

# ECS NEPAL

THE NEPALI WAY

ECS NEPAL  
www.ecs.com.np  
ISSN 1729-2751  
Live Adventure, Explore Nepal / Pushing to the rescue / Wheels on the hills / In flesh and feathers / House of the holy



## Live Adventure, Explore Nepal

The Himalayan Shangri-la's transformation into a world class adventure sports hub is no secret. Come shed your inhibitions, come live adventure.

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### 74 IN FLESH AND FEATHERS

A place of recreation and learning, Kathmandu's National History Museum's extensive display is a treat for everyone.

### 86 HOUSE OF THE HOLY

From ornately carved windows to historic caityas, the Kumari spends her time as a living goddess in a house worthy of her legend.

### 94 WEAVING LIVES TOGETHER

A carpet museum in Germany has become a center that documents the lives and lifestyles of the everyman from around the world.

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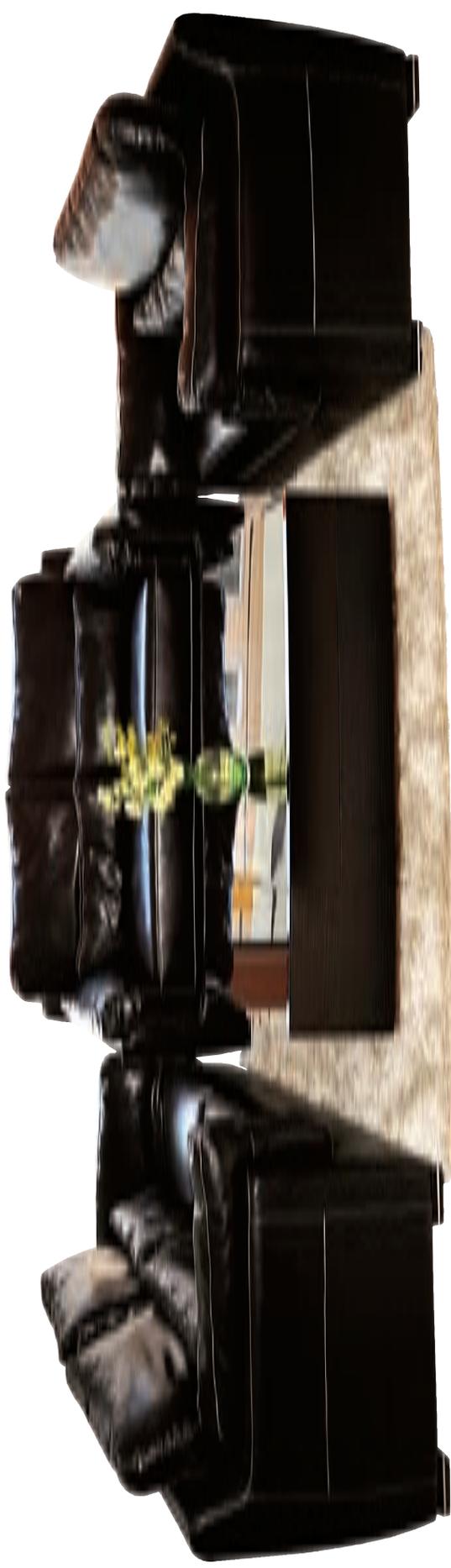
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# ECS NEPAL . JULY . 2011

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COVER STORY

## 42 LIVE ADVENTURE, EXPLORE NEPAL

Adventure sports in Nepal, previously synonymous to trekking, has now expanded into a full-fledged industry offering adventure junkies every kind of rush.

By Utsav Shakya

FEATURES

### 68 RUSHING TO THE RESCUE

From rescuing tigers to lending a helping hand in war-torn Iraq, USAID Mission Director Dr. Kevin Rushing leads a colorful life.

By Yukta Bajracharya

### 72 WHEELS ON THE HILLS

Ten years down the line and after the combined efforts of a group of biking enthusiasts, mountain biking is finally catching on.

By Peter Stewart

### 76 IN FLESH AND FEATHERS

Looking back into Nepal's rich wilderness and bio-diversity.

By Kapil Bishit

### 82 HOUSE OF THE HOLY

The history and design of the house where Nepal's living goddess Kumari resides, is befitting of her importance in Nepalese culture.

By Abhas D. Rajopadhyaya



#### ON THE COVER

ECS Nepal would like to thank Mr. Chandra Ale of Initiative Outdoor - Outdoor Leadership School for graciously assisting us with the cover photo shoot.

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## ECS REGULARS

20 EDITORIAL

120 SPILLED INK

122 HERITAGE TALE

## NOTICE BOARD

22 MARKET

24 EVENT

28 IN THE GALLERY

## LIVING IN NEPAL

30 PLACE: A hint of aroma and much more

32 PEOPLE: Bringing gypsy music to nepal

34 FOOD: Aalu bodi tarkari tama lai

36 ART: Carved in time

38 ON THE SPOT: Triggering spiritual revolution

40 PAGETURNER: Out here in kathmandu

## CRAFT

94 FEATURE: Weaving life together

98 PERSON OF THE MONTH: Damber's factory

100 SHOP REVIEW: Urban neutral

## TRAVEL

102 PEOPLE: Downhill, with pace

104 FEATURE: Soaring over the peaks

108 GEAR OF THE MONTH: Running shoes

110 PLACE OF THE MONTH: Mentoring



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30



ECS Media

94



Photo by: Central Museum, Tonnemann

104



Photo by: Raj Kaula



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ECS Nepal Magazine, Kupondole, Lalitpur, Nepal (Regd. 113/059-060). Tel: 5011571, 5011639 Website: www.ecs.com.np  
No. 119 ■ JULY 2011

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**ECS**  
MEDIA

Color Separation: CTP Nepal Pvt. Ltd. HATTIBAN, 525.0466/68 | Printing: JAGADAMBA PRESS, HATTIBAN, 525.0017/18/19 | Distributor: RB News

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EACH ISSUE: Rs. 100.00 in Nepal, ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION IN NEPAL: Rs 900.00 (For 12 issues). Send all subscription request to ECS NEPAL Magazine, E-mail: subscription@ecs.com.np, website: www.ecs.com.np



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42



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## NEPAL UNITES

The monsoon season of 2011 is going to be remembered in Nepali history for many things. It is the season when most Nepalis will be planting rice which will ensure that everyone is fed for the next one year. The Nepali people are also looking forward to seeing the draft constitution that will determine the future destiny of this country that has seen so much suffering over the years. This monsoon, the world is also witnessing the Nepali people coming together, uniting for the common good. This monsoon is going to be special because Nepal will have to unite to secure our future food supply. As the shortage of labor rises due to large migration off the farms and out of the country, Nepalis will have to unite to make sure rice is planted on all available land. Food security is going to be a mission for which Nepal needs to unite.

We need to unite because we need a constitution and lasting peace. We shall unite because we know that there is no other way to build a peaceful and prosperous country. Once we unite, all the challenges we face will be manageable, small enough to tackle, even insignificant. First we have to unite. This issue of ECS focuses as the natural sites of Nepal that offer unlimited opportunities for the outdoor and adventure lovers from Nepal and from across the globe. Whether you like to be on your mountain bike, or to climb mountains; whether you are excited about white water rafting or canoeing; whether you like rock climbing or kayaking; Nepal is the place to be. Its natural endowment is second to none when it comes to adventure sports.

In this great destination, we need peace; and the only way to get to peace is to have a constitution so that we can move on to nation building. For that to happen, we shall have to unite. Adventure

sport is a perfect means to help good teams to become better – all the time. These sports are done in teams and the members of the team must trust each other in order to enjoy the sports. If the trust is broken, accidents do happen. No one wants that to happen. Everyone wants to enjoy the game, to compete even with oneself, and to win. This is what teamwork is all about.

A divided team gets nowhere. There is anger and frustration all around and people then begin the blame game. They ultimately become indifferent. The challenges Nepal faces today are no different than the challenges posed to the adventure sports lover. As people in teams become good at solving problems, they are then willing to take up even bigger challenges. Nepalis have proven in the past that they can take on challenges. Whether it is to climb Sagarmatha or to raft down the world's greatest rivers, we are second to none. The key is, it must be team work.

Nepal's topography is often projected in the development circles as a near impossible place to work in, let alone build and manage infrastructures. The same Nepal however is the best in the world for the adventure sports lover. We all need to think outside the box we are in to move ahead and progress. Whatever you do in the coming days, we hope you make some time for the Nepali way.

Anil Chitrakar  
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## MARKET

### Celebrating Goodness



Deriving exotic culinary inspirations from the heart of Italy, Pizza Hut, Kathmandu has launched an additional menu 'Tuscani Singles' to their existing collection of Pan, Stuffed Crust and Pizza Mia on 16 May. With their signature hand-stretched thin crust and unique gourmet toppings, Pizza Hut is back on the news to titillate our taste buds all over again.

Careful not to bore customers with the same spices and recipes, Vishnu

Reddy – Country Manager for Pizza Hut Nepal, says that Tuscani Singles is an exciting option for Kathmanduites and that flavorful and exotic ingredients like parmesan cheese, pesto sauce, zucchini and basil will certainly bring back customers for seconds. Confident that Tuscani Singles will be a hit amongst customers, Reddy also reveals that the franchise will come up with more outlets in and around the valley in the next few years. (Chhoksum WP Bista)

### Making a Mart

The closure of Bluebird Departmental Store in November was disappointing for many. The country's first department store which started in 1985 was shut for almost three months. On 17 May, it made a comeback with a bang with a new name – Bluebird Mart. Situated on the top floor of Bluebird Mall, the store replaces the previous food court. Much larger and more attractive than the food court premises before, the Mart is spread over 8,700 sq ft. According to Arjun Bhandari, MD of Bluebird Mart, the complex will be catering to every need of the customer, from a car wash to clothes. Bhandari says that they plan to make



everything available under one roof. The complex will soon have KFC and Pizza Hut outlets along with Yellow Chili restaurant by July. (Mannat Shrestha)

### Urban chic

Running around town searching for the best designs to revamp your interiors? Urban Design, a retail furniture store that offers customized design solutions for home opens 6 May. Sunaina Saraf and Rishi Saraf, interior designers and the people behind Kathmandu's first home accessory store Casa are presenting their collection for Urban Design.

Urban Design, spread over 2400 square feet, offers personalized services like complete makeover and interior solutions on turn key basis. The collection includes the combination of unusual elements like mother of pearl and travertine with all types of veneer. The materials used in creating the designs set them apart from the obvious and predictable. (Anshu Khadka)

### Rolling in class



Joshi Automobiles has launched Ssangyong Korando C200 in the Nepali market. The SUV has been developed with an in-depth understanding of the elements of time, human and space. Korando is a model that has led Korea's SUV history and is listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as Korea's longest surviving brand. A modern and stylish SUV which depicts a new interpretation of dynamic urban chic SUV, Korando comes with a 1988 cc engine. Designed by the celebrated Italian Automobile designer Giorgetto Giugiaro, the exterior is perfected by aggressive graphic elements that represent Ssangyong's focus on expressing elegance in power. (Anshu Khadka)

## WILD EARTH PRESENTS TREKKER'S KIT

Wild Earth, producer of fine handcrafted Himalayan herbal products like herbal soaps, pillows, essential and massage oils launched its first trekker's kit in May 2011. Many of Wild Earth's high quality ingredients are sourced from the Himalayas itself, lending crucial support in sustaining rural livelihoods and income generation. The products are mostly handcrafted by Nepali women.

The Wild Earth's Trek Kit provides practical and portable body care essentials for healthy skin. This kit is made of 100% natural, biodegradable and eco-friendly ingredients. The

manufacturers have selected beneficial traveling companions such as jungle citronella - a natural insect repellent, mint for cooling and soothing a tired body and mind, mountain cedar wood for calming and rejuvenating your skin and lavender for relaxing and reviving your mind and body processes.

The Trek Kit offers a wide variety of products that come for between NRs. 225 and NRs. 1500. "Be a responsible traveler and take care of your body in one small bag," say the people behind Wild Earth. (Nimma Adhikari)

## THE HERITAGE KITCHEN & BAR



Right at the entrance to The Heritage Kitchen & Bar, your mind is set on a cultural rollercoaster: a temple in the courtyard, the slate staircase, traditional Nepali-style brick facade, reclaimed wooden doors and windows – the arcade owners' personal collection, overhanging lamps, clay lampshades, *thekis* and the hanged *taulos*.

The Heritage, as it will soon and surely be known as is located at Thamel's Narsingh Chowk on the top floor of Deva's Arcade. The fine dining restaurant offers its diners delectable Continental and Nepali cuisine along with a wide range of creative cocktails, wine and the choice to sip some Newari liquor - *aila*. Outdoorsy people will get to enjoy their meals on the terrace seating while non-smokers will surely appreciate the non-smoking dining area. If your style is more refined, some exquisite dining and drinks later at the

cozy, ambience of the bar should suit your tastes.

Heritage's kitchen will prepare you anything from a simple Nepali Thali to mouth-watering Kyoto Steak, Rainbow Trout Lemon Butter Sauce and Grilled Norwegian Salmon Steak. Add to your weekends with the outdoor BBQs and bring the mercury down a notch with great cocktails. Walk-ins and reservations are both welcome. (Nimma Adhikari)

### CORRIGENDUM

The photograph accompanying the article "TSUM VALLEY" by Deana Zabaldo, in the April 2011 issue is not that of Deane Zabaldo but Daniel Collins. The article would be re-published in our future issue along with the correct Tsum valley photographs taken by the writer herself. We regret the error, and any inconvenience that might have caused our readers or the concerned writers and photographers.



## Conferring on philosophies

The talk program organized by Fulbright Forum on two different Buddhist philosophies and Newar Buddhism was both informative and interesting. The program was hosted by current Fulbright students who discussed and shared information on the topic of their research. On 18 May, Constance E Kassor and Nicholas P Bomarito, both Fulbright students of philosophy elaborated on their topics of research, "The Suppression and Resurgence of Gorampa's Philosophy" and "Bile and Bodhisattvas: Shantideva on justified anger" respectively.

On 20 May, Kerry Lucinda Brown, an art history PhD candidate, made



a presentation on the symbolism of Dipankara Buddha in 'Dana' or gift giving festivals in Newar Buddhism. With the help of pictures and their underlying stories, she explained how basic traits of Buddhism had been followed by the Newar Buddhists through festivals and rituals. (Nimisha Karki)

## Fun in the fields



community but also promises a lot of fun. The planting will take place in the pristine location of Balthali in the Kathmandu Valley Cultural Trekking Trail (KVCTT).

The objective of this event is to promote agro-tourism and to inform the wider public about the agricultural practices in Nepal. It could be a captivating experience for a lot of participants to see that century old techniques are still being employed by the farmers. The participants will have no dull moments as there will be a lot to be cherished, from folk songs to dancing and river bathing. (Suraj Raj Karki)

To celebrate Nepal Tourism Year 2011, Nepal Environment and Tourism Initiative Foundation (NETIF) has come up with an event that promotes agricultural practices in Nepal. The rice planting event not only boosts the socio-economic aspects of the

## Taboche in snow

The Patan museum premises hosted an exhibition of unique shots of Mt. Everest as captured by Jeff Botz. These portraits also make up the first and most comprehensive photo survey of the world's tallest Himalayan range. Using high-resolution images, Botz's images display Everest's

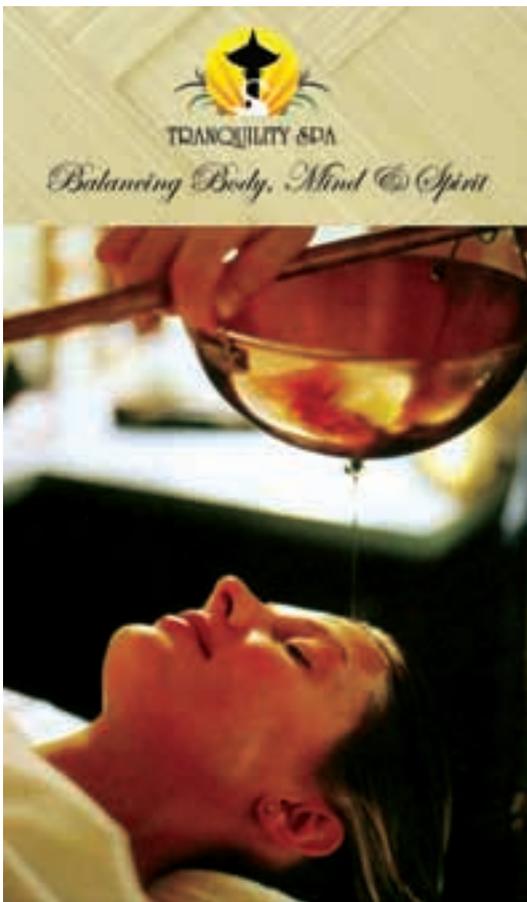
grandiose features that might go unnoticed in lower resolution images.

Jeff Botz stresses on his firm principle of "Everest Not Everest" which is also the title of his proposed book. He justifies the title by saying that Everest should be recognized as Sagarmatha and Quomolangma so as to validate the cultural connection of the two hosts, Nepal as a nation and Tibet as a sovereign Nation. (Suraj Raj Karki)



### CORRIGENDUM

Photo credits for the adjoining photograph goes to Wildlife Conservation Nepal (WCN). ECS Nepal regrets the error deeply.



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# what's on

things to do this month

## Fashion And Music Fest



Date: 1 July (Friday)  
Time: 6 pm to 11:30 pm  
Venue: 1905, Kantipath  
9849565905, 9806711768

The New Episode is organizing a fashion and music fiesta to launch the company. The fashion show will display the latest and most extravagant summer designs by new designers. There will also be live music with Bijay Gurung (Kalind Band), The Shadows (unplugged) and the new voice in the town Ciris Thapa. The after party will have DJ Flow (Winner of War of Djs 2010) and DJ Keeran (Winner of War of Djs 2009).

Ticket: Rs. 600 (includes a complimentary drink)

### Career Fair- Nepal

Opening Date: 8 July (Friday)  
Closing Date: 9 July (Saturday)  
Time: 12 noon onwards  
Venue: Bhrikuti Mandap exhibition hall.

Career fair is the platform for both organizers and interested candidates to interact with each other. This is the best way to obtain information regarding career opportunities in various fields ranging from Advertising, Animation, Banking, Bio Technology, Computer Training, Engineering, Fashion Designing, Film Technology, Finance, Graphic Designing, Hospitality and Travel, Information Technology, Insurance,

Interior Designing, Law, Management, Mass Communication to Medicine and Research from professionals themselves.

### Adventure De' Monsoon Mania

Opening Date: 8 July (Friday)  
Closing Date: 9 July (Saturday)  
Time: 6:30am  
Venue: Royal Beach Camp  
9851098410, 9841893918

"Country Road 4 -Hamro Soach" in-association with Himalayan Enchanter Treks & Expedition is proud to present "Adventure De' Monsoon Mania", a beach party along with some adventurous activities. It is a two day fun trip that includes dace party, Rafting on Trishuli and other fun beach games like volleyball.

Typical Nepali games like: Guchha, Chungi, Dandibiyo, Kabbaddi and club games like beer, wine, cocktail and tequila drinking competition will surely steak the evening. There will also be bingo and the winners will receive either a three days Pokhara trip by flight or Mountain flight ticket for couple. The beach party at night will feature DJ Cool on the music; also there will be a live performance by the Saayaas Band. Groups have been separated for rafters and non rafters and programmes have been scheduled accordingly.

Cost: NRS 4500 (With Rafting, Bus Departure at 6:30 AM and 9:00 AM)  
NRS 3500 (Without Rafting, Bus Departure at 2:00 PM)

### Music and Fashion Grind

Date: 9 July (Saturday)  
Time: 2 pm to 10 pm  
Venue: Hotel Shahanshah Poolside  
Contact: 9803157605, 9851050919

Future Sound Records presents "Music & Fashion The Grind". Groove into the latest club sounds with the best DJs in town. The event features DJ Rupesh, DJ Shanks, DJ Ucase, DJ Hypnotic Brownboy, DJ Niraj and DJ Rajeev.

Cost: Rs 1000 (includes 2 shot of drink)  
Free Entrance for ladies

### FunkyFresh E.L.E.M.E.N.T.S

Opening Date: 23 July (Saturday)  
Closing Date: 30 July (Saturday)  
Time: 10 am to 6 pm  
Venue: Sattya Media Arts Collective in Jawalakhel (behind the zoo) and the Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory

Sattya Media Arts Collective is organizing "Funky Fresh E.L.E.M.E.N.T.S" a positive Youth Empowerment program for young Hip-Hop enthusiasts above the age of 13 years. Join to learn the tricks and tools of the trade to harness the power and responsibility of becoming conscious independent Hip-hop artists and leaders of a positive Hip-hop community that breathes inspiration. Come to fully engage in the Arts of: Freestyles and Rhyme, DJ'ing, Beatboxing, Graffiti, Bboy'ing, Popping, Beatmaking and Slam Poetry. Also get a chance to perform at a public showcase with all the teachers at the Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory. To attend submit an application form before the 21 July. Forms can be downloaded on the FunkyFresh blog at <http://FunkyFreshMovement.wordpress.com>.

Cost: 1000 (Scholarships available)

## FAIR AND EXPO

### Education India

Date: 1 July (Friday)  
Time: 11 am  
Venue: The Annapurna Hotel

"Destination India 2011", an educational expo is being held at the Annapurna hotel. This is the only Indian Expo in Nepal that has been authorized by the Indian government. Visit to get authentic and detailed information about education and universities in India.

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## Art That Speaks

The art on the canvases came to life on 5 May at Siddhartha Art Gallery in Baber Mahal Revisited. The Gallery displayed a series of paintings titled "Stories from the Locality" by Hitman Gurung and "Fantasized Idea" by Laxman Karmacharya, the recipients of the prestigious Australian Himalayan Foundation Art Award Program 2011.

The Australian Himalayan Foundation Art Award had its successful inaugural exhibition in April 2010. The Foundation provides financial support for emerging artists for a year and in return, the artists donate one major and the other minor artwork to the Foundation to be auctioned in Australia. The Foundation had also themed the art project as "Fiction-short stories" for the artists.

Artist Hitman Gurung said that his paintings were more of a visual story than



simple brush strokes. "I would prefer to call it a conceptual art. I have tried to reflect social issues like lust for power, pain of widowhood, the disappeared and the likes," said Gurung "these are the real issues but the characters are completely fictional."

On the other hand, Laxman Karmacharya's works were highly influenced by Nepali art and culture. His arts displayed a combination of the cultural and the contemporary predefined symbols, motifs, icons and colors which are used during festivals and auspicious ceremonies.

The exhibition was formally opened by the H. E. Ms Susan Grace, the Australian Ambassador to Nepal. Peter Hillary, Director and Simon Balderstone, Chairman, Australian Himalayan Foundation were the Chief Guests for the art exhibition. (Nimma Adhikari)

## Accidental Art

The 26 th Solo Arupan Paintings (Gaami Period -1) by Senior Artist Ramesh Khanal was the collection of paintings "Accidental painting" as Ramesh Khanal -painter cum writer himself would like to call it. He has exhibited many solo exhibitions of his paintings over the quarter of a century and this one is his 26 th solo exhibition. Event took place at Park Gallery, Pulchowk Lalitpur on 15th May, Sunday.

With his canvases he has produced yet another story. These paintings have become his personal style and a way through to liberate him- he says. He would love to call these paintings sans images or *Bimbabiheen* works. He says, these are the paintings consciously done but its outcome

is accidental. According to him artist don't have the right to describe this art, it is what viewers perceive it as. Viewer's pain, joy and time are embodied in Arupan that he calls gaami which means forward going. He explained it took him three years to complete the collection. He admitted there used to be a time when he turned skeptic if anyone told him, painting takes years and years to complete but now he believes this statement to be true; "In fact painting is nerve complete in itself"-he added. These are figurative paintings yet without figure. Each painting is an image in totality yet never complete in itself.

Mr Mukesh complimented Mr Khanal on his exuberant use of canvases with rich

color fluidity and the style in which he using his brush strokes. Bharat Basnet praised Mr Khanal's work and said he truly respects such art works. He quoted "I am a simple man disappeared amidst the crowd the way art seem to have disappeared in this modernized world". Art is a transformation of culture from one generation to another therefore it is very important to preserve it-said Mr Basnet. Dr Abhi Subedi in his writing described Arupan paintings as an artist's unexplained forms of time-mysterious and in tangible.

The exhibition will continue till 27 th May. Prize for these paintings range from Nrs 4,000 to Nrs 35,000. (Shristi Ale)

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# LIVING IN NEPAL

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PLACE

## A hint of aroma and much more

*Illam is popular among the tourists for a variety of reasons. It has been admired for years now. What makes Illam the place it is today? Culture, nature, a combination of both and much more.*

By PAT KAUBA

Illam has made a place inside the hearts of people as a hill station known for its tea estates. When asked about Illam, a friend of mine showed a picture that was quite different:

“Staring down at a long and steep flight of stairs, I saw a kid escalating through. His father soon followed. I asked the father why both looked so eager to reach the top. I learnt that the stairs of the Temple of Singha-Bahini would fulfil your wishes if you climbed them in a single breath. I thanked their smiling and welcoming faces. Now, when I ask myself if the dad was superstitious, I have no answer. It is just something people do in Illam, of culture that they have learnt.”

Located in eastern Nepal, Illam is known for its pristine environment, lush greenery and sloped tea gardens. It is

the major production ground for export quality tea in Nepal. Kanyam and Fikkal have large tea estates which provide tea to the ever growing tea culture of Nepal. These places are known for their landscapes and are extremely popular among those who visit Illam. Tea that is sent out to different parts of Nepal and other nations from Illam is said to have the aroma of Nepal’s hospitality.

In talking about Nepalese culture and Illam together, there is one important aspect one cannot miss - tea. To some, it is just another beverage. To us, it is a part of our culture. It is something that starts conversations; something we offer to friends and to strangers alike. It is a part of practically every household in Nepal. We did not discover tea. We just learnt to enjoy it and that we do with all our hearts.

Other than tea, Illam is also famous for its culture and religious destinations. Sandakpur, Chhintapu, Siddhi Thumka and Antu Danda are some of the sight-seeing sites in elevated areas. The view they provide is quite a spectacular mix of panoramic vistas of hills and mountains in Darjeeling and Pashupati Nagar. The area surrounding Illam has dense forests and hence is enriched with a large biodiversity. Religious sites in and around the place have earned great respect from the local residents and tourists. Mai Pokhari, a lake surrounded by natural forests, is a major attraction in Illam. Similarly, Gajur Mukhi, Pathibhara, Mai Beni are other sites of religious significance.

While Illam has a lot to offer, it will always be known as one of the most popular hill stations of Nepal and for its tea estates. Large tea plantations extend on both sides of the highway covering acres of land which add to the already delightful weather of the place, and is regarded perfect for sightseeing, lazy strolls and picnics.

Illam is 700 kilometers and an 18 hour drive from the city of Kathmandu, but is thousands of miles away from the hustle of city life. To those who are visiting Nepal, the trip is incomplete without a visit to this place that so beautifully exhibits every aspect of the country we are proud of. The perfect amalgamation of Nepalese natural and cultural beauty makes Illam truly a pleasure to be in. For the Nepalese, it is a silent retrieve from the chaos of the cities. For visitors, it is an extraordinary example of what Nepal has to offer. All that has to be planned is just one visit to Illam. All your other visits that are sure to follow, will come of your own desire. ■



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# Bringing Gypsy Music to Nepal

*A globetrotting musician, Strouk's connection in Nepal has extended into musical collaborations with local artists.*

By YUKTA BAJRACHARYA

“I didn’t choose music, music chose me”, says French musician Samuel Strouk. Strouk first came to Nepal after one of his tours in India and has been visiting Nepal since then. “My career can be divided into two parts: I play both as a sideman and a front man”, Strouk explains. Strouk has been associated with two bands namely, Sam Smala and Caravan Quartet and has toured across boundaries giving the world a taste of his music.

It was during one of these tours that he first came to Nepal. A tour in India was followed by a sojourn in Nepal after

which Strouk kept coming back for more of Nepal. Earlier in February, Strouk teamed up with Nepali musicians Hari Maharjan and Jigme Sherpa for a Gypsy Jazz concert. The Alliance Française compound where this concert was taking place at, was resounding jolly melodies that Strouk effortlessly strummed from his guitar. The gypsy and Nepali music fusion of popular Nepali folk tunes proved to be a hit with surprised members of the audience. “Gypsy music is about expressing your self,” Strouk says about this upbeat musical genre which is an eclectic fusion between gypsy music and jazz. Apart from gypsy jazz, Strouk also plays classical western music, jazz and folk music.

The piano was Strouk’s first instrument. However, he moved to playing the guitar a few years after he began playing the piano at a very young age. A gradu-

ate with honors from Special Superior Conservatory of Paris in classical guitar and Chamber Music conservatory of Montpellier, Strouk looks up to musical inspirations such as Mozart, Beethoven and John Lennon. He confesses that he also gains inspirations from certain human emotions. “The feeling of departure from people I love never fails to inspire me,” he says.

“Nepali music is beautiful,” says Strouk, expressing his love for our very own traditional tunes which he feels gives one a jovial feeling. He also shares that he is learning Nepali music in his own way. He has tried his hands at playing the flute and is in the process of learning it. Strouk has also collaborated with the popular Nepali folk ensemble Kutumba, and played at local concerts in Bhaktapur and Harisiddhi. In the four visits that he has made to Nepal, he has met with many Nepali musicians and worked with them to blend his own music with the Nepali tunes. “Nepal is blessed with very good musicians,” Strouk opines, “They have a strong desire to improve themselves which is one of the reasons why I enjoy sharing and collaborating with them.”

Strouk’s next visit to Nepal is scheduled for June. He assures that during this visit we will get to hear more of his tunes, demos and collaborations with Nepali musicians such as the Hari Maharjan Project. ■



Photo by Eunice Chen

Nepali musicians have a strong desire to improve themselves; one of the reasons why I enjoy sharing and collaborating with them.

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# Aalu Bodi Tarkari Tama Lai!

*The hottest threesome of aalu, bodi and tama would be quite unsatisfying without the piquant, biting flavor of tama (bamboo shoot), a taste the Nepali tongue has gladly grown accustomed to.*

By SABRINA SINGH

You wouldn't think something so custard-yellow in color would taste so sharp. But no! *Tama* (fermented bamboo shoots), as we know it, is a surprisingly zesty addition to the everyday Nepali *dal-bhat*, otherwise salty or spicy for most parts. Crisp, tender and slimy to touch when cooked, the *алу-बोदी-तमा* concoction is perhaps as Nepali as *gundruk*, as naughty as *achaar*, and, in the aftertaste, tingles your tonsils as acerbically as alcohol.

These asparagus-like vegetables, of the grass family *Poaceae*, are harvested for food before they are two weeks old or one foot tall. As much as their earthy aroma from the kitchen may suggest otherwise, bamboo shoots are actually extremely bitter and barely digestible when raw. Also, with its bland color and pointy ends, it's not exactly eye candy amongst vegetables. To prepare for cooking, the tough outer layer is peeled off with a sideways slit, and the inner, softer, edible core is boiled (preferably with the utensil lid open) to remove the natural bitterness.

Asian kitchens are aplenty with its taste: in Indonesia, they are sliced thinly and boiled with coconut milk, in Manipur, India, it is fermented and preserved, in Vietnam, it is added to pork chop soups and in Japan, this spring delicacy can be boiled, sautéed or braised and served alongside meat and



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fish. They are eaten fresh, pickled or dried in China, Japan, Korea and other South-East Asian countries.

In this part of the world, bamboo shoots are not only indigenous but have been grown seasonally for thousands of years. In winter, they are small, tender and dug out from underground; in spring, shoots are harvested when young, chunky and pale; and their summer counterparts come from a late-appearing bamboo variety that are closest to asparagus in appearance. They can be stored, unpeeled, in refrigerators for

up to two weeks, although if exposed to sunlight they will start tasting bitter.

What sets the Nepali *алу-बोदी-तमा* combination apart are the spices and sauté. Red chilies, onions and oil are sautéed until dark and salt and spices are added before cooking for about five minutes in low heat. Squarely cut potatoes, soaked beans and slices of fermented bamboo shoots are then added for a few minutes. Water is added until it is boiling. Let it simmer for about fifteen minutes and stir well to bring out the desired consistency.

Then, of course, comes the best part: serve hot with rice! ■

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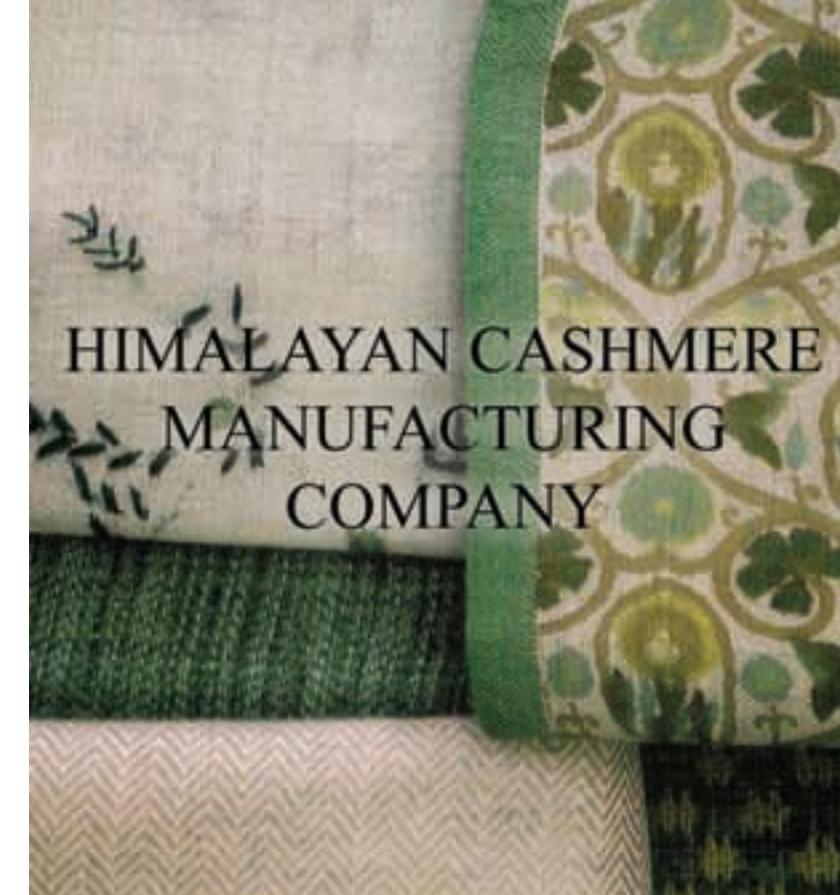
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# Carved In Time

*Amidst the ancient temples in the historic city of Bhaktapur, an unassuming building holds the key to a passage that showcases an astonishing body of art.*

By PAT KAUBA



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**B**haktapur a world set apart from the valley and country. A place where little has changed since early times, where men still sit under promenades, playing chess, while others carry loads. A repetitive and muffled sound: tunk, tunk tunk... reverberates. The sound of crafts, brought to life.

This hidden Newar kingdom of old is one of the most famous places in all the land(s) for craftsmanship: Paubha painting, metal works, stone-carving and wood-work. The temples of its royal square, have stood here for more than 500 years, since the reign of the Malla Kings, they are a testament to the skill of the workers and works that this city produced.

The *Wood Carving Museum*, run as a National Art Gallery is a place to see the ancient skill of woodcarving, up close. This former home of *Mahants*, or temple priests, houses some impressive pieces of religious arts, ranging from 18<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, B.C. Even the building itself, is part of the museum's display. Built over 500 years ago, the building is spread out over four floors, made from mud bricks, and deep black Sal wood, aged gracefully with time, built around a small courtyard

and fitted with intricate wooden windows. The displays of the museum are kept on the top floor.

A bright wide-open room greets you on-top, with a low ceiling that makes those who are tall stoop heads perhaps in reverence. There is a selection of intricate wood works on display, most notably: the *Cosmic Shiva* (18<sup>th</sup> Century), decked with a countless number of heads, round-bellied and fierce. Also on display is the elegantly shaped *Nartaki Devi*, a dancing goddess, in a glass box and at the other side the *Mar Vijaya*, of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, a wall hung carving, depicting Lord Buddha in deep meditation, with a pantheon of gods and demons surrounding him.

As was the way with most Newar homes of the day, the top floor houses a *puja-ghar* or ritual room. In the museum is a small, well-designed room, which you must stoop to enter. A large statue of the fierce god Bhairava, of 17<sup>th</sup> Century, another aspect of Shiva, held dearly in Newari culture is housed inside. His beard and face are still noticeably red, from all the *tikka* powder applied through the ages.

The walls of the *puja-ghar* are also of note. There is a raised plastered stencil on the wall outlining a temple,

a trident (Shiva's weapon) and a *daramu* (cosmic drum). Three small triangular shaped alcoves are built into the walls, in the back of which are finely detailed and vivid paintings, also from the 17<sup>th</sup> century of Sri Dattatreya (the founding guru of Sanyasis), Uma Maheshwor (Shiva/Parvati) and Lord Vishnu. Even today, the vivid colours still make the images jump-out.

At the back of the top floor is a fine display of struts, used to support roofs, intricately detailed with images of Lord Buddha or Vishnu. Many show the ravages of time, damaged by elements before rescue. Also notable in this room are the *Manjushree* statues and the dancing, elephant-headed Ganesha.

In olden times, and even today, it was customary for people of the *Silpakar* clan to be the woodcarvers, it is amazing to see the quality of work that was possible 500 years ago. It is a testament to the country of what went before. So next time you find yourself in Dattatreya Square, Bhaktapur, at a loose end, go check out the past. ■

Pat Kauba is a freelance writer and photographer, respecting the skills of before. He can be contacted at patkauba@gmail.com.

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# Triggering Spiritual Revolutions

*Founder - President of Children of the Earth (COE), Dr Nina Meyerhof, through her proactive work is making sure the children of the world have a voice.*

By Yukta Bajracharya

**D**r. Nina Meyerhof established Children of the Earth (COE) in 1990. COE is a charitable non-governmental organization which has been recognized by the United Nations since 1992 and works with youth and children locally and globally. A believer of activism through spirituality and inviting peace through collective means, Dr. Meyerhof *is* the change that she wants to see in the world.

Dr. Nina travels from one place to another, planting seeds of peace at various places on the global map, and doing a remarkable job at it too. Founder and President of Children of the Earth, Dr. Nina and her team have been inspiring and uniting young people from all around the world for peace, for a lifetime now. “The youth have to understand that they have the future in their hands and that they have their rights as well as responsibilities,” she says. Defining and spreading the notion of spirituality, she envisions a world where the youth and the people, altogether, work as one towards peace and harmony.

Dr. Nina holds a doctorate in Educational Policy, Research, and Administration from the University of Massachusetts where, she also developed a self-esteem model to be used in schools. For her work and passion towards young people and building a better tomorrow, Dr. Nina has received many awards: from the Mother Theresa Award and the Citizen’s Department of Peace

Award to The International Educators Award for Peace.

“I have worked with young people since I was 27. I believe that only children can speak for themselves. Just like how a white person cannot speak for a black person, adults cannot speak for children. Children have the right to participate and voice their needs,” Dr. Nina emphasizes strongly. Through Children of the Earth (COE), the spiritual as well as the humanitarian needs of youth are being tended to. What COE does can

not an abstract, ‘there in the clouds’ concept,” she adds.

She and her team made a trip to Nepal during late May, this year, and conducted workshops and training in Kathmandu. The team included Development Director of COE, Rev. Patrick McCollum, Karoline Buys, International Program Director for COE, and Jimmy Lama, a youth leader from Nepal, amongst others. The COE team had immense faith in the power of youth. “Youth today have to be close to one another.

## Just like how a white person cannot speak for a black person, adults cannot speak for children.

be categorized into two divisions – the Social Action Chapters, through which COE conducts humanitarian projects led by the youth, and Spiritual Youth Hubs – a platform where the youth meet other youth, explores ideas, discover their inner self and spirituality and connect with one another.

Spirituality, here, doesn’t involve religion. Dr. Nina believes that spirituality can be found in the inner self after the layers of differences are peeled away and the basic human character is left. “Everyone is 99.09 per cent same,” she says and opines that it is only a matter of discovering the similarity between people and one’s identity, beyond the body, mind, emotions, culture, race and religion. “Spirituality can be manifested; we try to make it more tangible. It is

They are powerful and can even topple governments and bring various other changes,” says McCollum while Buys says, “One by one we need to touch the hearts of all the youth. We start by opening doors and giving voices to a few and then we hope to pass it on. It’s like a ripple effect.” Jimmy, after being inspired from one of the COE workshops, is now aiding humanitarian projects in his own village back in Helambu with support from COE. Two workshops were conducted – one was aimed at teachers from various schools while the other, called “Transforming Spirituality into Action” was aimed at youth and brought together young representatives from different parts of the world providing them with a global platform for interaction and expression. ■



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# Out Here in Kathmandu

## Modernity on the Global Periphery

BY MARK LIECHTY

Reviewed by DON MESSERSCHMIDT

**O**ut Here in Kathmandu is a collection of essays that demonstrate how cities like Kathmandu locally engage, produce and reproduce global cultural processes. The essays in the book showcase Kathmandu as a site where modernity expresses itself through the discourses of fashion, food, sex, love, mass media, caste, gender and class. These discourses, as the essays suggest, broadly constitute the core of the project of ‘Nepali’ modernity. Through ethnographic finesse and historic-anthropological flair, Mark Liechty also traces the career of middle-class culture and its intimate links with modernity in Nepal’s history. (Cover blurb)

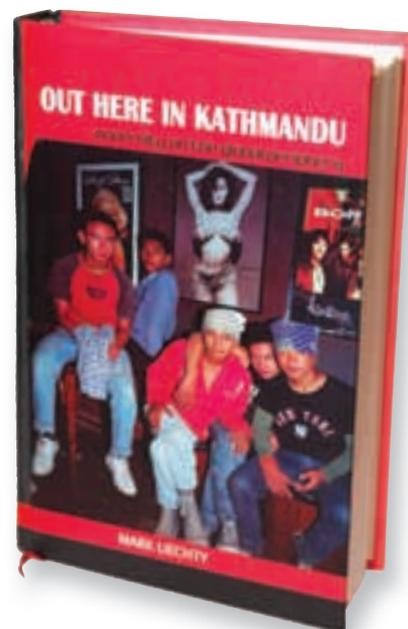
To foreign tourists, residents and anthropologists who think of Nepal as essentially rural, traditional and ethnic, even ‘exotic’ (compared with the more ‘modern’ globalized world beyond its borders out of sight of the romantic Himalayas), *Out Here in Kathmandu* is a startling book. It describes a cultural transformation far more ‘exotic’ in its way than at first imagined. This is a book about contemporary youth-oriented urban Nepali society, seemingly far removed from older ethnographic and romantic notions of Nepal; yet, they, too, play a part in these essays.

The book is so rich in subject matter that no short review can do it justice. So, for a glimpse of its content, I turned to the Index to sample a few of the topics covered.

The first Index entry is ‘Aerial ropeway’, which leads to a piece of history revealing evidence of Nepal’s first tryst with urban consumerism and material culture. In a fascinating but brief encounter, we see how the Rana rulers of the early 1900s secured all the Western (mostly European) consumer goods that they craved, given their sumptuous lifestyles as the elite, rich, feudal masters of the realm. Back then, before roads and airplanes intruded, they build an aerial ropeway from the Terai over which to import their various materialistic desires.

In order to keep themselves well-supplied with imported “comforts” the Rana regime instituted a variety of new means

for acquiring foreign consumer goods, including the aerial ropeway that, by the late 1920s, was able to deliver up to eight tons of freight per hour... To keep his ropeway busy Chandra [Prime Minister Chandra S.J.B. Rana] established a “foreign goods department attached to the Jinsi Adda” [the government Procurement Office] in Kathmandu, and a “buying agency” in Calcutta, that imported European goods for “certain of the Prime Minister’s domestic requirements”... [T]he Ranas mail ordered countless tons of goods from the West—from pressed-tin ceiling panels and decorative statuary, to bath tubs and marble floor tiles. The Jinsi Adda dealt



This provocative book helps us understand some facets of contemporary Nepali urban life, the impact of modern media on society, and the yearnings and (often unobtainable) aspirations of youth.

mostly with British supply houses but on at least one occasion ordered goods from the great French department store Au Bon Marché...” They even imported “huge Packards, Rolls Royces, and other luxury vehicles..., each “carried” over the mountain trails on bamboo cross-poles by teams of 64 porters. [Liechty cites several sources for these descriptions.]

Who says that the consumerism so evident today on Kathmandu’s glitzy Durbar Marg is “new”? It’s just more evident nowadays, and available to the relatively “new” and numerous middle- and upper middle-classes, compared to the minority elites of yesteryear.

Under another Index entry, ‘Arnold Schwarzenegger’, we read of the author’s amazement upon entering the room of Mahesh, a 17-year civil servants son living in a modern house in one of Kathmandu’s new suburbs:

My first glimpse of Mahesh’s room left me speechless. Essentially every wall surface, plus some of the ceiling, was covered with pictures, posters, magazine cutouts, or hand-made drawings and

signs—all of the images foreign, and/or in English. There were four or five types of commercially produced images. First were the large posters of foreign, usually American film/pop stars: James Dean, Elvis, Schwarzenegger, and Rambo along with other “tough guy” pictures of Clint Eastwood and Charles Bronson. Also in this category were various martial artists like Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan and nameless body builder photos featuring white men with bulging muscles. Competing in number with these macho images was a collection of “Heavy Metal” posters. These included Kiss and Bon Jovi posters full of bizarre clothing and suggestive poses, plus an assortment of Heavy Metal motifs, particularly skulls: skulls with blood dripping knives sticking out of them, skulls with flowers in their mouths, skulls and cross-bones, etc. A third, smaller category of image was the sports hero, here represented by the soccer stars Pelé and Diego Maradona.

These assorted hyper male images were contrasted with a fourth group of images: what might be called “girly pictures.”

While the “girly” images “seem to stand in contrast with the room’s more ubiquitous macho male images...,” Liechty tells us, “both sets represent fantasy bodies... But more important is the fact that practically all of these print images are tied in some way to electronic entertainment media (music, cinema, or televised sport)...”

In these two examples, one historical and one very current, we taste a little of Liechty’s post-modernist style of describing and analyzing some of Nepal’s extreme globalization.

The book has three parts and nine chapters. Part I: Frames, deals with class experience, mass media and consumerism, foreigners, foreign goods and foreignness in modern Nepali history. Part II: Middle Class Practice: Media and Consumer Culture, covers social practices of viewing cinema and videos as well as mass media and its effects on class and gender. One chapter is entitled Building Body, Making Face, Doing Love. Another, provocatively entitled Carnal Economics: The Commodification of Food and Sex in Kathmandu, describes popular eateries and hang-outs and includes the conceptualization of space in modern urban society. Part III: Women and the Experience of Modernity, focuses on female

freedoms in Nepal’s modern youth society, women as consumers, and the presence and meaning of popular pornography.

These are definitely not your traditional ‘old school’ ethnographic essays. Nonetheless, the book presents an amazingly rich foray into urban youth culture, and a look at the impacts (real and imagined) of modern media on lifestyle, and at the freedoms and chains that materialistic/consumer globalization imposes on Nepali society.

Liechty writes in the Preface: “If there is a unifying theme in these essays, and all of my work, it concerns the impact of media and consumption on class practice and class subjectivity... within a larger field of consumer culture.” He goes on to say that the book’s title evokes a modern “globalized” sensibility where “people come to experience themselves, their city, and their location in the world of meaning through interactions with media and other consumer goods from around the world that cast shadows of desire and marginalization over everyday life. When people who have never ventured beyond the valley rim identify their own experience as “out here”..., we see the power of media and other consumerist promotions... promotions [that] then reinvigorate

circuits of desire that drive people to seek presumably better lives elsewhere.”

He points out, however, that the realities and impacts of the contemporary massive foreign employment and the remittance culture that now attracts thousands of Nepali youth away from home, have barely begun to be analyzed. When they are, we are bound to see how this form of profound globalization plays out back here in Kathmandu.

This provocative book helps us understand some facets of contemporary Nepali urban life, the impact of modern media on society, and the yearnings and (often unobtainable) aspirations of youth. Here we have a cogent analysis of their symbols played out in fashion, food, sex, love, mass media, caste, gender and class. Out Here in Kathmandu is a recommended read. ■

Published in 2010 by Martin Chautari Press, Kathmandu; 402pp., 1100 rupees in Kathmandu bookstores. The author, Mark Liechty, is an Associate Professor of Anthropology and History at the University of Illinois, in Chicago, and the author of *Suitably Modern: Making Middle-Class Culture in a New Consumer Society* (2003, Princeton University Press). The book reviewer is an anthropologist, freelance writer and contributing editor to ECS Nepal magazine. He can be contacted at [don.editor@gmail.com](mailto:don.editor@gmail.com).



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# Live Adventure, EXPLORE NEPAL

By NIRAJ KARKI



*"Travel is the art form available to Everyman. You sit in the coffee shop in a strange city and nobody knows who you are, or cares, and so you shed your checkered past and your motley credentials and you face the day unarmed ... And onward we go and some day in the distant future, we will stop and turn around in astonishment to see all the places we've been and the heroes we were. - Garrison Keillor*

**M**ake one of those places Nepal. There's Thamel for your coffee shops and the rest of Nepal to do everything else. Come here or ask those who have been here and they'll tell you it's perfect. In that day in the distant future of reminiscing, make it Nepal. You won't regret it.

And then be more specific - add adventure. Start with adrenaline, move to testing fears and phobias, tempting them, pushing them - conquering them! Ultimate tests of one's body's physical and mental limits, and going over. Reconnecting with the primal instinct, to be

stronger, faster, better, connecting with nature, the earth, the elements, and your own spirit. To live the thrill, moments of exhilaration, absolute freedom. The lure of the next challenge - seeking the bigger, higher, longer, scarier - the better.

Adventure is not a hobby, it is a lifestyle - a calling. To live the experience of being alive, to feel the rapture of being alive in things new, in seeking new boundaries. So if you hear this calling, Nepal is the place to be.

Jump off a bridge. Literally, with a bungee cord tied to your feet, scream your lungs out. Raft the wildest 5+

rapids, trek amazing hidden places so close to heaven, climb mountains, stand on the highest places on earth, stare at the rare Bengal tiger. Fly! Fly the skies paragliding with exquisite views of the mountain range over stunning valleys and rivers. If you're a ground person, grab your bike and cycle over mountain passes over 5000m high and then cycle downhill. Bring your climbing shoes and a chalk bag and climb hills, rocks, and walls - climb anything. Put on your wetsuit and abseil down magnificent waterfalls.

All this and so much more - get here, get out there. Welcome to Nepal!



# Chain reaction

**W**e are walkers - our natural means of travel is to put one foot in front of the other. The bicycle seduces our basic nature by making walking exciting. It lets us take 10-foot strides at 160 paces a minute. That's 20 miles an hour, instead of 4 or 5... It is not only how fast you go --- cars are faster and jet planes faster still. But jet-plane travel is frustrating boredom - at least the car gives the pictorial illusion of travel. Cycling does it all - you have the complete satisfaction of arriving because your mind has chosen the path and steered you over it, your eyes have seen it, your muscles have felt it, your breathing, circulatory and digestive systems have all done their natural functions better than ever, and every part of your

being knows you have traveled and arrived. - John Forester, *Effective Cycling*

There are plenty of dirt roads and trails in Nepal to meet every mountain biker's wildest fantasy – all set in the backdrop of majestic mountains. From day trips to weeks of cycling – there's everything even the Yak Attack – the worlds highest mountain bike race on earth crossing the Thorung La Pass at 5416m.

Cycling holidays vary from day rides to weeks for example the around the Annapurna which lasts for 15 days. Riders can explore rims and ridges of Kathmandu and Pokhara through off routes that weave in and out of the cities along which food and accommodation are easily available.

Cycles can easily be hired from cycle shops in Thamel in Kathmandu and in Lakeside in Pokhara. Prices start at around Rs. 500 per day. Many cycling holidays booked from travel agencies will include the cost of bike hire but some won't so that's always worth checking.

In Kathmandu day cycling trips to any of the surrounding hill stations is a great idea. Drive up to Nagarkot, Jamacho, Godavari and then cycle back downhill 20-45 km back to Kathmandu. You can also cycle up the hill and back down again usually after an overnight stay at the hilltop of Nagarkot, Chisapani, Dhulikhel and Namobuddha.

## CHALLENGING BIKING ROUTE GUIDES

	Muktinath to Pokhara	Round Annapurna
<b>Duration</b>	10 Days	15 Days (includes rest day for acclimatization)
<b>Best Season</b>	February-April, September to November	March-May, September-November
<b>Altitude Range</b>	3710m	Max 5416m at Thorong la Pass
<b>Difficulty</b>	Tough	Extreme (possibility of AMS)
<b>Group Size</b>	Min. 2	Min. 4 person
<b>Average Daily Distance</b>	25-30 approx.	35km
<b>Support</b>	Porter, Guide-cum-Mechanic	Guide-cum-mechanic and Porters
	<p>Fly to Jomsom, and then bike via spectacular places such as Kagbeni, Muktinath, Marpha, Tatopani and Sarankot finally ending up in Pokhara.</p> <p>Cost \$1300-\$1500 (depending on group size includes Pokhara to Jomsom flight and permits)</p> <p>Experience required, consists of some areas where bikes will have to be carried.</p>	<p>Cycle through Besi Sahar, Taal, Chame, Manang, Thorong Phedi, Kagbeni, Tatopani, Beni and end up in Pokhara. There's extreme cycling and there's extreme cycling – crossing the magnificent Thorong La Pass at 5416m will leave you breathless, literally!</p> <p>Cost \$1800-\$1900</p>

Or try a combined route over 5 days that takes you to the best hilltops in Kathmandu for stunning views of the mountains.

**Day 01:** Kathmandu to Lakuri Bhanjyang via Chobar - Mixed 34 km

**Day 02:** Lakuri Bhanjyang to Dhulikhel via Namobuddha - Mixed 39 km

**Day 03:** Dhulikhel to Nagarkot via Nala - Mostly Uphill 22 km

**Day 04:** Nagarkot to Chisapani - Flat and Uphill 42 km

**Day 05:** Chisapani to Kathmandu via Sundari Jal - Downhill 23 km

21 to 27 gear bicycles are recommended for most biking in Nepal since the terrain is often very rough. While ev-

ery season has its own appeal for cycling, monsoon which runs from mid June to late September will offer little views of mountains and lots of rain instead. Ideal riding conditions are in winter from October to end of January with clear views of mountains and dry tracks. From February to May which is spring/summer riding is pleasant but tends to get very hot towards the end with possibility of showers.

#### BETTER TOGETHER

Cycling in groups with a minimum of 2 and maximum 16 people makes for safer travel as well as cheaper.

For those into serious biking here are a couple of challenging biking route guides in Nepal.

#### RECOMMENDED ATTIRE AND GEAR

1. T-shirts (cotton and short sleeved) or lightweight cycling jersey.
2. Light pullover (Polypropylenes is recommended)
3. Cycling shorts or loose trousers
4. Waterproof wind breaker with a hood and wind trousers (Gore-Tex)
5. Cycling socks.
6. Cycling gloves or mittens.
7. Hat-suitable for cycling and sun protection.
8. Bike repair kit (most cycling holidays will include a someone for repairs)

#### LIST OF COMPANIES

Dawn till Dusk ([www.nepalbiking.com](http://www.nepalbiking.com)), Borderlands (<http://www.borderlandresorts.com/>), The Last Resort (<http://www.thelastresort.com.np/>), Nepal Cycling Club (<http://bikehimalayas.com>)



ECS Media



# The real hangover

*“Most climbers aren’t in fact deranged, they’re just infected with a particularly virulent strain of the Human Condition.” — Jon Krakauer (Eiger Dreams: Ventures Among Men and Mountains)*

**A**s the country of Himalayas, climbing is synonymous with Nepal. While mountaineering is its history, rock and wall climbing are much more recent in that respect but very quickly gaining ground.

Nepal and even Kathmandu have amazing natural climbing sites for those used to outdoor climbing and even some climbing walls that go up to grade 7c that will help hone climbing skills. For those with little or no experience, there are plenty of places to learn and get used to climbing and bouldering.

## INDOOR PLACES TO CLIMB IN KATHMANDU

### Pasang Lhamu Sherpa Climbing Wall, Maharajgunj

Built in memory of Pasang Lhamu Sherpa, the first Nepalese woman who climbed Mount Everest this 10 metre high wall is one of the most climbing popular spots and is located in. The place has a rugged mountaineering feel to it since frequented by the mountaineering community who are always happy to share their experience and climbing skills and will point out the every tiny bit related to safety.

Various levels of courses are available.  
Climbing fee: Rs. 250

Equipment hire optional  
website <http://www.pasanglhamu.org/climb/introduction.html>

### Astrek Climbing, Bhagawan Bahal, Thamel

At 15 metres tall, this is one of Kathmandu’s highest climbing walls with 20 colour-coded routes featuring climbing grades suitable for all levels. It also features an smaller area where you can practise overhangs.

website <http://www.asian-trekking.com/astrek-climbing-wall>

### Bouldering Gym, Bal lukha, Patan

For those living close to Patan, this bouldering gym is ideal for learning climbing and building upper body strength. While it might not look as lucrative as climbing, bouldering requires great upper body strength and refines climbing techniques. Another advantage this place has is that as the name implies, it also has a gym specially designed to suit climbing needs.

Contact: Paresh 9841226397

### International Mountaineers’ Memorial Park, Kakani

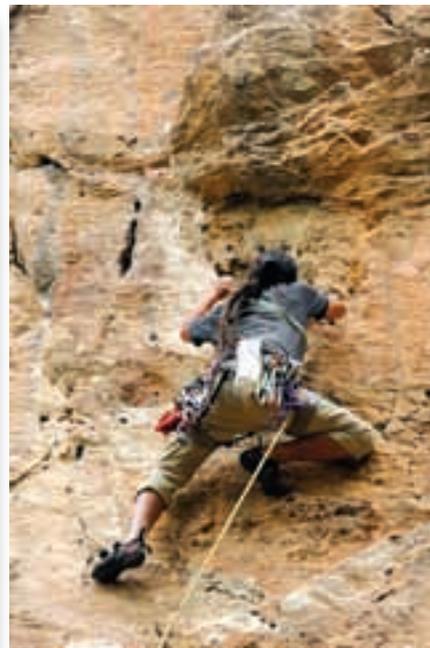
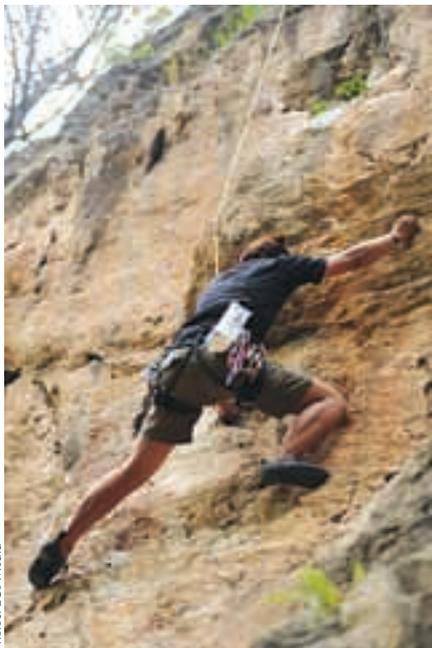
Built on the grounds of the Mountaineers memorial park, this 15 m wall is used extensively for mountaineering training courses.

Website: [www.nepalmountaineering.org](http://www.nepalmountaineering.org)

### Balaju Climbing Wall – Balaju Industrial area

Unlike most places, this climbing wall does not have equipment to hire and climbers are required to bring their own gear. It features climbing grades upto 7c and some serious overhangs. When it comes to indoor climbing, this is as tough as it gets.

Climbing fee: Rs. 450.  
Outdoor climbing sites



## NATURAL CLIMBING SITES

Natural rock climbing requires a combination of not just pure climbing skills but also the more technical aspects of knots, rope systems and anchors. It is highly advised to hire an experienced climbing guide when going natural climbing since most of the climbing sites in Nepal are not signposted. Most natural climbing sites are free to climb but a few of them require entry permits for which rules change from time to time. Check with climbers at indoor sites for updated information.

### Nagarjun (Day climb)

About 9 km up to Budhailkantha, then walk west from the bus stop the Vishnumati stream through terraced fields and enters the Shivapuri Watershed and Wildlife reserve. The granite faces here lie scattered about, and the big cliff in the center is equipped with a single route.

### Balaju Rock Climbing.

This is one of the nearest climbing sites from Kathmandu located about a 30 minute northwest drive from Kathmandu. It is a day climb. There are more than 9 climbing routes from grade 4a to 7b+. It also features an overhang for climbing and also 65 m multi pitch and 12 m single pitch.

### Dhalu Pharping/Hattiban

This site is 26km from Kathmandu city and it takes around an hour to reach by bus. The wall is over 35 metres high and is located about a 20 minute walk from the road. There are more than 10 routes with the highest climbing grade available being 7a and 7b and starting from 6a.

Climbing is best in winter here since it is a south facing slope and gets really hot during daytime in spring and in summer. Early mornings are a good way of getting out of the heat.

### Thame (Khumbu) (week long)

Outdoor Rock Climbing in 3800m Thame Everest region it is situated in the eastern part of Nepal, near by Mt. Everest. This village is very famous among the climbers because both of world record holder Everest climbers are born in this village. In this rock climbing site there are more than 17 different routes which are starting from 4c to 7c multi pitch 200m height.

### Bimal Nagar climbing site

Bimal Nagar climbing site is situated in the south west from Kathmandu and it takes almost 5 hours by bus on the way to Pokhara. It is 140 km from Kathmandu. If you are coming

from Pokhara then it is 60km from Pokhara there are many nice climbing routes. (check mingma dai's fb)

There are only few fixed routes where you can go climbing it is 55m natural rock climbing and four pitch and some single pitch it is just 5 minutes from the road.

### Kakani International Training Center

Artificial wall below the picnic spot. twenty-five kilometers north-west of Kathmandu. Climbing grades of 5+ and 6B available.

### Equipment and Rentals

Equipment can be rented from many trekking shops in Thamel and from many indoor climbing sites. Costs are usually around Rs. 50-200 per piece of equipment and it's good to hunt around for good deals. It is usually best to have your own shoes and harness for climbing.

While climbing can be done in all seasons, it is best to check weather forecasts when going climbing. Some places also get too hot to climb during the daytime.

Travel agencies can usually arrange day climbs for around \$50-\$60. Happy climbing!

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# The swingers club





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About a 3-hour scenic drive from Kathmandu and a 166 metre long walk across the Jhulunge pul (wobbly bridge), your bungee experience starts. It's a panic point that becomes real and the eventuality of the jump solidifies and suddenly the 160 metres deep gorge seems a lot longer than you ever imagined.

Adventure aside, The Last Resort is a great place to just be in, scenic, peaceful with provisions of long stays in tents complete with lush gardens, a plunge pool, a bar, lounge and hammocks! A real place of relaxation indeed, until the jump master begins his jump briefing which brings back the dizzying memory of the walk across the bridge and the view 160m straight down. The briefing filled with dry humour addresses jump procedures,

security issues, medical conditions (speak up if you have one!) and also mentions that there's nothing the very encouraging staff can do about broken hearts.

Groups are sorted according to weight, the walk across the plank begins. First timers bind together like a herd of sheep being moved into new pastures (or in this case the centre of the bridge you jump off), while the pros excitedly decide on their flair jumps.

Walk like a penguin, fly like a bird – it's probably the only thing that you can remember about the briefing when you get to the bridge. Pay attention to the briefing however because security is a REAL issue although not as paramount as the fear of the real jump. But then again, it's really hard listening to anything after walking the plank. To those already scared it is like a death sentence that you

#### Logistics and costs

All reservations and booking can be done at the Last Resort's sales office in Thamel, online or via most travel agencies. Its 65 for a trip to the Last Resort including two-way travel, lunch and bungee jump or a canyon swing, 85 if you do both the bungee jump and swing and 20 for each additional bungee or swing. The best bit - do 3 jumps and the 4th is free!

So go on, head over to the Last Resort and step unto the Last Metre – test yourself and treat yourself to the ultimate adrenaline rush!!

pay for, that and a t-shirt and a video of your screaming your guts out. Ah, so much fun!

Security checked, harness and ropes checked and you step into a metre long extension of the bridge – the bit that you actually jump off.

The last metre at the last resort. That's where it actually, really, truly and overwhelmingly terrifyingly begins. Go on, jump!

At 160m high the bungee jump at the Last Resort is 7th highest in the world (8th if you count the Royal Gorge Bridge

Sunkoshi Valley		
	Bandiba Khola	Tantung Khola
Region:	Kavre ( Est. Kathmandu) Sunkoshi valley	Kavre ( South-Est. Kathmandu) Sunkoshi valley, Kallery Village -(800)m
Grade:	V2.A1 III	V3.A2 III
Water Temperature:	13	13
Time:	4 h 30	5 h 30

Marshyandi Valley Canyoning				
	Bul Bule Khola	Kabindra Khola	Raindu Khola	Sansapu Khola
Region:	Annapurna Himal Bulbule Village – (820)m	Annapurna Himal ( Est) Ngadi Village – (930)m	Annapurna Himal ( Est) Syange Village – (1180)m	Annapurna Himal ( Est) Syange Village – (1180)m
Grade:	V3.A1.I	V2.A1.I	V4.A3.II	V4. A3. II
Water Temperature:	14	14	14	13
Time:	2 hours	1 h 30	3 H 45	7 h 30

Marshyandi Valley Canyoning				
	Sansapu Canyoning	Kabindra Canyoning	Syange Canyoning	Raindu Canyoning
Difficult:	—	V3. A2. II	V5. A4. III	V4. A3. II
Elevation:	650m	350m	400m	260m
Alt. Departure:	1750m	1180m	1550m	1360m
Alt. Arrive:	1100m	1030m	1150m	1100m
Length:	1200m	400m	400m	600m
Schedule:	5h	1h 40	4h 45	4h 30

Bhotekoshi Valley Canyoning					
	Jombo Khola	Handi Khola	Kabre Khola	Galung Khola	Fanfung Khola
Region:	BaraBise- Kodari				
Grade:	V2.A1 I	V2.A1 I	V2.A2 II	V2.A2 II	V4.A3 III
Water Temperature:	13	13	13	13	13

Chamche Canyoning						
	Chamche Khola	Chipla Canyoning	Bhulbule Canyoning	Jagat Canyoning	Gopte canyoning	Tal Canyoning
Difficult:	V6. A7. VI	V4. A3. III	V4. A1.II	V5. A5. V	V3. A2. II	V4. A4. IV
Elevation:	1000m	720m	530m	1000m	400m	500m
Alt. Departure:	2150m	1800m	1350m	2150m	1350m	2000m
Alt. Arrive:	1150m	1150m	820m	1150m	950m	1700m
Length:	4500m	650m	4500m	2000m	600m	500m
Schedule:	11:30	6h 20	2h	12h 30	3h 45	6h

in Colorado which is only open annually during the Go Fast Games); the highest being the Macau Tower in China at 233m. The wild, rugged setting of the Bhot Koshi gorge with the river roaring below and the opportunity of doing the Canyon

Swing however makes it for one of the one of the must go places for jumps. While the bungee jump is a 160m of pure adrenaline, the Canyon Swing in itself lets you free fall 100m into the gorge and then swing a 240m arc at 150km per hour.

For those watching the jumps there's lots of entertainment. The first terrifying jumps done people become more adventurous and try acrobatic and themed jumps. There's the obvious superman, 'I'm like a bird' and the best in the set - 'the Tarzan jungle cry' done on a backwards swing.

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[www.radisson.com/kathmandu](http://www.radisson.com/kathmandu)



# Off to the hills

*Mountains are the means, the man is the end. The goal is not to reach the top of the mountains, but to improve the man. – Walter Bonatti.*

The journey is part of the destination – nowhere is this truer than in Nepal. It is not only that 8 of the 14 highest peaks in the world are here – not everyone climbs Everest (or can) but the beauty and the majesty that it commands can be felt at varied levels and even without making it to the destinations. Nepal is amazing because of more than just mountains – within an area so small Nepal encompasses incredible geoclimatic variations and biodiversity. With destinations such as the Everest and Annapurna Base camp voted amongst the best treks in the world, trekking in Nepal is as rewarding and beautiful as it gets.

The possibilities and variations of treks in Nepal are astounding. With views of mountains from almost every trek that run along the upper spine of Nepal, absolute destinations mean little. All that's needed is the will to head out and no trek will end in disappointment.

Following is the list of trekking sites in Nepal with a simplified guide to difficulty level and days required to complete the trek.

With the exception of treks into very remote areas, treks in Nepal can be

teahouse treks where food and accommodation are available throughout the journey in lodges or the more expensive camping treks where all equipment including tents and food are carried. While teahouse treks are easier and cheaper, camping treks provide the real experience and thrill of being in the mountains.

There is something for everyone in Nepal when it comes to trekking – whether you're on a budget or mind the budget at all. Meals can cost you as little as \$5-\$10 and guides and porters can be hired for as little as \$30 and \$15 a day. It is however worth spending a bit more and hiring from a good company.

Rooms too can cost as little as \$3-\$5. For those on a budget, sharing rooms and generally sharing holidays is a great way of saving money. Trekking in Nepal consists of some very precarious sites and 2 is the minimum recommended number for travel.

Most conservation areas and national parks will require an entrance fee when trekking in Nepal. In addition, travellers need to obtain a TIMS card (Trekking Management Information System).





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## LIST OF TREKKING SITES

Annapurna Circuit Trekking	Medium-Hard	22 Days
Annapurna Panorama Trekking	Easy	10 Days
Dhaulagiri Circuit Trekking	Hard	21 Days
Ghalegaun Trekking	Easy	9 Days
Ghorepani Poonhill Trekking	Easy	7 Days
Jomsom Muktinath Trekking	Medium-Hard	12 Days
Mardi Himal Trekking	Medium-Hard	12 Days
Panchase Trekking	Easy	6 Days
The Royal Trek	Easy	6 Days
Sikles Trekking	Easy	7 Days

### TREKKING IN EVEREST REGION

Arun Valley Trekking (Salpa Pass)	Medium-Hard	13 Days
Bhairav Kunda Trekking	Easy-Moderate	10 Days
Dhud Kunda Trekking	Easy-Moderate	10 Days
Everest Panorama Trekking	Medium-Hard	9 Days
Gokyo Valley Chola Pass Trekking	Medium-Hard	20 Days
Jiri -EBC Everest classic Trekking	Medium-Hard	21 Days
Lukla to Everest Base Camp Trekking	Medium-Hard	14 Days
Rolwaling Valley Trekking	Medium-Hard	22 Days

### TREKKING IN LANGTANG REGION

Across Ganja-la Pass Trekking	Hard	14 Days
Dhading Ganga Jamuna Phulkharka Trekking	Easy	10 Days
Ganesh Himal Trek	Medium-Hard	19 Days
Gosainkunda (Frozen Lake) Trekking	Medium-Hard	7 Days
Helembu Classic Trekking	Medium-Hard	7 Days
Langtang Classic Trekking	Medium-Hard	14 Days
Langtang Valley Trekking	Medium-Hard	9 Days
Panch Pokhari (Five Lakes) Trekking	Medium-Hard	13 Days
Tamang Heritage Trekking	Medium-Hard	13 Days

### TREKKING IN THE RESTRICTED AREA

Humla - Mount Kailash - Manasarovar Trekking	Hard	27 Days
Kanchenjunga Base Camp Trekking	Hard	24 Days
Lower Dolpo Trekking	Hard	20 Days
Manaslu Circuit Trekking	Hard	19 Days
Narphu (Nar-Phu) Valley Trekking	Medium-Hard	21 Days
Upper Dolpo Trekking	Hard	22 Days
Upper Mustang Trekking	Medium-Hard	15 Days
Humla and Limi Valley Trek	Medium-Hard	17 Days

### TREKKING IN EASTERN REGION

Makalu Base Camp Trekking	Medium-Hard	20 Days
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### TREKKING IN WESTERN REGION

Chepang Hill Trekking	Easy	4 Days
Rara Lake Trekking	Medium-Hard	13 Days

### SHORT TREKS IN KATHMANDU VALLEY

Kakani - Nagarkot - Dhulikhel Trekking	Easy	5 Days
Sundarjal - Nagarkot Trekking	Easy	3 Days

### HOME STAY

Tsum Valley Trekking	Medium-Hard	21 Days
Ghalegaun Trek	Medium-Hard	9 Days
Indigenous People Trail	Medium-Hard	8 Days
Gangajamuna Ganesh Parbat Trek	Medium-Hard	10 Days
Tamang Heritage Trek	Medium-Hard	13 Days
Chepang Hill Trek	Medium-Hard	4 Days

### GEAR

Trekking in Nepal will involve walking across varied terrain on a daily basis. The following are recommended for a safer trek.

1. Footwear
2. Walking boots with suitable ankle support that have been worn-in prior to the trek, and which are waterproof
3. Trainer or casual shoes, for trekking and/or for travelling
4. Warm socks and thermal underwear for colder areas
5. Gaiters, in case of rain or snow
6. Windproof, waterproof outer shell garment for higher altitudes (Goretex)
7. Wool or fleece hat, or balaclava
8. Hat or cap for sun protection while trekking
9. Sunglasses or goggles
10. Sunscreen lotion (50+) and lip balm
11. Warm gloves
12. Personal first aid kit to include essential items
13. Sleeping bag, 4 season

### SOME GOOD GEAR SHOPS

Sherpa Gears Imports, Sherpa, Tashi Sherpa, 4443665, Near Jay Nepal

Sherpa Adventure Outlet, The North Face, Sabina, 4445101, Thamel

Himalayan Techno Gears Trading, Vaude, Prajwol, 9841 388345/ 4445447 - Lazimpat

### USEFUL LINKS

Trekking Agencies Association of Nepal  
[www.taan.org.np](http://www.taan.org.np)  
[www.visitnepal.com](http://www.visitnepal.com) (information on parks, fees etc)

Nepal Mountaineering Association  
[www.nepalmountaineering.org](http://www.nepalmountaineering.org)

The Last Frontiers Trekking  
[www.lastfrontierstrekking.com](http://www.lastfrontierstrekking.com)

Himalayan Holidays  
[www.himalayanholidays.biz](http://www.himalayanholidays.biz)

Nepal Tourism Board <http://www.tourism.gov.np>

# Monsoon Returns

MADNESS

“ Raindrops, beyond borders, ripples the earth,  
'Tis a solemn moment of peace and mirth,  
A time when shelters are in, but the spirit free,  
Shoulders shrugged under umbrellas can be,  
Filled with smiles in this season no less,  
And she, the monsoon brings a serene madness...”

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\* Valid from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011 till 30<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

\* Valid for Nepalese and Expatriates.

# How to travel





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Imagine yourself on the trip of a lifetime – headed to a place of exquisite beauty. And imagine getting to live the rare and amazing opportunity of getting to the destination.

What would you do? Celebrate the special moment? Crack open a bottle of champagne, have a nibble stashed away for the top? Lets say you do it – afterall why not, you feel like you’ve deserved it after making it to the destination. You do and so does everyone else.. and then you leave the mess behind.

The problem though is that if you do it – there is absolutely no reason why someone after you shouldn’t do what you have done. And if you turn the tables around – what if you got to this place you dreamed of coming to and finding garbage.

The preservation of the wilderness starts and ends with you.

Leave no trace (LNT) is a set of principles designed to teach people how to minimize their impacts on the environment and the wilderness. Summarized into the points below, it should be followed by everyone, for everyone.

#### **PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE**

Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you’ll visit.

Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.

Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.

Visit in small groups when possible. Consider splitting larger groups into smaller groups.

Repackage food to minimize waste.

Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns or flagging.

#### **TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES**

Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow.

Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes and streams.

Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.

In popular areas:

Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites.

Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.

Keep campsites small. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.

In pristine areas:

Disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails.

Avoid places where impacts are just beginning.

#### **DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY**

Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter.

Deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished.

Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.

To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater.

#### **LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND**

Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts.

Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.

Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.

Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

#### **MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS**

Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry. Use a lightweight stove for cooking and enjoy a candle lantern for light.

Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires.

Keep fires small. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.

Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, then scatter cool ashes.

#### **RESPECT WILDLIFE**

Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.

Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.

Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.

Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.

Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.

#### **BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS**

Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.

Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.

Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock.

Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors.

Let nature’s sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

# Sky is the limit

*The most beautiful dream that has haunted the heart of man since Icarus is today reality - Louis Bleriot. The most beautiful dream that has haunted the heart of man since Icarus is today reality — Louis Bleriot.*

It's like.. *flying* – that's people's first hand accounts of paragliding. A dream that has actually come true for man – to be in the sky and soar with the creatures of flight. And here in Nepal people live that dream everyday.

## PARAGLIDING SITES

Pokhara, with fairly constant weather conditions is the centre for paragliding in Nepal although there are Kathmandu and Bandipur are now becoming very popular as well.

Paragliding in Kathmandu is operated by Kathmandu Paragliding ([www.ktmparagliding.com](http://www.ktmparagliding.com)) from Chapakharka, Kot Danda, Godavari and Fulchowki which are all within a hour or twos drive away from the centre of Kathmandu.

The main area for flying in Nepal is the Annapurna region, more specifically the Pokhara valley from where 3 of the worlds 8000m peaks are visible while you fly.

## SITES WITHIN POKHARA

The most accessible and popular site around Phewa Lake, Sarangkot is at 1500masl and 2000ft above the lake set in the backdrop of mountains with unlimited potential for XC and out and returns. Most pilots will only fly from this location but there are other locations around the valley all of which need to be walked up such as Dikie Danda, Devi Falls, Poomdi and Matepani, all of which can be connected by air from Sarangkot.

## LEARN TO FLY! (WHO WOULDN'T?)

If the one time flying isn't enough and you want to take control of your flight in the sky, there are courses for all levels from the beginner pilots licence to serious advanced courses available in Nepal run by highly certified professionals.

Courses are run by different companies and will vary in structure.

Beginner courses after which a pilots licence can be obtained usually consist of 3 levels and cost from 950-1500. There are further courses for XC, SIV and

Acro which cost from around 300-400 (usually around 100 a day). Besides these, refresher, pilot tandem and thermalling courses are also available.

Courses run on the same seasons as normal flying.

## LIST OF COMPANIES

In Kathmandu  
Kathmandu Paragliding  
([www.ktmparagliding.com](http://www.ktmparagliding.com))

Pokhara and Bandipur  
Blue Sky Paragliding (Thamel, Lakeside)  
(<http://www.paragliding-nepal.com/>)

Sunrise Paragliding  
([www.sunrise-paragliding.com](http://www.sunrise-paragliding.com)),  
Frontiers Paragliding  
(<http://www.nepal-paragliding.com/>),  
Flying Fever Paragliding  
([www.flyingfever.net](http://www.flyingfever.net))

## Dates of courses/best seasons to go

The best times to go paragliding are from March-April or Oct-Nov. Within reason, there are no restrictions on age or weight and is open for anyone to try. Bookings can be made either directly at the company or at one of the many agencies around lakeside and in Thamel. While in Pokhara, a lot of hotels too offer booking services too.

## Equipment

The cost of rentals are usually covered in the cost of the flight. For those that advance beyond the pilots level, buying their own equipment is a good option particularly if taking further courses. Equipment is best bought from the flying company.

Once you have tasted flight, you will forever walk the earth with your eyes turned skyward, for there you have been, and there you will always long to return

— Leonardo Da Vinci

## TYPES OF FLIGHTS

### Discovery tandem flight (cloud buster)

The most basic flight where a pilot accompanies you. The pure thrill of being airborne and incredible views.

**Flight duration:** 30-45 minutes.

**Cost:** 70-80

### Cross country (XC) tandem

For those who have already tried discovery tandem, this offers the chance to fly from one valley to another using thermals and clouds.

**Flight duration:** 1 hour

**Cost:** 100-120

Expedition tandem flight  
Several Hours, 130  
Acrobatic flying

For the ultimate rush of adrenaline, and real showcase of skill – try manoeuvres like Helicopter, SAT, Back-fly, Tumble and Wingover” for some truly acrobatic flying.

**Cost:** - 70-80

**Flight duration:** 10-20 mins.



IN KATHMANDU  
Kathmandu Paragliding  
[www.ktmparagliding.com](http://www.ktmparagliding.com)

POKHARA AND BANDIPUR  
Blue Sky Paragliding, Thamel, Lakeside  
<http://www.paragliding-nepal.com/>

Sunrise Paragliding  
[www.sunrise-paragliding.com](http://www.sunrise-paragliding.com)

Frontiers Paragliding  
<http://www.nepal-paragliding.com>

Flying Fever Paragliding  
[www.flyingfever.net](http://www.flyingfever.net)





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# Current activities

*The river has taught me to listen; you will learn from it, too. The river knows everything; one can learn everything from it. — Herman Hesse, Siddhartha*

There is no other place in this world quite like the country of Nepal. Engulfed in the giant embrace of the Holy Himalayas, the landscape of the country stretches from a mere 70 meters (Kanchan Kalan) all the way to an astounding 8,850 meters (Mt. Everest) - the highest altitude on Earth. The dramatic topography of Nepal makes it not only the Mecca of trekking and climbing destina-

tions, but it has also blessed the country with an expansive system of rushing rivers. The 6,100 rivers that stretch endlessly throughout the vast valleys, some of which are the fastest in the world, have earned Nepal the name “the water tower of Asia.” Extending from the high mountain glaciers, these cherished sacred waterways are the ever-flowing source of life for the people of Nepal. For the river-runners of

the world, however, the rushing Himalayan water is an endless playground, a utopian set-up for exhilarating water sports such as rafting and kayaking. Surrounded by the unmatched beauty of Nepal’s landscape, navigate your way down technical white-water rapids, or paddle peacefully down quieter rivers - either way, an experience on one of Nepal’s magical rivers will breed new life into the flow of your veins.

*\*Starting locations can vary in relation to desired length of trip*

	Trishuli - The classic river	Bhote Kosi - The harmony of Tibet	Kali Gandaki – The holy river	The Bheri River	Sun Kosi - The river of gold
Available	Rafting and kayaking	Rafting and kayaking	Rafting and kayaking	Rafting and Kayaking	Rafting and kayaking
Starting Location	Kathmandu	Baseri, approx. 3.5 hours NE	Kusma	Samjhigat	Dolalghat
River Distance	160 km	20 km	72 km	142 km	260 km
Length	1-3 days	1-3 days	1-3 days	1-7 days	1-10 days
Season	Sept, Oct, March to May	Sept to May; June to Aug	Sept to May; June to Aug	Oct to Dec, Feb to May	Sept to May
Grading	1 - 4-	3 - 5+	3 - 5	2-4	2- 4 +



**USEFUL LINKS**

Rafting Association of Nepal  
[www.raftingassociation.org.np](http://www.raftingassociation.org.np)

Paddle Nepal  
[www.paddlenepal.com](http://www.paddlenepal.com)

Equator Expeditions  
[www.equatorexpeditionsnepal.com](http://www.equatorexpeditionsnepal.com)

Marshyangdi -The raging river	Seti – The warm river	Karnali – The Wild West	Arun – For the Adrenaline Junkies	Tamur – The Jewel of the East
Rafting and kayaking	Rafting and kayaking	Rafting and kayaking	Rafting and kayaking	Rafting and kayaking
Nagdi, Approx. 6 hours W	Damauli	Kalyandada	Tumlingtar	Dovan
52 km	35 km	180 km	50 km	155 km
1-4 days	1-2 days	1 – 10 days	1 – 9 days	1-11 days
Oct to Dec, March to May	Oct to Dec, March to May	Sept to May	Oct - Dec, Feb - May.	Sepr to May
4-5	1-2+	4+	4	3- 5-



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### THE RIVER SYSTEM

The rivers of Nepal can be divided into three categories, in accordance to their origin. For the purpose of water sports, the following river systems are in use:

1. Saptakoshi River System (East Nepal)
2. Narayani or Saptagandaki River System (Central Nepal)
3. Karnali River System (West Nepal)

**Short Rafting Trips:** between one and four days and do not involve any trekking  
Seti River, Trishuli River, Bhoté-Koshi River, Kali-Gandaki River

**Longer trips:** Five or more days, some with trek to Nepal's most remote areas:  
River Marshyangdi, Arun River, Sun-Koshi River, Karnali River

In these three river systems, eleven are open for rafting:

\*Travel time is approximated from the starting point of Kathmandu, with the exception of a few from Pokhara, as stated. Duration of travel time may differ significantly regarding the use of private or public bus transport. Flights are also available to or near many of the locations.

## KAYAKING

You can obviously do kayaking in most places where you can raft and a lot more places in addition to rivers. The Sun Koshi river is among the best places for kayaking anywhere. There are also a number of courses for kayaking available in Nepal via a number of agencies (see links below) for all levels from beginners to advanced.

### THE RIVER RAFTING GRADING SYSTEM

- Grade 1: Rapids are small, regular waves. The passage is clear and easy to negotiate.
- Grade 2: Rapids have regular, medium sized waves. Low ledges or drops, easy eddies and gradual bends. The passage is easy to recognize and is generally unobstructed although there may be rocks in the main current.
- Grade 3: Rapids with fairly high waves (1-2 meters), broken water, strong eddies, exposed rocks and small falls. Maneuvering to negotiate the rapid is required.
- Grade 4: Difficult rapids with high, powerful, irregular waves, broken water, often boiling eddies, ledges, drops, dangerous exposed rocks. Precise and sequential manoeuvring is required.
- Grade 5: Very powerful rapids with very irregular and broken water, large drops, violent and fast currents, abrupt turns, fast boiling eddies, numerous obstacles. Complex, precise and sequential maneuvering is required.

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# Welcome to the jungle

*TIGER, tiger, burning bright  
In the forests of the night,  
What immortal hand or eye  
Could frame thy fearful symmetry? — William Blake*

Photo by: Nirraj Karki

For those that have been bitten by the safari bug and lived the incredible moment of seeing a tiger in the wild, Nepal with 9 national parks, 4 wildlife reserves and 3 conservation areas is a natural destination. Add to that the amazing diversity of wildlife and birds and Nepal becomes not only unique but a must for visits with chances to see endangered species such as tigers, one horned rhino, leopard, sloth bear, elephants hundreds others.

The most popular safari destination in Nepal is the Chitwan National Park listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site which is located in the sub-tropical inner Terai lowlands of South-Central Nepal about 200kms southwest of Kathmandu. 43 species of animals have been recorded including the protected one-horned Asian rhino, the critically endangered Royal Bengal tiger, leopards, sloth bears, the gharial, marsh crocodiles, the gaur, wild elephants, the four-horned antelope, numerous species of deer, the striped hyena, the pangolin, the Gangetic dolphin, monitor lizards, cobras, kraits, rat snakes and pythons as well as 400 species of local and migratory birds!

Following Chitwan Park, the Bardiya National Park on the western Nepal is also a tropical park sharing its habitat with the India jungles & their beasts with truly wild settings. To get to Bardiya, flights are available from Kathmandu to Nepalgunj from where the Park is a ride away on a jeep or bus. Daylight sightings of predators are more common in Bardiya than anywhere else in other parks and it is home to some of the last wild elephant herds in Nepal, one-horned Asian rhinoceros, the Royal Bengal tiger, wild elephants, mugger crocodiles, gharials and Gangetic dolphins as well as endangered bird species that are given sanctuary such as the Bengal florican, the lesser florican and the Saurus crane. Besides this, the park is a transit for migratory birds which makes it very popular with birdwatchers.

Koshi Tappu region is increasing getting popular for its unique tropical

**FOLLOWING IS THE COMPLETE LIST OF JUNGLE SAFARI SITES AND CONSERVATION AREAS IN NEPAL WITH BEST TIMES TO VISIT.**

SITES	BEST TIMES TO GO
Khaptad National Park	Mar, Apr, May Oct & Nov
Rara National Park	Feb to Apr & Oct & Nov
Sagarmatha National Park	Oct & Nov, Mar to May
Shey Phoksundo National Park	Apr to Nov
Kanchanjunga Conservation Area	Mar-May & Sep - Nov
Langtang National Park	Around the year
Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area	Sep-Oct & Mar-May
Shivapuri National Park	Around the year
Shukla Phant Wildlife Reserve	Oct to Apr
Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve Tour	Apr to Nov
Parsa Wildlife Reserve	Mar to Nov
Dhorpatan Hunting Reserve	Mar-May & Sep - Nov
Chitwan National Park Tour	Sep to May
Annapurna Conservation Area Tour	Around the year
Manaslu Conservation Area	Mar-May & Sep - Nov
Bardia National Park Tour	Aug - May

climate on the banks of one of Asia's largest rivers. There are more than 280 species of birds in the reserve and it is also a resting place for migrating birds that can't be seen elsewhere in Nepal.

**ELEPHANT RIDES, CANOEING AND JUNGLE WALKS**

Here's a special feature - safaris in Nepal can be done either in jeeps or on elephants! The tall wild grasses make a perfect habitat for the elephants. Most jungle safari consists of canoe rides such as in Chitwan where you glide softly sharing the river with crocodiles! Jungle walks and elephant rides with experienced guides will let you see rhinos, varieties of deer and hopefully the ever-elusive tigers. (Chitwan at present is also home to the only surviving twin elephants which can be found at the Elephant breeding centre.)

Jungle safaris can be done either as a solo activity or part of a package. The national parks are located in Chitwan and Bardiya which are only about 4-5 hours from Kathmandu and very close to Pokhara which is a stopover for many treks including Annapurna.

The national parks offer a range of accommodations from well-appointed resorts to basic tent style and real jungle

**TIPS FOR SAFARI**

Chitwan and Bardiya the most popular places for safaris are both located in the Terai of Nepal which are hot most of the year. Dress light, in natural fibre clothing and in casual jungle colour clothes such as beige, brown, khaki and green that are least disturbing to the environment and most appropriate for wildlife viewing. Shoes made easy for walking - heavy walking boots are not needed. Don't forget your camera and insect repellent!

**SOME RECOMMENDED PLACES**

- Tiger Tops ([www.tigermountain.com](http://www.tigermountain.com))
- Hotel Parkside ([www.hotelparkside.com](http://www.hotelparkside.com))

themed cottages are available in some resorts. The resorts make a package for you that included everything from your sleeping arrangements to meals to days full of activity.

The cost of a typical one night 2 day activity package is between \$100-\$150 with longer packages (3 nights 4 days) costing between \$200-250. There are of course a few cheaper packages and much more luxurious and expensive packages to suit everyone's needs. All packages feature safaris, canoe rides, jungle walks and cultural tours.



ECS Media

# RUSHING TO THE RESCUE

*His favorite animal is the cat. Not any cat but the big wild cat we know as the tiger. As a development professional, he believes that projects funded by foreign organizations should be “Nepali led and Nepali driven”. I question him about whether at any point in life as a wildlife vet, he has feared anything and even before I can finish, he cuts me off with “I do not have any fear.”*

**BY YUKTA BAJRACHARYA**



Photo Courtesy: Dr. Kevin Rushing

**D**id it intimidate me that I had set out to interview the USAID Mission Director? Certainly.

But as soon as I entered the door which was plastered with children’s illustrations, I heard music playing inside the room and spotted a witty wooden slab on the table with ‘Whatever’ written on it, I took a breather. Two minutes with the man himself, and any sign of nervousness that I had in me had melted away. Dr. Kevin Rushing exudes genuine warmth and immediately brings ease to whoever he is with. He also seems adept at how to befriend both, people and animals.

In his 28-year career with USAID, Dr. Rushing has established himself as a dedicated development professional and a passionate veterinarian – a rare combination. “When I am going out in the fields, I am wearing two hats. One as the USAID Mission Director and at the same time, someone very devout about protecting the biodiversity,” Dr. Rushing says.

Rushing mentions that USAID is now hosting two projects – the tiger genome project and the ‘Hariyo Ban, Nepal ko Dhan’ project. “These are our major investments in protecting biodiversity and global climate change. We will be providing some resources to conduct the genetic fingerprinting of tigers in Chitwan and find out the actual count of tigers without putting the lives of tigers at risk. We will also be providing direct support to the government and working with the National Trust for Nature Conservation and its anti-poaching activities,” Dr. Rushing points out some aspects of the USAID projects. The projects are a clear sign of his drive to help animals and the environment because as he shares, when he got here in Nepal two years ago, no one was talking about doing anything for these issues.

Wherever Dr. Rushing goes, he provides his veterinary services pro bono. When working in the Philippines, Dr.

Rushing helped raise three Siberian tiger cubs, a Bengal tiger cub and an African lion cub in his own home. In Cambodia, he provided veterinary services to an international nongovernmental organization, WILDAID, to help stop the illegal trafficking of endangered species. In Ethiopia, he took care of several confiscated and injured wild animals that were too young to fend for themselves in the wild. Here in Nepal, one of the very first trips that Dr. Rushing made was to bring a tiger cub, Narayani, to the Central Zoo at Jawalakhel. Narayani had been rescued by villagers in Chitwan but she had been kept in a very small enclosure, restricting the tigress’ motion and proper care. Dr. Rushing jokes, “Narayani can still recognize me. When I visited the zoo recently, I went to meet Narayani. She let out a threatening growl – a warning to not come near her. She remembers that I had given her anesthesia.”

Dr. Rushing admits that working in Nepal has been one of his best assignments. “The counterparts that we have worked with – the government, the NGOs and all the other people – are simply great,” Dr. Rushing says. “No one wants to credit the government for the good things that they do. In my experience, the government has been great,” he continues. Often times, the people I meet who have faith in Nepal and its potential are the ones who are foreigners. Dr. Rushing is also one such example. He believes in this country and its good people and looks out to creating more opportunities for them. However, he does say that the revolutionary change in mindsets and behavior of people as far as being conscious about the environment and the like will probably not happen in his generation. “The next generation of young people is the one that will bring about the change that we need. Hence, we need to educate them well,” he says.

The fervent wildlife veterinarian went on to share some of his animal stories. First, he talks about Imy, the chimpanzee. On one of his visits to the Jane Goodall Institute ▶



Photo Courtesy: Dr. Kevin Rushing

“Narayani can still recognize me. When I visited the zoo recently, I went to meet Narayani. She let out a threatening growl – a warning to not come near her. She remembers that I had given her anesthesia.”

Chimpanzee Orphanage in Burundi, there was a lot of chaos because Imy was let loose. “Now, Imy had the reputation of being the biggest, baddest and meanest female chimp. When she came towards our car, we were instructed to move out of the way and get inside our cars but instead, I got down on my knees and spread my arms. Imy came charging towards me and then jumped into my embrace,” Dr. Rushing recalls. “Imy has been in the sanctuary since 1993, I still keep checking on her,” he reveals his fondness for the chimp who would not let go of him for hours. A photograph of the same moment hangs on Dr. Rushing’s office wall along with other photographs of him with a baby elephant, a tiger cub and a boa constrictor. “I use that picture with Imy as my Christmas card,” Dr. Rushing points out.

Next, we hear about the mongoose he woke up face to face with during his stay in Bangladesh. After that sudden encounter, he made friends with the mongoose, offering it food and even inviting it to sleep with him the following night. “The mongoose became my friend – one who would protect me from poisonous snakes,” says Dr. Rushing.

We also hear of a success story – where Dr. Rushing’s veterinary skills complimented and helped his professional work. When Dr. Rushing was in Iraq, there was a problem where the Al-Qaeda were recruiting widows. These widows’ pension had just been cut off, they had no source of income, no assets and had children to take care of. Taking advantage of this desperate situation, the Al-Qaeda was convincing the widows to strap bombs across their bodies and blow themselves off for money that would at least facilitate the needs of their children for some time. As a result of this, many widows were considering the option of becoming suicide bombers. To stop this, Dr. Rushing and his team established a small dairy co-operative which would allow the widows to generate some source of income. Dr. Rushing examined and bought several dairy cows and provided the widows with a herd of cows. Veterinary services, money for the feed and the other necessities were also provided to these women. The women directly sold the milk to the processing plants and earned a living.

Dr. Rushing’s parents always knew that he was destined to be a vet. This fate was

established after an incident with his parent’s friend’s dog when Dr. Rushing was only three years old. One day at his parent’s friend’s place, while the grown-ups were busy with a game of cards, baby Kevin was off somewhere. When his absence and the presence of an unfriendly and angry, 25-pound German Shepherd pet were put together, the adults panicked. But, to the surprise of the grownups, baby Kevin was tossing and turning and wrestling and playing with the dog who earlier, liked no one except the couple it was living with.

This assumption which was bound to be a reality was further supported by the various species of pets that Dr. Rushing brought home. Raccoons, rabbits, stray dogs, cats, lizards – there was a whole zoo in the garage. When the plastic veterinary kits first came out, Dr. Rushing had one for himself. He would engage himself in role-playing games and treat stuffed animals with his plastic stethoscope.

Over the years, of course, the stuffed animals and the plastic stethoscope have been replaced by their real counterparts but the love that Dr. Rushing has for animals has never been superseded. ■

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# WHEELS ON THE HILLS

## THE FIRST 10 YEARS.

Text by PETER STEWART

**H**istory is a wonderful subject as it tracks the developments of our world, filling in missing pieces and creating a larger picture of how we got to this point in life, especially when we pool together what has been going on globally.

Take the wheel, without it where would we be today? The streets of Kathmandu would be a lot quieter! Stone-age man may have watched a round rock roll down a hillside and utilised the idea. However, the Sumerians, from the region between

the Tigris and Euphrates, present day Iraq, were major players in inventing the wheel, man's greatest invention. They are the ones credited for developing it for practical application. The earliest representation of a wheel is shown in pictures in 3000 BC.

Some 5000 years later, it has resulted in some stunning machinery that biking enthusiasts like to put between their legs, which has created a life style, a sport and a massive worldwide industry that has also found a home in Nepal.

In 1974 it was Mike Sinyard, a guy that rode a bike to school and home who moved from importing Italian bike parts to establishing the iconic bike company "Specialized". With a culture of innovation it was his 1981 "Stumpjumper" (now enshrined in the Smithsonian Institution) as the first mass-produced mountain bike that really put peddles on the wheels (as far as mountain biking is concerned).

From his shop floor in Marin County, in the North San Francisco Bay Area, U.S. across the Golden Gate Bridge, that

became the birth place of the mountain bike. In the embryonic stages of the sport, it was guys like Gray Fisher, Charlie Kelly, Joe Breeze, Tom Ritchey, & Mike Sinyard that gave the sport a start.

But in truth the origins of the mountain bike date back many years before, precisely in 1933, when Ignaz Schwinn (also in the United States) created a very robust bike: the “Schwinn Excelsior”. Its popularity quickly spread among newspaper delivery boys.

With more races emerging Gary Fisher, changed his Schwinn, and applying changes to the gearing, allowing you to even go uphill! Joe Breeze realized that the secret of the old Schwinn was not so much related to the thickness of the tubes, as to the geometry of the frame. These breakthroughs led to the construction of a new bicycle frame with a similar design, but equipped with more efficient group sets; mountain biking was ready to explode. These bikes were called “all terrain bikes” or “fat tire bikes.”

Amazingly, just seven years after the Stumpjumper made its appearance on the world stage, it also appeared in Kathmandu about the same time. There seems little need to mention what mountain biking is; in 2011, it has blossomed into a highly participated off-road adventure sport that has enticed the Nepali youth to claim a strong standing in the international biking arena.

Eureka! It was in the fading months of the winter of 1988 that Himalayan Mountain Bike (Tours & Expeditions) now widely known as HMB, pioneered the business of mountain biking in Nepal and the Himalayas. A sporty and possibly visionary woman, in Francis Higgins along with the technical help of Greg Vann (who passed away in April of 2011 of cancer), it was Greg who trained the boys on bike mechanics and riding skills. It was Francis & Greg who saw what was capturing the interest of so many in America (races launched down Mt Tamalpais, State Park, Marin

County, as the first organized ‘mountain biking’ and the new American outdoor pastime) which would most likely suit the mountainous terrain of Nepal. Funny to note that Mt Tamalpais tops out at 784m (2571ft) whilst a ride down from Nagarkot starts at 2175m (7135ft). History has proven Francis correct and at that time mountain biking was considered one of the fastest sports to be adopted by the IOC for the 1996 Olympics and later for the 1998 Asian Games. (453)

These versatile machines of off-road terrain and the ground breaking races in Marin County lead to a week of competitions held in Crested Butte, Colorado, culminating in the crossing of the Pearl Pass (3,800 m) between Crested Butte and Aspen, with mountain bikes carried on ones shoulders for long stretches as the rider braved the adventure. In no time two crazed adventurers had set their attention on Nepal. In 1983, Craig Moffet and Brad Grunewald ventured to Everest Base Camp on their Himalayan Mountain Bike ▶



Photo courtesy Peter Stewart

Expedition, and as such opened up mountain biking in Nepal with HMB opening its office in Kathmandu five years later.

The first office of Himalayan Mountain Bike was located in the Kathmandu Guest House courtyard, another endearing landmark over these past 23 years and HMB put together the first ever mountain bike festival. The 3-day festival, held as a modest but inspiring event ignited conversations that started to spread stories of these multi-speed bike models that could take you places unimaginable compared to the traditional and more prominent Indian and similar Chinese models.

HMB had gained its first Nepalese mountain bike guide (Sonam Gurung) and via some guidance and inspiration from his friend Greg Vann, they teamed up on biking trips during the first year of business. Sonam has been a worthy holder and ambassador of the title of being the first Nepali mountain bike guide and with the combined talent and athletic ability of an ex-Buddhist monk and kick boxer he fitted the position well. Again as time has proven, he retains a prominent and

This event was won 4 years in a row by HMB and the very talented Nepal rider Rajbunshi being the first to win the HMBC and dominate the local scene for some years.

active place in the mountain biking scene today in his late 50's, and is certainly a fitting role model to youthful riders. Although we never cast away experiences of the past Sonam would be recognised today for his biking talents and contributions rather than his past in martial arts. In those early days with HMB, he ventured back to his home village of Manang to give villagers their first sighting of a mountain bike and in the same year as HMB commenced its tours, he is credited with being the first Nepali to cycle/carry to Everest Base Camp in 1988. He also won Nepal's first official mountain bike race organised by HMB (HMB Bike Festival) which brought a very modest cash prize of 500 rupees. Compared with the top prizes in the 2002 Himalayan Mountain Bike Championship, a 3-day Race Series which rewarded the winners with international flights, mobile phones and upwards of NRS. 30,000, it spells out the dramatic shifts in recognition of the sport in Nepal.

By 1993 and HMB reaching five years in business, Francis was departing Nepal and the next chapter of HMB emerged with James Giambromie taking the helm as Managing Director and a lot of new developments in store. The Himalayan Mountain Bike Championship (HMBC) continued throughout 1993/94/95 and it was some exciting race photos taken from a helicopter in 1994 and published in an international biking magazine, that built a name and presence for the race. It was scheduled to coincide with the Annapurna Triathlon held in Pokhara by having the HMBC event the week before the triathlon. Triathlons were the new fusion sport dominating the

world with its Swim/Ride/Run synergy of events and creating a new breed of super fit athletes which also blended well with a three person team relay. For many who were coming to Nepal for the Annapurna Triathlon, it became a good idea to travel a week earlier and participate in the HMBC. It was this combination of events on the Nepali sports calendar that saw the professional UK "Team Saracen" enter the HMBC Race and display the abilities of a top ranked team to the sports enthusiasts of the kingdom, which only inspired more interest in biking.

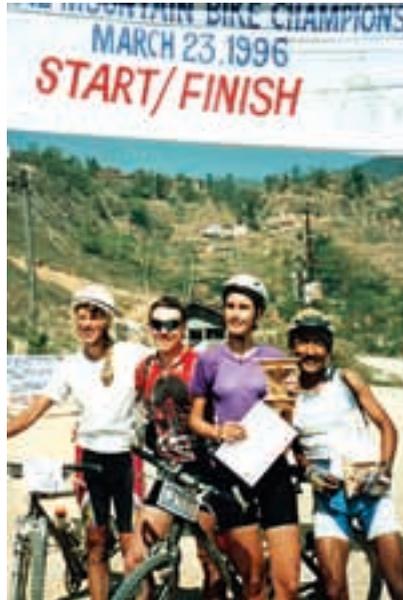
At that time HMB offered the first place Nepali winner, a place in "Team HMB" also made up of its other guides and staff, a sponsored trip to Pokhara. This event was won 4 years in a row by HMB and the very talented Nepal rider Rajbunshi being the first to win the HMBC and dominate the local scene for some years.

By this time HMB had expanded its tours outside Kathmandu Valley, to include Pokhara, Tansen and the Dang Valley finishing up in Nepalgunj where clients went to Tiger Tops to finish the tours. In the 90's, Kathmandu offered an almost unlimited range of biking trails commencing from the rim of the Ring Road, which is not quite so easy to do these days!

James, who was already an avid trail rider around the valley, was able to convince other crazed adventure seekers to purchase bikes from those bikers coming to the Himalayas from Tibet or overland from India and encouraged them to sell in Kathmandu. This was probably the birth of the 2<sup>nd</sup> hand bike market and a very convenient way to ►



Photo courtesy Peter Stewart



Photos courtesy Peter Stewart

acquire a good bike, otherwise a scarce commodity. As the number of riders built up and gathered for morning rides the famous Gear Wallah Club was created from James's initiative and for many years became the focal point for locals exploring the valley, so much so that the first mountain bike tour guide book (*Hikes & Bikes*) was written by James. That tradition of the morning rides, especially on Saturdays, has spread to many such groups of mountain bike lovers. Not surprisingly, his first bike was the reputed Schwinn (18 speed) which was upgraded for the classic Specialised "Stumpjumper" In the 90's, his next ride was the first all suspension "Proflex" with its big yellow elastomers as shock absorbers after which the company K2 brought them out and the state of the art 'full suspension' version entered the market.

It would be fair to say that HMB was definitely the commercial pioneer of the sport and James the grandfather of mountain bike racing in Nepal when he sold the business after 5 years in 1997.

An Australian adventurer, cycling enthusiast and Triathlete in Peter Stewart visited Nepal in 1995 and naturally gravitated to HMB, just at that time

the Annapurna Triathlon was again being staged. With a recent World Cup Triathlon completed in Australia and the Hawaiian Ironman World Triathlon Championship some years earlier, Peter joined the HMB team in Pokhara. The lure of Nepal and the whole adventure scene was magnetic with its abundant trails and unlimited opportunities to explore, not just the physical adventures but also the fertile environment of Buddhist teachings. By mid 1995, Peter was managing HMB and in 1997 had decided that Nepal could well be his future home. It was in 1997 that again saw HMB enter a new age of adventure tourism from Nepal under Peter's guidance and management.

In the early 90's, the only way to reach clients was by published details in guide books that offered a fax number. The fax enquiry would arrive and a typed reply would be printed and faxed back, and so it would go on until a booking was made, at a cost of about \$7-9 per fax! In about 1996-97, with the amazing revolution of the Worldwide Web suddenly tour information could be published and electronic correspondence shared. It was just what tourism needed in Nepal to flourish.

The amazing landscapes and physical challenge of crossing the 1108 kms of the Himalayas by bike, venturing from the Tibetan Capital Lhasa via Everest Base Camp into Kathmandu held great appeal and HMB lead the way with many yearly expeditions across the Tibetan plateau with full camping services and a crew of talented and trained guides. With a decade of experience and greater ease of marketing, HMB's tours started to expand beyond the boundaries of Nepal.

During 1996 and 1997, the promotion of biking as a profession was expanding and this included giving some recognition to the Rickshaw Wallah's of Kathmandu City. With a talent for event management Peter created *The Great Kathmandu Rickshaw Race* organised by HMB and its Committee that saw more than 100 rickshaw wallah's race over 10 events, sprinting down Durbar Marg starting from the Palace Gate that resulted in an elimination final of the ten fastest. Parades, marching bands and some 10,000 people witnessed the winner taking the Grand Prize of a custom built rickshaw, all sponsored by Kathmandu businesses whilst also raising money for an education fund of young kids. The winner became an overnight legend amongst his peers.

In the winter of 1998 HMB pioneered Helibiking into the Nepal Himalayas when it signed up 24 enthusiastic and inspired expat-mountain bikers living across Asia and chartered a huge M-18 Russian Helicopter that would drop them & their bikes in Jomson. Over 7-days they would bike out after first reaching Muktinath. On the morning of the tour, departing Kathmandu they were blessed with sunshine after 10-days of non-stop snow and poor weather that left 4-6 feet of snow on the Jomson airfield and a glorious start to HMB's pioneering spirit in Helibiking that continues today with several drop zones around the greater valley rim of Kathmandu allowing for the euphoric joy every mountain biker wants, experiencing a full day of downhill & off road trails.

This first 10 years was just the starting point from which mountain biking in Nepal was about to take off. Stay tuned! ■

# IN FLESH AND FEATHERS

LOOKING BACK AT NEPAL'S RICH WILDERNESS AND BIO-DIVERSITY

By KAPIL BISHT





ECS Media

In the World Heritage Site area of the Syombhunath Hill, at the base of its southern face, is the old, red monument that houses Nepal's natural heritage. That building is the Natural History Museum.

Since its establishment in 1975, the Natural History Museum has been collecting specimens of Nepal's flora and fauna. Today, its collection has surged to over 50,000. The museum's collection is a true treasure trove for anyone interested in wildlife. The list of the specimen numbers in its collections is impressive: butterflies and moths (14,843), beetles (4,142), dragonflies (1,464), other insects (1,604), lower chordates (6), fish (890), amphibians (107), reptiles (390), birds (1,194), mammals (225), skeletons (22), fossils and animal body parts (964). It also has 107 models of plastic-clay and 74 of rock and

minerals. It has a rich botanical and mycological collection too: algae (124), fungi and mushrooms (2,320), lichens (61), bryophytes (1,124), pteridophytes (507), gymnosperms (163), and angiosperms (5,034). Partly because the museum hasn't been able to develop its infrastructure in response to its collection's growth and also because it adheres to the norms of the museum world, only 5000 of the total specimens are on display.

Although lifeless and mute, the specimens produce the same sense of grandeur and curiosity, of loss and yearning that an old map of one's country showing its ceded territory does. "A museum of natural history is a reflection of Nature, a means for comparison. It shows what we have or have had and allows comparisons to be made between the past and the present," says Dr. Keshab Shrestha, Chief of the

museum. According to Professor Karan Bahandur Shah, head of the museum's herpetology and mammal section, the past becomes tangible in the museum. "Here you can see and touch animals that are extinct or that you have only read about in books and seen in photographs," he says.

Beside most of the animal and bird specimens on display are small cards bearing the particular specimen's scientific name, common name, Nepali name, and description of its habitat. In the lowest line appear the words 'common', 'vulnerable', 'endangered', or the disheartening 'extinct'—indicators of the particular specimen's status in the wild. To visitors that have been following the status of wildlife in the country, the information on the cards is not only obsolete but depressing. They know the 'common' are common no more; that there's no security for the 'vulnerable' and



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they know not how long the ‘endangered’ have before they become ‘extinct’.

But not all specimens spell doom for their kind or spread gloom in the visitor’s heart. When I saw on the card beside a bird the words ‘Comb Duck’, memories of the ducks flying over the paddy fields in the Terai during monsoon and their sonorous cries came back to me. And something as simple as a flask made out of a gourd and a pitcher of wicker reminded me of the Tharus of my hometown. I remembered Tharus drinking from the flasks and how they placed the fish they had caught into the wicker pitchers that hung from their waists. On a board and under the heading ‘species of butterflies that have disappeared from Godavari’ some butterflies have been pinned. Although a sense of loss is felt on seeing the specimens, it is also a

sight that would evoke happy memories for anyone that visited or lived in the Godavari area when these butterflies were around. Visitors can see their nation’s natural wealth and history in the museum, but there’s an equal chance that they’ll discover personal memories as well.

There are also specimens of wild-life that would be almost impossible to observe in their natural habitats, or alive. The museum is perhaps the most convenient place to observe the endemic and elusive Spiny Babbler. It is the only place to see the Mouse Deer (Indian Chevrotain), which is believed to be extinct in Nepal. I came to know from specimens that there are places in Nepal where I can see flamingos and pelicans, which I thought, I could only see on National Geographic. (I was convinced

of their occurrence in Nepal only after Dr. Hem Sagar Baral, an eminent Nepali ornithologist, told me that these birds were migrants). Specimens of nature’s artistic works like the Golden Pheasant, an exotic bird from China, balance some of its grotesque creations: an eight-legged embryo of a goat, a four-legged chick, and a two-headed snake.

A tour of the museum is a spectacle ranging from one end to the other in terms of size: 13-foot pythons, 12-foot gharials, the Sarus Crane, which at 5 feet is one of the largest birds in the world, and the Atlas Moth, the world’s largest moth, measuring between 6.3 inches to 11.18 inches, and bones of elephants share the museum with snakes that are a few inches long and the skeleton of a domestic cat. The fossilized skull of the Archidiskodon, an elephant that ▶

Coiled, mounted,  
laid out in a  
file, or pinned  
to boards, the  
specimens are  
historical records  
in flesh and  
feathers.



roamed the Siwalik Hills of Nepal and the molar teeth of *Shivapithecus*, a hominoid, are believed to be around 3 million years and 8-10 million years old, respectively. The Karan's Pit Viper was discovered by Professor Karan Bahadur Shah in 1998. It also has a specimen of the Bajhang frog (*Paa ervepeae*), a frog species endemic to Nepal.

The sight of some specimens took me back in time. When I saw a Great Indian Hornbill in a glass case, eyes shut as though in a deep slumber, I imagined it in the ancient forests that this majestic bird once inhabited in great numbers. I tried to picture the forest cover of the Ichangu Narayan area in north-east Kathmandu, where a King Cobra had been captured. Coiled, mounted, laid out in a file, or pinned to boards, the specimens are historical records in flesh and feathers; they transcend time and life itself.

#### NOT JUST A STOREROOM

Dr. Shrestha believes the influence of the museum is not just limited to the exhibition hall, nor that preservation is its only function. "This museum is not just a place for storage. It can be a center for scientific research and a medium for raising awareness on our country's biodiversity," he says. For Shrestha, a natural history museum should reach out to the scientific world and the common people with its knowledge and information. The Natural History Museum did that in the past through its mobile awareness camps, where it took some of its specimens to various places in the country and put them on display for schools and villages. The response from the public was memorable. "For years after our visits, people used to write to me, inquiring about the status of some of the species they had seen during the exhibition. Some even wrote poems on the animals," he recalls. Unfortunately, the program was discontinued after 1990.

In Shrestha's opinion, the exploitation of Nepal's biodiversity has its roots in ignorance. "Our museum can provide information and knowledge on wildlife to

people," he says. Since its establishment, the museum has continued to be a center for research and study on Nepal's biodiversity. It collects, identifies, and preserves specimens of the country's flora and fauna. Each specimen is registered in the museum's database and is a step towards one of their goals 'to create a complete collection of the Nepalese flora and fauna'. The museum uses the data and findings from its research and specimen collections to ascertain the status of Nepal's biodiversity. It then disseminates the information and knowledge thus obtained to the public. For this purpose, the museum has been publishing the *Journal of Natural History Museum* – the oldest journal on nature in Nepal – annually, since 1977. It has also brought out a number of books and field guides on wildlife, such as snakes and butterflies. Shrestha also told me that the manuscript for a book on the museum is ready.

The museum is the scientific authority in fauna for CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) in Nepal. It conducts training programs on CITES-related issues for teachers, students, and people working in Nepal's conservation sector. It also holds regular trainings in taxidermy.

#### LESSONS FROM THE DEAD

The specimens in the museum, Shrestha believes, help us learn about nature. "A dead animal is not useless; they serve us even after dying. They teach us how things were and how they will be. The specimens we have are a source for reference for scientific study," he states. He believes that wildlife, like any other resource, should be re-used. "Specimens of wild animals – those that die of natural causes or those that are confiscated – can be used for posterity," he says.

Shrestha wants to put Nepal's natural wealth on display for the people who, he feels, are oblivious of their natural riches. "A look at the specimens reveals our natural richness. People should be able to see what Nepal has and what it had," he says. ▶



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During his years of working in the Natural History Museum, Shrestha has seen dead specimens instill an appreciation for life in people. “People see a specimen, and they think, ‘If this specimen is so beautiful, how pretty must it be alive, in the wild’. During and after a visit to the museum, people acquire a new sensitivity and perspective towards what they took for granted and treated indifferently. In Kathmandu, we no longer hear a frog’s croak or a jackal’s howl. When people come to the museum and read about the role of frogs and jackals in our ecosystems, they realize the importance of these creatures,” he explains.

#### METAPHOR

The museum may have realized the importance of our nation’s natural wealth, but the government or the people are yet to realize the museum’s importance. Our nation’s annual budget does not allocate any funds for the country’s only museum of natural history. Even among the inhabitants of Kathmandu only a few people know that such a museum exists. Fewer know where it’s located.

In the absence of government funding and policies, lack of infrastructure,

and interest among the public, the Natural History Museum has acquired the look of a taxidermist’s unfinished work; the appearance shadows the vision. I asked Shrestha what the reasons for government and public apathy towards the museum could be. He had no explanations for it. I suggested that maybe it was because the museum’s specimens of dead birds and animals were after all a poor substitute for the live ones in a forest. He told me he accepted the museum’s status as a substitute. But he also said that it had some advantages over a jungle, too. “You cannot see everything that lives in a forest or do what you want when you’re there. In our museum, however, you can see and do much more. You can touch a crocodile, count its teeth, and measure its snout,” he said.

The issue, however, is not what one can see in the Natural History Museum, but what the specimens look like. One recent visitor, a Belgian-French citizen, was disturbed by the difference in what he had read on the museum’s brochure and what he saw on display. His photographs of the disintegrating specimens appeared on the center page of a local English daily. He expressed

his anguish in a paragraph succeeding excerpts from the museum brochure: *...I spent a bit more than two hours in the museum, trying to understand the gap between what I read and what I was seeing... It became rapidly clear that this strange disintegrating microcosm could only be seen as a metaphor of the situation of the whole country.*

The above-mentioned observations aren’t exaggerations on the visitor’s part, but it would be a mistake to consider them as the only way to describe the museum. Deciding against visiting the museum because it’s not in a good condition is like not visiting the attic because it’s dusty. Sometimes the best aspects of our past lie hidden in places where we don’t bother to look. The Natural History Museum is one such place. Visit the Natural History Museum and discover the richness of Nepal’s biodiversity.

And don’t forget to count the crocodile’s teeth. ■

The article on the museum’s plight was written by Frédéric Lecloux and was published in *Republica*. The Natural History Museum is open from 10 am to 5 pm (10 am to 4 pm in winter) on all days except Saturdays and public holidays. For more information, call 01-4271899, or e-mail [nhm@htp.com.np](mailto:nhm@htp.com.np)

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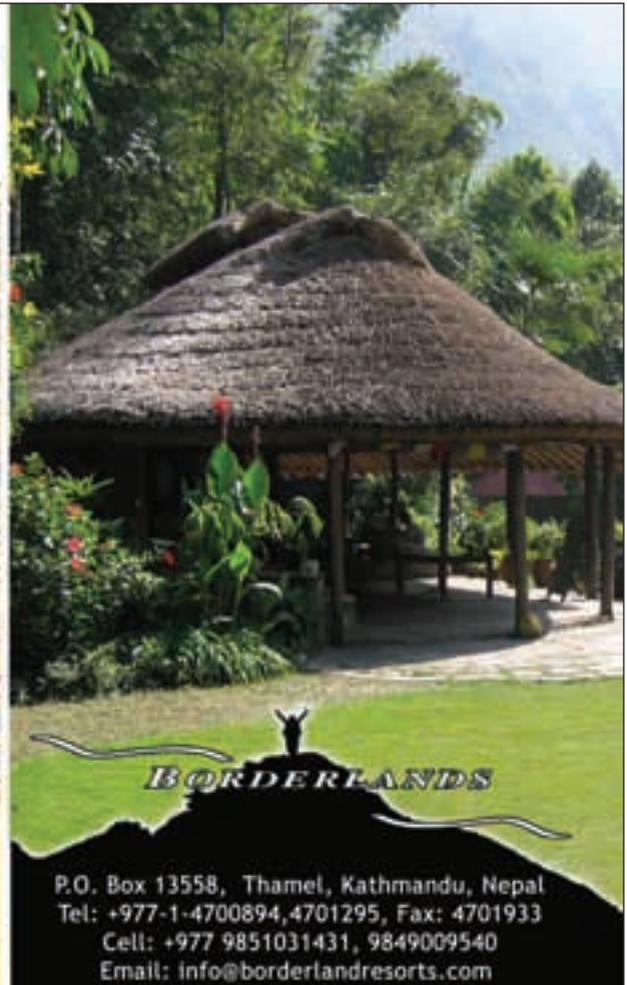
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# House of The Holy

*Kumārārūpā Kaumarī mayūraravāhanā  
Raktavastradhārā tad vacchūlāsaktidharā mata*

BY ABHAS D. RAJOPADHYAYA

**T**he *Matsya Purana*, one of the eighteen *puranas* of ancient Hindu mythology describes the image of *Kaumari* as the female counterpart of Lord Kumar, sitting upon a peacock (*vahan*), clad in red cloth and possessing *sakti* and *sula* as her weapons. Even the *Kumari Tantra* describes the Goddess Kumari in the same red form. She is also taken as one of the eight Matrikas (Ashta matrika) and nine Durgas (Nava Durga), and is respected as a mother-figure in both Hinduism and Buddhism.

Goddess Kumari is worshipped in many different forms around the world. The Indian version worships the Kumari in a living child on special occasions in Dusshera (the tenth day of Dashain festival) and elsewhere in the

form of an idol. The Nepal Mandal (i.e. the Kathmandu valley along with organized Newar settlements in the outskirts of the valley), also has its unique version of the worship of the mother-goddess, Kumari, in the living form.

#### **KUMARI CHHEN**

The Mallas of the Kathmandu valley were great patrons of the Goddess Taleju Bhawani. Legend has it that they even met the goddess in person and often talked and played *tripasa* (a traditional game played using two dices by moving pieces corresponding to the numbers over a piece of cloth divided into various squares) with her. But, in course of time, over some misbehaviour with the mother-deity or due to a heinous crime a king got stripped off

the rights to see the goddess in person. Lately, when the king apologized to the goddess during a tantric ceremony, the goddess finally agreed to be hosted in the body of a young Shakya girl, who was subsequently entitled to take the office of a royal Kumari.

Then, according to the promises made to her, the foundation of the Kumari Ghar was laid in Nepal Sambat 877 Falgun (1757 AD). An annual chariot procession of Kumari along with those of Lord Ganesh and Bhairab too was started then.

#### **ARCHITECTURAL OUTLOOK**

The Kumari Chhen (Newari name for Kumari Ghar) is typically in the shape of a typical vihar dedicated to Buddhism. Though it is commonly called Kumari ▶



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Baha or Kumari Temple, it is also gets its name in respect to Boddhisatva (i.e. near Buddhas) — Rajkiriti Manoram Mahavihar. Renowned expert, Mary Slusser, however, attributes the temple with the name Rajlakshmikula vihara, where the royal (state or Raj) Kumari resides and has her shrine established.

This is true in case of other Kumari houses as well. Almost every Kumari is associated to specific vihars, whether or not they are permanent residents there. For instance, the abode of Kumari in Patan at Haka Bahal is called Ratnakar Mahavihar. In Bhaktapur, the Yekanta Kumari resides in Chaturvarna Mahavihar or Dipankar Vihar. In Chabahil, she is associated to Suvarnapurna Mahavihar or Charumati Vihar. This also applies to the living Kumari of Kilagal, Kwabahal, Mubahal, Tanabahal, Bungamati and so on.

The Kumari ghar of Kathmandu lies south-west of the Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square compound next to the Sikha Mubahal, in front of Trailokyamohannarayan temple (commonly called Dash-Avatar Mandir) and Gaddi Baithak. The

eastern face of Kumari Ghar has an open façade at the south-eastern corners of which houses the Kathmandu Metropolitan Hanuman Dhoka Conservation Programme Office and Nava Adarsha School. Towards the south of the Kumari Ghar is Gwachhemuga Galli connecting Freak Street with Singha Satal. The front façade facing north is decorated with ornate woodcrafts of medieval period. Atop this north face on the roof covered with terra cotta tiles is the pinnacle (*gajur*). This pinnacle is different than common ones found on most some temples as it has one pinnacle slightly bigger than two identical sized pinnacles on either side. From the pinnacle hangs a long gold-plated strip called *pata*.

The building is surrounded both inside and outside by a wider plinth covered with bricks and stones. They now host a resting place for passers-by and a store for wooden logs of the chariot used during the annual Kumari procession in Indra Jatra. This three-storey chariot is placed adjacent to Kumari Ghar. Another small chariot called the Viman Khat (meant to be carried on

shoulders) is placed at the open eastern side under a small enclosure made especially for the chariot.

The ground floor has exquisitely carved doors with tympanums worked with equal mastery. Among the three doors, only the middle one is open. The stone steps leads to the main door and has two life-size lions placed on either sides as guards to both, the temple and the deity. The northern side has 22 exquisitely carved windows in various forms. There are a total of 11 *Tiki Jhyas* or *Akhi Jhyas*, three *Ga Jhyas*, two *Chakla Jhyas* and six *Sa Jhyas*. The main *Ga Jhya* directly over the main entrance is gold-plated in the centre and it is believed that no one but the Kumari can only see outside this window. This Kumari *Jhya* was established with tantric rituals on the occasion of *Varshabandhan puja* (annual worship) in Nepal Sambat 878 Ashwin (i.e. AD 1758) by king Jaya Prakash Malla and queen Dayalakshmi Devi. This window is again elegantly carved with 39 flying-horses at the bottom.

Except the two *Aakhi Jhyals* and a set of three *Sa Jhyals* in the eastern façade, ▶



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there are no other elaborate windows. The southern façade has simple windows. Lacking ornate woodwork and the western side has no windows as it is attached to Sikha Mubaha.

Inside the Kumari Ghar is an open courtyard (or bahal) in the midst of which is a chaitya (locally called the Chiba Dya). The stone chaitya, as many other chaityas in the Nepal Mandal, is crafted with Pancha Buddhas or Five Buddhas. The bahal also contains the two Chakras one of which is carved with the tantric Kumari Yantra.

In a typical Newar residential style, the Kumari Chhen can be distinguished as Chhidi (the ground floor), Maatan (the first floor), Chwata (the second floor) and the roof. Straight inside the bahal is a long passage wherein five Buddhas namely Vairochan Buddha, Amitabh Buddha, Amogh Siddhi Buddha, Akshyobhya Buddha and Ratna Sambhav Buddha are established.

Directly over this, at the second floor is another Sa Jhya from where the Living Goddess gives a short glimpse everyday to the devotees.

Before stepping down into the bahal, there are two holes on either side

of the walls which are worshipped as Nasadya (the god of dance and other arts) and Mahankal Bhairav especially in annual Varshabandhan.

At the top floor is the grand throne of the living goddess. Set in a special room, the golden throne is carved with peacock as the seat (*aasan*). On the final day of Indra Jatra and in Dashain, devotees worship the Goddess Kumari seated on this throne in this room.

Alongside this magnificence, terracotta images carved at the plinth of the bahal too bear artistic excellence. However, the story to those carvings has not been worked out.

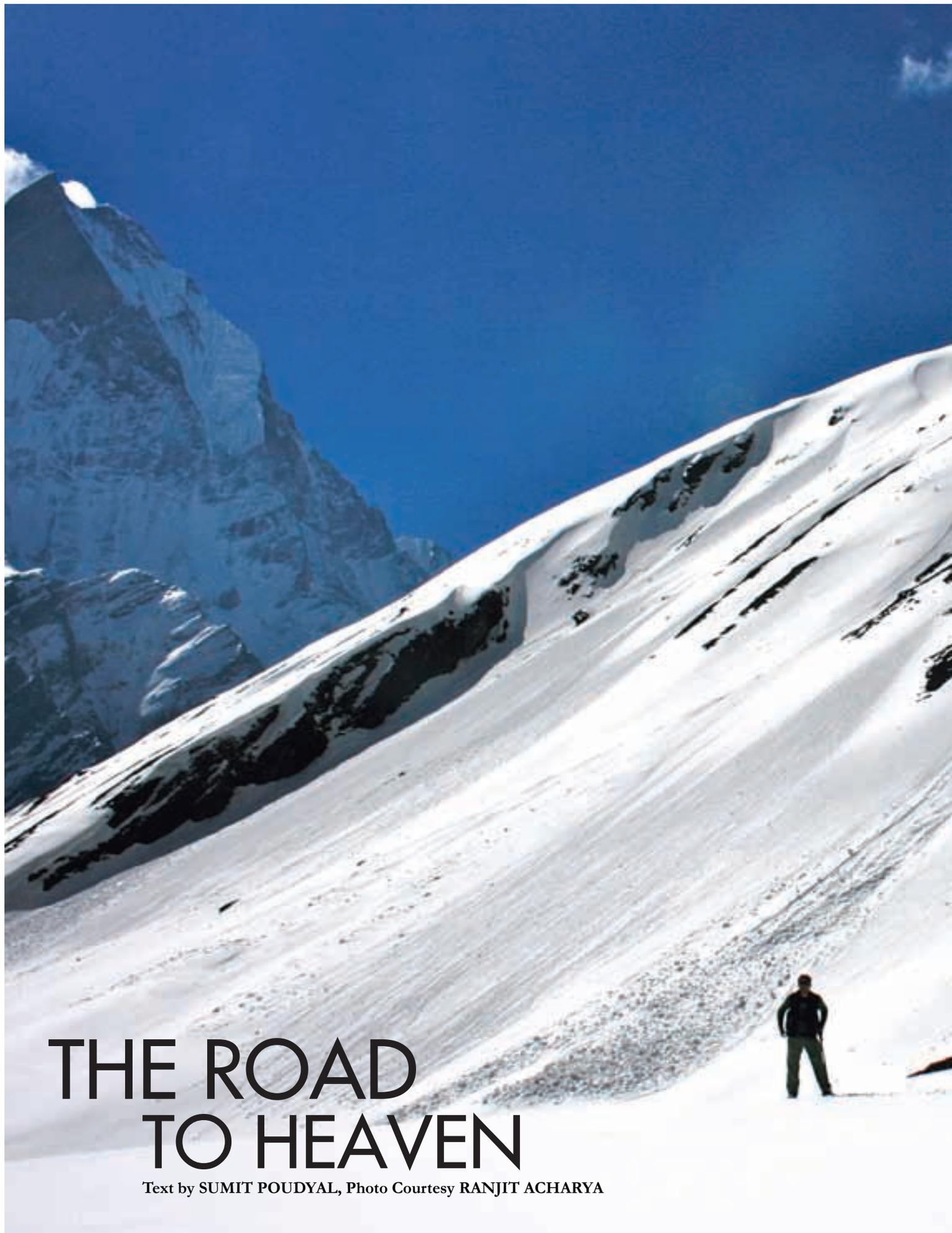
#### WALL PAINTINGS

The house of the living goddess has walls that are artistically painted with many different religious crafts. The wall paintings are found only inside the Kumari Ghar, wherein one can find rare and colorful paintings of gods and goddesses belonging to various tantric traditions like Mahaganesh, Mahabhairav, Mahakumari, Vaishnavi, Tulaja Bhawani, Mahavarahi, Mahaindrayani, Mahachamunda, Mahalaxmi, Mahabrahmayani and Manamaheshwori.

The life-size painting of king Jayprakash Malla with hands folded in due respect to the goddess can also be found here. The king is shown at the right foot of the Goddess Taleju, whereas the queen Dayalakshmi is shown at the left foot along with prince Jyotiprakash Malla. These paintings portray the deep respect of the royal family to the goddess Taleju Bhawani and, ultimately, to the living goddess Kumari.

Similarly, there are wall paintings dedicated to four Matsyendranath (Karunamaya or Lokeshwor) of the Kathmandu Valley, viz. Padmapani Lokeshwor (Rato Matsyendranath, Lalitpur), Vajrapani Lokeshwor (Seto Matsyendranath, Kathmandu), Anandadi Lokeshwor (Adinath, Chobhar) and Shristikanta Lokeshwor (Nala Matsyendranath). Also the wall paintings of Swoyambhunath Stupa, Hanuman, Narsingha, Pachali Bhairav, Kal Bhairav, Bagh Bhairav of Kirtipur, Dolakha Bhimsen, Dakshinkali and other yog-yogini (demi gods and goddesses) have been placed in the Kumari Ghar.

These wall-paintings adhere to the fact that medieval Nepal respected all religions and cults, and so does the abode of the living goddess, Kumari Ghar. ■



# THE ROAD TO HEAVEN

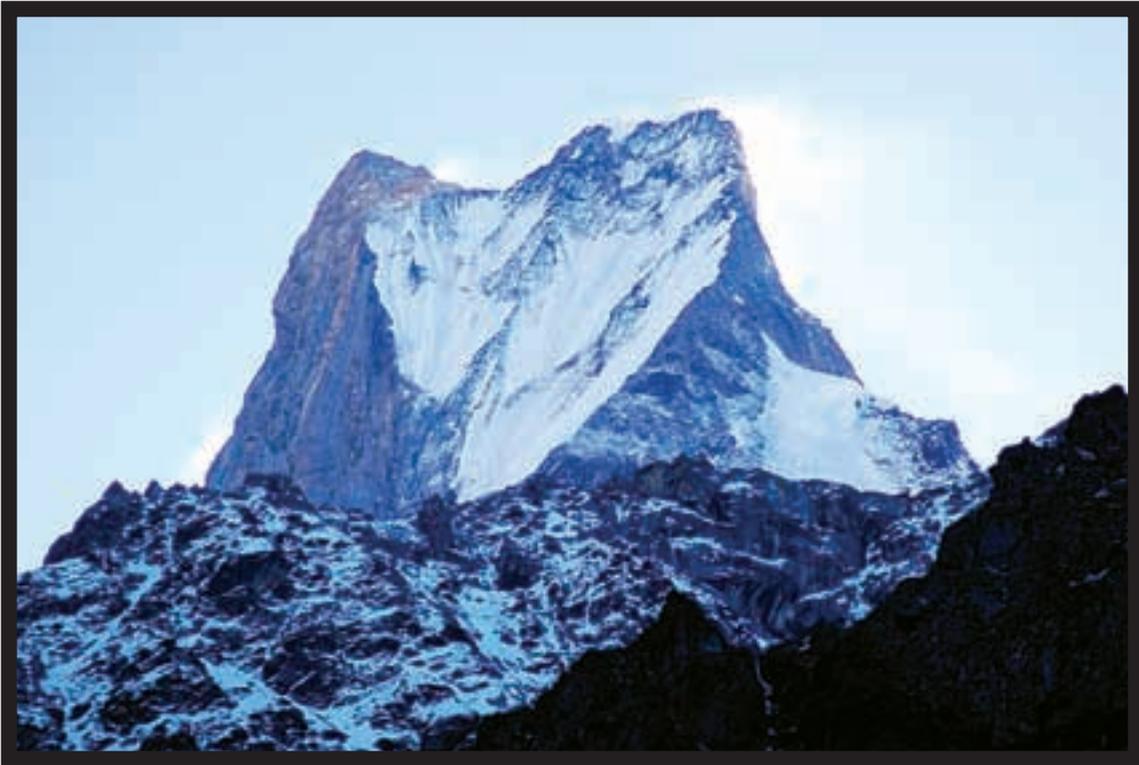
Text by SUMIT POUDYAL, Photo Courtesy RANJIT ACHARYA



A trek to the base of Annapurna is an experience – of a lifetime, perhaps a life changing one. It holds differing meanings for different people – a break from the routine life, a vacation plan, a quest for tranquility or simply a fun trip. The journey passes through forests brimming with greenery and blossoms, valleys abounding in culture, rocky terrain devoid of life, and landscape covered in snow to culminate in an individual with more perseverance, more inner strength, more conviction, more love and more purity at heart. The magnificence of nature – unbound, unrestricted, unpolluted – is a divinity in guise that challenges all things human.



Basking in the glory: Midday through the walk, a rest is suggested. A whiff of the Himalayan chill does away with weary memories.



The striking Machhapuchhre (Fishtail) is finally captured: the summit attracts, eludes and agonizes before finally revealing its façade.



The prayer flags evoke emotions – love, spirituality, submission. The ranges inspires awe – accomplishment, the trekker's only will.



Journey half covered: The fond traveler is overwhelmed with memories as he takes one more step closer to home.



Serenity: The beauty of the gentle slopes is glorified by the sun and caressed by the winds.



Civilization fades into a haze: Attachment obscures the view to atonement.



Pretty teahouses have a phoenix story to tell: They are dug out of winter snow every spring.



Test of devotion: Deified by the forces of nature, the mother demands appeasing at an altitude.



Her majesty: Sunlight peeks through troughs in the snow clad magnanimity as heavenly clouds float hither and yon.

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# CRAFTS

FEATURE | PERSON OF THE MONTH | SHOP REVIEW

FEATURE

# Weaving lives together

Text by UTSAV SHAKYA, Photos courtesy: CARPET MUSEUM TÖNSMANN



Many of the Tibetans who fled Tibet during the Chinese invasion in the 1950s sought asylum in Nepal. After the then royal regime granted them asylum, most must have unpacked unwillingly, still taking in the sights and sounds of this beautiful yet strange land that they were supposed to call home now.

Something they had carried all the way from over the snowcapped mountains was however not something they had slung over their backs or pushed into their full pockets. It was not an expensive heirloom or a photo of a high *Lama*. Rather, it was something that seemed ingrained into their identities, a part of their lifestyle back home in their villages in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR). This something was an art form, a way of life, a means to a living – the art of weaving traditional Tibetan carpets.

Before then, Tibetans made rugs for their own use, which often involved religious ceremonies. There was little, if

any commerce in Tibetan rugs outside Tibet, although today the oldest rugs from Tibet are among the most desirable for collectors. The introduction of this art form in Nepal, a country alien to carpets kick started the Nepali carpet industry. Carpet artisans, both Nepalese and the Tibetan refugees living in Nepal, quickly made it clear that carpet making could be something big. Soon, word got around and promotions for producing the carpets commercially with intention to export abroad started.

The industry saw an exponential rise after the International Committee for Red Cross (ICRC) and Swiss Association for Technical Assistance (SATA) opened the Jawalakhel Handicraft Center. The first batch of Tibetan carpets finally made their way to Switzerland and the next few decades became the golden years of the Nepali carpet industry.

Of the first batch of carpets, one made it into Carpet Museum Tönsmann, a private museum in Espelkamp. The company owner, Jürgen Tönsmann,

winner of the high Moroccan Order of Chevalier de Ouissam Alaouite says, “The collection began in the 1960s and is updated continually. Opened to the public since 1989, the Moroccan Ambassador to Germany inaugurated the museum after a complete renovation in 2009.” Predominantly present at the museum are nomadic Berber rugs from Morocco that are up to 300 years old. Some special carpets are for example, a 120-year-old Beni-Ourain carpet, made using the wool of a breed of sheep that is now extinct and a Glaoua carpet, copies of which are present in the Textile Museum in Washington. Sharing space with these carpets are roomfuls of magnificent Tibetan carpets made in Nepal. With illustrations depicting traditional symbols in vivid colors, the carpet is distinctly Tibetan in style. Alongside the carpets is a 300 year old Tibetan prayer book, and traditional music instruments such as the historic *chen dung*.

The important thing about the facility is that by housing such a ▶



## AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. JÜRGEN TÖNSMANN, OWNER OF THE CARPET MUSEUM TÖNSMANN.

**How are Nepali carpets different to other carpets at the museum?**

Of the three main types of carpets we have on display at the museum – Persian, Moroccan and Nepali, Nepali carpets stand out due to the art on the carpets. Nepali designs, influenced hugely by Tibetan culture, are full of mythic elements and characters such as dragons and yetis. In terms of the story behind them, their history is very interesting too.

**How did you first come across Nepali carpets?**

I first came across Nepali carpets 50 years ago in Europe through a Swiss carpet pro-

ducer. He had a carpet from the earliest batch of carpets produced in that time. I brought one from him because it matched with the furniture I had at that time. It is on display at the museum today. Later, in the 1980's I traveled to Nepal and made direct imports too.

**How popular are Nepali carpets in the museum compared to the others available?**

Nepali carpets are very popular because of the difference in style. Most visitors are amazed by the difference in style that these carpets display. There was a time when the Nepali carpets did great business in Germany (160 million Euros in 1993), being the top importer of carpets in the world. Their trade volume was so great that

it even affected the trade of Moroccan carpets at that time. They fulfilled a gap in the market that was looking for something new.

That said, every client has distinct taste and is interested in different things about a carpet. I have noticed a large number of the youth find Nepali carpets very interesting. The thing about the Nepali carpets at the museum is that they have successfully forged a link with the Nepali experience. Many visitors who have traveled and trekked in Nepal come back and visit the museum for a different taste of Nepal.

**What can we do to attract the new, international carpet buyer? What are the shortcomings of our carpet industry?**

Nepali carpets are a very important part of the museum along with carpets from around the world. However, the governments of most countries cooperate with even the small-scale exporters helping us import a wider variety of carpets from their countries. This kind of help is crucial for the carpet industry. The taste of the client is always changing, it's like fashion. Regarding the problems, in the last few years, the production costs of the carpets in Nepal have increased dramatically. I do not know how this will be received in the European market and by the bigger carpets importers in Germany.

**What else would you like to say about the museum and the Nepali carpet industry?**

The museum is trying to do all it can to promote Nepali carpets. That is why we have an entire section dedicated only to Nepali carpets.

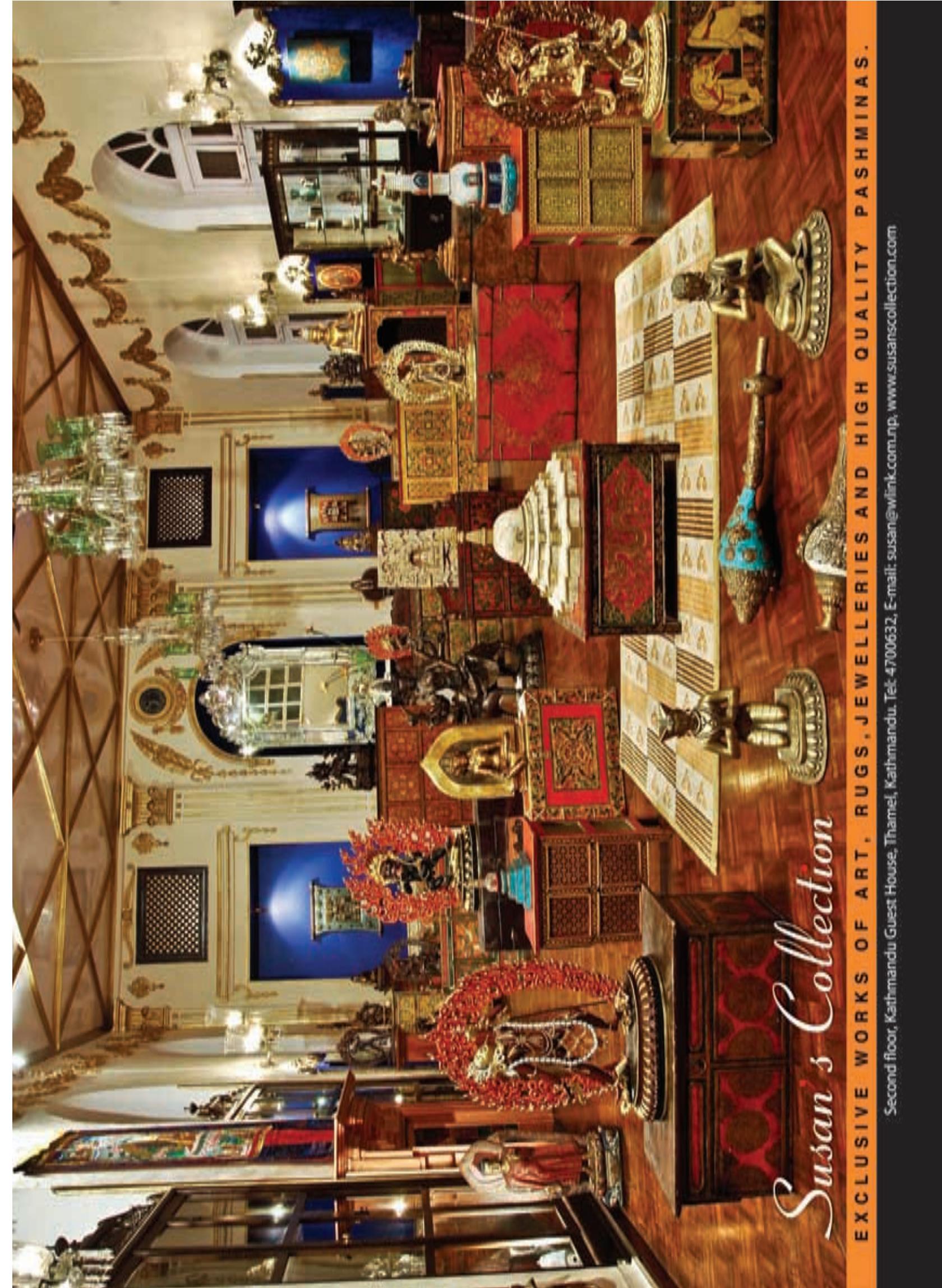
Back home in Nepal, carpet making has a terrific history attached to it. Although this history started out with some violence and heartbreak, as with all things in life, it too eventually seemed to find a semblance of a purpose.

huge variety under one roof, the place has become an important multi-cultural Mecca, weaving together fragments of the history of people and how they have lived around the world. These carpets represent the way people have lived, what has influenced their lives and what continues to, their religion and their beliefs.

Nepal's presence in the museum is nothing but good news for the Nepali carpet industry, which although not flourishing as before, still has the potential to make collectors stand up and take notice. Although the terrific history of carpet making does include a fair bit of violence and heartbreak, as with all things in life, it too eventually seemed to find its purpose. This

purpose seemed to be to impart their knowledge of carpet making – something they had learnt over a lifetime with lessons passed on from generations to generation – on to unemployed Nepalese, large numbers of which were illiterate homemakers and unskilled youth.

Woven into every inch of fabric and tied together into every complicated knot displayed at the museum, are stories of the tens of thousands of Nepali who worked painstakingly on these pieces, the stories of their hopes and aspirations besides the tall tales of 80,000 Tibetans who fled their homes. Above all, the story is of two not so different communities of people coming together, the Nepali way. ■



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## Dambar's Factory

Text & Photo By JULIA HORTON

**D**ambar's Factory – Child labor strictly prohibited. So states the sign outside Dambar Bishwakarma's silversmith factory in a surprisingly ostentatious house not far from the famous Swayambhunath 'monkey temple' in Kathmandu. What goes unwritten is that this thriving business is the only one of its kind in Nepal run entirely by Dalit people – and that neither Dambar nor his factory would be here today if it were not for a chance meeting with a good Samaritan.

It has been 20 years since doctors diagnosed Dambar with tuberculosis and told him to say his last goodbyes to his family. Medication was readily available, but as Dalits, his parents could not afford to pay for the treatment so the family accepted his fate. Fortunately, and not long after, Dambar found himself talking to a Dutch tourist, Jos Bus, at the jeweler's shop where he was working. Appalled by the situation, the visitor insisted on arranging lifesaving treatment.

After 18 months, Dambar recovered fully. Jos then offered to help him establish a fair trade silversmith shop so he could escape the traditional low paid blacksmith trade from which his family eked out a meager living. An old photograph shows just how delighted Dambar was to become a silversmith as he looks up from his work, grinning broadly into the camera.

Now 46, and still smiling, he employs around 20 other Dalit men who skillfully craft exquisite silver jewelry for high profile clients around the world. These include UNICEF, the international children's charity, which recently commissioned specially designed cufflinks from the factory. There is an air of quiet concentration about the place as the men tap away, painstakingly creating intricate designs in brilliant silver. In Dambar's office, a floor above the factory, a glass cabinet filled with rows of beautiful bracelets, pendants, rings and earrings takes up an entire wall while a few personal designs for his regular customers lie on the table ready for delivery.

Dressed smartly, Dambar welcomed me into the building, which is also his family home, and Jos' when he is in Nepal. Dambar tells me the story of his life again: "I never thought this would happen. It was like a blessing from god to meet Jos when he came to the silversmith's to buy some gifts. He wanted to use dollars, which is not legal in Nepal so I was sent with him to exchange the amount into rupees. He was very interested in the Dalit community and when he found out that I needed treatment, he said he would provide it. If I had not met him, I would not be here today."

Still appearing amazed by the turn his life took that day, Dambar is all too aware of the discrimination that still blights fellow Dalits,

including his own family in the village of Khadkabhanyang, a four-hour drive from the capital. "My village is still the same. One of my brothers still lives there and works as a blacksmith, making iron tools for Brahmins. He still cannot touch the Brahmins, go into their houses or drink their water. I feel very sad about that." Thanks to his good fortune, talent and hardwork, Dambar was able to get a loan to send his son to train to be a pilot, meanwhile his daughter hopes to be a doctor. He also helped pay for chemotherapy for a nephew diagnosed with cancer. Although Dambar has made several business trips to Holland and America, he remains loyal to Nepal and to his caste.

"In my community people think I am a lucky man. I have my own power, my own business, my own home. Although I like visiting other countries for business and to see family and friends, I want to stay in Nepal. Here I can do something for myself and for others," says Dambar. Beaming enthusiastically yet again, he shows me a sparkling new pendant that he has just designed especially for Nepal Tourism Year 2011, hoping to market it here.

It would seem a fitting way for Dambar's Factory to finally break into the Nepali marketplace. ■

For more information about Dambar's Factory:  
[www.dambar-silver.com](http://www.dambar-silver.com). Phone: 4353370  
 Email: [dambar@mail.com.np](mailto:dambar@mail.com.np)

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# Urban Neutral

*By bringing together eco-friendly and natural fibres, contemporary fashion and cutting edge designs, Karuna is pulling in customers in droves.*

By GARIMA RANA



ECS Media

The idea behind the store is to generate eco-friendly/natural fiber products geared towards local people and the local market, says Nischal Bajracharya, owner/founder of Karuna, the natural store. As the brand name suggests – karuna or compassion in Nepali, is the theme. “Creating affordable natural fiber products and bringing it to brand conscious Nepalese is our goal”, adds Nischal. Although the Karuna products are sold internationally, in places like San Francisco and Canada, adhering to their target/purpose, Karun stores can be found in and around different parts of Kathmandu city. They currently have stores in three locations, Durbar Marg, Lazimpat and Pulchowk. According to Nischal, they intend to expand in the near future into Pokhara and Dharan.

All the Karuna products are made in Nepal; their factory is currently located in Balkumari. The materials used in the creation of their various products are found in the lush and abundant natural environment, here in our beautiful country. The natural fabrics

that are used include in the Karuna products are – Hemp, Bamboo, Linen, Ramie, Rayon, Tencel, Viscose, Cotton, Allo, Soya, Banana, Cashmere, Wool and Silk. Milk Fiber is generating some buzz too and is something Karuna is trying to experiment with. Milk fiber has been around for a while, making its first appearance during the 1<sup>ST</sup> World War, when the Germans became interested in creating an alternate source of fabric. The milk fabric holds dye well, is extremely breathable and is also said to be good for the skin.

Nischal explains, “Originally, it all started as a family business, primarily working with hemp fiber, which later on expanded on its own velocity into a natural fiber brand Karuna. Hemp is commonly used still, due to its durability, light weight, absorbency and breathable qualities”. Hemp is the earliest domesticated plant; it is fast growing and very environmentally friendly. Hemp farming requires very little water and fertilizers, it is an easily renewable resource. The fabric is extremely versatile and cost effective.

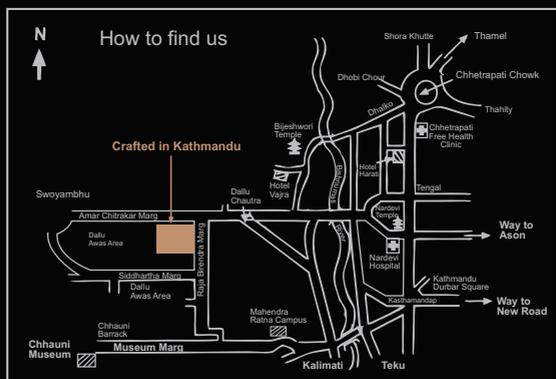
Karuna also manufactures leather accessories like wallets and silver products such as belt buckles, tie pins and cufflinks. “These products are handcrafted, authentic Nepali products, for which we use local man power and local raw materials”, informs Nischal.

Karuna as a brand aims to create awareness and generate loyalty-based products, which in turn, in the long run can build loyalty towards products made in the home county, instead of the imported products/brands. By producing and churning out great quality, fashionable creations, Karuna wishes to promote talent in Nepal, while also going with the Boutique culture, spreading and promoting the revival effort of Nepali textiles; contributing towards sustainable economy. I say, natural fibers are always better option, for both the body and the soul. Karuna promotes a sense of social responsibility by providing work at a local capacity and successfully fashioning eco-consciousness by blending the modern and the traditional into the cultural fabric. ■

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# TRAVEL

PEOPLE | FEATURE | GEAR OF THE MONTH | PLACE OF THE MONTH

PEOPLE

# DOWNHILL, WITH PACE

*The brand ambassador for commensal bikes, Tangi is out to take the sport to the youth.*

Text by PAT KAUBA, Photos Courtesy TANGI





I look in shock at Mr. Tangi as he explains the trick of falling off a bike: “the worst thing is to react, just relax and roll, when you come off. Those who react, tensing bodies, come out worse. You must be fluid, like a river. Most accidents only happen in the beginning, soon you develop tricks and style”. The concept frightens me as I look at this relaxed gentile, from Brittany, France, who says it all so matter-of-factly.

Tangi is not just any another mountain biker, who we see as commonplace on Kathmandu’s roads, dodging traffic with fancy jumps and stunts, riding impressive steeds, no, Tangi is an ambassador. And, not the ones we see in chauffeured SUV’s.

Eight years has been spent promoting *Commensal Bikes*, in Nepal. They know about not just building these beasts of flight, but of winning. Commensal holds over 80 world titles in mountain biking, especially in adrenalin packed, downhill racing. They have only been around for 13 years, before that Commensal was under another name, meaning: 13 years of winning, is backed by 25 years of experience. Asking what sets Commensal apart from the competition, Tangi smiles, “the man who designs our suspensions also designed the suspension for Formula 1 cars”.

His relaxed nature impresses me, at ease with his environment. Hearing

about the high-paced nature of the sport, I realise it would take lots to phase Tangi. He talks about a recent journey, Himalayan-side: “It took us three days to climb to the top, and, we returned in one and a half hours”! The worst thing was, he said it all without batting an eyelid.

“How did it all start”, I ask?

In his late teens, he had a knee injury and needed physio, finding cycling was best; it was not long before he was off-road. Back then it was a totally different experience, “there was no suspensions, no technology, not like today”. It was all really hard work, and it’s the main reason why mountain biking has only recently become popular. Tangi believes the advances in design and production, makes the sport more open to participation. Most want to just ride for fun he figures, maybe 80% of mountain bikers are recreational, in it for the thrill.

Where is the best place in the world, for the sport? Tangi swiftly responds with “Nepal. It’s all here: roads, trails, tracks and the mountains, Nepal is a land full of tracks, mostly unknown, but, I really like Mustang”. Having cycled 12 odd countries around Europe, Asia and North Africa, he figures here is the *crème de la crème* of trails.

Recently Tangi was over in Pokhara helping to set up a club, and soon he’s off to Dharan, in the east, checking

new tracks. On top of that, Commensal has arranged for the winner of recent competitions here, to go to France, to Megavalanche, a major downhill racing competition, in July. “Commensal really focuses on helping the youth”, says Tangi. Everyone who works at the factory in Andorra (a tiny mountainous country between France and Spain), are mountain bikers themselves and want to see the sport develop.

Nepal is a country that is quickly developing reputation amongst a niche of nuts, with world champions coming to experience and promote. Tangi enjoys seeing how the Nepalese are discovering their own country, he feels the future is bright, production companies are even making mountain biking videos, which in turn promote the sport and country, to the outside world.

Finally I just have to ask, why, why to do this sport, why to take the risk?

Tangi smiles, explaining: “Mountain biking changes your life; friends, plans, weekends are never the same again. Nothing beats that feeling when on top, in a totally wild place, finding your own limits, with a feeling of freedom”. ■

Pat Kauba is a freelance writer and photographer who admires the crazies, but won’t jowin them. He can be contacted at [patkauba@gmail.com](mailto:patkauba@gmail.com).



# Soaring over the peaks

*When it comes to “sightseeing”, sometimes the bigger picture, is the better picture.*

Text & Photos By PAT KAUBA



Before I know it, our 15-minute flying time has come to an end, and Stephen is back on the headset asking for landing permission.

**Y**ou are now clear for take-off”, comes the message over the pilot’s headset, as his right hand slips down to the throttle stick—acceleration is instant. The engine powered microlight aeroplane begins to shriek, as the runway’s end comes racing forward. With no covering over the small two-man cockpit, the air rushes past us, making breathing difficult for a second, just like on a fast motorbike. My flight suit, helmet and visor break most of the moving air, a tilt of the glider wing and we are up, before the runway expires.

Pokhara becomes smaller below, people turn ant-like in dimension, and the Annapurna Mountains stretch out in front. Ours will be but a short 15-minute flight, and we move straight in the direction of Sarangkot, the famed paragliding Mecca of Nepal and Asia. In early morning’s light, the colours of day are pleasantly muted, and at our altitude, mixed with this light, the whole expanse of my view becomes “life-changing”. Another microlight glider moves up behind us and for a short while we are as two (noisy) eagles, flowing through the air, until the other breaks off, heading deeper into the mountains, on a longer sortie than ours.

#### A VIEW FROM ABOVE

My pilot in this two-seater bathtub is Stephen Shrestha, Nepal’s only licensed microlight pilot. He has been at the flying game now for eight years, mostly in the U.S.A. and Russia. We move over Pokhara’s famed Fewa Tal Lake, the deep colors take my breath away as the World Peace Pagoda’s white color, shimmers in the morning’s glory.

Before I know it, our 15-minute flying time has come to an end, and Stephen is back on the headset asking for landing permission. He moves the handle that controls the shift-weight glider wing, we begin to descend, again the runway rushes towards us, but Stephen is cool as ice, bringing the wheels smoothly to

ground, as the bathtub races on towards the runway’s finish line. The throttle goes back with tested ease and comes to a perfect stop just outside of *Avia Club Nepal’s* hanger. As we come to a halt, the next set of adrenalin and serenity junkies are ready to board, and experience this Himalayan paradise, from its least spied angle.

A young lady, in red suit jacket helps me out of the cockpit, helmet, flight suit and prepares the pictures that Stephen had taken of the flight. I on the other hand was still busy processing the short, dramatic experience that I just went through, with the thousand and one things I had seen—as never before.

#### WHO IS AVIA CLUB NEPAL?

This May, the club will celebrate its 15th year in operation; it is in many ways the pride of Nepali aero-tourism. Why? Because it is the only place in all of Asia offering such a possibility, even most other countries in the world don’t provide microlight flying. But Nepal has it and more than that: it is becoming an ever-growing success story.

Praveen Gauchan, the manager at Avia Club Nepal explains to me about what they offer. Currently they have four shift-weight planes (microlights), that can fly for up to three hours and a single fixed-wing plane (Aeropratik); flown here from the Ukraine by its Ukrainian pilot. Except for Stephen the other pilots are all from former Soviet countries: Russia, Belarusia and Ukraine, but not for long.

A new option available for people at Avia Club Nepal is to take the microlight pilot’s training course. The first, in all of Asia, and beyond. Here it is possible to train and learn to fly one of these planes. And, after completing 25 hours of flying time you can go to CAAN (Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal), in Kathmandu, to take your final examination and become a licensed microlight pilot. Currently the program is in its first phase but is excelling with five Nepalese students and one Swiss. Soon Stephen won’t be the only Nepalese air-jockey in the sky. ▶



Praveen explains that if you have a licence you can hire their planes to use, also, many businessmen are starting to take an interest in this novel form of transport. Citing Nepal's rough terrain as their main reason. It can provide a quick, simple and not so expensive solution to moving about the country. Last January saw a two-week Para motor extravaganza, by the Federation Aeronautic International, with 25 pilots from ten countries participating in a cross-Nepal journey. Taking them to places like Hetauda, Baratpur, Palpa, Kathmandu and more. Proving the ability of these small agile planes in a taxing environment like the Himalayas.

Cruising anywhere from 80-120km/h, and licensed to fly up to 12,000ft, microlights are a dream to be in. Avia Club Nepal offers fixed packages ranging

from 15 minutes to one hour in duration, taking you from around Pokhara, to the deep Himal. But if you want more then of course more is possible, maybe you need to do research at high altitudes, then hiring a plane and pilot is also possible, or how about skydiving, why not, they've done it before, after all they can go to 12,000ft! So why not jump out and float back down? But no tandem-jumping folks, only solo, for the planes are strictly limited to one pilot and one passenger, only.

#### GEESE AND THEIR EGGS

The benefit and possibilities of micro-light flying in Nepal is a golden egg for the tourism industry. But more than that, Avia Club Nepal is a shining example of Nepali aeronautics. In 15 years, the club has seen many big airline companies

come and go, from Pokhara airport, even seeing others loose a plane or two, but these guys are still going (with an average of 25 flights a day) and have yet a blemish on their record.

So the next time you are in Pokhara and wondering what to do, maybe you would like to try something fresh and novel, looking upon the world from a whole new perspective. Give a high-altitude head-rush a try, on a fresh morning, go say hello to the mountains as you get your blood pumping. The world is indeed a beautiful place, and seeing it from above a paradise like Pokhara, will keep your throttle pumping for some time to come. ■

Pat Kauba is a freelance writer and photographer who is not an adrenaline junky, but loves the view from up top. He can be contacted at [patkauba@gmail.com](mailto:patkauba@gmail.com).

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# Running shoes

BY NIMMA ADHIKARI



ECS Media

**D**ifferent athlete shoes are designed for a particular sport that requires specific movement patterns and sporting positions. Using the wrong kind of shoes increases the possibility of injuries as it decreases the stability of the shoe making them less durable.

The running shoe is made to move along in linear direction or forward motion rather than side to side which renders it more suitable solely for running purposes. The heels of our feet pound during running and the rubber soles in the running shoes provide cushion effect as well as adhesive friction for a comfortable run. The materials used to create these shoes are light and flexible which easily adjust on the wearer's feet. It helps prevent injury and the running becomes more effective and efficient.

## FEATURES TO LOOK FOR IN A RUNNING SHOE:

The weight of the running shoe is very important for a swift run and manufacturers look for materials that provide enough stability with the lightest shoe possible. The outer-sole of a running shoe is semi-hard and is made by considering the traction and wear. The most important layer in a running shoe is the mid-sole that provides cushion and stability which is made up of a softer material. It is usually combined with harder and more durable polyurethane for support and structure to guide the perfect balance for a runner.

The type of feet a runner has is also vital for determining the correct pair of running shoes. Runners' weight is the other factor that determines the type of shoe they should put on for a comfortable run. Research shows that forty percent of all the running injuries are caused by using wrong pair of running shoes. Every runner has a particular type of

foot and running pattern, and these factors determine the injury risk.

Subash Singh, a kick-boxer says that since running shoes have spikes on the outer-sole, they help maintain a perfect grip on the ground making every swift of the run comfortable and easy. The cushioning of the shoe is the other part he feels is really necessary for the reduction of injuries and proper balancing. He states that the grade of running shoes is also important for performance standards; fit, cushioning, stability, weight and flexibility are the most important factors to look for in a good pair of running shoes. One should choose the shoe that is neither too loose nor too compact. Most manufacturers create separate versions of running shoes for men and women; women's running shoes are softer and flexible than the men's. He suggests buying a pair that is a size larger than your regular shoe as our feet tend to swell when we run. ■

### NORMAL (MEDIUM) ARCH

This is the most common foot type. You can choose any shoe that provides moderate arch support with neutral cushioning for a swift and fast run.



### FLAT (LOW) ARCH

If you have a flat foot, there is a higher risk of injury during running. You need to switch for motion-control shoes that provide stability with the dual-density midsoles.



### HIGH ARCH

The pounding on your feet during a normal run travels all the way to your upper legs if you have this type of foot which is the least common. What you need is a running shoe that provides softer midsoles that has no added stability device.





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# The great escape

*City sounds and sights getting on ur nerves. Relax an rejuvenete in Daman.*

Text & Photos by EUNICE CHAN



At an altitude of approximately 2500m, there is nothing more refreshing at Daman than its cold, fresh air. Boasting an extraordinary view of the Himalayan range, Everest Panorama Resort at Daman is the only place in Nepal where it is possible to view eight of the world's ten highest mountains.

I was told that at the resort I would be able to see Dhaulagiri in the west to Everest in the east; a whopping 400 kilometers of the Himalayan range can be viewed from the resort itself on a clear day. Although the weather did not hold up for me, I was pleasantly surprised when I arrived at the resort.

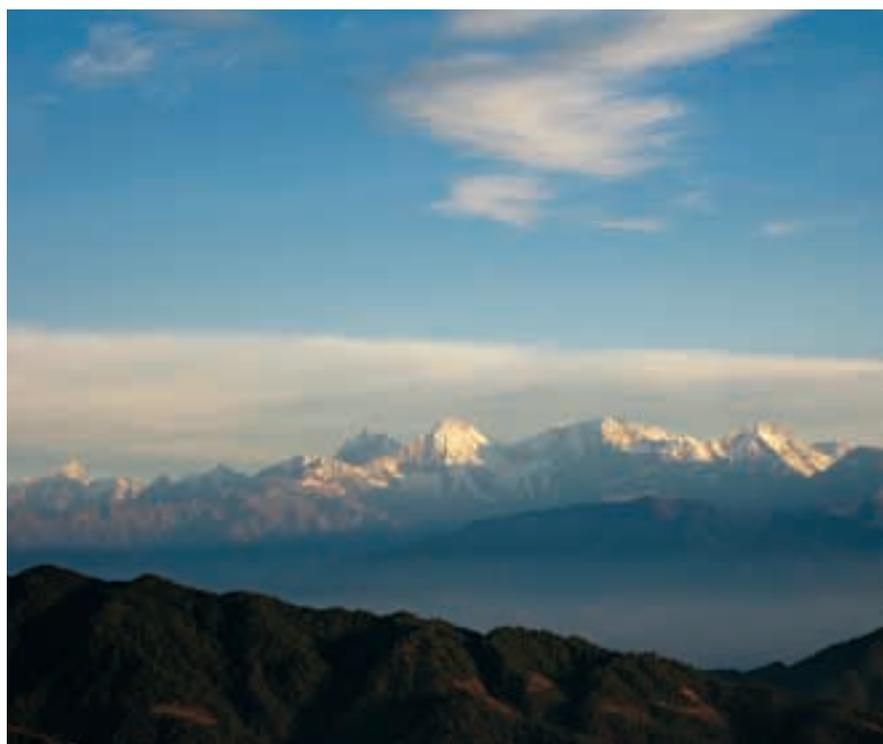
The area around the resort was covered in patches of white; hail left over from the previous storm. The trees rustled in the wind, and the damp cold air blowing against my face was a refreshing change from the dusty heat in Kathmandu.

For people who are looking to escape from the hustle and bustle of the city, sit down, enjoy a cup of joe, and get in touch with your spirituality, Daman is the place to be. Located 85 kilometers from Kathmandu, the town of Simbhajyang is situated on the highest point of the oldest highway in Nepal, Tribhuvan highway. The drive along Tribhuvan Highway to Daman takes a little over three hours through hilly terrains and an endless beauty of step fields on both sides of the highway.

Except for surrounding villages and two places of interest, the resort could be considered at a rather isolated area. The peace and calm washes over one like a cool breeze, and not to sound too exaggerated, I could literally hear the hail melting, as the surroundings were so still and quiet. Sitting in the heated dining room playing cards, one could listen to the wind whistling through the hilly area.

Unlike travelling in some parts of Nepal that have been over run with tourists, Simbhajyang offers a refreshing change. Watch the children play with hail and make snowmen while they brush their teeth, shy girls and women going about their daily chores and men sitting about sipping chiya and chatting about the day's news, without the annoying stress of dealing with touts and children asking for money as you take photographs.

Take a short one-kilometre trek through some forested area to the



Daman is the place to be. Located 85 kilometers from Kathmandu, the town of Simbhajyang is situated on the highest point of the oldest highway in Nepal, Tribhuvan highway.

nearby Hindu temple. It is not so much of a temple with brick walls per se, but rather a small place of worship for Hindu devotees, full of lit butter lamps along a huge stonewall. It is said that if you truly believe in Lord Shiva, you will see an image of him on the stonewall. Just 200 meters away from the temple, there is a Buddhist monastery established by a kind, generous old man, Rim Puchey, 35 years ago. According to the 84-year old lama, this particular Buddhist monastery is deemed as the Holy Grail for many Bhutanese Buddhists.

You may also watch the sunrise right from your room, as all the cottages are East-facing. Wake up at around 5.30 am in the morning, and be welcomed by the glorious sunrise from behind the Himalayan range. There is even a watchtower with a pair of binoculars set at the top of the resort for you to take a closer look at the ice-capped mountains.

The resort can also serve as an alternative accommodation to people visiting Chitwan. As it is two and a half hours drive away from Chitwan, tourists who find Chitwan's

climate too unbearable can stay at Daman, where the weather is much cooler. Other relaxation facilities at the resort include a spa, sauna and dance floor.

Apart from rest and relaxation activities, the resort also offers plenty of activities for outdoor enthusiasts, such as mountain biking, hiking, bird watching, pony rides, putting, tennis, table tennis and rock climbing. One could even visit the Indrasarobar Lake that is 18 kilometers away for fishing and boating.

In encouraging domestic tourism, Everest Panorama Resort is currently having an exclusive package for Nepalese nationals only. Inclusive of three meals, a welcome drink and an overnight stay, it costs a mere Rs. 2068 per pax on a twin-sharing basis. Children aged between 5 and 15 sharing the same room are charged Rs. 1250 each and free of charge for children below 5. This special offer is valid from 2nd Baisakh 2068 till end of Ashadh 2068. Transportation to the resort can be made available through the resort upon request.

For more information: 4428500, [info@everestpanoramaresort.net](mailto:info@everestpanoramaresort.net) ■

# ECS COURSES

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

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**Email: [ecs@infoclub.com.np](mailto:ecs@infoclub.com.np) or [services@ecs.com.np](mailto:services@ecs.com.np) to book a place.**

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

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



## NEPALI LANGUAGE CLASS FOR FOREIGNERS

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

## BASIC ENGLISH READING & WRITING

### FOR HOUSEHOLD STAFF

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

## BASIC ENGLISH LANGUAGE

### FOR HOUSEHOLD STAFF

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

## NEPALI LANGUAGE CD

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

## FOOD HANDLING & HYGIENE

### FOR HOUSEHOLD STAFF

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

## SPECIAL COOKING

### FOR HOUSEHOLD STAFF

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

## INTERNATIONAL COOKING COURSE

Participants will be able to cook the following items.

1. Chicken tikka masala curry
2. Stuffed green peppers
3. Risotto rice
4. Carrot mushroom loaf
5. Lemon tart

**DATE:** 28<sup>th</sup> August 2011  
**TIME:** 1.00 pm to 5.00 pm  
**VENUE:** Maharajgunj  
**FEE:** Rs. 1,200



## THE FRENCH COOKING COURSE

Participants will be able to cook the following items.

1. Fish raisins couscous
2. Green beans with cheese
3. Vegetable stew
4. French bread
5. Chicken mushroom casserole

**DATE:** 31<sup>st</sup> July 2011  
**TIME:** 1.00 pm to 5.00 pm  
**VENUE:** Maharajgunj  
**FEE:** Rs. 1,200

# ECS

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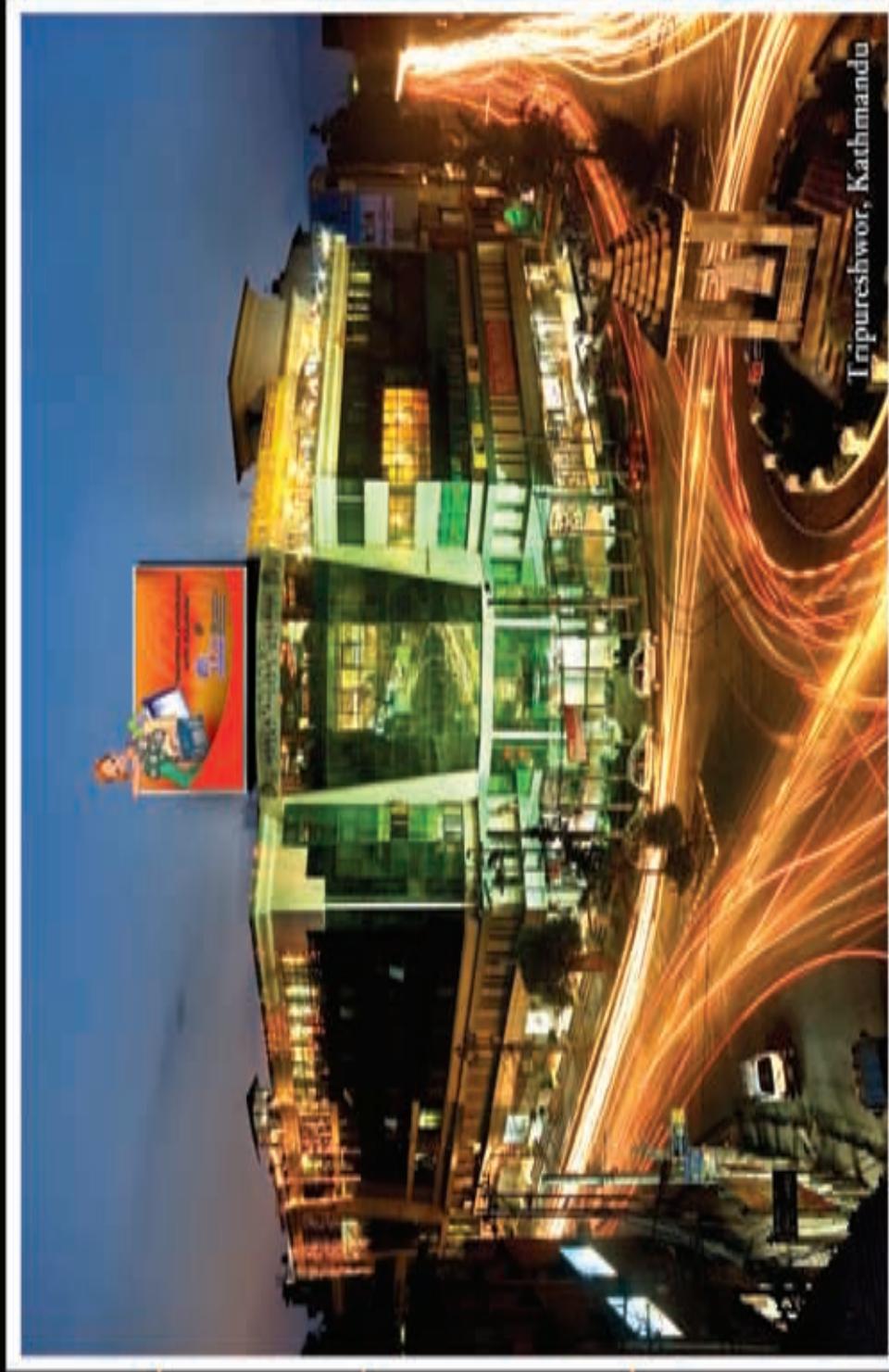
JOHN PLAYERS

Ground floor:

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Tripureshwar, Kathmandu

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### BAKERY CAFÉ BOUD-DHA

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### BAKERY CAFÉ TEKU

Tel: 4265987

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Temple Special Chicken Rs. 225  
Nepali Style Grilled Fish Rs. 250

### ITALIAN RESTAURANT OLIVE GARDEN

Radisson Hotel, Lazimpat  
Tel: 441818  
Italian Cuisine  
Gourmet Trout Rs. 800  
Dinner 6:30pm onwards

### FIRE AND ICE

Pizzeria  
Thamel,  
Tel: 4250210  
Pizza's Spaghetti Ice Creams

### THAI CUISINE

#### YING YANG RESTAURANT

Thamel, 4701510  
Prawn Tempura-Rs 595  
Chicken Satay- Rs 385

### THIRD EYE RESTAURANT

Thamel, 4260289  
Wrapped Prawn- Rs 595  
Potato Cush Bara with Peanut sauce -Rs 145

### JAPANESE AND KOREAN CUISINE

#### KOTO RESTAURANT

Durbar Marg  
Sakeyaki Rs. 290  
Donburi Rs. 310  
Tempura Rs. 260

### EZER BOOK CAFÉ

Sanepa  
Tel: 5546578  
Katsu Don Rs. 260  
Cutlet Rs. 260  
Bulgogi Rs. 250

### FRENCH CUISINE

#### DELICES DE FRANCE RESTAURANT

Thamel  
Tel: 4260326  
Chicken Sandeko  
Salad: Rs 290/-  
Salmon with cream & Wine Sauce: Rs 760/-  
Mediterranean Platter: Rs 580

### CONTINENTAL CUISINE

#### CHAPTER 9

Pulchowk  
Tel: 5525979  
Woo Rs. 100 - Rs. 150  
Paneer Chatpata Rs. 225  
Murgh Boti Kabab Rs. 410

### TFC

Radisson Hotel  
Lazimpat, Tel: 441818  
Congi Lamb Rs. 600

### Seasame

Chicken Rs 500  
Fillet Mignon Rs. 550

### CAFÉ OLLA RESTAURANT & BAR

Kantipath, Jamal  
Tel: 4232673  
Golden Fried Prawn: Rs.320  
Sea Food  
Pizza: Rs.200  
Shring Chicken: Rs.125

### CHEZ CAROLINE

#### RESTAURANT

Mediterranean and French food  
Babar Mahal Revisited  
Tel: 4263070 / 4264187  
Soup of the day Rps 205  
Pepper steak, french fries, salad Rps.700  
Lemon tart Rps. 225

### CAFÉ DE PATAN

Patan Mangalbazar  
Tel: 5537599  
BlueBird Food Court  
Tel: 4228833,  
Ext. no. 4476  
Newari Samay With Chicken Rs.175  
Nepali Thali Rs. 190  
With Buff Rs.150

### COURTYARD

#### RESTAURANT

Kamaladi  
Tel: 4253056  
Roasted Chicken Rs.195  
Chicken Steak Rs.190  
Mix Pizza Rs.220

### RICE & BOWL RESTAURANT

Tripureswor  
Tel: 4251678  
Hakka Prawn Rs.550  
Jambo Prawn Special sauce Rs.950

### JALAN JALAN

Tel: 5544872  
Kewebs Cut Chicken Rs.390  
Jalan Praion & Bacon Rs.550  
Pork House Stake Rs.490

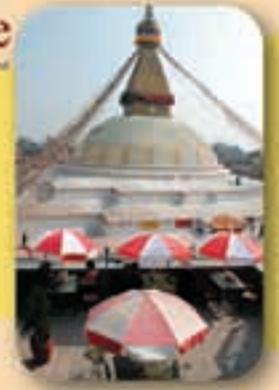
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Satish Shukya 9851081692  
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### RESTAURANT AND BAR

#### (Continental Gourmet )

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Tel: 4253337

Filled Salmon With Cumin Rs. 850  
Sea Food  
Platter Rs. 950  
Creper A La Goat  
Cheese Rs. 550

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Thamel  
Tel: 4422097  
Mint Lemonade Rs. 70  
Stuffed Vegetable Combination Rs. 290  
OR2K Combo  
Platter Rs. 310  
Beautiful Antipasti  
Platter Rs. 180

### STATION BBQ

Jhamsikhel 552208  
Shredded pork with spring onion-500  
Pork Chop-450  
Burrito-350  
Spicy whole Fish-700

### NEPALI AND NEWARI CUISINE

#### BHUMI RESTRO LOUNGE

Lazimpat  
Tel: 4412193  
Mix Bara: Rs.90  
Mix Chatamari: Rs.90  
Choyela : Rs.100

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Babar Mahal Revisited  
BabarMahal  
Tel: 4267346

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Tel: 4430170  
Samay Baji Rs. 450  
Chicken Bara Rs. 260  
Chicken Chatamari Rs. 310

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Buck wheat Pan Cake- Rs 280  
Mediterrain Platter- Rs 480

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Tel: 2210423  
Paneer Skewer Rs.475  
Salmon Fillet Rs.875

### Fish and Chips Rs. 475

Chicken Burger Rs. 250  
Home made Veg/ Non-Veg lasagna Rs. 275/350

### COFFEE SHOP

Durbar Marg  
Tel: 4221711  
Masala  
Dosa Rs. 175  
Chicken MoMo Rs. 250  
Chicken Kathi Roll Rs. 250

### DHOKAIMA CAFE

Patan Dhoka 5522113  
Grilled Australian Steak Rs.1099  
Grilled Shilake Mushroom Rs. 359

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Taragaon, Boudha, Tel: 4491234

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Melting Chocolate: NRs 750  
Smoked Trout & Salmon Cutlet: NRs 690  
Prawn and Salmon Risotto: NRs 1050  
Skewers: NRs 1150-1450

### THE CAFE

Pepper Steak: NRs 800  
Arabic Chicken Shishta-wouk: NRs 800  
Japanese Pork Chop: NRs 800

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Raan E Awadh Rs. 1575  
Doodhiya Paneer Rs. 575  
Lahsoni Methi  
Chilgoza Rs. 775

## ITALIAN

Alfresco  
Tel: 4273999 Ext. 6123  
Norwegian Salmon  
Rs. 1195  
Australian Lamb Cutlet  
Rs. 1195

Pizzas Rs. 395  
Chocolate surprise Rs. 395

## CAFÉ

Garden terrace  
Tel: 4273999 Ext. 6152  
Prawn and Salmon Fantasia Rs. 1295  
Chicken Chutney  
Roll Rs. 550  
Grilled Churrasco Steak  
Rs. 695  
Bhujure Rs. 595

## BAR

Rodi Bar  
Tel: 4273999 Ext. 6224

Red label Rs. 450 per peg  
Beer Rs. 350  
Black Label  
Rs. 1000 per peg

## CHINESE

China Garden  
Tel: 4273999 Ext. 6159  
Corn Cream Rs. 400  
Gin Chicken Rs. 575  
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Sapo Chicken Rs. 600  
Honey Pork Ribs Rs. 575



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Breakfast burrito Rs. 345++  
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## THIRD EYE BAKERY

Thamel, 4701510  
Mango Mous Rs. 240  
Almond Cake Rs. 170

## BAR AND LOUNGES

### ABSOLUTE BAR

Hotel Narayani Complex,  
Pulchowk  
Tel: 5521408  
Bandel Tareko Rs. 300.00  
Chicken Chowela Rs. 300.00

### ATTIC BAR

Tejbhawan, Lazimpat  
4442615  
Bacon Potato Roll- Rs 200  
Chicken Wings with Hot  
Garlic Sauce Rs 350

### BRONCO BILLY

RESTAURANT & BAR  
Harihar bhawan, Pulchowk  
Tel: 5526212

Beef Chimichanga Rs. 350  
Mexican Steak Rs. 500

## BOURBON ROOM RESTRO BAR

Durbarmarg,  
Tel: 4441703  
Nachos Grande Rs. 400  
Grilled Pork Chops Rs. 400  
Hot and Spicy Pizza Rs. 320

## CINNAMON GRILL LOUNGE

Jhamsikhel  
Tel: 5521339  
Chicken Rag Out Rs. 350  
Grilled Pork Chop Rs. 425  
Grilled Chicken Parmesan  
Rs. 380

## DEGGA RESTO LOUNGE

Kumaripati, 5008679  
Mutton Fokso Tareko-Rs 90  
Chicken Egg Bara- Rs 110

## EATEMPUS THE EATING LOUNGE AND BAR

Anamnagar, 4221037  
All kinds of BBQ- Indian  
Continental and Nepali  
ET Hot Wings and Mo: Mo

## THE CORNER BAR

Radisson Hotel  
Lazimpat Tel: 4411818

## THE AMBIENCE RESTAURANT & BAR

Patan Durbar Square, Mangalbar, Tel: 5538980  
Newari Set- Rs. 250  
Roast Chicken- Rs. 185  
Nepali Thali (veg)- Rs. 225

## FOOD BAZAAR

Thamel, Kathmandu  
Newari Khaja (Non veg)-  
Rs. 120, Beef Sizzler- Rs. 200  
Chicken Tikka Kabab-  
Rs. 250

## GARDEN COURT RESTAURANT AND BAR

Tukuchamarga Gairidhara,  
Kathmandu 4429207  
Chicken Houro as one of the  
speciality  
Rainbow Trout

## HIMALAYAN JAVA

Thamel, Contact: 4253956  
Mixed Pizza: Rs. 285  
Chicken Pasta: Rs. 180  
Chicken Fajita: Rs. 160

## JATRA

Thamel, Tel: 4700043  
Sukuti Ko Achar Rs. 110  
Sandwich Steak &  
Cheese Rs. 360

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Jhamsikhel, Lalitpur  
Phone: 01-5009076  
Email: picasso.cuisine1@gmail.com



Beef Chimichanga Rs. 350  
Mexican Steak Rs. 500

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Mango Mous Rs. 240  
Almond Cake Rs. 170

## BAR AND LOUNGES

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Chicken Fajita: Rs. 160

## JATRA

Thamel, Tel: 4700043  
Sukuti Ko Achar Rs. 110  
Sandwich Steak &  
Cheese Rs. 360

Tenderloin Steak Rs. 220

## K-TOO BEER

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Tel No: 4250440  
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Chicken Fajita 440,  
Apple Momo 220

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Shawmi Kebab Rs. 275  
Shahi Paner Rs. 225  
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## EATEMPUS THE EATING LOUNGE AND BAR

Anamnagar, 4221037  
All kinds of BBQ- Indian  
Continental and Nepali  
ET Hot Wings and Mo: Mo

## THE AMBIENCE RESTAURANT & BAR

## THE EVEREST HOTEL

New Baneshwor, Kathmandu, Tel: 01 4780100

### MULTICUISINE

The Cafe- Lobby Level  
Executive Buffet Lunch: Nrs 1100  
Executive Buffet Dinner: Nrs  
1200  
Saturday Brunch: Nrs 1200  
Nasi Goreng: Nrs 650  
Grilled Prawns: Nrs 1200  
Crumb Fried Stuffed Mushrooms:  
Nrs 375

### INDIAN

Far Pavilion  
Roof Top  
Kakori Kabab: Nrs 725  
Chandi Chowk Tikki: Nrs 525  
Gosht Ki Biryani: Nrs 725

### CHINESE

Mandarin Roof Top  
Crispy Fried salt & pepper Duck:  
Nrs 995  
Lobster in Mushroom & wine sauce:  
Nrs 2150  
Multi Flavoured shredded Chicken:  
Nrs 625  
Tibetan Gyakok (Veg or Non Veg)  
(Minimum order for 2 persons):  
Nrs 1400

### GURKHA BAR

Bugles and Tigers Roof Top  
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The details provided in the listings are tentative and are subject to change

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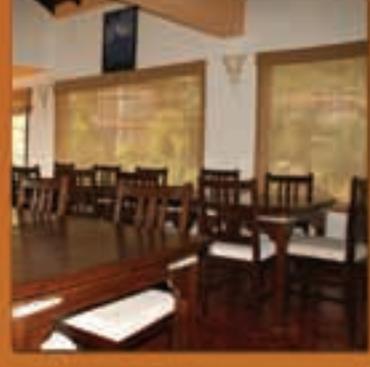


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# CHAPTER 9

...all about Food & Wine



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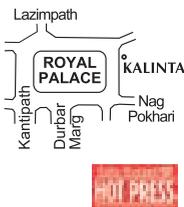
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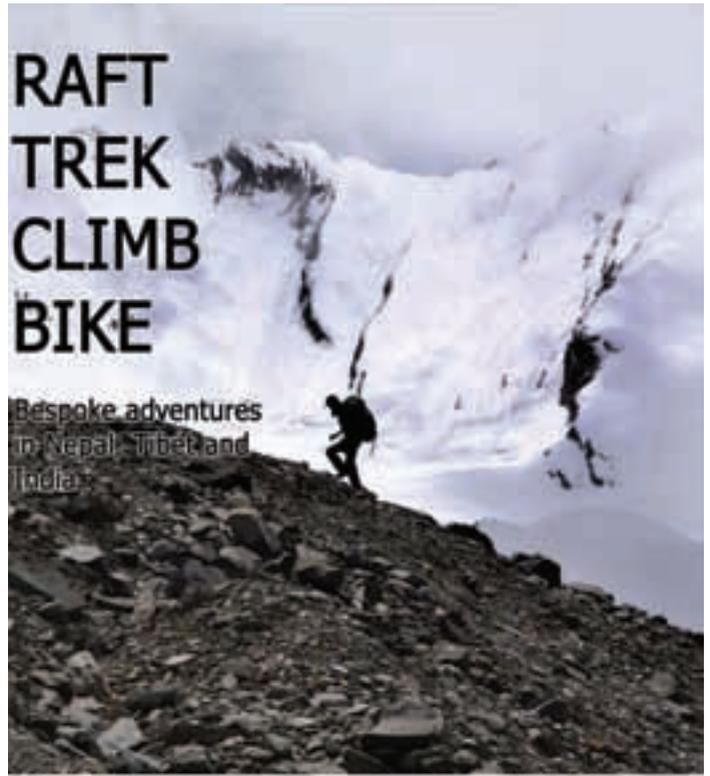


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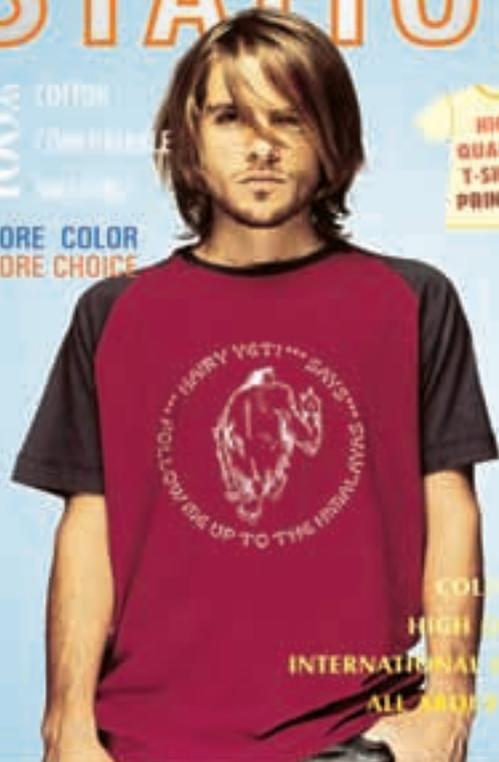
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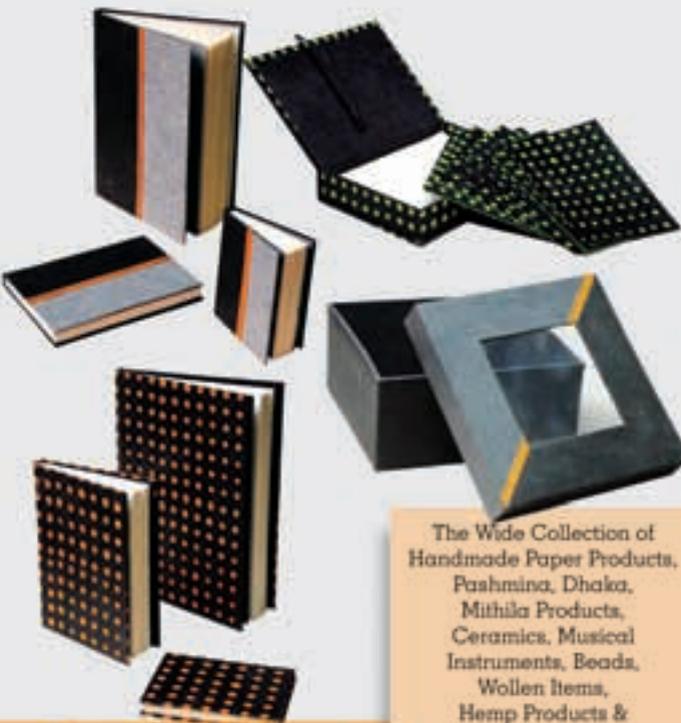
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# Mentoring

By DON MESSERSCHMIDT

Photo By MARIAH HILL

Besides my regular writing for this column I also mentor new writers. Some months ago I met a young writer, an American student, heading into the hills on trek. She seemed observant and fascinated by Nepali culture, mountains and villagers, and was especially enamored by the children she saw. She had done some writing in school and when I mentioned 'ECS Nepal' magazine, she expressed interest in possibly writing something for us. I encouraged her, and that small bit of mentoring paid off. Here's her first contribution, a short travel essay. Good work, Mariah. Send us more!

## MORNING SWING AT THE BASE OF ANNAPURNA I

by Mariah Hill

I loomed two feet above the children, gawking with my Nikon swinging from my neck, and making my way down to the grassy plateau where their Ping was stationed. Hushed upon my approach, the trio gathered closer to one another, waiting. Their calloused, bare feet impressed footprints in the mud as they circled around the giant bamboo swing.

"Namaste Bahini. Namaste Bahini. Namaste Bai," I greeted each child, bracing myself for the giggles that could always be expected whenever a tall, blonde girl wanted to try speaking Nepali. The giggles didn't come however, and the sweet voices softly replied one by one, "Namaste Didi."



Their innocent faces grew blank and they stared in awe. I could feel them cross-examining my entire appearance and comparing our dress: my American graphic T-shirt and morning sweatpants, to their colorful, woven ensembles. I made my way towards them, slipping in my moccasins, ankles rolling underneath me awkwardly on the cumbersome terrain. The view of Annapurna-I from this steppe on the valley wall was incredible; the morning sun illuminated her white, glowing face, each glacial break and divot pronounced in the contrast enhanced by the glorious lighting.

Raising my camera, I stumbled through a couple more broken sentences of Nepali to confirm that taking pictures of them would be okay. Smiling, they disregarded my questions and mounted their swing. Sometimes in a pair, sometimes solo, the two girls and the boy took turns soaring into the clear abyss. Their clothing rippled against their thin frames as they bent at the knees, pumping speed into each pendulum-like pass of the ropes. Creaks escaped from the bamboo: heavy, measured noises, as if the creation was sighing from the constant villagers' play.

I was then snapping away on shutter speed, swing after swing safely stored away on my memory card. It was as if each of them had a personal style while swinging. The boy boldly worked up to the maximum swing radius in a matter of seconds, aggressively working into a rhythm, then relaxing all at once, and slowly letting the momentum die, hopping off when it was easy enough to safely land.

The girls tending to go simultaneously; they stood on the worn wooden bench at their full height of four feet, facing each other. At the apex of their swings, their bodies were parallel to the ground. Their faces were mischievously crinkling in laughter at the pure joy of being lifted into the air on an energetic swell. The novelty of the activity never waned.

Of course, after some time, the silent guest crouching in the mud was remembered. The girls cautiously approached me and held out their hands, a gesture of inclusion. The language barrier was broken down as I realized, through a mixture of signals and mispronounced terms, that it was my turn to try the Ping.

If you are an aspiring new writer and want to give it a try, send me your best essay. It must have a Nepali topic or linkage. I can't promise publication, but will give it serious consideration.

Good Writing ■

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# Count me

By ANIL CHITRAKAR

**W**e all need to be counted and we all need to know our fellow Nepalis much better than ever before. The true nature of the diversity of this country has to be understood if we are to attain our goals for a peaceful and prosperous Nepal. In 1919 Prime Minister Chandra Sumshere established the “Census Goswara” with the purpose of “keeping record of men, women, cattle, places and land”. According to the census returns of 1920 AD, the number of houses in the Kathmandu valley was 64,440 while the population was counted as 306,909 persons.

No one really knows how many people live in the valley in 2011. There is a very large floating population and during the festivals of Dashain and Tihar when many people will leave for “home” will we get a sense of the local population. Many also have houses here and in the districts as well. To escape the conflict and to avoid having to join either side of the conflict many Nepalis left for work abroad. Today, the number of people “flying out” is close to 1000 per day.

The result of the census carried out in 1920 was recorded by Perceval Landan in his book on Nepal published in 1928 in London. According to these tables, Palpa and Gulmi in western Nepal had a population of 376,900 which was much greater than the Kathmandu valley. Similarly in eastern Nepal, the hill settlement of Dhankuta had a population of 353,062, again greater than the valley population. It was only in the 1950s with the eradication of malaria in the terai, that people were encouraged to move down to the plains and settle near the Indian border. The numerous towns and massive deforestation that Nepal witnessed in the last century are a direct result of this policy.

Kathmandu valley on the other hand got a huge in-migration because after 1950, the administrative powers began to be centralized here. Then tourism created hotels, restaurants and attracted job seekers. With the growing demand for carpets in Europe, a huge number of weavers moved into the valley. The armed conflict of the past 10 years really accelerated this process and people estimate that the valley today has a population that ranges between 2 and 3 million, which is ten times higher than in 1920 AD. No wonder all the city infrastructures are under stress. Water shortage, garbage collection, the state of the Bagmati, and air pollution are all indicators of this stress.

In 1920, the terai towns were not small either. Birgunj and the adjoining areas of Bara, Parsa, and Rautahat had a population of 414,657, again much larger than the Kathmandu valley. Similarly Mahotari and Sarlahi had a population of 471,292 and Saptari 377,855. On the other hand fast growing areas today such as Chitwan in the inner terai had a population of only 20,520 in 1920.

Looking at the total for the whole of Nepal, the 1920 census states that there were a total of 957,609 houses and the population was stated to be 5,573,791. We can see that the numbers were not even rounded off. It seems that every Nepali was actually counted to come up with a figure that accurate. There is a foot note in the book stating that the number of houses was taken from the 1910 census. For a country with so much snow and mountains, the density is very high. The Kathmandu valley towns of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur, according to the 1920 census, states that each of them had a population of 108,805, 104,928 and 93,176 respectively. Just make sure you are counted this time. ■



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