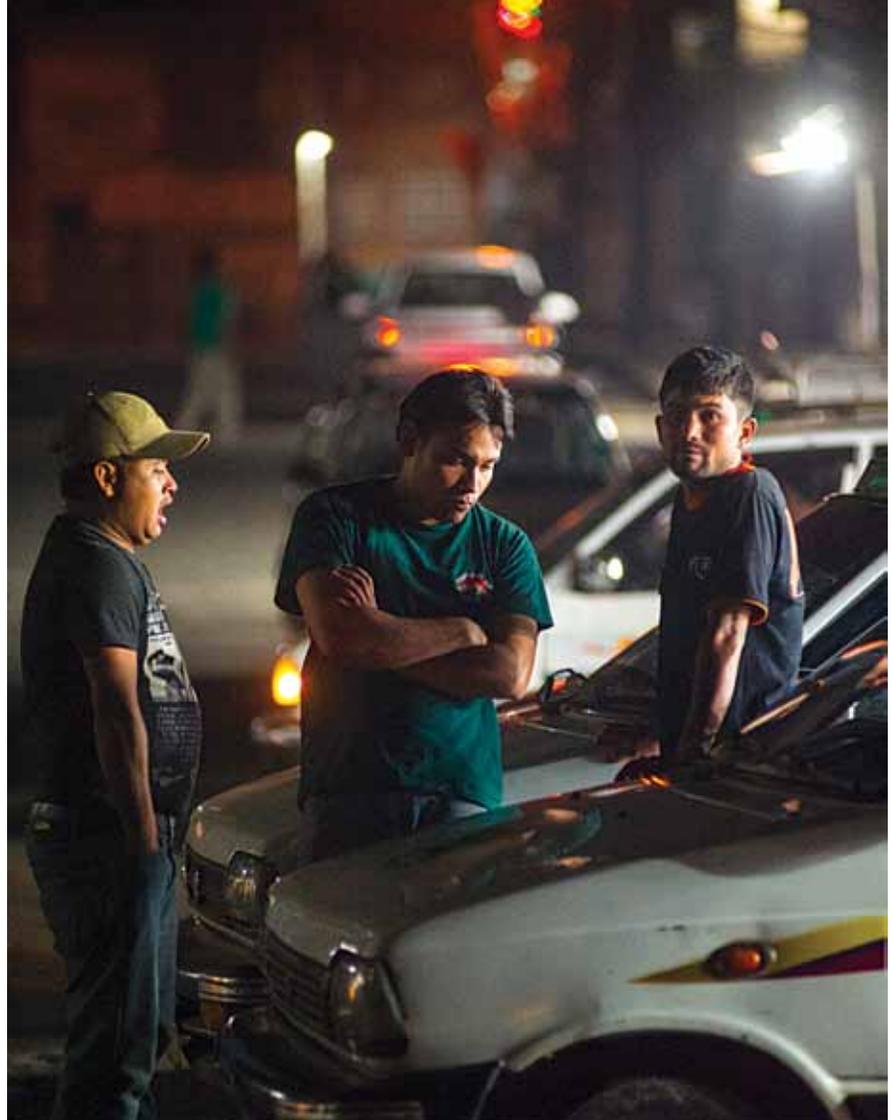


This Page:

Road surveyors taking measurements along the junction of Kanti Path and Bir Hospital. The constant flow of traffic in the day hours means that late nights are the only time they are able to carry out their job safely

Right:
Taxi drivers waiting along the Masa Galli next to Bir Hospital. The 24 hour pharmacies situated here make this one of the sole places in the city which are lit throughout the night.

Below:
Western View of Kathmandu towards the Ring Road from the hilltop of Swayambu. Even nearing the stroke of midnight, traffic still runs along the Ring Road. The normally dim lit streets and buildings of the city are lit up in this long exposure panorama.

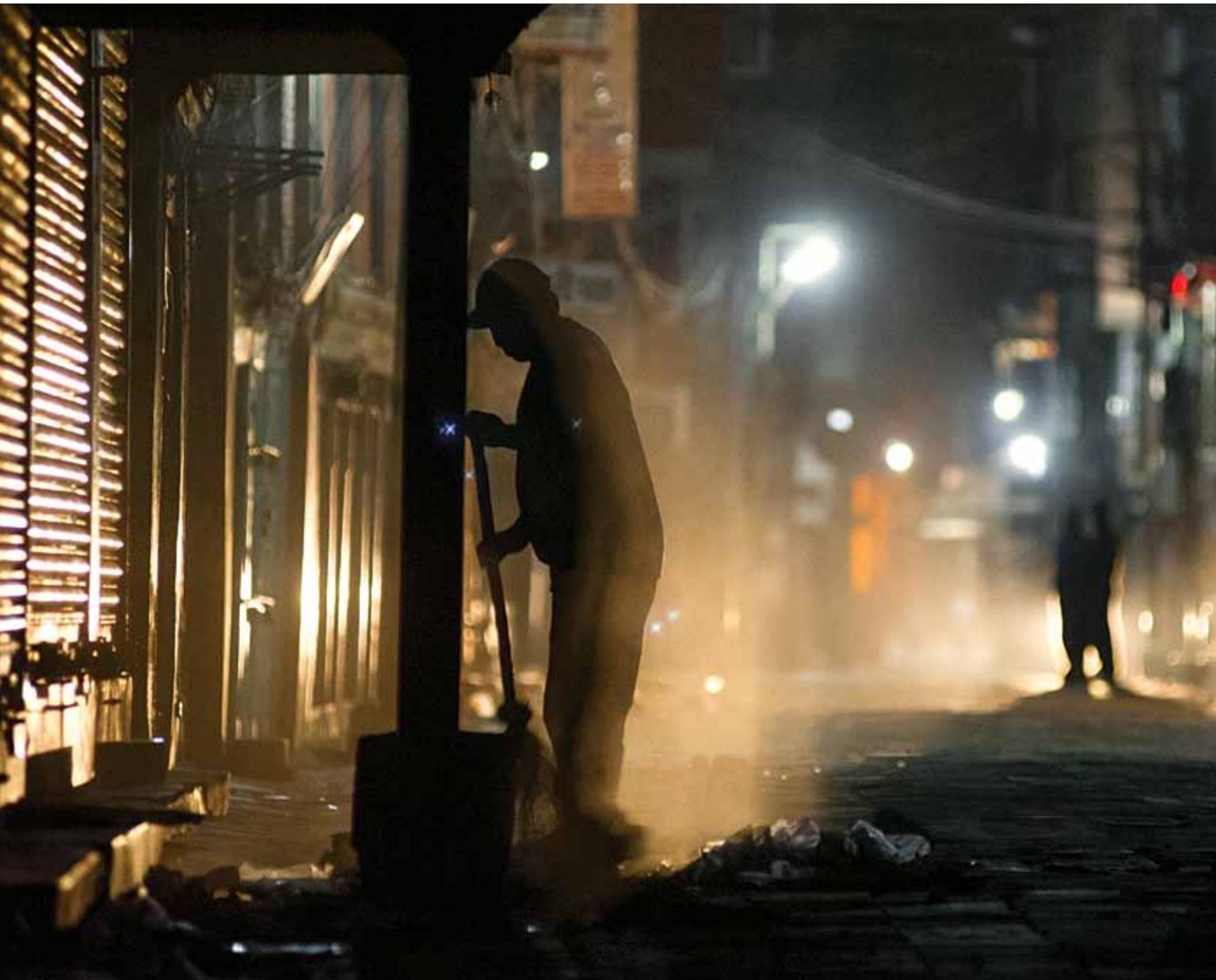




Above:
Traffic police set up a roadblock along Sundara. NRs. 1000 fines meted out as part of the city's recent efforts to curb drink driving, have proved to be successful.



Right:
The wide expanse of space at the old Bus Park is evident only after dark. By day, the buses shuttling back and forth from the city centre are a stark contrast, turning the bus park into a crowded and chaotic venue.



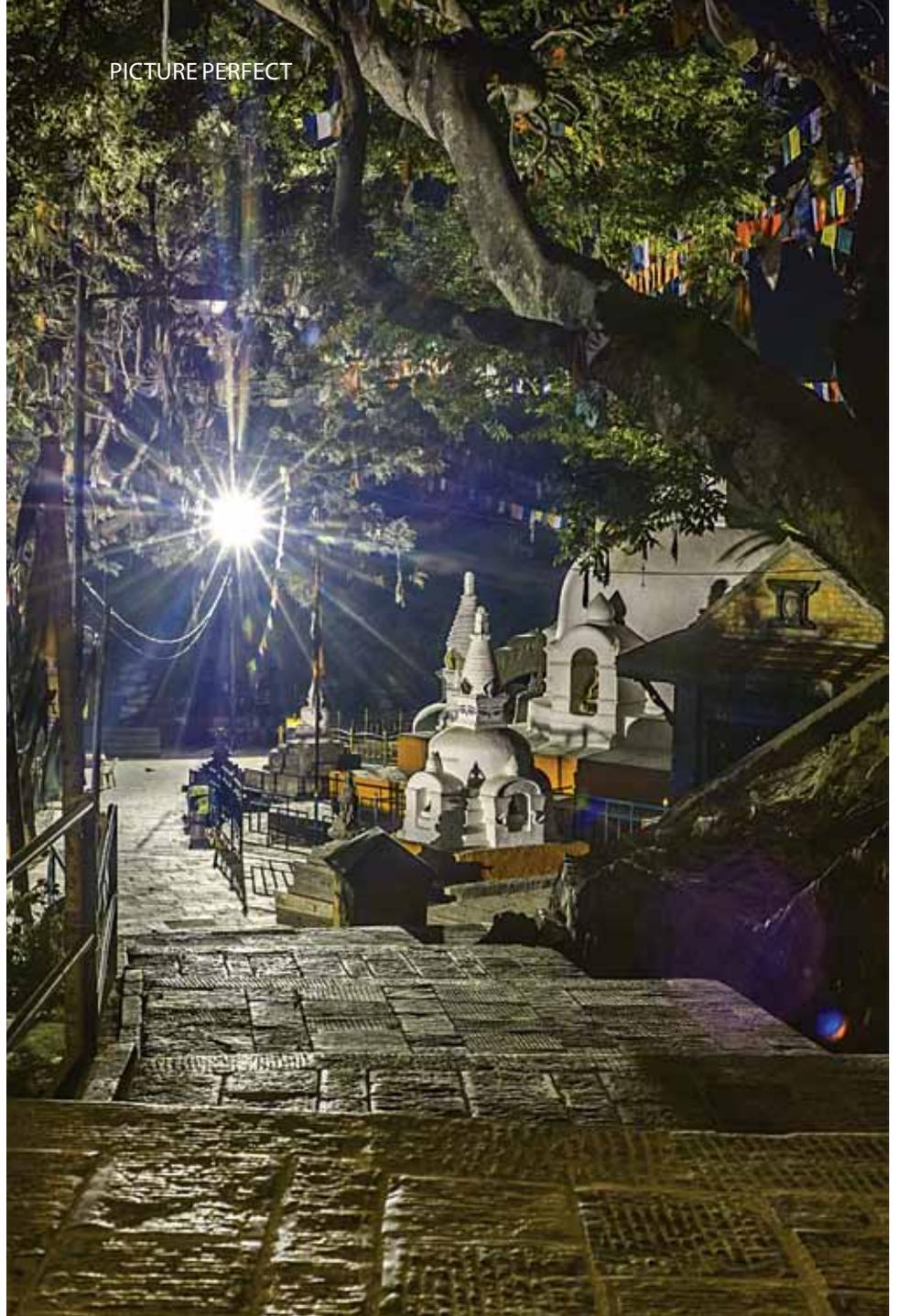
Above:

Sweepers cleaning the streets between Ason Chowk and Thamel. Their work begins at 11pm, when vehicular traffic is minimal, and involves clearing litter and debris left from the day's activities.

Right:

A man lighting his cigarette in Basantapur Durbar Square. While many of the vendors have already packed up much earlier, the presence of taxi drivers and rickshaw pullers waiting for potential customers means that there is still business to be made in the wee hours





Above:

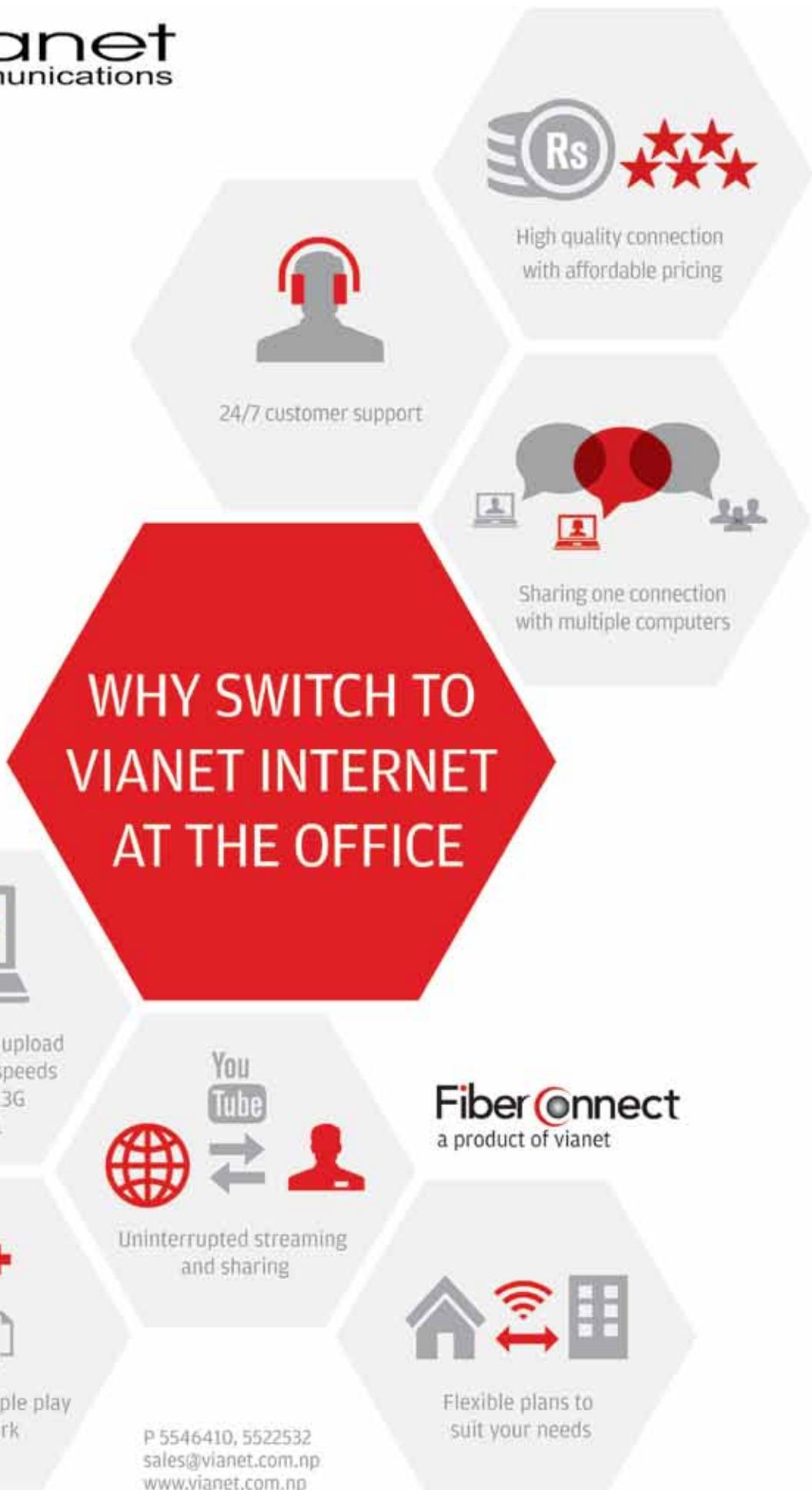
The steps from the entrance of the temple compound leading up to the main stupa of Swayambunath. Known affectionately as the “Monkey Temple” by tourists due to the hordes of macaques that flock here by day, not a single one to be seen in the hours after dark.

Following Page:

Construction workers clear the debris from a recently demolished building site at Indra Chowk. The shoulder to shoulder human traffic in the day makes it almost obligatory for them to work when all other movement dies - at night.







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Artudio's Street Art Project



ECS Media

Artudio auctioned three of the photos that were awarded in the 'Hamro Nepal' National Photo Contest 2012 and with the support of Pashupati Paints utilized the fund to restore and repaint the Street Mural Art at Tri Chandra College on April 25 2012. It was originally painted with the involvement of 550 school children, artists, 100 volunteers from KU art, Srijana College of Fine Arts, Artudio on 16th September 2011.

With the passing of time, the efforts were overlapped with various film posted and political slogans. The

beautiful murals disappeared into the background. Artudio in association with Pashupati Paints, UNICEF, Axmi Cares and all Public Private Partnership of Handwashing took the initiative to bring back the murals that disappeared behind the posters. Miss Nepal 2012 Participants joined the initiation to clean, restore and repaint the public spaces.

The program started at 10:00 am with the removal of posters. Around 3 pm marked the time of restoring the murals.

Handcrafted Items from Maiti Nepal



Maiti Nepal, an organization set to help out victims of trafficking and violence has been engaging themselves with handicraft works with a range of products – especially beaded products such necklaces, bracelets, bangles, hairclips, earrings, handbags, storage baskets, pen holder. They also use felt to make their products such as the mobile holders, baby blankets and key chains. These beads are purchased locally and Maiti Nepal has been doing their best to support the local suppliers. Maiti Nepal try their best to purchase only environment friendly products to be used in the handcrafted works produced in the workshop. The rescued trafficked girls and victims of violence make these products as a method of income. These products are a means to support the women producers in the workshop. All the proceeds are used to support the women in the organization.

The workshop is located next to Maiti Nepal's head office at Pingalsthan in Gaushala. The prices for the products can be enquired over the phone or email.

For more information contact: Aakriti Kharel, Phone: 4494816, 449204, Email: info@maitinepal.org

India -Nepal Craft Festival



The six-day Nepal-India Craft Festival started on April 27th at Nepal Academy Hall. The South Asia Foundation (SAF) in association with the Embassy of India, state government of Goa and Nepal Tourism Board organized the festival to foster effective and comprehensive collaboration between Nepal and India. A first of its kind, this program

was inaugurated by President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav.

This festival featured 19 stalls from Nepal and 35 stalls from India. The festival opened an opportunity for craft exchange program between the two countries and also helped to strengthen the cultural relationship between two countries. There were a display of woolen handicrafts, items

made out of coconuts, showpieces, candle holders and Ayurveda products, skin care products among others. Indian Embassy in Kathmandu and Federation of Handicrafts Association of Nepal have signed an agreement under which 20 craftsmen from Nepal will be Trained at the National Institute of Design every year.

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The Glassblower

Recognizing the unknown art of glassblowing in Nepal

Text and Photos by Niraj Karki

For most people, the idea of the art of glassblowing and finely crafted glassware might bring to mind the image of European craftsmen. Glassblowing is a highly unconventional and unlikely craft to be associated with Nepal although Nepali artisans have always been known for their work in wood, metal and stone. The fact that glassblowing has more of a utilitarian value than an artistic one is sad considering the former overshadows the latter quite considerably. 'Art for art's sake' doesn't necessarily apply when the works of art end up as items used everyday – drinking glasses, vases and as produced in Nepal, smoking hookahs – and the art and skill of glassblowers is easily overlooked.

A visit to a glassblower's shop though, is certainly enough to change such perspectives. Anodyne doors with giant oxygen cylinders open up to a workshop with the glassblowers wearing protective goggles bending, pulling and shaping glass to their will. Watching glassblowers work with flames hot enough to melt metal fuelled by oxygen and normal LPG cylinders is daunting and fascinating at the same time.

The glassblowers here don't use the traditional forms of glassblowing – instead of the giant 3-chambered ovens, everything is done over a single flame controlled by a burner. Their tools are nothing fanciful either – called 'carbon' they are bits of metal and sometimes even just pieces of stone used to bend and shape glass.

The results though, are stunning. Locketts, hookahs, glasses, vases and even sculptures – and yes, glasses – the drinking kind. You certainly wouldn't say 'it is just glass' after seeing how intricate the designs are, with the more complex items made by melting colors into patterns inside the glass itself.



Glassblowers in Nepal use different and limited methods, yet produce spectacular results



One of Nepal's most popular exports – this one uses actual gold and silver

Glassblowing is a lot more than just blowing glass. There is a lot of skill involved. For one, there are no real measurements or guides to work by and all work is done through experience and the glassblower feeling the state of the molten glass. It isn't only glass that is used either. Glassblowers use metals – even expensive ones like gold and silver – to create colors and shadows.

Most apprentices start as helpers learning to pull melt and pull colored glass, which goes into the bigger pieces. It is not easy and takes time – about 3 months to learn the basics of just stretching molten glass. While it is a form of art neither native to Nepal nor recognized, glassblowing and the skills of the blowers here needs to be considered. About a year ago, there were about 120 small sized glass blowing workshops in Nepal, most within Kathmandu. Business has surely been good as now there are over 150. Ironically, almost all the glasswork made in Nepal is not just shipped abroad but is commissioned by foreign clients. ▢

*If there is a greater joy than
in Giving a Gift,
It is in crafting one.*

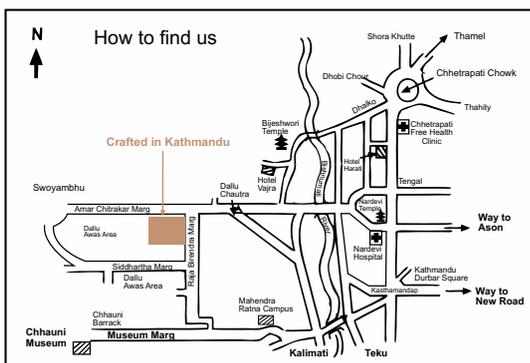


Lumbini dish

Size: 4.5" D

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Painting a paubha

Acclaimed Master Paubha painter Lok Chitrakar breaks down the complex processes of starting a paubha painting for ECS NEPAL readers.

Text By SHRISTY SHRESTHA, Photos By ECS MEDIA

The cotton fabric forms the foundation on which the traditional Newari Paubha painting is prepared. One can start the basic steps of painting a paubha at home by using cotton fabric, glue (Saresh), stone, ropes and minerals. However nowadays

it is mostly prepared with the use of a readymade canvas and acrylic and oil colors. The traditional paubha is painted with five basic colors- red (Cannabar), blue (Lapis Lazuli), yellow (Orpiment: yellow sapphire), green (light green malachite) black (charcoal burnt with the herbs used to make homemade Kajal) to create a range of colours and white is made out of grinding shells into fine powder but previously limestone was used. Powdered silver and gold are also other key ingredients in the painting that make it more expensive

STEP-WISE DEMONSTRATION TO PREPARE A TRADITIONAL PAUBHA

1. To start with, cut the cloth, size it to fit the wooden canvas, seal and fasten it with ropes in order to stretch the fabric.
2. Apply a mixture of glue (Saresh) which acts as a binder and white clay (Sapeta) evenly on the surface and keep in a shaded area to dry.
3. To press the cloth, burnish it with a smooth, round while the cloth itself rests on the canvas. Continue to press it for 4/5 times a day for a week until the cloth stiffens and is resistant to tearing, the surface smooth and ready to be painted.
4. Another crucial step in creating the Paubha is in sketching the desired design and setting. Select the design from a book or reference card and trace it onto the home made canvas.
5. Colour preparation being the most time consuming process, synthetic colours commercially found in the local market are often used for convenience. Traditionally, the minerals are broken down and further ground with the use of some water in a mortar and pestle. The minerals which are hand ground for months are dried and stored. The paints are mixed with glue (Saresh), which is used for stiffening the paintings cloth.



6. Fill in the sketch with a wide array of colors and shades, slowly moving towards the foreground where brightly portrayed religious icons are found which include natural elements such as mountains, rivers, plants and wildlife. The colour of the deity has to be according to the principle of the holy Shastra.
7. After the initial coat of colour is applied, create a fine lining to give a perfect shape to the deity followed by shading and gradation and apply gold and silver layering at last according to the tradition. The eyes of the deity are opened at the end which signifies that the painting is complete.

Although paubha painting is one of the oldest forms of traditional art known to us, there are very few in the trade who still work to uphold the rich heritage and the sacredness it holds from a religious point of view. The spirituality associated with the long lost tradition is sure to stir up curiosity in the hearts of both, foreign paubha enthusiasts and local appreciators of their own heritage. △



The finest in Newa: art

Bodhisattva Gallery prizes its collection of the finest and the skilled when it comes to Newar art.

Text By SADICHCHHA DHAKHWA



ECS Media

The finest works by a range of Nepali artists are displayed at Bodhisattva

I say this in all modesty: I grew up in a family concerned with the best of art. Art in its various art forms has always been a part of my life and it is because of this that when I visited Bodhisattva Gallery, I could say in all confidence that the collection is of those most skilled in their profession.

Purna Man Shakya started his collection over 25 years ago but only shifted his gallery to Babarmahal Revisited in August of 2010. However, the family's dealings with art started quite a while back. Prajwol Man Shakya, Manager of the gallery explains, "As far as we know, my great-grandfather was an artist, my grandfather dealt with antiquities and my father switched to contemporary Newa art." The word contemporary can be rather deceiving. It merely means that the collection at the gallery comprises of recent work – say from about ten years back.

What makes the collection special is the value placed on the traditional process without succumbing to the growing urbanization and mass production. The

artists work from home – as it was in the years before – starting the process by readying the mold and purchasing of minerals after which the process switches hands with every step. Shakya remarks, "We don't work on copied statues. We have the original work from the best statue makers and carvers." A switch from the olden ways is that Bodhisattva is trying their best to promote the artists and give them credit for their efforts. "We are trying to promote the finest Newa artwork as well as the name of the artist. We try to promote only the best - whether the artist is young or old, as long as it is the best," he adds. Each piece on display has the name of the artist, along with a brief description of the work, the size, the year of completion and the material used.

Around a year ago, on April 2011, Bodhisattva organized an exhibition, 'Jewels of Newar Art'. Held at the main courtyard at Babar Mahal Revisited, the exhibition saw major success with around 100 people visiting everyday.

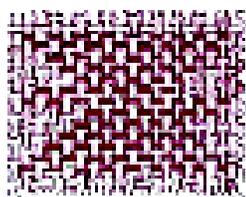
On display was Purna Man Shakya's collection of 25 years - most pieces being Paubha paintings. Since many artworks are purchased directly from the artist without the market seeing it, the exhibition attempted to show that there is a willing market.

The exhibition was also meant to showcase the works of Nepali artists, who still base their work on traditional art and that despite modernization, there are still many who still have the skilled hands of older days. "Everything beautiful in the field of craftsmanship in the Kathmandu Valley is the work of the Newar community. We wanted to show that these artists still remain," explains Shakya.

Bodhisattva Gallery specializes in Paubha paintings, statues, coral works and gold repoussé. The pieces on display at the gallery are probably one of the finest collections in Nepal – the work of the best. Besides retail, they have been selling to private collectors in Germany, USA, Japan, India, Thailand, Singapore and China. ▽



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TRAVEL



TRAVEL NEWS

TRAVEL REVIEW: Mapping the roof of the world

PEOPLE ON THE GO: A Permanent Job

TRAVEL DIARY: Bhumdi

Qatar Airways' Premium Terminal world's best



Qatar Airways' Premium Terminal at Doha International Airport (DIA) has been named World's Best Premium Service Airport for the second year running. It was recognized for its superior Five Star service and excellent customer care. Opened in 2006, this terminal is for the exclusive use by the Qatar Airways' First and Business Class

passengers and is renowned for its world-class facilities such as fine dining, luxurious spa amenities and facilities for transiting and departing passengers.

Qatar Airways Chief Executive Officer Akbar Al Baker says, "We're extremely proud of our Premium Terminal, the first of its kind in the world to provide check-in, duty free, fine dining and transit services exclusively for our First and Business Class passengers," said Al Baker.

Qatar Airways' Oryx Rotana, a five-star hotel at Doha International Airport has won the Best Airport Hotel in the Middle East award and has also been ranked the 10th best airport in the world. It beat two other high profile contenders for the title of Best Premium Service Airport- Frankfurt Airport's Lufthansa First Class Lounge and Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Airport's Thai Airways First Class check-in and lounge facilities placed second and third respectively.

On-site education by WWF Nepal and Initiative Outdoor

The Green Hiker Campaign organized by WWF Nepal in partnership with Initiative Outdoor, a private Nepalese Trekking agency provided on-site education and awareness among local people during the successful 10 day hike on the Gosaikunda trail from Thulo Bharku in Langtang to Sundarjal in Kathmandu with the motto of 'Leave no Trace'. With their return from the trek, a briefing session was held at the WWF office on April 26.

The participating members were trekking leaders representing renowned trekking and expedition agencies and involved with providing guides to both domestic and foreign tourists. They came together at this briefing and discussed the environment related problems and their experience. They also brainstormed potential solutions to ecological benefit of the trekking regions.

THAI's 44th Year of Successful Operation in Nepal



Thai Airways International (Thai) had increased flight in the domestic sectors such as Chiang Mai, Phuket, Krabi and other places and also offers Special Promotional Fares for specific destinations such as Bangkok/Domestic Thailand/Singapore/Kuala Lumpur/Penang, Australia, Japan and many

more destinations on the occasion of Nepalese New Year and Songkran Festival in Thailand. It announced an increase of over 3000 seats on domestic flights.

2012 marks a milestone for THAI as they celebrated the 44th successful years of operation in Nepal. THAI is committed in providing the highest level of service to all customer touch points, making each journey a memorable one.

THAI has recently implemented a new checking time in Tribhuvan International Airport to avoid delays at the immigration desk. The counter opens at 9:30 a.m. and closes at 12:50 p.m. to facilitate the costumers. It also offers free excess baggage for students and businessmen travelling to Australia and China and free hotel services in Bangkok. Thai has handed over the Memorial Part situated in Kakani to the local community and is providing regular fund for its maintenance and development.

2012 Everest Expeditions



Hilaree O'Neill, 39, a ski-mountaineer from Colorado has started her expedition to Everest covered live in the National Geographic iPad app. It is the same route Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay did 59 years ago – with the exception of better gear. Hilaree O'Neill joined The North Face and National Geographic's 2012 Everest Expedition teams.

National Geographic is also seeking out to repeat the historic climb of the 1963. Everest Expedition. Two routes will be taken to the summit. Mountaineer Conrad Anker and photographer Cory Richards will attempt to take the West Ridge in alpine style, carrying all their food, shelter and equipment. Meanwhile, scientists and researchers from Montana State University with NatGeo writer Mark Jenkins will climb Everest's Southeastern Ridge in expedition style. They'll carry fixed ropes, stocked camps, supplemental oxygen, and they will have help from porters.

The North Face and National Geographic sponsored this expedition with the support of Montana State University. The entire expedition was covered live on an iPad application.

BB Airways to operate in Nepal

Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal granted the Air Operation Certificate to BB Airways, a new airline company promoted by Non Resident Nepalese (NRNs). BB Airways will operate scheduled international and chartered flights to seven destinations. The international flights are scheduled to take off within a year. It will only be operating internationally with Boeing 737-300 aircrafts. The destinations for BB airways include New Delhi, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Doha and Singapore.

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Mapping the roof of the world

Himalayan Map House are veteran map makers in Nepal, setting standards and then changing them to remain up to date with modern innovations.

Text By SHRISTY SHRESTHA

Situated along the old lane of Basantapur, just at the starting point of the freak street, Himalayan Map house is synonymous to its name. It has its outlet on the ground floor and is spread over three storey`s of the same building. Easy to locate, it has been the dwelling place for many foreigners and local customers seeking maps and other trekking guides. It was the year of 1997 when they started out, when digital media wasn`t introduced yet and the map making process had to undergo a lot of manual work as it had to be prepared with one`s own hands. Two years later, with the help of some foreigners they collaborated with National Geographic to digitized their maps of Everest, Annapurna, Langtang and Khumbu routes.

Since its inception, the place has undergone many changes. Long before digital technology was brought into practice, maps were prepared in analogue form. It`d take about six to eight months to prepare a single map; the



From traditional pen and ink maps to digital cartography, HMH's outlets have been catering to the country's mapping needs

varieties were limited but they still had huge quantities. At their store, they now have about 50,000 varieties of maps besides other products such as guidebooks, fridge magnets, postcards, calendars, posters and even playing cards! Not only that, Pawan Shakya, the Manager at Himalayan Map House shared that they are planning on entering into applications to make it more suitable for changing times as in today`s context mapping a place is just a click away. Although they do make amendments in the maps on a yearly basis, they have also been working on interactive maps to make it easier for people to access the remotest areas in Nepal. Currently, The Great Himalayan Trail (GHT) is one of their major projects, which has been garnering rave reviews from around the world as it has catered to the needs of trekkers, both foreign and local.

The store has also been publishing coffee table books since 2003 besides selling out guide books focused on a few areas since 2007. The shop is stacked with beautifully mounted

maps, prices starting at NRs 400. Quite surprisingly, they have also come up with maps in the Chinese language for the convenience of Chinese customers considering the recent increase in the number of Chinese tourists to Nepal. Pawan says that along with keeping up with new technologies and innovations, their biggest challenge is working with the fear that their ideas might be copied by purely profit-motivated vendors in the same business. "Hadn`t it been for the love of what we do, we would`ve quit the business long time ago," Pawan admits. Fifteen years later, times have certainly changed but the eagerness to pursue what has been their passion has multiplied too. The Himalayan Map house has some of the most detailed and interesting maps you will ever see and their store is definitely worth a visit for trekkers and non-trekkers both. [△](#)

For more info:

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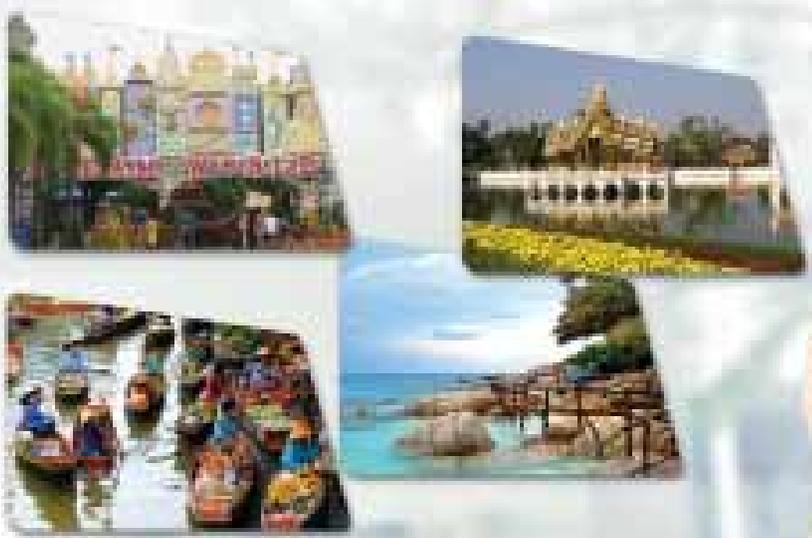
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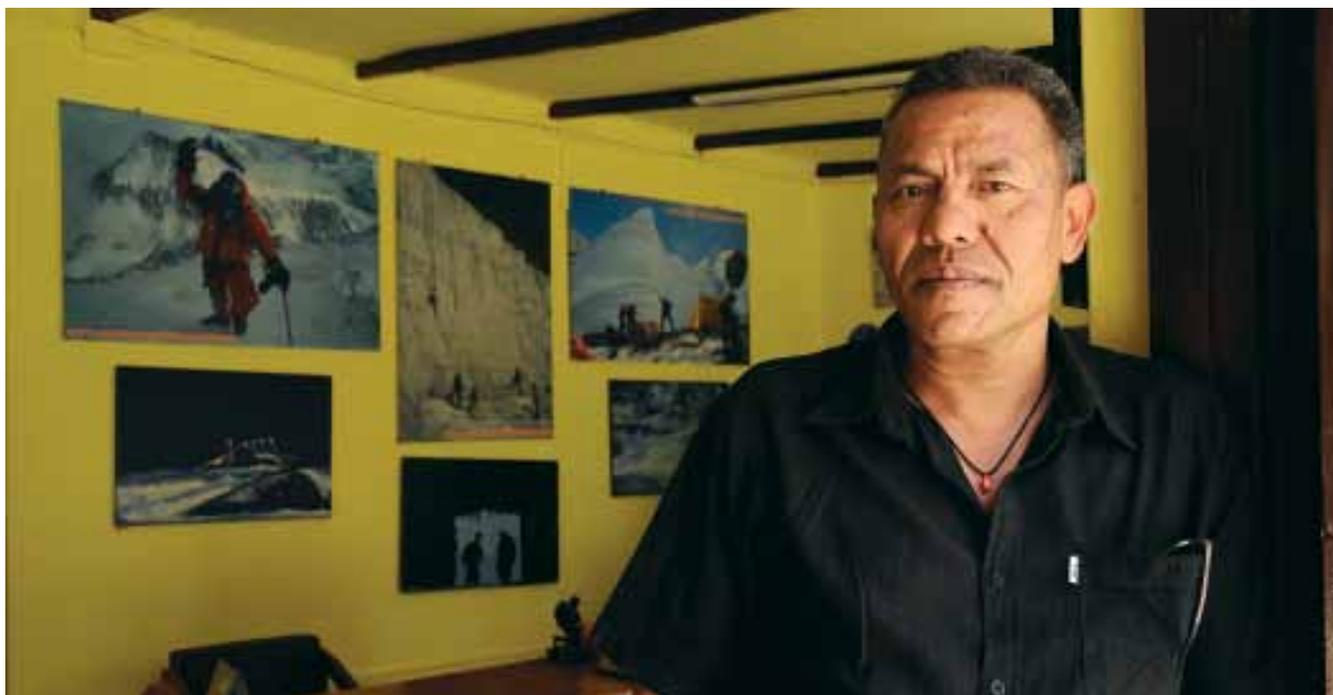
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A Permanent Job

The President of the Trekker Agencies' Association of Nepal wants to make Nepal a more affordable tourist destination

Text By KAPIL BISHT



Thapa wants to improve things for everyone involved in the tourism industry

Mahendra Singh Thapa, the President of the Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal (TAAN), got into the tourism industry as a guide. He came to Kathmandu from his home district of Solukhumbu thirty years ago. He had just passed the SLC examinations, and he enrolled in a college in Kathmandu. But he soon found himself guiding foreigners on treks during the Dashain holidays. "I had friends from Solukhumbu whose relatives owned travel agencies. They would ask me to take groups for treks to Solukhumbu," says Thapa.

But treks were a seasonal thing. Thapa needed a permanent job. Actually it was his wife who pushed him to get a permanent job. "My wife kept telling me that working as a guide for a few months of the year would not be enough to survive. Around the same time, a vacancy announcement appeared in the Gorkhapatra," says Thapa. Tiger Tops were looking for someone to work

as a rafting guide. Thapa applied and got the job.

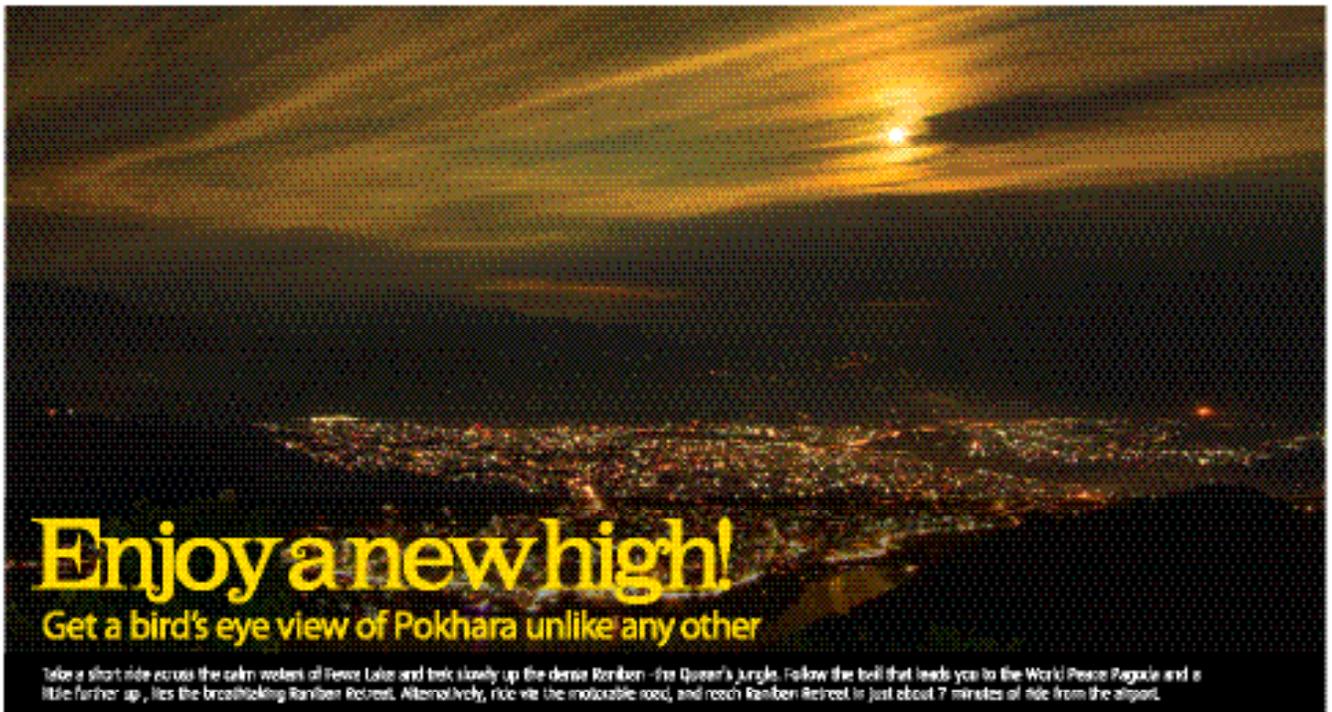
Thapa worked for a decade for Tiger Tops. During this period he also worked in the United States and Europe as a rafting guide. In 1992, he started his own rafting company, Equator Expeditions. His company enjoyed great success and became, according to him, one of the best amongst the 80 rafting companies operating in Nepal at the time. In 1996, Thapa launched his travel company, Equator Tours and Travels. Thapa was immersed in all things connected to rafting in the 1990s, serving as the President of Nepal Association of Rafting Agents from 1992 to 1995.

Thapa was elected as the President of TAAN in September 2011. His main purpose in this position he says is to make the Everest and the Annapurna regions more affordable for porters. "We have designed shelters for porters. We will run a mess in these shelters, where porters will be able to eat at low rates," he says.

In some places in these regions a porter has to pay 300 rupees for a meal. Thapa plans to offer meals at half that rate.

As a former guide Thapa knows numerous trekking routes. He also knows how once serene and quiet trails have been ruined by newly-built roads. "We [TAAN] will open new trekking routes soon. We have sent survey teams to the Taplejung and Gorkha districts to map new trekking routes," he said.

What irks Thapa most is the high amounts of money needed to trek in Nepal. "India, Pakistan, and Tibet are our main competitors in the tourism world. We are more expensive than them," he says. One reason for this, he believes, is the restriction placed on entry to certain areas for tourists. "A tourist can spend a month in Tibet with a 1000 dollars. To trek in Mustang, he would need 2,500 dollars," he says. Thapa has been urging the government to open the restricted areas of Nepal. He is also trying to get the government to benchmark prices in the tourism industry. △



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Bhumdi

Escape from the city to Bhumdi, a day's hike from Pokhara and experience typical Nepali village life.

Text & Photos By SURAJ RATNA SHAKYA



On a clear day, one can see the whole range of the Himalayas from here

As a Kathmandu local, I rarely get a chance to stay in a village. So when my friend asked me if I could accompany her to Bhumdi, her village, I was more than excited. I have been to a couple of villages during some of my treks but have always stayed in lodges but this one was different, as I would be staying at her place.

The journey started from Pokhara at five in the evening. Getting a seat on the bus proved to be a challenge with locals 'reserving' seats with whatever they could find - a small plastic bag, a wrapper. The local children climbed up on the roof of the bus while everyone else inside seemed to know each other. My friend was suddenly flooded with questions and greetings after someone recognized her. For me, the bus itself resembled a village, with most people related in some way to each other.

The ride was smooth until the bus turned into the winding hills after Khadekhola. While my friend was busy giving updates on her life in Kathmandu to her new relatives, a person next to me started up a conversation. Once he came to know I was visiting for the first time, he told me that people from Bhumdi and nearby villages commute early in the morning to Pokhara to sell vegetables and return in the evening after buying food and other daily commodities. His voice took on a serious tone when he told me about the young generation being keen on leaving the village to go abroad or to the city. The only response I had was to nod my head. As his stop approached, he picked up bag, shook hands with me, and bid me farewell. With each stop, I noticed that the bus driver and his assistant changed roles, worrying but also re-assuring that both knew how to drive.

Finally, we reached Bhumdi after an hour. It was already dark and we could hear the sounds of the nocturnal insects. We were welcomed by my friend's Aathey (father's sister in law) who had been waiting for us. There was no light on the road so we reached her place, navigating the darkness. Later that night, my friend's Bhuthey (father's brother) joined us and treated us to some great sukuti (buff jerky) and hot Paa, homemade liquor, which helped to digest all the heavy food we had for dinner.

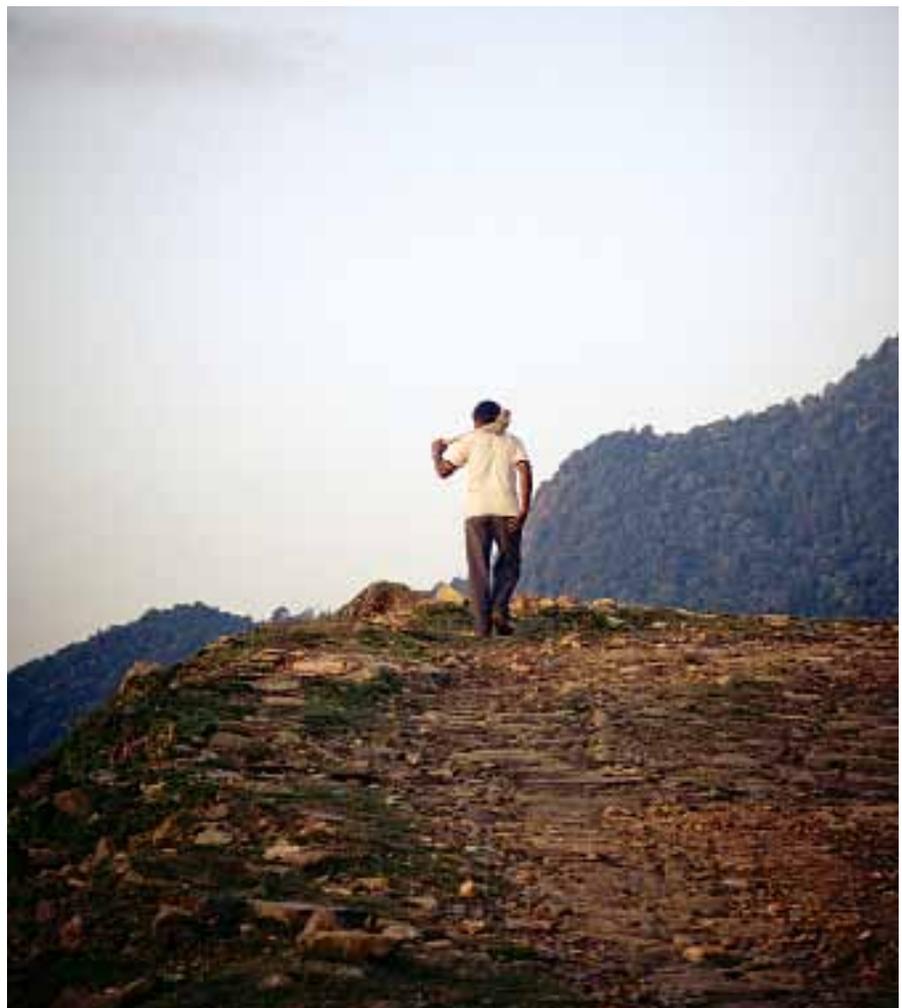
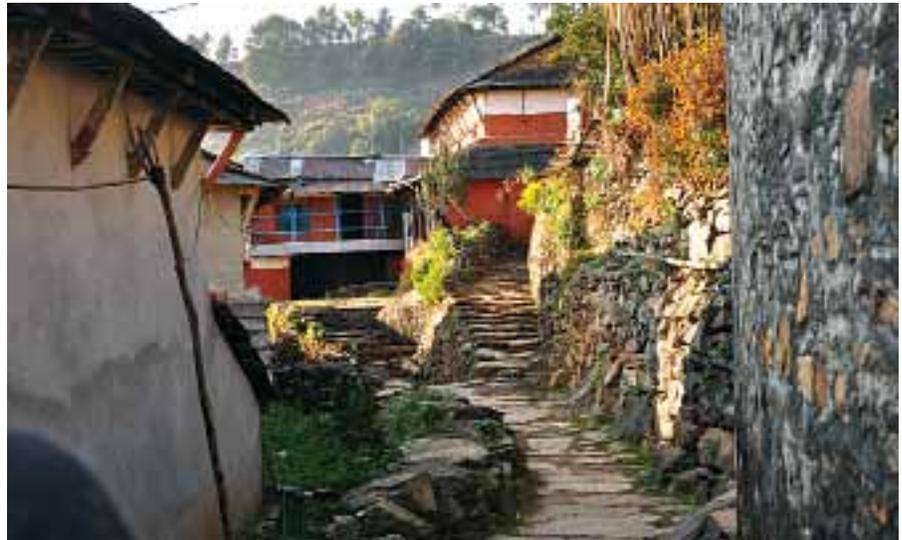
The people in Bhumdi wake up early. At about 4 am, the locals were going about with their morning chores. As the sun rose, aathey made us some black tea, which I sipped while looking at the scenery and the house. It was almost like what I had imagined - a village house with a scenic view, stone paved paths in front, abundant clean water and a stable for the family's buffaloes. After having

sel roti for breakfast, we took a stroll around the village. A quiet and peaceful place, Bhumdi has an awesome view of the Macchapuchhre peak and the adjoining hills and forests.

After lunch, we went to see a farm near the village. It was a short hike with fresh air blowing which made me realize what I was missing in Kathmandu. Young children followed us, some talking in English and pretending to be our guides. Like most children, they were eager to be photographed and changed poses with every shot I took of them. When we got the farm, people were already planning millet in the fields. After spending some time at the farm and chatting with the locals, we headed back to the house. That evening we spent talking about the village itself. Aathy shared her dream to see the village develop as a great tourist destination for domestic and international tourists who could experience typical village life through home stay programs. I agreed. Bhumdi with its close proximity to Pokhara and its charming slow-paced lifestyle and natural beauty would be a great draw if marketed well.

There was a big celebration the next day in the village. The 'bhai khalak' was organizing a big festivity for the women of the community. An annual event, it is an opportunity for those living away from the village to come together and celebrate. The crux of the festivity is the village men preparing food for the womenfolk. With song and dance, lots of snacks and tea throughout the day, the men continued to prepare food in big pots while the women adorned themselves with traditional Gurung attire and ornaments.

The official celebration began around 10 in the morning with the announcement of the introduction and importance of the gathering. The event also marked the achievements



Top: The locals' houses are connected with charming stone-paved paths
Bottom: Work starts very early in Bhumdi

of the village `s youth. My friend was honored for completing her Master `s Degree, while others for completing high school. Soon there was Solti-Solti dance followed by a group dance.

The next day we got ready to hike down to Pokhara. Locals came to wish us goodbye and good luck and packed our bags with gifts of fresh vegetables. It was just two days but I already felt like a part of the family. Soon we were on a downhill, stone paved path. Fit for a downhill bike ride, the trail led us to numerous terraced farms and chautaris (resting stops under trees) where we rested for a while to enjoy the view. Confused at a point, we were guided back on track by local children bathing their buffalos nearby. After about forty-five minutes, we could see the road and hear its many sounds. Soon enough we reached the main road, from where we took a bus back to Pokhara. Reaching the city, I reminisced about my short but wonderful time in Bhumdi. I would recommend anyone to take a one-day hike there to get away from the city. 

"I would recommend anyone to take a one-day hike there to get away from the city. "



Top: Three generations: My friend (left) talking with *aathey* (right) and a relative
Bottom: Even buffaloes need to cool down!



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FOR HOUSEHOLD STAFF

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DATE: 24th June 2012

TIME: 1.00 pm to 5.00 pm

VENUE: Maharajgunj

FEE: Rs. 1,200

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5. Chocolate pudding

DATE: 29th July 2012

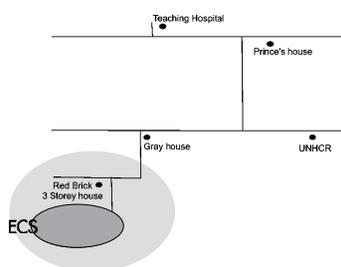
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VENUE: Maharajgunj

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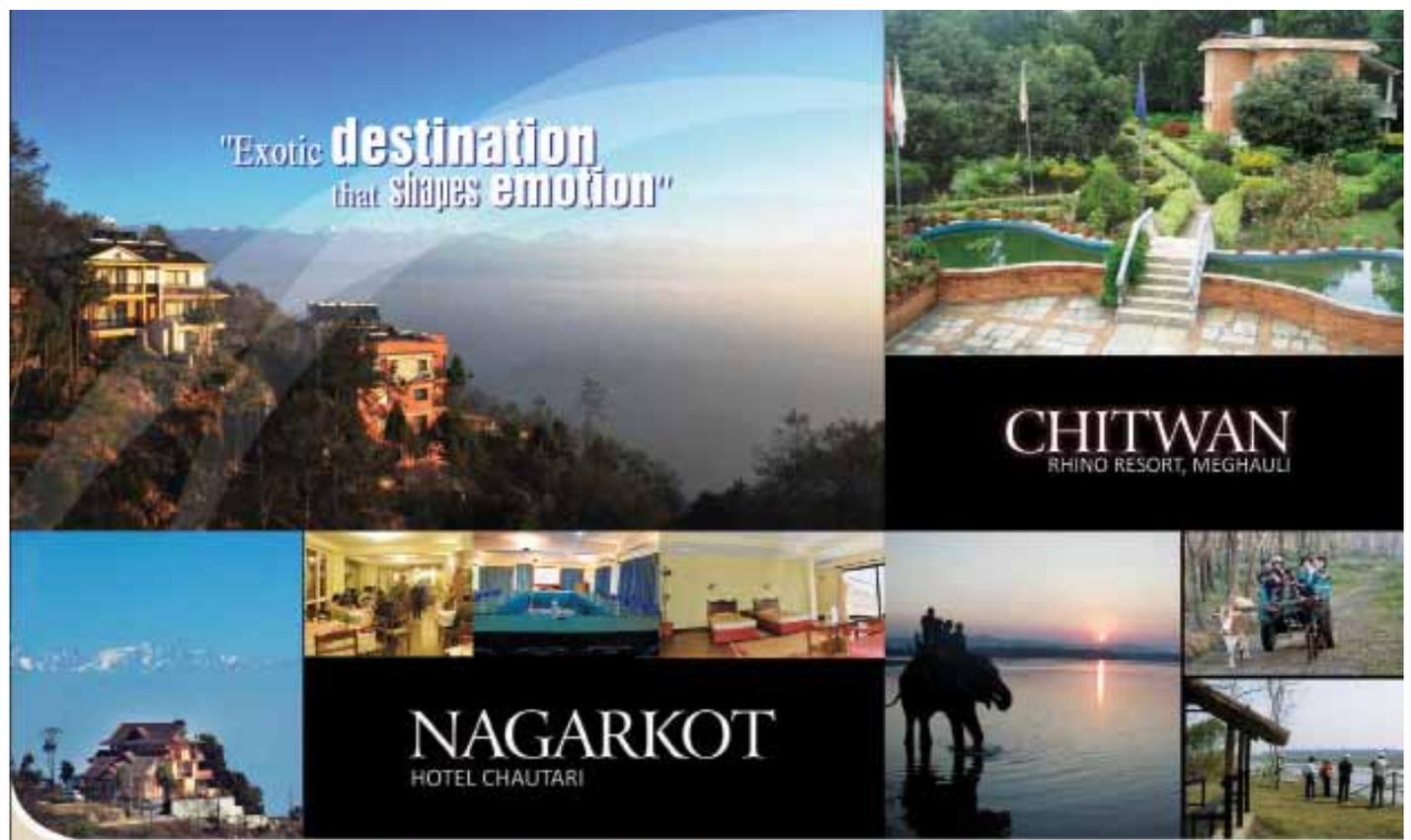
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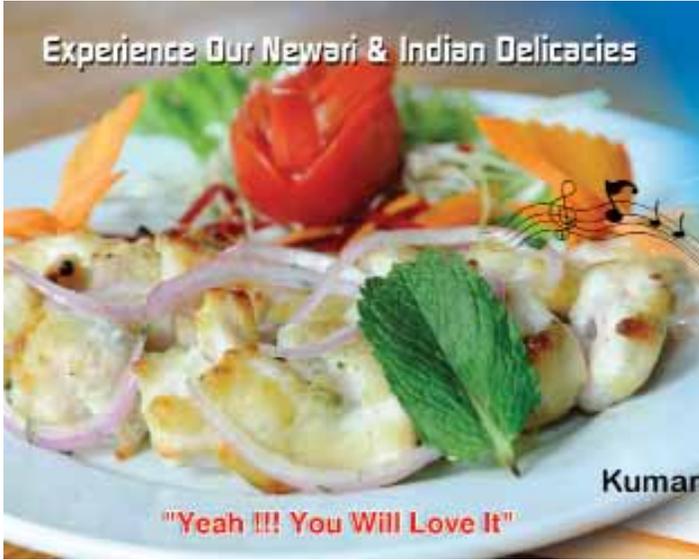
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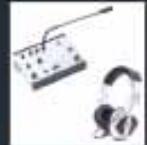
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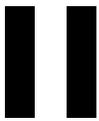
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Putting life (and writing) on pause

The right word may be effective, but no word was ever as effective as a rightly-timed pause. (Mark Twain)

Text By DON MESSERSCHMIDT



CAESURA IN POETRY



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ELLIPSE IN PROSE



'THE PAUSE THAT REFRESHES'

Mark Twain (the pseudonym of Samuel Clemens, 1835-1910), was a wise and popular humorist, essayist, lecturer and author. He wrote *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, and a delightful travel book called *The Innocents Abroad*. His emphasis above, on a "rightly-timed pause", literally gives me pause..., time to ponder its significance in writing, poetry, music and life; and in Nepali.

In all languages 'to pause' is to stop momentarily to suspend voice or action, time to think something through, or ponder a joke, or get out from under a deep thought or a heavy back load. In Nepali it's *bisraam* or *bisraanti*, meaning 'rest, ease, repose, peace of mind, relaxation, stop'. Or *thaaminu*, 'to come to a halt'. As *man thaaminu*, it means 'to be satisfied', like the old slogan promoting a sip of Coca-Cola® as 'The pause that refreshes'. Out on the trail your porter may pause - *bhaari bisauné* - 'to put down the load' and take a rest (and sip a coke?).

The world around, when advocates and lawyers defend the innocence of their client in a court of law they may insert a well-timed pause for special effect. **Example:** *The courtroom was quiet. The jury was alert. Then, after a dramatic pause, the lawyer completed her summation.*

Comedians often use a well-timed pause for special effect. A humorist's pause may have a strong impact on a

joke's effect, even altering its meaning. The next time you watch the famed comedians, Shrestha and Acharya, on Nepali TV, listen for their use of the comical pause.

Script writers sometimes insert a 'beat' (in parenthesis), telling the reader where to pause. For example, one of the standard jokes of Victor Borge, the popular Danish-American comedian, is an attempt to explain the function of the three pedals under a grand piano. His script writer inserted a 'beat' and two ellipses together:

"The pedal in the middle is there to separate the other

two pedals...(beat)...which could be a problem for those

of you who have three feet."

A 'pregnant pause' is what we sometimes call the brief suspension of voice for special effect. It's a metaphor quite literally filled with meaning, like an about-to-be-born offspring. A pregnant pause brings the listener to the edge of his seat waiting to hear what comes next...

In prose writing we use an ellipse, those three little dots that sometimes pepper the written page... If used too frequently, you'll have encountered an ellipsophile - one who suffers from ellipsophilia...

It is also common to mark a significant pause in poetry by inserting parallel lines called a caesura, as in this snippet of a poem by Alexander Pope:

To err is human; || to forgive, divine.

And here, from the first lines of Pope's 'An Essay on Man':

Know then thyself ||, presume not God to scan;

The proper study of Mankind || is Man.

Those 'double pipes' or 'train tracks', as the caesura is sometimes called, tell you to stop briefly, before completing the line. They've been added only to indicate the position of the audible pause; they are not in Pope's original.

And, not least, there's the fermata in music - a dot under a wide arch placed over a note, chord or rest, symbolizing a pause, or hold. In this example, it tells the performer to sustain the quarter-note for longer than its normal value, at the performer's discretion. Sometimes, for more emphasis, the word *lunga* (short for *lunga pause*, or 'long pause' in Italian) is printed above the fermata symbol.

And now... || ...back to Mark Twain for the final word. The pause, he concludes, is -

That impressive silence, that eloquent silence, that geometrically progressive silence which often achieves a desired effect where no combination of words howsoever felicitous could accomplish it. ◊



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Text By ANIL CHITRAKAR

Our heritage consists of a rich oral tradition that captures fascinating stories that seem to be relevant for all generations. At times like this, stories that highlight the importance of unity must be retold again and again till we are heard. The Pancha Tantra and Jataka stories are great sources for these insightful tales that allow us to convey deep messages without hurting people's ego. There is a lot of ego around these days.

The first story is of a group of young boys who go to the "wise man" to ask for help to settle their dispute. After listening to them, the "wise

man" picks up a stick and asks them to break it. This is easily achieved. He then takes a whole bunch of sticks, holds them in a bundle and then asks the boys to break it. This time as much as they try, the bundle of sticks would not break. The boys thank the "wise man" and leave having learnt a valuable lesson.

The second is a story about a colony of frogs that used to live in a water hole. The leader is really tired of all the infighting and quarrels that he has to resolve all the time. Seeing how frustrated the frog leader was, a snake that lived nearby made a proposal, "You point out the ones that give you trouble and I will take care of them." The frog leader lives in peace for a while as the snake "took care" of the trouble makers. As the story goes, the frog population dwindled to a point where he was alone. The snake finally ate him up as well.

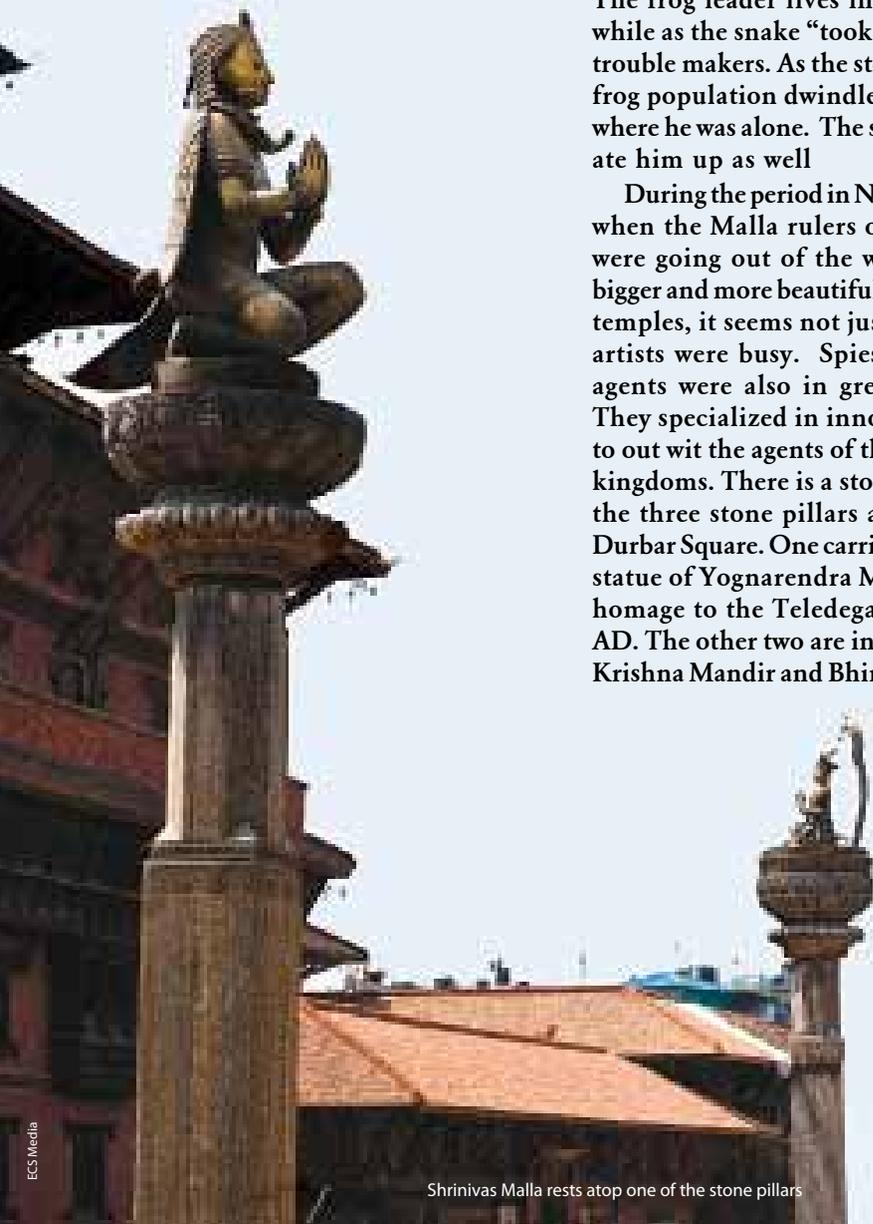
During the period in Nepali history when the Malla rulers of the valley were going out of the way to build bigger and more beautiful palaces and temples, it seems not just kings and artists were busy. Spies and secret agents were also in great demand. They specialized in innovative ways to outwit the agents of the other city kingdoms. There is a story related to the three stone pillars at the Patan Durbar Square. One carries the gilded statue of Yognarendra Malla paying homage to the Teledega dated 1694 AD. The other two are in front of the Krishna Mandir and Bhimsen temple



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just a few meters away. As the story goes, the three pillars were actually one tall pillar and was so magnificent it was the talk of the kingdom. Something had to be done about it; and so an agent was hired whose sole job was to go to Patan each day and put his ears to the stone pillar, tap it with his knuckles and listen carefully.

This routine was repeated each day. The people and King began to slowly take notice of this daily routine and one day the king ordered the 'agent' to be caught and brought into the palace. In response to the king's query as to why he came each day to tap the pillar and listen, the 'agent' said he was really concerned as a stone 'expert' that the pillar was rotting on the inside and did not want to see any accident that would discredit the great king's name. The king did not want the pillar to fall and hurt anyone either. He consulted his "advisors" and decided to cut it into three pieces. The valley kingdoms fell to the Gorkhals in 1769. △



Shrinivas Malla rests atop one of the stone pillars



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