

# ECS NEPAL

THE NEPALI WAY

ECSNEPAL  
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Art since the time of Arniko / Mud, sweat and madness on the mountain / There's something about Kwi

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MEDIA

MAY 2011



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The history of Nepali art is one that has seen times, both good and bad. However, its essence has remained preserved by dedicated masters.

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**64 AN EVENING WITH KIRAN MANANDHAR**  
The prolific artist goes candid about artists and art in Nepal.

**74 MUSIC MUSEUM OF NEPAL**  
A group of music enthusiasts have ensured that Nepali history is documented through musical instruments.

**104 TRIALS AND TRAVAILS ON THE TRAIL**  
Reaching Everest Base Camp without a guide and porter provides an altogether different high.

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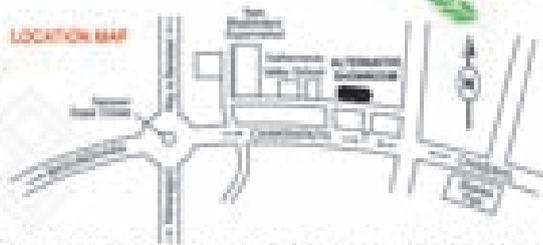
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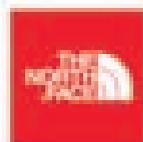


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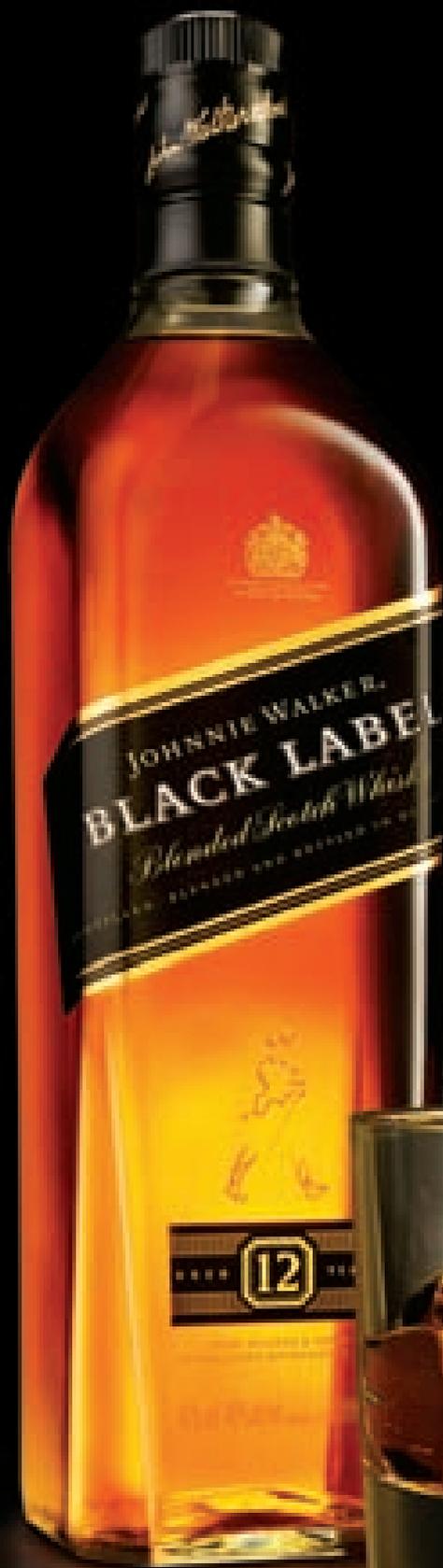
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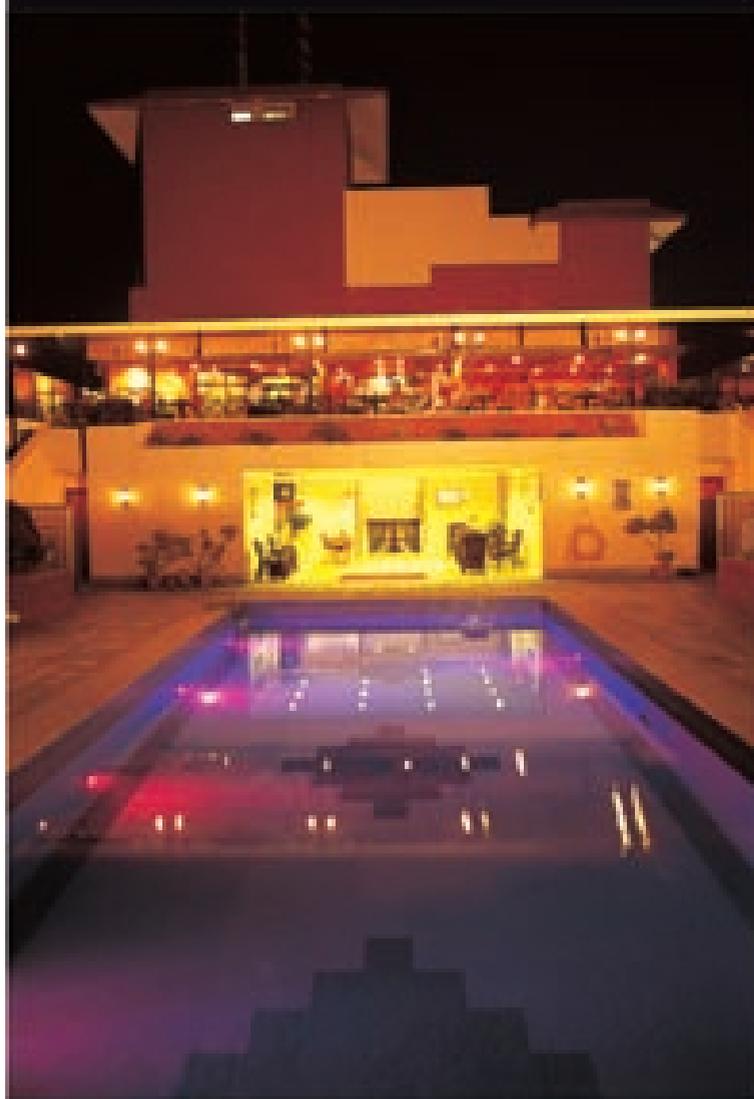


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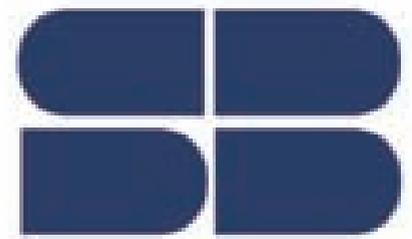
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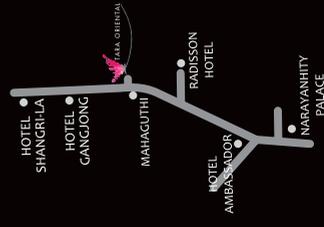
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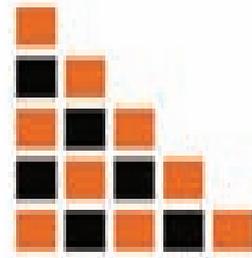
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नेपालकै पहिलो राष्ट्रिय आर्थिक दैनिक कारोबारले लिएर आएको छ नयाँ मोबाइल वेबसाइट । अब जुनसुकै बेला जहाँसुकैबाट प्राप्त गर्नुहोस् समाचार र अपडेट सोभै आफ्नो मोबाइल फोनमा ।

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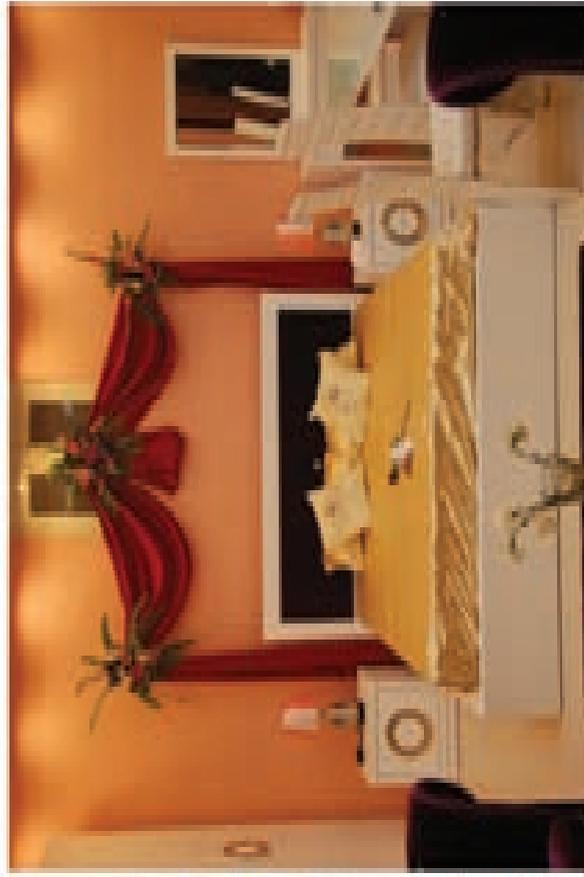
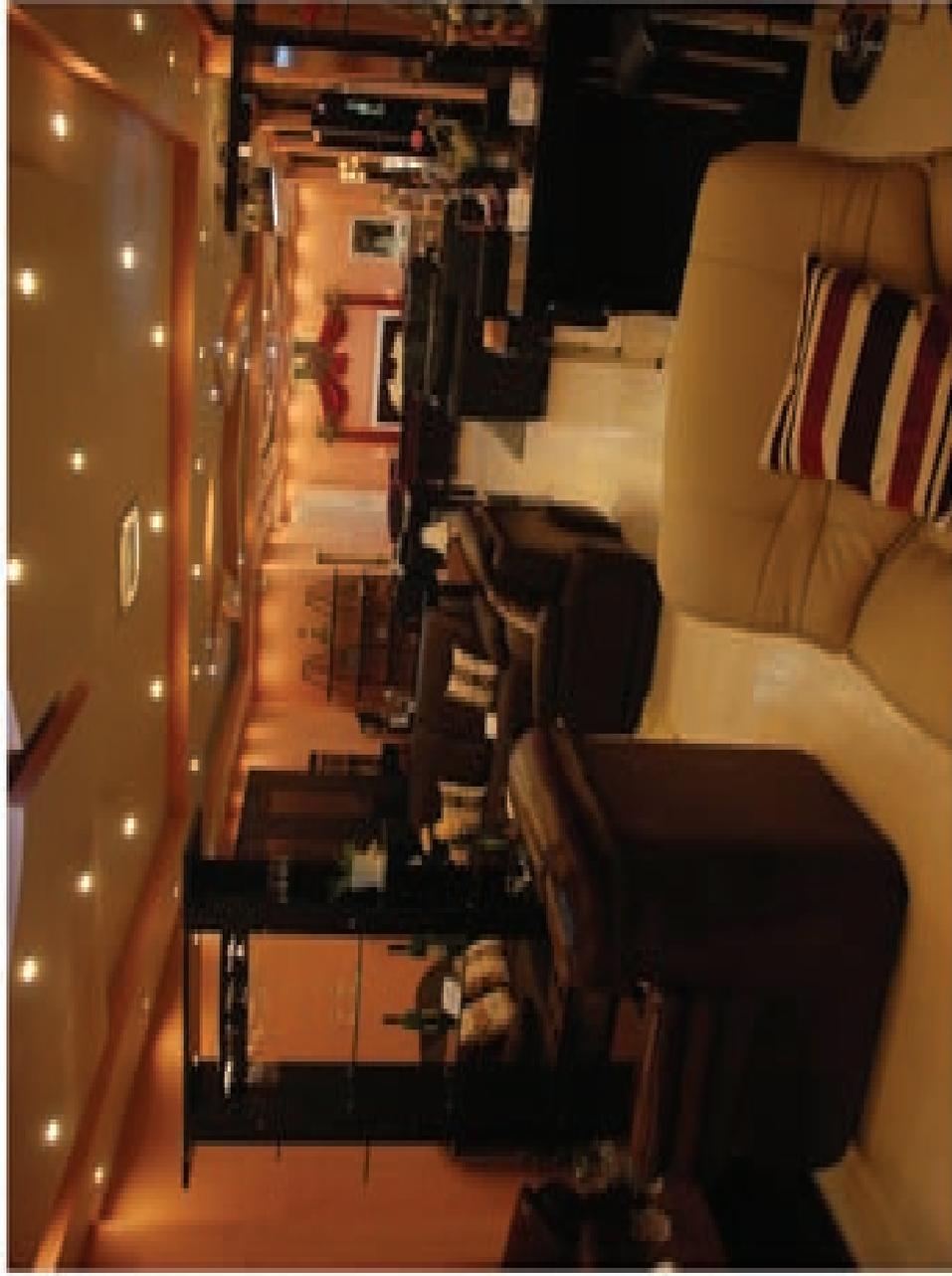
मोबाइल वेब सेवा प्रयोग गर्न ल्याइयो फोनमा टोपी, कियोअपन, रिम डेटा जस्ता सर्भिसहरूको लागि एक सेवा उपलब्ध गरायो दुरुपयोग । यो सेवा आईफोन, एन्ड्रोइड, ब्ल्याकबेरी, एन्ड्रोइडलसकाल वेब २.० जस्ता सर्भिसहरूले मोबाइल इन्टरनेट प्रयोग गर्न सकिन्छ ।

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#### ON THE COVER

Art on canvas by artist Bhai Raja Maharjan. Many thanks to Kasthamandap Art Group for assisting with props for the cover shot.

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Photo by Lizbeth Ludom

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Photo by Leah Olson



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## NEVER TOO LATE

There is a popular belief that when we are “developed” and have no more problems to solve, the world will have only three professions left – music, art and cooking. We all know this and hence it would be great to begin to learn and master one of the above three options. In the meantime you may want to start looking around to see, meet and watch the masters of art, music and cooking go about their business. The problem of course is that they make it look so easy. They are very good at what they do and yet are not happy because they always see room for improvements.

One day I asked Lok Chitrakar what his vision in life was. Without any hesitation he said he wanted to see Nepali art and the artist reach the same stature as in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. He feels it has been going downhill for sometime. The artist is also not doing well and according to Lok, not receiving the social recognition they deserve. Many struggle to make ends meet and are often enquiring about and looking for other options.

In recent years, the effort to preserve our globally unique heritage is on the rise. It seems many prefer to invest in the temples and the *stupas* that make the results very tangible. Looking into the future, we do need to give a little more care to preserving our *intangible heritage*. These do not just include music and art but also the skills, techniques, tools and oral traditions of the country. The festivals and rituals are doing much better with youth taking new interest and adding the much needed energy. A section of the media is

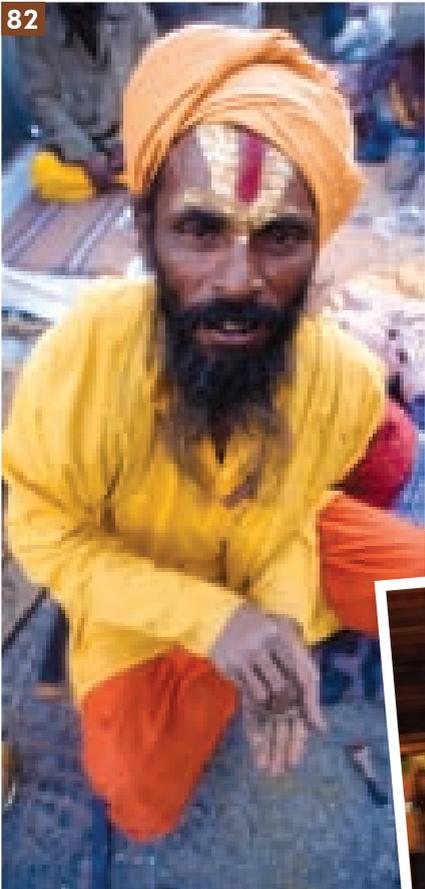
also dedicating more time and space to these cultural events. Photos of festivals are so much better than politicians giving speeches anyway.

The people of the Republic of Nepal are quite curious to find out how and where the former kings and queens lived, and occasionally killed each other. We all must have noticed there are two long lines outside the old Narayanhity Palace. One is for everyone who is trying to get a passport to go out of the country and the other is trying to understand the private lives of the people who ruled this country till recently. Surely there is a link between the two lines. It may not be a straight line, but still they are in some way linked.

Theater is another aspect of Nepali society that is really picking up. There are performances at different locations almost all year round. The concept of theater is not new to people who for centuries have watched performers entertain them from the *Dabali* (raised platforms) which can be seen all over the valley. Today TV has replaced the need to go out and watch plays and dances; but with the kind of power outages we are experiencing in Nepal, these spaces may find their rightful place again in our daily life. As recently as 1990, when we only had state censored electronic and print media, theater was the only way people could express their true feelings in satire. Live music is already here to stay as was exhibited by the Bryan Adams show.

This issue of ECS is going to be just as enjoyable as any and whatever you are doing this month, we hope you make sure there is time and space for *the Nepali way*. It is never too late to get into art, music and cooking.

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Anil Chitrakar  
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## MARKET

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Dhukuti, retail outlet of the Association for Craft Producers, has been running for 26 years now. The ACP aims to maintain a system of management that provides regular design, market and technical services to low income groups and improve their overall standard of living. It provides jobs to 1500 producers each of whom makes an earning between Rs 5800 and Rs 60000. The ACP store in Kupondole has crafts and handmade products on display and for sale. The outlet has products for everyone, from furniture to play toys for children made from clay, copper, textile, felt and more.

ACP provides skill trainings on weaving, felting, carpentry, leather work, sewing,

painting, ceramics, metal work, embroidery, paper crafts, dyeing, wool spinning, screen printing, quilting, knitting, block printing and others. ACP does not only provide services to the producers but also has been bringing out splendid products in the market. Finds at the store include tableware, floor mats, bed covers, pillows, cushion covers and ceramics among others.

Celebrating the annual opening, Dhukuti, Kupondole, has brought in a completely new range of ceramic products that are unique and beautiful. (Anshu Khadka)

Contact: ACP, Kathmandu, 4275108, 4270721, craftcp@mos.com.np

### Time Market



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HIM Electronics has opened another outlet "Time Factory" at Civil Mall. The new outlet features watches from different brands with completely different styles in attractive packages. Time Factory is Timex's avant-garde watch store and aims to be a favored one-stop destination for international watch brands under the Timex umbrella.

Time Factory features products from Timex Group that has a portfolio of ten brands in various segments from mid-premium to luxury segment: Timex, Opex, Guess, GC, Marc Ecko, Nautica, Salvatore Ferragamo, Versace and Valentino. Currently, Marc Ecko, Nautica and Timex brands are on display at the store. With a design centre based outside Milan and manufacturing bases in different countries, Timex is present in 100 countries.

Contact: HIM Electronics, Ganabahal, 4250001 (Anshu Khadka)

### Healing Hands



For those of us who have a habit of taking medicines for minute pains and using quick relief antidotes without considering the side effects, natural ways of curing our health problems without the side effects sound like a miracle.

Hotel Shangri-la brings to you such a place where you can find natural ways to help you. Shangri-la re-launched the Spa by Healing Hands on March 10, 2011 adding services and new methods to give you a relaxing time away from your stressful day. The spa has been providing its services for a few years now, helping people remain healthy. Being healthy is not merely being free of diseases but being healthy in all four dimensions of health - curative, rehabilitative, preventive and promotive. The spa at the Shangri-la fills the gap between the hassles of our lives and our health.

Since not all of us are regular spa goers and a first visit to the spa can be a bit of a daunting experience for anyone. Behind the polished doors of the spa lies a space that is classy and inviting. The spa at Shangri-la relieves your stressed mind, soul and body with different massages, steam bath and many other services. (Anshu Khadka)

### Vijay Motors gets into Top Gear

Vijay Motors, the Sole Distributor for General Motors in Nepal, launched its Top Gear Privilege Card at a gala privilege card launch party on March 18 and 20 March for its clientele. The Top Gear Privilege Card provides Vijay Motor's clients with exclusive privileges/discounts at their establishments.

Top Gear will offer these privileges/ discounts for all Opel, Chevrolet and

Subaru customers. The membership entitles customers to Rs.10000 worth of services and products at Vijay Motors' workshop including immediate help for its female customers in the event of a flat tire through Vijay Motors' HOTLINE service. Vijay Motors was established in 1998 and first started its operations with the sale of the Opel vehicles in Nepal. Vijay

Motors introduced the Chevrolet brand in Nepal in the year 2003 and currently sells eight vehicles ranging from compacts, hatchbacks, sedans and MUVs to premium cars and SUVs. The company also acquired the sole distributorship for the Subaru brand of highly preferred Japanese Vehicles in 2005.



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## Chobi Mela comes to Kathmandu



On 18th and 19th of March, 2011 photo. circle presented a selection of works from the recently held Chobi Mela that took place from 21 Jan to 3 Feb, 2011 in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Chobi Mela is an International Festival of Photography that takes place in Dhaka every two years. This year, the festival featured artists from 31 countries showcasing works based on the festival theme; 'Dreams', 29 print exhibitions, mobile exhibitions on 10 rickshaw vans, 33 digital presentations, 9 workshops and several portfolio reviews. Serving as a birthplace of ideas, and a crossover meeting point for many artists, Chobi Mela is an open portal to a mystical world of images showcasing new trends in photography and bringing to the fore issues of our troubled world.

It was a rare opportunity to view this selection of works from the festival here in Kathmandu. The works screened on 18th March were presented by Bangladeshi award-winning photographer Munem Wasif. The evening included works by Laurence Leblanc (France), Kosuke Okahara (Japan), Tamas Dezso (Hungary), Karen Knorr (Puerto Rico), Rashid Talukder (Bangladesh), Munem Wasif (Bangladesh) and 8 Contemporary Photographers from Bangladesh including Rasel Chowdhury, Wahid Adnan, Anisul Hauque, Tushkur Rahman, Kausar Haider, Arifur Rahman Munir, Sayed Asif Mahmud, Tapash Paul

The screening on 19th March were presented by Bangladeshi photographer and photography teacher Tanzim Wahab. The evening included works by students from Morten Krogvold's (Norway) Workshop, Bronek Kozka (Australia), David Burnett (USA), Shumon Ahmed (Bangladesh), Carlos Cazalis (Mexico), Abdoul Ganiou Dermani (Togo/Germany) Sailendra Kharel (Nepal)

For more information about Chobi Mela please visit [www.chobimela.org](http://www.chobimela.org). For more information about the screenings in Kathmandu, please call 9851014930 or email [mail@photocircle.com.np](mailto:mail@photocircle.com.np)

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## ICIMOD Knowledge Forum

Prof. Veerabhadran Ramanathan, Distinguished Professor of Climate and Atmospheric Sciences, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California in San Diego, USA, gave a presentation on 'The Extreme Vulnerability of the Himalayan-Tibetan Region to Global Warming and Air Pollution' at an ICIMOD Knowledge Forum on 22 March 2011.

Prof. Ramanathan explained how carbon particles from incomplete burning have contributed to formation of atmospheric brown clouds (ABCs) across the region. Sources include burning of biomass for cooking and heating; vehicle exhaust, especially diesel; factory chimneys; and forest fires. ABCs are contributing to overall warming of the atmosphere, melting of the glaciers, reduced sunlight, and increased heavy rainfall with less rain overall.

The global temperature increase can be limited to 2°C through a combination of measures: reduce CO<sub>2</sub> by 50% by 2050; reduce short-lived warming agents including black carbon by 30% in the next 30 years; and thus buy about 30 years for developing transformational technologies for energy



development. Around 60% of black carbon emissions can be prevented, this requires local action. However, temperature increase in the Himalayan region will still be higher than the global average.

In conclusion, he noted that the Himalayan-Tibetan Plateau region can't wait for world governments to agree to a binding roadmap. He urged everyone to think globally, assess regionally, and act locally, and seek integrated solutions through innovations in science, technology, policy, politics, institutions, and finance.

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## Social Tragedy

Actor's Studio, already famous among theatrical circles as a group to watch out for, presented its new production "Malaami" at Aarohan Gurukul. The play, hailed as one of the best in Nepali literature, was previously showcased by Pratibimba in 2056 B.S. to huge acclaim. After more than a decade, playwright Sarubhakta has penned the story in a style that relates to today's society. By talking of old age loneliness and emotional crisis, the play portrays a delineation of a society that is both sad and yet uncomfortably real.

The actors include talented new faces like Diya Maskey, Aashant Sharma and Alok Subedi along with old favorites like Bijay Lama. With the acclaimed actor Anup Baral showing his versatility through direction and storytelling, the play makes for a compelling ride surrounding the social tragedy.

The play was performed at the Bal Krishna Sama Theatre at Aarohan Gurukul from the 11 to 13 March. (Liza Paudel)

## Power of Poetry



Academy Bairagi Kainla sharing one of his poems. "Poetry brings me relief," the dignified poet said before setting the mood for the program through his short yet compelling poem. The event featured 40 poets reciting poetry in 20 different languages including Maithili, Limbu, Nepal Bhasa, English and Urdu. Each poet shared two poems of their own in their respective languages while some also shared Nepali translations of famous poems.

Since 1999, March 21 has been celebrated the world over as World Poetry Day. The day was celebrated here in Nepal by Chomolunga UNESCO Center (CUC) by organizing 'Recitals' – a multidimensional, multilingual poetry recitation program at Momomagic in Pulchowk.

The event was a true revelry of diverse languages, poetry and the unity that this genre of literature allows. It successfully brought to surface the beauty of each language, the sentiments of the various poets coming from different backgrounds and the power of poetry itself. (Yukta Bajracharya)

## Festival at Patan

Omkuli Pasa Pucha, a non-profit organization organized Omkuli Mahotsav 2011 (March 10-13) in an effort to help promote Nepal Tourism Year 2011. The event took place at various places around Patan like Sundhara, Mahabuddha, Okubahal and Thapahiti. The organization had organized a four day-long event focusing on Nepali traditions, culture, arts and crafts and norms.



The festival consisted of *Charya* dance, a handicrafts exhibition, household utensils, traditional musical instruments, ancient dance masks, and chariot ornaments of Matseyndranath and a photo exhibition. Apart from this, there were live demonstrations of Metal Craft, Thangka art, woodcraft and an art workshop by contemporary artists.

business stalls, live performances by Nepali artists like Kutumba, Cobweb and Zenith. The event had numerous food stalls with traditional Newari cuisine and a Laptya Bhwey - a traditional Newari feast served on customary leaf plates.

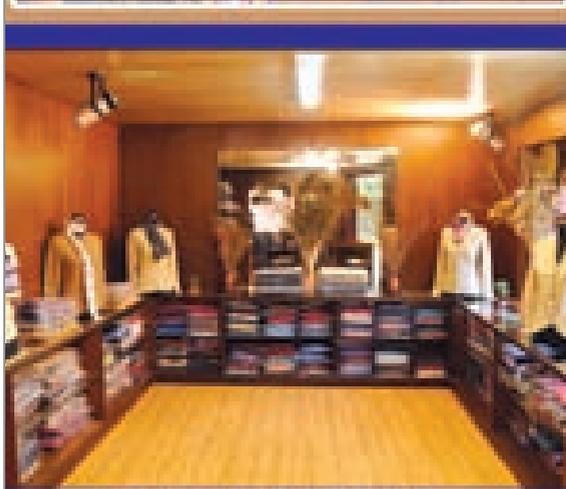
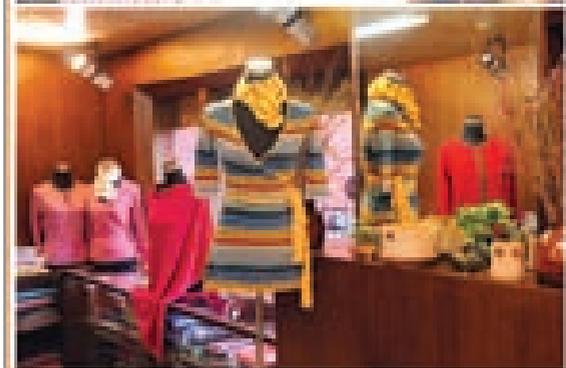
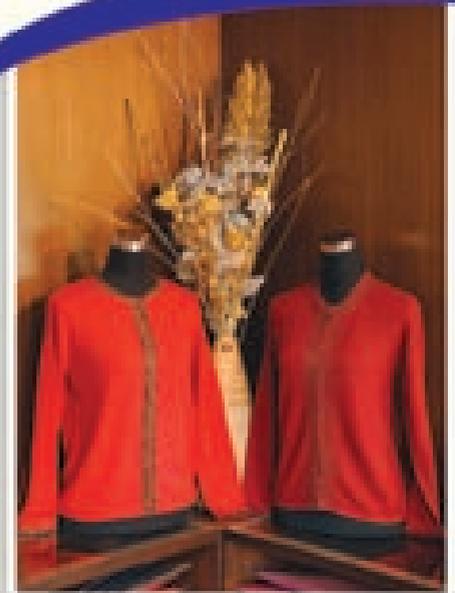
The cultural carnival also hosted traditional Newari food stalls, education and tourism-based stalls, industrial and

"This event was organized to make an impression on the public for the preservation and promotion of the sacred cultural and traditional arts in national and international levels," said Siwali Shakya, Joint Secretary, Omkuli Mahotsav.



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## Salute To the Late Hero

Helicopter Association International (HAI) chose Late Captain Sabin Basnyat as the winner of HAI's Eurocopter Golden Hour Award for his performance during the Fishtail/Air Zermatt rescue mission on Mount Annapurna on the 29th of April 2010 when they made history by successfully carrying out the Highest Sling Rescue operation from 6900m. This award recognizes the efforts of those who contribute to and advance the use of helicopters in the vital mission of air-medical transport.

The Eurocopter Golden Hour Award was the perfect tribute to Late Captain Sabin Basnyat's bravery. The award was presented to the captain's wife, Mrs. Poonam Basnyat, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March at the Heli Expo 2011 event at Orange



County Convention Center, South Concourse, Orlando, Florida. Mrs. Basnyat also attended the Salute to Excellence Awards Dinner along with other distinguished members of the international helicopter community.

Fishtail Air prays for the soul of Late Captain Basnyat to rest in peace for eternity. (Gaurav Thapa)

## Alliance for Women

The 100th International Women's Day was celebrated with much enthusiasm at Alliance Française, Tripureswor. The day began with a screening of "Women Are Heroes", a documentary film by the French artist JR. The documentary revolves around women who sometimes walk side by side with death and often embrace life, overcoming their fears and tears.

The screening was followed by a visual art performance which was aligned with this empowering and important day. Heartbeat, an organization working to empower youths through various socially interlinked activities, brought together the art of four women and four men in a celebration of colors on the canvas. Entitled 8 March, 8 Meters & 8 People, the 8-metre long canvas was painted with the shadows of women in front of a developed, urban backdrop.

Various organizations related to women such as Kritika Campaign, National Disabled Women Association (NDWA)

and Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO) were also invited to celebrate Women's day at AFK. 25 women from minority groups danced for social justice and equality in a dance program coordinated by the Kritika Campaign.

Krishna Thing showcased a selection modern pieces and abstract drawings as a tribute to women while Yann Rollo on the other hand exhibited his collection of photographs depicting striking faces of women he met during his pilgrimage from Nepal to Bhutan.

Bringing together women and illustrating their talents and stories, March 8 at AFK was a true celebration of women. (Yukta Bajracharya)

## CORRIGENDUM

The photograph accompanying the article "Soshu's New World Rhizome", in the March 2011 issue is not that of Indra Raj Subba, aka Soshu, but Sagar Manandhar. Also, in the article "Ritual Handicraft", published in the February 2011 issue, the title of the workshop is "Basic sculpture from human to divine", not "Ritual handicraft". We regret these errors, and any inconvenience they might have caused our readers or the Centre.

## A Thrilling Hunt

The starting line was at Nepal Academy in Kamaladi. As the numbers were announced, all the participating cars at the Ford City Chase Version 2.0 set out for a thrilling ride. Organized by the JA (Junior Achievement) forum, one of the six clubs from Kathmandu College of Management (KCM), the event was the second of its kind, following the first one in 2008. "We've re-launched City Chase after three years," says Manish Badetia, KCM student and Club Coordinator. "This is totally a college event and employs students' initiative and participation. For this event, we're timing each participant, and they will receive a maximum of three and half hours, to complete approximately 15 clues and tasks," added Badetia. "Each car has two people: a driver and a navigator. There are unique tasks for each participant. The ones completing all their tasks and back to the finish line - at the Nepal Academy hall premises, within the shortest duration wins."

An open participation for the event addressed cars from any brand, and saw a turnout of more than 100 vehicles. With Ford as the title sponsor, winners were presented with a Diamond Wrist Watch worth Rs.60,000 from Shree Ridhi Sidhi Jewellers as the 1<sup>st</sup> prize followed by a Car Headrest LCD with DVD player worth Rs.40,000 from Kundan Auto Deco and a Gift Voucher worth Rs.30,000 from VLCC as the third prize. Ladies, were given special credit since the Best Female driver received a Coral Necklace from Shree Ganesh Nandini. The closing ceremony, for the event, at the Factory, Thamel, was even louder with a lot of dancing and music. (Nandita Rana)

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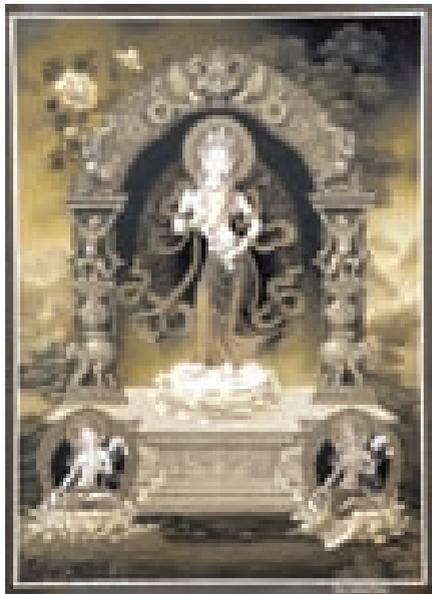
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# what's on

things to do this month



## Jewels of Newar Art

Opening Date: 26 April (Tuesday)  
Closing Date: 15 May (Sunday)  
Time: 5:30 pm  
Venue: Sidhartha Art Gallery, Baber Mahal  
Revisited  
4218048

Bodhitsattva Gallery in collaboration with Siddhartha Art Gallery presents 'Jewels Of Newar Art' – an exhibition to be inaugurated by Dr. Dina Bangdel, Associate Professor of Asian Art at Virginia Commonwealth University, USA. The exhibition will continue till 15 May.

Bodhitsattva Gallery, now in its fourth generation in the business has been cultivating relationships with famous artists and also promoting and encouraging new artists in order to keep the fine work and artistry alive. At 6 pm on 29 April, a talk program 'In the Legacy: Arniko' will be facilitated by Dr. Dina Bangdel. On 1 May, artist Udaya Charan Shrestha will be giving a speech on 'The use of oil in Traditional Paubha Painting' at 6 pm. On 8 May, Bijay Ratna Shakya will talk on 'Ancient Lost Wax Process Method

of Statue Making' at 6 pm while Master Artist and Deepak Joshi will talk on 'Paubha painting and Spirituality' at 4 pm the next day.

Free Entry

### FAIR/EXPO

#### Festive Streets

Date: May 14 (Saturday)  
Time: 10 am to 10 pm  
Venue: North Gate, Lazimpat

Lazimpat Street is all set to ignite with a celebration of art, fashion and food for the second time. The Lazimpat Street Festival is an event where people of all ages are invited to just enjoy and have fun. Along with the fun, information stalls regarding the culture of Nepal will also be set up. And to keep the event secure, young volunteers from local clubs, organizations and institutions, along with Garud Security and the Metropolitan Police will be available at hand.

Free Entry

### MISCELLANEOUS

#### Summer Scrawls

Starting Date: 1 May (Sunday)  
Ending Date: 15 May (Sunday)  
Timing (tentative): 10 am to 3 pm  
Venue: Sattya Media Arts Collective, Jawalakhel  
For registration: [www.sattya.org](http://www.sattya.org)  
9841942595

As summer crawls in, scrawl in with summer! Organized by Vent Magazine and Sattya Media Arts Collective, Summer Scrawls is a two-week long collaborative writing project (aimed at those who've just finished their SLC exams) which will culminate in a handmade literary journal produced entirely by participants. Those enthusiastic about writing and sharing their creative juices with a group of dynamic, young writers can join in an experimentation that uses words and language as tools for self expression.

The workshop provides the opportunity to participate in intensive writing workshops, embark on mini-excursions around Kathmandu, watch and discusses films and documentaries, gain exposure to different forms of media and interact with young "experts" who are making a living off their passion and creativity.

Applications Deadline: 22 April. Send in applications to [ayushma@ventzine.com](mailto:ayushma@ventzine.com)

Participation fee: Rs. 2,000 (includes fees for all sessions and materials, transport during excursions, and light snacks during the day)

#### Yoga Trek

Opening date: 22 May (Sunday)  
Closing Date: 29 May (Sunday)  
4412508, [info@socialtours.com](mailto:info@socialtours.com), [www.socialtours.com](http://www.socialtours.com)

Come join the trip that combines a holistic traditional look at yoga practice in Nepal with Sannyasi Yogatara (Lisa Gautschi), Director of Isha Institute. Lisa holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Applied Yogic, has a Masters degree in Transpersonal Psychology with specialization in creative expression. In addition to teaching yoga, Lisa works as a yoga therapist, counselor, freelance writer, and leads yoga retreats and spiritual journeys to Nepal, India and Tibet.

The eight day trek starts 17 April from Dhunche and follows through Sing Gomba, Gosainkunda, Ghopte, Kutumsang, Chisopani ending at the eastern village of Sundarjal via the national park and back to Kathmandu.

Fee: Rs. 34,500

#### For the Real Women

Forms Open: 18 April, Forms Close: 16 August  
4244929, [pageant@nepalesecouncil.com](mailto:pageant@nepalesecouncil.com), [www.nepalesecouncil.com](http://www.nepalesecouncil.com)

The Miss United Nation Nepal Pageant is a competition which aims to inspire and empower them by giving them an opportunity to showcase their inner beauty. The event is organized by Nepalese Council Pvt. Ltd. and is scheduled to take place on 8 November. The organizer calls all Nepali women between the ages of 18-27 to participate in this event, the winner of which will later take part in an international pageant – Miss United Nation International Pageant. For more information, contact Nepalese Council Pvt. Ltd, New Road.

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## Geniuses in the city



ECS Media

A coming together of artists from all genres made for an explosive show on the evening of 23 March, at the Nepal Art Council. Artists in the City- Urbanization

and Urban Culture, an on-going project, brought together artists from all walks of life including musicians, performers, painters, urban planners, theatre artists and architects to, objectively, initiate an open dialogue regarding the Kathmandu city. "They are going to express their relationship with the city and show us the effect of urbanization," said Kushal Regmi, one of the notable organizers.

Creating an exotic fusion of creativity, the evening was put afire with music, art and theatre. "I came here as an observer and this contemporary art mixed with traditional work is amazing; the fusion is great!" said Santa Hitang, an art teacher at Rato Bangala School. Well-known bands like Maya and Albatross spellbound the audience with their performances and theatre groups like Sarwanam and Aarohan Gurukul, set the audience, that encompassed old and young, nodding with appreciation. Observing the hair-raising performance, Daxika Bhandari exclaimed that she

had not such levels of professionalism. A documentary regarding urbanization was also shown. Art installations by Collective I, Paranoid Identity, Rest Room, Urbanization and Urbanization Elapse were also displayed energizing the already vigorous crowd with their artful genius.

The project was launched by Interactive Mapping and Archive Project (IMAP) which aims to digitize art, theatre and the culture of Kathmandu valley. The organization has so far succeeded in obtaining 160 profiles of key institutions and preferred artists, including descriptions of artists, institutions, photographs, catalogues, reviews, video interviews and other related materials. Fellowships were offered to scholars working in the fields of contemporary theatre and art as well as traditional forms such as Mithila, Paubha, and Punjya arts and also to scholars studying architectural and socio-cultural aspects of the city. Housed at the Social Science Baha, the organization is supported by the Ford Foundation. (Chhoksum W. P. Bista)

## Jewels of Newari Art

What is Newar Art? "No other people on earth, Watson, has produced such intricate beauty in as small a space as the Valley of Kathmandu. One trenchant observer has described it best as a kind of coral reef, built up laboriously over the centuries by unrecorded artisans. As a human achievement, it ranks with the creations of Persia and Italy."

This fictional exchange between Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson, from author Ted Riccardi's *The Oriental Casebook of Sherlock Holmes*, 2003 best describes the predicament of these unrecorded artisans who worked so laboriously over the centuries. For these were the Newar artists of Nepal, the original inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley. Newari art and the artist's have received little acclaim and acknowledgement.



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"Jewels of Newari Art" aims to shed some much-needed light on Contemporary Newar Art and Newar artists. The exhibition will take place from April 26 – May 15. The exhibition will feature a select collection from Bodhisattva Gallery located at Baber Mahal Revisited along with at the Siddhartha Art Gallery, with support from ECS Media.

An exhibition of Newari Paubha art and statues of the highest quality, the artwork is from the personal collection of Purna Man Shakya of the Bodhisattva Gallery. Visitors will get a rare opportunity to view artwork by artists ranging from renowned senior artists to young, highly talented artisans. The exhibition also makes for a great opportunity for interested people to learn a great deal about Newar art, understand its importance and buy some of the artwork.

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# LIVING IN NEPAL

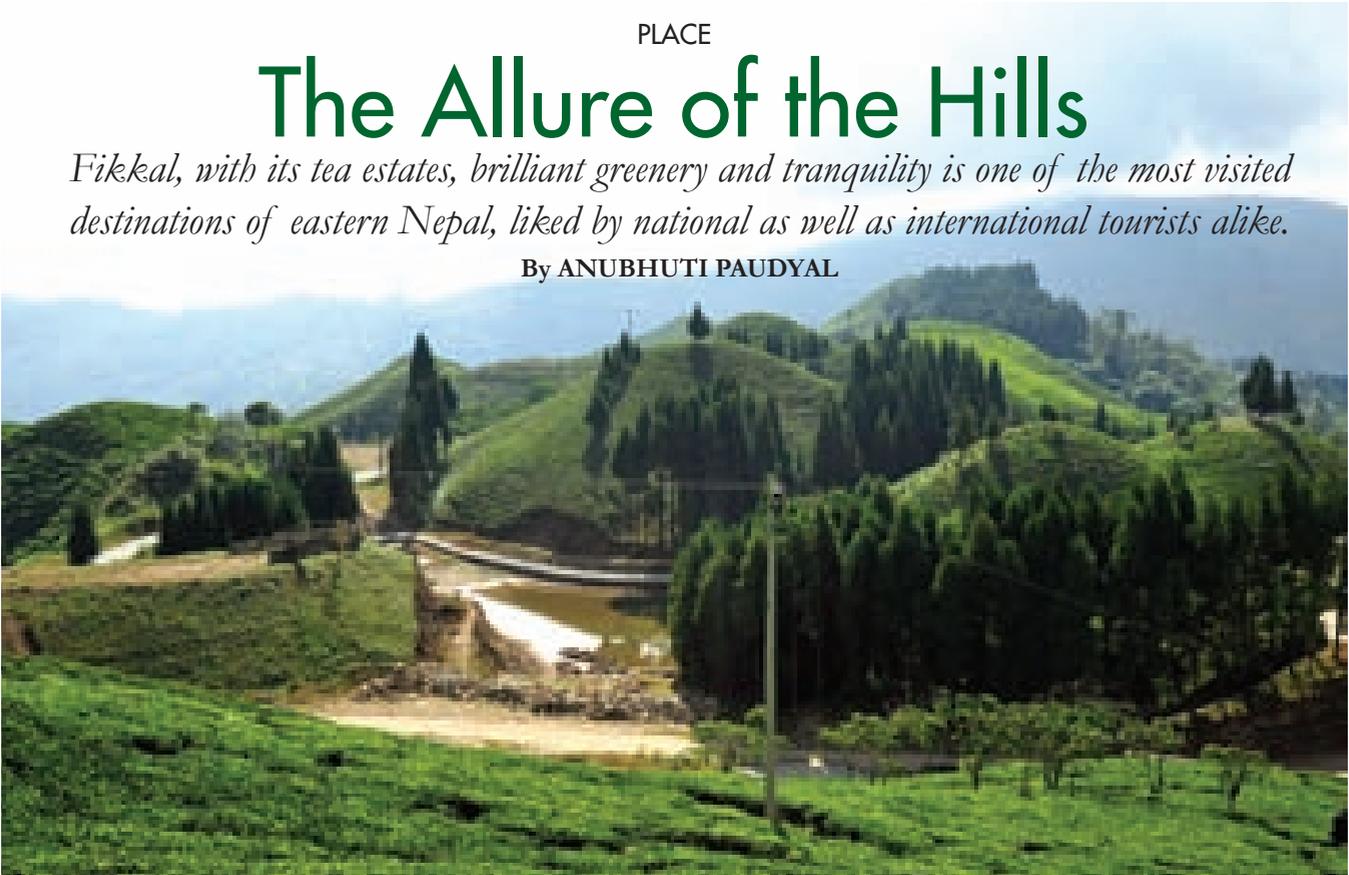
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## The Allure of the Hills

*Fikkal, with its tea estates, brilliant greenery and tranquility is one of the most visited destinations of eastern Nepal, liked by national as well as international tourists alike.*

By ANUBHUTI PAUDYAL



ECS Media

When it comes to nature, Nepal is the answer. For years now, Nepal has been *the* destination for nature lovers. The exotic locations, breath-taking views of the mountains, lakes large enough to resemble the sea, majestic mountains, gorges, glaciers and lush green hills have come to represent Nepal today. Though there are many locations that are a treat to the human senses, there are a few that one will immediately recall when thinking of Nepal. One such place is located in the far eastern hills of Nepal in Illam District – Fikkal.

Regarded as one of the most scenic places in eastern Nepal, Fikkal is located close to the Indo-Nepal border and is home to large tea estates, some of them a hundred years old. Sloped tea gardens stretch as far as one's eyes can see. Fikkal is populated with Mongolian faces mostly and their unique culture makes for some amazing food. It is rather conveniently

located too, some 700 kilometers away from Kathmandu by road, making for a scenic 18-hour drive. There are bus services available from Kathmandu and flights from Kathmandu to Bhadrapur or Biratnagar from where one can take a pleasant bus ride on winding roads that lead to Fikkal and Illam past it. The picturesque beauty of the place is something that can only be experienced. The whole of Illam district is home to tea estates. What makes Fikkal special however, is its convenient location, unique culture and the endless beauty of its tea gardens. One can also partake in recreational activities such as picnics, sightseeing and short treks. The gentle slopes and fresh air ensure that you enjoy the tranquil beauty of the place.

Fikkal is linked with India via Pashupatinagar on the Indo-Nepal border and is regarded as the exit gateway to India from Nepal's eastern border. It is also a business hub where goods from the mountainous regions of Nepal meet

those from the Tarai. While Nepali and Indian tourists prefer the Pashupatinagar exit, other tourists prefer Kakkarbhittha, Jhapa, which is not very far from Fikkal either. In addition to the beautiful landscape, it falls near Mechi highway, which makes it an integral part of business in eastern Nepal.

The best part about Nepal is its cultural and geographical diversity. Fikkal is a perfect example of the combination of the two. For those who have had enough of the hustle and bustle of city life, it could be just the destination for a rejuvenating time. One of the major reasons behind Nepal being an ultimate tourist destination is its ability to offer amazing experiences to everyone. Be it wildlife or culture, everyone has something to see or experience. Nepal is the right destination for unique natural and historical heritage as well. For those who want to sit down and enjoy nature for its freshness, greenery, scenic beauty and tranquility - Fikkal beckons. ■



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# Art Vs Time

*Lok Chitrakar is one of the country's foremost Paubha painters, a respected name amongst the thinning number of artists working to preserve this ancient art form.*

By UTSAV SHAKYA



ECS Media

Situated in a quiet, residential lane, a stone's throw away from Patan Dhoka, the modest two-storey that houses Simrik Atelier, a school for Newar art has an air of seclusion and purity about it. This is *Paubha* painter Lok Chitrakar's abode and the simple, functional space reflects the artist's personality beautifully.

As an icebreaker, Chitrakar shifts some things in his studio and turns around a huge six-foot canvas to display what he is currently working on – an awe-inspiring paubha of Buddhist deity Chintamani Lokesvara. Trying to explain an art form one has been a disciple of for 37 long years – Chitrakar started painting at the age of 12 – would perhaps have irked any

other artist. Patience is an essential virtue for a paubha artist though; the art form seems to have little regard for time as we measure it. Artists work long hours and completing an elaborate paubha could rob years of an artist's life.

In his calm voice, as he has likely explained the same to many of his apprentices and students, he tries and defines the paubha yet again. "The word paubha is derived from two Sanskrit words – *Pattra* or flat and *Bhataraka* or deity. So literally speaking, it is a depiction of the divine in a flat form." Artistically though, it may be understood as an expression of ancient texts in the form of a painting.

"It is imperative that a paubha painter know the canons that guide the art form. A painting that depicts a similar scene without following these canons is not considered a paubha," adds Chitrakar. Obtaining this knowledge takes plenty of time and the rewards are not necessarily in the form of financial gain; reason perhaps for a decline in more people taking it up.

Chitrakar however, is one of those who have dedicated his life to it. Growing up, he was surrounded by art; the Chitrakars are a caste of Nepali people who have customarily painted for a living. However, he admits being oblivious to the meaning of these paintings until later on in life when after the demise of his father, he took it up more seriously. From then until now, it has been a fulfilling journey for Chitrakar who counts his solo exhibition of paubha paintings in Japan as a benchmark in a long, illustrious career.

His success he says is relative. In his words, the state of art in a country is an indicator of the country's progress. Even though a change in people's perspective about traditional art seems to be undergoing a revolution, Chitrakar does not recommend people looking for financial stability to take up paubha painting. "It is useless to tally the time and effort spent on a painting with the price we get. Time just does not figure in the equation." ■

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# The Power of One

*Without any formal training in architecture, Jitendra Shrestha, a self-taught art appreciator, is designing and building his way towards what he hopes will be a more cultured, social environment. Utsav Shakya catches up with the jovial personality.*

**P**EOPLE CALL YOU A CULTURE EXPERT. WHAT EXACTLY IS IT THAT YOU DO?

The concept of culture has evolved so much in urban Nepal that it is hard if not impossible to define its present status. We follow a centuries-old model of culture and traditions that are not compatible with modern times. We pay no heed to this and continue to center our lives on age-old traditions blindly. For instance, an institution like the Newar guthi that could have such an important and central role in present day Nepal has chosen to stand back, trapped in a time capsule. It still preaches canons of a lifestyle that define Newars as superior to others and encourages the Newar community to stay away from people of other castes. This is not our culture. I do appreciate our heritage of art and culture and think it is up to the common Nepali man to preserve it. This is all that I claim to be doing.

**WHAT DON'T YOU AGREE WITH ABOUT OUR CULTURE TODAY?**

The way I see it, our culture has been stuck where it was 400 years back. Take the typical Nepali kitchen as an example; an area that should be the most social area in the house reduced to a place where food is prepared. We hide it from our guests and we seldom share recipes. Take our fine homemade liquor – aela. Why has a drink that the Nepalese had the knowledge to prepare such a drink such a long time ago, been reduced to being served only in Newar functions



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and rundown bhattis? These are things we should take pride in and not hide; I don't agree with this attitude. This has to change.

**HOW DID YOU GET STARTED WITH RENOVATING HOMES?**

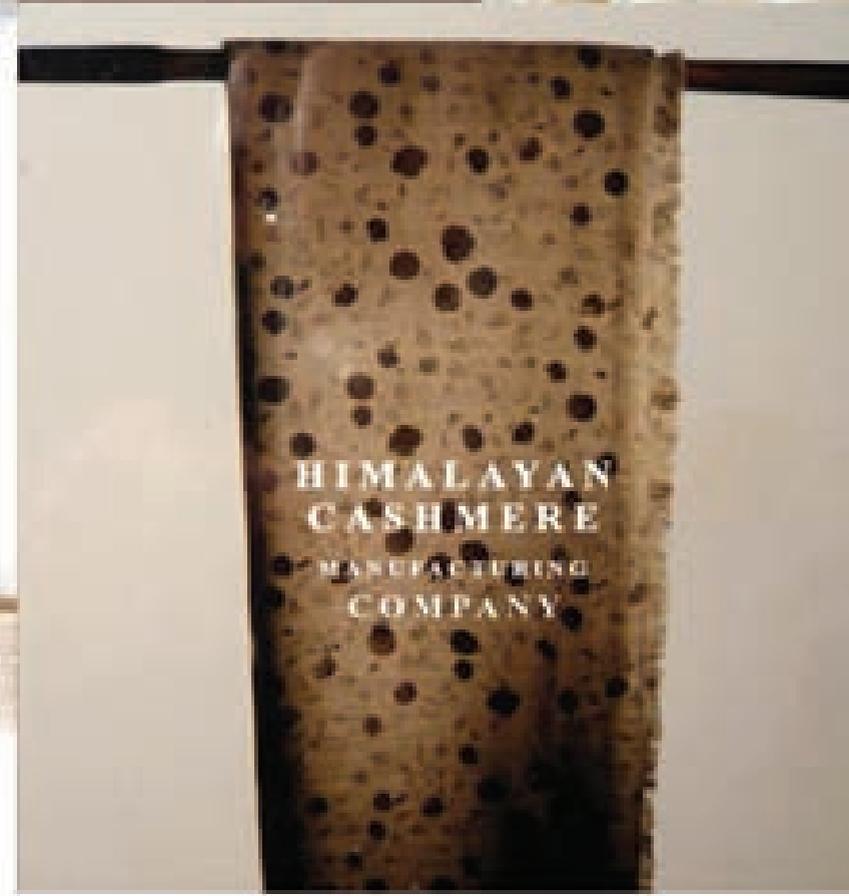
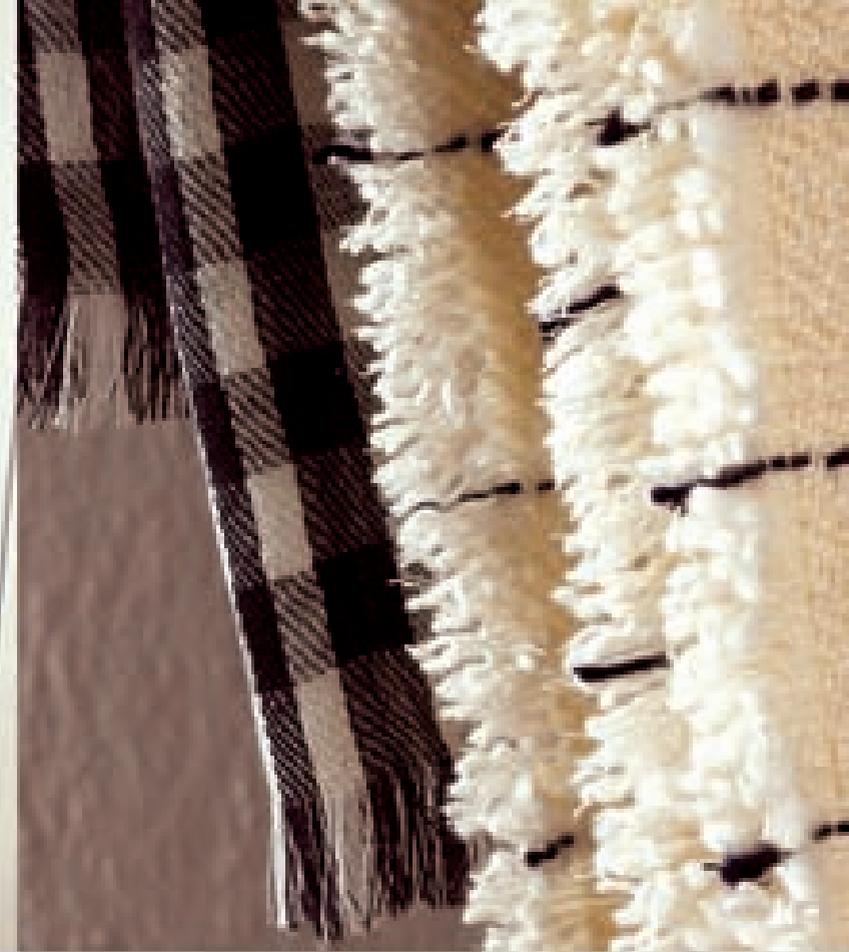
I don't have any formal training in architecture. It is sad that the architects we do have often lack an appreciation of art and confine their interest to the basics. My interest in architecture was born out of my need to live the way I wanted to. I was not going to run away from here just because things were bad in Nepal. I want a clean environment so I started the Friends of Heritage project to clean

I am most excited about opening a microbrewery in Chyusal in Patan. The building will be designed in traditional style and will consist of a venue for social gatherings and apartments to rent out to like-minded people.

up my neighborhood. This did not start out as a social initiative but as a selfish need. Similarly, I started to build a house for myself and incorporated things that I liked. People liked it and this is what got me managing similar projects.

**WHAT PROJECTS DO YOU HAVE LINED UP?**

I am most excited about opening a microbrewery in Chyusal in Patan. The building will be designed in traditional style and will consist of a venue for social gatherings and apartments to rent out to like-minded people. I want to promote Newar aela as a worthy alternative to foreign liquor and make the bar, a more social area and not just a place where people get drunk. I am also working on a house which is going to incorporate a lot of reclaimed wood in its design. ■



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## A Delectable Treat

*A unique dish prepared in very few Nepali households, Kinema is uncommon and unknown amongst people of most communities. Sapid insights into the country's ethnic food culture help you better understand the Nepali way of life.*

Text & Photo By LIZBETH LUCKSOM

Weeks before my planned trip to Nepal, I decided to take a short tour of our local market or *Haat bazaar* in Kalimpong, a small town in the district of Darjeeling. Every Wednesday and Saturday, fresh homegrown fruits and vegetables arrive from surrounding villages. Mesmerized by the hustle and bustle of the villagers, I watched them bring in their colourful produce and the town folk as they made quick purchases while scrutinizing the quality. Amidst this somewhat psychedelic sight, I caught a glimpse of small, neatly packed, green colored bundles, tied loosely by a piece of straw. I quickly assumed it was '*kinema*' wrapped in a banana leaf because that is how it is commonly sold. I am not aware of any kinema processing factory or unit but for all I know it is a much sought after local delicacy and a means of income for many rural households.

Now for those of you who are still wondering what it actually is, *Kinema* is a unique flavoursome delicacy prepared by fermenting the whole soybean.

Apart from its greyish color, its sticky texture is its main characteristic. The word kinema, might sound foreign to us but it is apparently derived from local Limbu dialect. *Kinambaa*, where *ki* means '*fermented*' and *namba* means '*flavour*'. Before the unification of Nepal in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Limbu people belonged to the independent kingdom of Limbhuwan, present-day district of Therathum, Taplejung, Panchthar, Dhankuta and Ilam, during which they started the production and consumption of this fermented food in Nepal. However, no historical documents are available that support its actual origin. Over a period of time and mainly due to various geographical factors, making and eating kinema spread to Rai, Manger, Gurung, and Tamang communities, not to forget ethnic communities like the Lepcha and Bhutia community.

I was overjoyed to witness my cousins actually preparing kinema, a while ago here in Nepal. They do not buy kinema in the market like most of us but prepare it at home by soaking the dark brown coated seeds of soybean overnight, boil-

ing it in a pressure cooker until soft the following day. Packed in banana leaves and wrapped in additional layers of thick cloth to insulate it, the container is then stored in a warm room for several days. Once the soybean forms a sticky texture with a typical ammoniacal odour, the kinema is ready to be prepared as a dish. Different communities follow different methods as far as its preparation is concerned and some communities might even have a different name for it. Nevertheless, it has the same unique flavour.

Trying this dish is a must if you happen to travel to the eastern districts of Nepal someday or for that matter the Darjeeling Hills, Sikkim or even the North-eastern region of India. Try and visit a local family and share this special dish which goes very well with a bowl of hot steamed rice, with a salad mix to balance the diet. I would personally recommend the infamous *dallay kborsaani* (hot red round chilly) found in the Darjeeling hills & Sikkim along with kinema to have that wholesome experience while you are at it. ■



# The Future of History

*Eight artists come together to try and understand the future of art.*

By: PRATIK RIMAL



ECS Media

Eight artists attempted to analyze and interpret a state of mind shaped by harmonization of the *Rato Matsyendranath Jatra* with modern times in a collaborative art project entitled, “Future of History,” at Park Gallery in Pulchowk.

Through the 50 paintings, they attempted to search the point of integration between ancient culture and modern lifestyle. Ambar Gurung, chief guest at the inauguration program on March 13, lauded the artists for their attempt. “Culture distinguishes us from other living beings, and we cannot live without it. It is something we must respect and recognize,” Gurung said in his short inaugural speech.

## WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF HISTORY?

Mukesh Malla, Research Coordinator of the team fears that the future of our history would be doomed if today’s society fails to continue age-old customs and traditions. He says that the present is due to the past, and the future-in turn will be a result of our present. “We all have our roots, and they define what we do and don’t. It therefore is important to preserve our history,” Malla said. If Malla’s words hold true, “We’re prob-

ably diverted to a point where culture and modernity do not meet,” said Saroj Bajracharya, Project Coordinator.

## CAN MODERNITY AND HISTORY MEET?

One of the themes that the artists explored in the exhibition was whether modernity and history could meet. Unlike common beliefs, modern life and ancient culture are not disparate, Bajracharya argues. “They have their roots in culture itself. It is only degrees of variation that causes distortion and transformation,” adds Bajracharya who painted the *Roots of Coincidence* piece. Since the roots are the same, Malla believes that these two can meet - solely with culture as the circumstance.

## SIMPLICITY IN MODERNITY

Although technological advancements have helped ease our lives, it has also added more chaos to it. Harmonization and simplicity can be achieved nonetheless says Bajracharya adding, “In order to reach simplicity, we first need to see the object of focus—simplify and understand it. Only then, can we work to reach the state of simplicity.” He conveys the same feeling in his

painting -*Roots of Coincidence*, which depicts a red dressing table with many linked and disparate paths. Pointing to his painting, he explains that in order to achieve simplicity, “We only need to look at the object, the red dressing table. Once the object is clear, we need to find the simplest route that leads to the object.”

## CHANGING FORMS, ONE BELIEF

*Rato Matsyendranath’s* chariot is created every year to commence the festival and is dismantled later to indicate its completion. It is because of this that we do not have a single idol of *Matsyendranath*. Despite this, “The belief towards the deity remains as powerful a force,” adds Malla. This feeling has been expressed well in Sheelasha Rajbhandari’s painting, “24 Changing Skins and One Evolving Soul”. In it, Rajbhandari has created 24 different images of the deity as seen by 24 different perspectives.

The exhibition that supported by Park Gallery concluded on March 26. The team comprised of painters Mukesh Malla, Gopal Kalapremi Shrestha, Saroj Bajracharya, Manish Lal Shrestha, Hitman Gurung, Sundar Lama, Sheelasha Rajbhandari and theatre artist Ashesh Malla. ■

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# Mohkee

*A simple head accessory worn while performing certain rituals proves yet again, how the simplest detail of Nepali life is full of meaning.*

By UTSAV SHAKYA

There is a lot about Nepali culture and its various rites and rituals that those foreign to the land and its customs might deem as strange and impractical. They will not be completely wrong in thinking this. While the practicality of these traditions is a subjective matter, many of the rituals *are* a bit strange. Many times, people might not even know the significance of the rituals they are performing. Many people grow up watching their traditions in practice and it becomes such a part of their daily lives that it is as exotic to them as washing one's face in the morning.

This has happened to some parts of Nepali culture due to an absence of re-

search on the topic and the subsequently poor state of its preservation. Naturally, people would be unaware of the meanings of the little things they do during various festivals. However, if one were to get slightly more inquisitive and ask around about such traditions, pockets of people who know about this still exist, shedding light on these charming little everyday mysteries.

*Bel Bibaha* is the custom of marrying a young girl to a *bel* fruit. Although it is largely symbolic, with the fruit representing an immortal husband, it is an important rite of passage for a young Hindu girl. The *bel bibaha* is in fact one of three types of marriages which a Hindu girl will probably experience in

her lifetime. The second marriage is to the sun god or Surya. Only the third is to an actual human! The tradition ensures that the girl is never widowed. *Janku* is another tradition where upon reaching the age of 77 years, seven months and seven weeks, an elderly person gets the status of a living god or goddess. The second *janku* takes place when the person reaches 88 years, eight months and eight weeks of age.

The *Mohkee* is a traditional Newari ornament - if you consider a painting on paper one, worn by young girls or elderly women during *bel bibaha* or *janku*. An accessory to be worn on the head, its front side is arranged on a girl's forehead so that the most prominent motifs on it, the *Ashtamangala* are clearly visible. *Ashtamangala* comes from two Sanskrit words - *ashta* meaning eight and *mangala* meaning auspicious. Together they represent eight auspicious Buddhist symbols.

These symbols are revered and held with great respect by its followers, with meanings that have significance to every Buddhist. These symbols are - the Endless Knot, the Golden Fish, the Lotus, the Om Mani Padme Hum, the Parasol, the Swastika, the Triratna and the Varada Mudra. The symbols are especially important in countries that practice the Theravada sect of Buddhism such as Sri Lanka and Thailand. Over time, the different cultures of the various areas it spread to added to the symbolism continually and made it richer.

The symbols represent eight of the teachings of the Buddha. This makes it quite clear, as to why this design is on the *mohkee* in the first place. In marriage and when being designated a living goddess, these teachings of the Buddha are to act as guidelines. Another mystery solved, in the series of such that makes up Nepali life. ■

*Bel Bibaha* is the custom of marrying a young girl to a *bel* fruit.

Although it is largely symbolic, with the fruit representing an immortal husband, it is an important rite of passage for a young Hindu girl.



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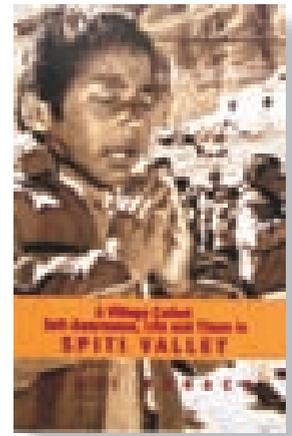
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# A Village Called Self-Awareness Life and Times in Spiti Valley

By Benti Banach

Reviewed by NEALE BATES



When the author of *A Village Called Self-Awareness* taught school at the Spiti Children's Home School Munsel-Ling, in the north Indian Himalayas a few years ago, he kept detailed notes on his experience. Notes about all aspects of teaching English to the Tibetan Buddhist children of the district of Spiti. Notes about daily life in his host village of Rangrik. Notes on his attraction to the Dharma - Tibetan Buddhism. Notes on the town drunks, public health, pedagogical philosophy, monastery monks and former monks, fellow teachers, and the personalities and prospects of his many students, many of whom shared the same name. "Seventeen of my hundred and eleven pupils are called Tenzin. How am I supposed to tell the difference between them?" he asks. Notes on the arrival and departure of myriad visitors, and about his stone cold room on winter mornings, and the food he ate, and the virtues of meditation. Notes on weddings, murder and death rituals, on runny-noses and on dirty faces, and on that aspect of life so important to virtually all schoolboys in South Asia: sports.

One of the first questions his students asked him on Day One was "Do you like cricket, sir?" Benti Banach was at a disadvantage. It was obvious that how he answered the question would

certainly determine how he would be perceived and accepted (or not) by his young charges. He had come to Spiti to teach English and explore the practice and meaning of Tibetan Buddhism, in an exotic place that he has described simply as a "curve in the Himalayas." And the first thing the students want to know is what sport is 'best'? Of course he liked sports, but what did he know about cricket? And what did cricket have to do with classrooms full of wide-eyed boys and girls learning English?

It turns out that this Dutch school-teacher, adrift as a stranger in the high Himalayas, didn't know much about cricket, even less about The Netherlands' national cricket team. But his students did, and the which-sport-is-best theme occurs several times through the book. It is a motif against which he paints a remarkably rich and poignant picture of life in Spiti, day by day, season by season, crisis to crisis, festival to festival, game by game. It is a book as much about discovering the ups and downs of life in a remarkable little community near the roof of the world as it is about discovering oneself. In the end, he concludes: "If I have fallen short in improving their English, I perhaps have had a small influence on their preference of sports."

The book has 20 chapters covering a great deal about life in Spiti, with wit and insight. It is all about what he taught

his students, and about what he learned about them and their community and himself in the process. A lot, it turns out. There are also several pages of photos, many showing of his friendly students, smiling and being silly or somber and being serious at their prayers at the start of each school day.

Spiti Valley comes over in this book as a fascinating yet difficult place for a European seeker after the Dharma to live and teach. It is a long way from anywhere else, he finds out. "The name Spiti," he writes, "is often explained as 'land of the middle', a country between India and Tibet, or the country between the two mediaeval Tibetan kingdoms of Ladakh and Guge, in West-Tibet." In the end, however, he concludes that it is difficult to know precisely what that means: "Tibetan scholars accept the name as being innate and impossible to deduce." In some ways (like the sports question) the meaning of life in Spiti and of Banach's own richly detailed experiences there are equally difficult to deduce. However, he has written a great story about how he lived it, day by day.

Benti Banach's *A Village Called Self-Awareness* is a remarkable memoir.

Vajra Publications (Vajra Bookstore), Jyatha/Thamel, Kathmandu; 256pp., illustrated; NRs.800. The reviewer is an occasional contributor to ECS NEPAL magazine. He can be contacted at [neale.bates@gmail.com](mailto:neale.bates@gmail.com)

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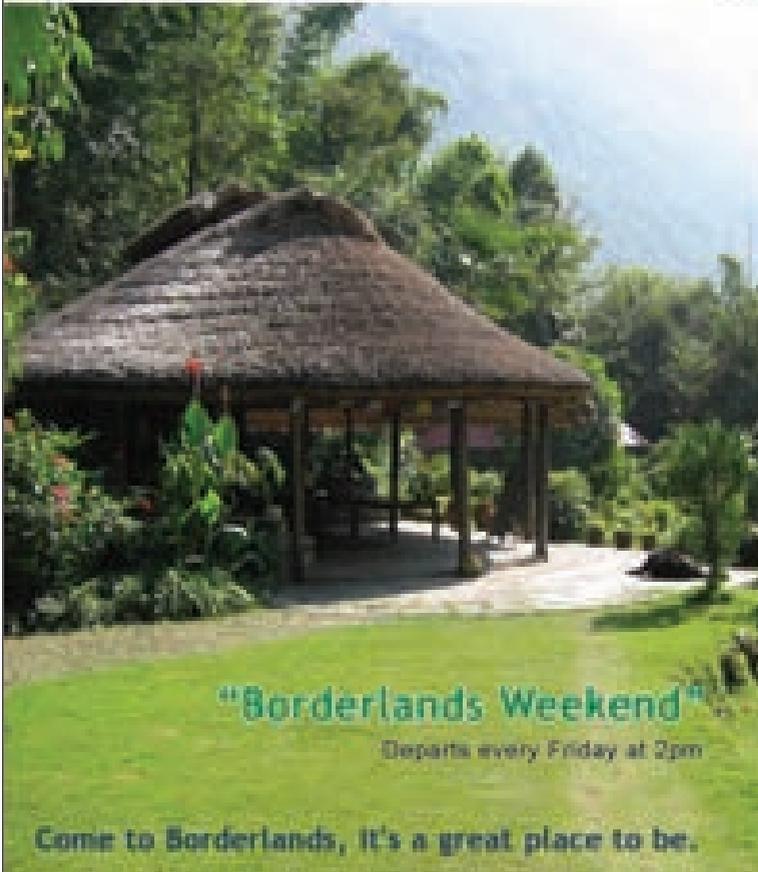
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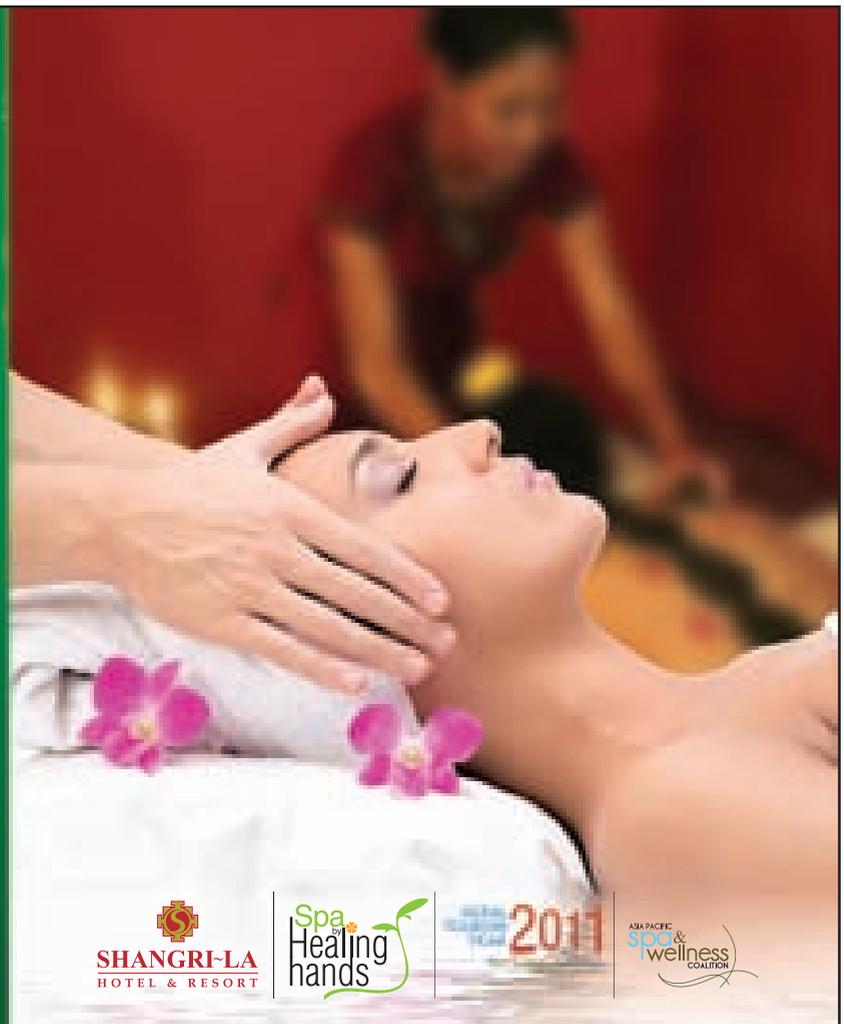


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# ART SINCE THE TIME OF ARNIKO

*From the early days of Arniko to the present art scene, it has been a long and colorful journey for Nepali art and artists; the artists being as colorful and moody as the art they create.*

**By AMAR B SHRESTHA**

In 1260, the great Mongolian Emperor Kublai Khan decreed to Lama Phags-pa, his spiritual teacher, to build a golden stupa in Lhasa in honor of a previous teacher, Chos-rje pa Saky. Phags-pa, in turn, requested King Jaya Bhim Dev Malla of Nepal to send a skilled architect to supervise the work. Arniko, then just 16 years old led a group of 80 artisans and carried out his work so well that the Emperor asked Phags-pa to summon the young architect. Kublai Khan wanting to test him further, asked Arniko to repair a copper statue of a Sung emperor that was had been considered 'beyond repair'. When finished, the statue looked so perfect that even the most skilled of the court artists were impressed. Arniko went on to build many other masterpieces in China, among which, the most renowned is the White Pagoda of Miaoying Temple in Beijing. Built in eight years (1271-79), the stupa, better known as White Dagoba, was later declared a historical treasure. According to historians, Arniko's other notable works included nine Buddhist monasteries, two Confucian shrines and one Taoist palace as well as the Archway of Yungtang - the design of which exactly adopts a Nepalese style. ▶



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A larger than life sculpture of Arniko in artist Manuj Babu Mishra's garden.

#### MICHELANGELO OR LEONARDO DA VINCI?

Besides architecture, Arniko was equally adept at painting and sculpture. His portraits of a series of Chinese emperors were admired by everyone. Pleased with Arniko's work, the Emperor conferred on him the title of Liang Guo Gong (Duke) and made him a minister in his court. He was also rewarded with 15000 acres of farm land near Beijing, 1000 serfs, and 100 heads of cattle. Arniko is among the very few foreigners, whose biography is included in imperial China's history books. Arniko died in 1306 in China at the age of sixty-two.

Arniko's real name was Balabahu. The Chinese called him Arniko (*ara*: woman; *niko*: face like), because he had delicate feminine features. Another meaning could be *Aa Ni Ka*: or respectable brother from Nepal. Going by history, few will dispute

the premise that Arniko is the greatest of all Nepalese architects and artists, dead or alive. He was responsible for spreading Nepalese art and architecture not only to China (including Tibet) and Mongolia but also to places like Indonesia. The "World Expo Park of Shanghai" at Expo 2010 Shanghai had a "Nepal Arniko Center" in the Highlight 1 section of the Nepal Pavilion. one of the more popular sections at the expo, it was visited by hundreds of thousands of visitors.

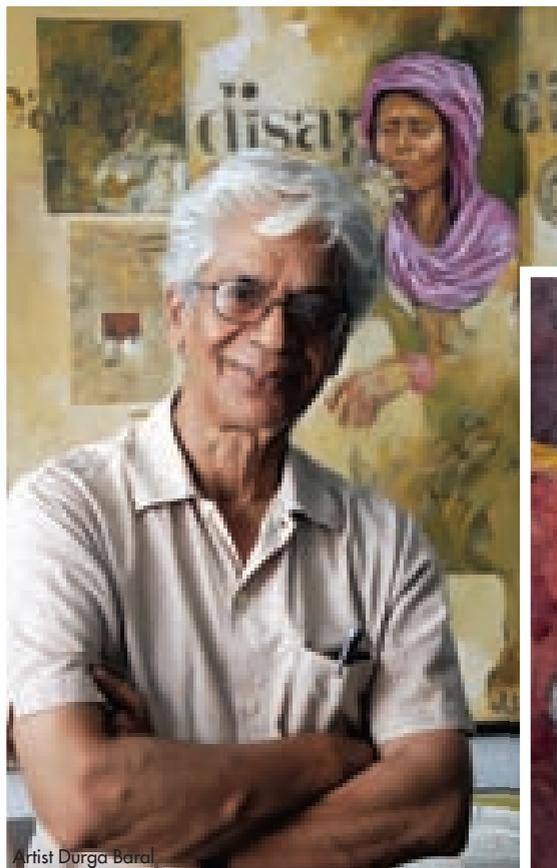
#### ART BEFORE ARNIKO

While Arniko gave international exposure to Nepalese art, it is also true that art, especially stone carving, was already flourishing in the country long before him. According to the late Lain Singh Bangdel, the history of Nepalese stone sculpture goes back at least 2000 years whereas works in wood and terra cotta

date back only to the 17th century. A stone image of Yaksha Bodhisattva found at Hadigaon, (now in the National Museum) dates back to the first century.

Most ancient Nepalese sculptures were created by artists from the Newar community of Kathmandu Valley. Their style influenced Chinese (and Tibetan) art too and Nepali artists were often invited to work on decorating their shrines.

As far as wooden sculptures are concerned, they were mostly architectural works (windows, door surrounds, struts, *toranas*, etc). According to experts, although the Nepalese style borrowed heavily from the art of Gupta and later, of Pala - both Indian, Nepalese artists later developed a distinctive style of their own - deities with languid eyes and wider faces than that of Indian models, stylized curves and beautiful proportions. Traditional Nepalese art (and architecture) remained more or less the same over the



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Arniko's real name was Balabahu. The Chinese called him Arniko, because he had delicate feminine features.



centuries. It particularly flourished during the reign of the Malla dynasty (1200-1769) in Kathmandu Valley when successive rulers outdid each other in creating wonderful works of art and architecture. In due time, contemporary art too began to make its mark in Nepal, heralding the arrival of a long list of modern artists on the scene.

#### THE PIONEERS

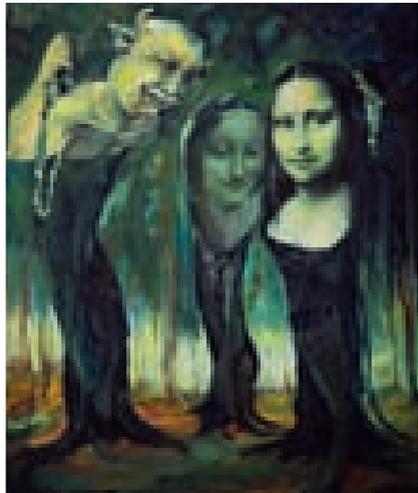
Perhaps an excerpt from the book, 'Tej Bahadur Chitrakar – Icon of a Transition' (2004) by Madan Chitrakar, would be rel-

evant at this point. *“But the irony of history is such that when there was relative calm in 1957 and King Mahendra instituted the Royal Nepal Academy as the upholder and custodian of Art, Culture and Literature of the country, someone who had never stepped inside the country earlier was chosen to ‘represent art’ of Nepal. For sure, Lain Singh Bangdel – the new member - was born, brought up, and was working in a place other than Nepal. All the local rightful claimants (aspirants) for the post then, who had struggled so long and so hard to lay the very genesis of the Western style of painting in Nepal and were responsible for the achievements so far, including Tej Bahadur Chitrakar, were ignominiously ignored. Only King Mahendra knew the reasons. And above all, without prejudice it should be read in the context that in 1924 when Lain Singh was still a toddler, Tej Bahadur and Chandra Man Maskey were painting portraits from life in the Government School of Arts, Calcutta – the same institution Bangdel himself got enrolled into some twenty years later.”*

Tej Bahadur Chitrakar, Chandra Man Maskey and Lain Singh Bangdel are some names that *have* to be mentioned when talking about Nepal's later art history, as have to be names like Uttam Nepali, Batsa Gopal Vaidya, Krishna Manandhar, Indra Pradhan, Vijay Thapa, Thakur Prasad Mainali, Durga Baral and Rama Nanda Joshi. The last mentioned, besides being an excellent water colorist, also established Park Gallery, Nepal's first modern art gallery.

#### THE PRESENT SCENARIO

At present, art has become somewhat of a run of the mill affair, especially in Kathmandu, with art events being the order of the day or, to put it another way, a trend. Art schools are producing artists by the dozen every second year and old timers are having a difficult time keeping pace with new and more youthful energy. The majority of artists practice the art of painting with ▶



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Artist Manuj Babu Mishra

few devoting themselves to installations and sculpture. In fact, sculpture is more of a prerogative of artisans who toil day in and day out in the narrow lanes of cities like Patan to produce stone and metal icons of various deities for use in temples and monasteries. In villages like Bungamati also, woodcarvers chip away determinedly to create decorative wooden items like toranas and peacock windows. But an attempt to understand the Nepalese art world as it exists today through brief sketches of a selection of artists and their works makes for interesting exercise. By no means complete, the list is representative of the country's contemporary art world as it stands today.

#### THE HERMIT

Manuj Babu Mishra, 75, is an artist and litterateur who is held in the highest esteem nationally and internationally. However, he is also

the quintessential eccentric. He has now lived indoors for almost 10 years in his abode called the 'Hermitage'. "I go to sleep between 6:30 to 7:00 pm. I wake up at 2:00 am," he discloses. What does he do at that hour? "I sketch, paint, write!" he says. His sketches are mesmerizing. They are clearly the works of a master. He uses sharpened bamboo tips dipped in ink to draw his sketches. As for his paintings, they are rowdily extravagant in nature. "The basic concept of my work regardless of the media I use is the result of and a reaction to, the churnings of my mind", he declares. Many, if not all of his works have wide (and wild) eyed - some very much devilish - faces of the artist himself. He says, "Art for me is inner expression to vacate the load on the mind."

#### HORSE WHISPERER

In an interview a couple of years back, he had disclosed, "After 15-20 years of

painting horses, I am now painting other subjects". This was a surprise as Shashi Shah's name has always been related to paintings of horses; not just ordinary ones, but large, muscular and magnificently unbridled animals. Perhaps it was the artist's way of expressing his own free spirit. The 71-year-old artist is presently the head of Srijana College of Fine Arts in Lazimpat. He says, "Even in a country like Nepal with its innumerable difficulties I have managed to achieve a lot as an artist." Much of the artist's life has been devoted to the depiction of horses. He admits, "Horses dominate my paintings. A white horse is the symbol of Vishnu, others are also symbolic - some are evil, horrifying, manic and devastating while others are good. I hope they all seduce the viewers' imagination." He opines, "Everybody has a different style and a painting must immediately be



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recognized as a particular artist's. This is success in itself."

#### MASTERFUL STROKES

His works are easily distinguishable; the distinction primarily due to the endowment of concise broad strokes throughout his paintings. "Shades of cubism, yes, that is what some people have noticed in my works," admits Shyam Lal Shrestha. Initially a watercolorist, he later went on to explore more creative possibilities. The 65-year-old artist takes pride in that he got to learn under the tutelage of the late Lain Singh Bangdel and especially happy with what the former Chancellor of the Royal Nepal Academy had to say about one of his exhibitions, 'Expression' (2000), "...Once a powerful and successful water color artist...he exhibited his water colors with a mastery of flow, strokes, technique and charm...he has changed his style since and has now developed more on his semi abstract figurative works." His canvases, though oriented towards the abstract, are still to a layman, comparatively easy to fathom but he does admit, "I have still some way to travel before I can claim to be proficient in abstract art".

#### SOULFULLY YOURS

Shashikala Tiwari, 61, doyenne of Nepal's art world, is as unpretentious as they come, and as down to earth. 'Merging With Nature', completed in 1988, is one of her personal favorites. It shows a lovingly proportioned woman, clad in a white - out in the open being buffeted by the powerful gusts of a strong wind. It is a painting that is soulfully sensuous in content. Her atelier in Bishal Nagar, Kathmandu, is located within surroundings brimming with greenery. This environment no doubt must have played a part in inspiring her to paint a whole series of canvases titled 'Fallen Leaves', 'Flowers', 'Harvest Leaves' and 'Monsoon'. In 2002, her 'Sunny Man Ka Stabdha Aankha Haru' - a tribute to the late King Birendra and his family - had a collection of lovingly done depictions about the royal tragedy. Her poetic talent was evident in the lyrical eulogy penned on the brochure which led to Sangeeta Thapa, Curator of

## THE GOLDEN AGE OF NEPALI ART AND ARCHITECTURE

After the fall of the Licchavis (300 - 1200 AD) came the Malla period (1200-1769 AD) during which the foundation of the city of Kantipur (latter day Kathmandu) was laid. The early Malla rule started with Ari Malla in the 12th century and over the next two centuries grew into a large empire before disintegrating into small principalities. Jayasthiti Malla, with whom the later Malla period commences, reigned towards the end of the 14th century. Although his rule was rather short, his place among the rulers in the valley is eminent for numerous social and

economic reforms. In general, Malla rulers transformed their capitals into what might be called open-air museums of arts and architecture. Almost all the fine examples of art and architecture, the graceful pagodas in the shape of temples, palaces, and houses; the prevailing customs of the various castes and the many festivals cycling round the year are the products of Malla period. They are still a living phenomenon and influence the life of the people with the same impulse as it used to do more than four hundred years ago.

*Excerpted from: [www.infonepal.com.np/mallas.htm](http://www.infonepal.com.np/mallas.htm)*



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Artist Lok Chitrakar

Artist from left to right:  
 Bijay Thapa, Asha Dangol, Shyam Lal Shrestha, Shanta Kumar Rai, Erina Tamrakar, Uttam Nepali, Kiran Manandhar, Sashi Kala Tiwari, Bhai Raja Maharjan, Binod Pradhan, Krishna Manandhar, Narendra Shrestha And Manish Lal Shrestha



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Siddhartha Art Gallery, stating, "...she is also an accomplished poetess. It is precisely this synthesis of literature and art that gives Shashikala's paintings a distinct lyrical style".

#### THE EXPERIMENTAL EXPRESSIONIST

Arguably, Kiran Manandhar, 54, is the most popular contemporary artist in the country today. Currently he is the Chancellor (the first one in fact) of the recently established Nepal Fine Art Academy. He is a modern artist, an 'expressionist', and a vigorous one at that. He declares, "I go mad when I am working. I paint with brushes, hands and feet. When I am working, nothing else exists for me. I stop only

when I become exhausted." Kiran has spent considerable time in France where he is a Fellow of Cite' International des Arts, Paris, France, and a member of the Association des Arts Plastiques, Draveil, France. About his style, a critic has observed, "Kiran paints very fast. He starts with the abstract forms but later discovers in them, the faces, figures, animals and birds through the swift strokes of the brush. He scatters or flings colours on to the canvas in order to explore the physical qualities of colour". He prefers not to mix colours on the palette, believing that this will dilute the strength of colours. Expectedly, his favorite colors are passionate reds, strong blues and bold blacks.

#### THE PERFECTIONIST

"All *paubha* paintings are religious in nature but not necessarily based only on Buddhism," says Lok Chitrakar. However, if one were to look around his studio, Simrik Atelier in Lalitpur, one would see mostly Buddhism inspired paubha paintings. Because of the time consuming nature of his craft, it is understandable that the artist manages to finish but four or five paubhas a year. Explaining his art, Chitrakar says, "Paubha actually comes from two words, 'Pau' and 'Bha' derived from the Newari term *Patra Bhattarak*, which means, 'depiction of god in flat form'". He adds, "One has to be very disciplined to success in this field. Concentration is essential otherwise

Concentration is essential otherwise one cannot achieve the high levels of perfection required in paubha art.



one cannot achieve the high levels of perfection required in paubha art". This discipline and concentration, combined with his immense talent, has made Lok Chitrakar into one of the finest of paubha artists in the country.

#### RACING AGAINST TIME

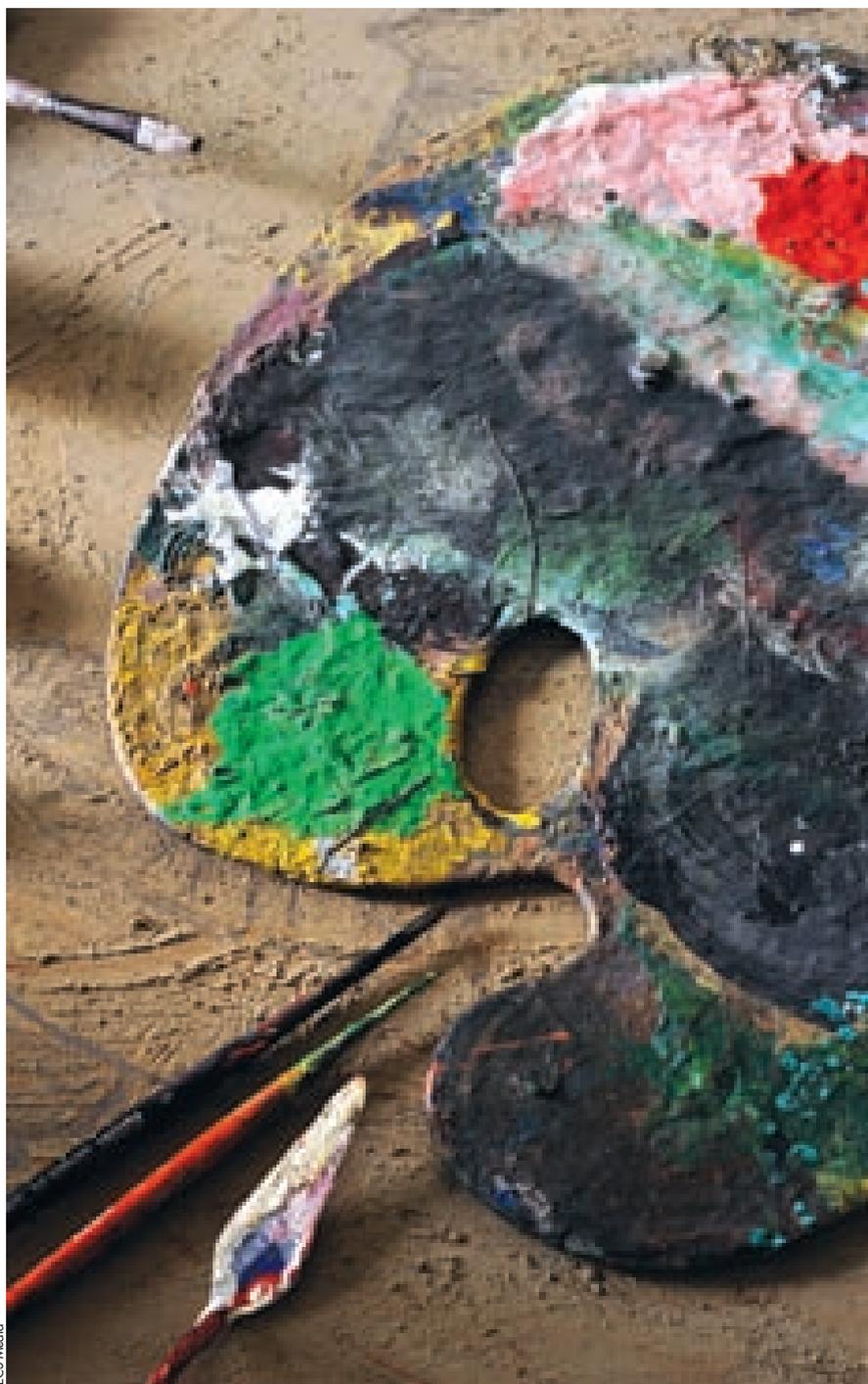
Son of the legendary artist Tej Bahadur Chitrakar, Madan Chitrakar is very much at the centre of today's Nepalese art world. As an art writer, he is one of the few giving impetus to Nepalese art through the medium of words that are knowledgeable and discerning. In 1999, on the verge of reaching the golden median in his life, and after having worked ▶

## EVOLUTION OF CONTEMPORARY ART IN NEPAL

Nepalese art is usually associated with thangkas (paubhas) and religious bronze and silver sculptures. Nepal is also famous for her architecture and temple squares and an unrivaled tradition in metalwork and woodcarvings. In order to understand how contemporary art evolved in Nepal, one has to look into Nepali history. Many experts have concluded that the move towards contemporary art began with the Rana Prime Minister, Jung Bahadur's visit to England in the early nineteenth century. A small group of traditional Chitrakar artists (temple artists) were selected and specifically commissioned to paint royal

family portraits, scenes of royal hunts and landscape in the "European Court Style" for their anglophile Rana patrons. Bhajuman Chitrakar was the first Chitrakar to paint in the European style. During the Rana regime, only a few artists (Chandra Man Maskey, Tej Bahadur Chitrakar and later Kesab Duwadi) went to India for formal artistic training. Several self-taught artists like Manohar Man Poon, Bal Krishna Sama and Amar Chitrakar painted in the western style for their patrons. In the early 1950s, Lain Singh Bangdel became the first Nepali ever to receive formal artistic training at the Ecole National des Beaux Artist in Paris. Excerpted from: [www.siddharthaartgallery.com](http://www.siddharthaartgallery.com)

“An artist may be very accomplished, but it is creativity which uplifts art to a transcendent level.”



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in a cushy job for almost 20 years, he quit. He says this is because, “Realization struck me that I was nearing 50 and that I had precious little productive time in which to attain my goals in the fields of painting and art literature, both of which I regard as my first calling.” He refers to this point in his life as his ‘second coming’ and aptly, his style too underwent a metamorphosis. Where, once he expressed his pain at society’s ignorance in not recognizing the great legacy of Kathmandu’s heritage by exhibiting works like ‘The Vanishing Heritage’, his later works are more light-hearted and celebratory in nature.

**THE SHAHS OF CONTEMPORARY ART** ‘Shanti Yagya’ at the Siddhartha Art Gallery held in April 2006, was one of the most successful exhibitions held there. This was when the then 41-year-old Umashankar Shah revealed his proclivity for newer styles rather than only those credited to him so far. His better half Seema is an accomplished artist in her own right, and her successes have been no less. Her ‘Explorations of The Magical Realm’ exhibition in 2003 was hugely successful. She now has a reputation as one of the finest printmakers in Nepal. It must be noted that transitions are never easy. As Seema says, “Initially, I used to paint only trees and jungles. Even when I wanted to change my theme, the shapes of my favorite subjects would somehow creep into the picture.” Her husband agrees, “I have been fortunate to have a smooth transition.” Gigantic prayer wheels, portrayed with remarkable realism and a glowing translucence are indeed very different from the neatly crowded night cityscapes that Umashankar is famous for.

#### LET’S PLAY WITH CLAY

“Come on, why don’t you try out your hand here? Let’s play with clay,” is what Gopal Kalapremi Shrestha said to me once during a visit his Gokem Art Ceramic Studio in Maharajgunj. He says he sculpted his first statue when he was just eight years old. At age 17, he decided to turn professional. “I also paint and work with stone,” he says.

“But you can call me a clay specialist.” His love and enthusiasm for the art is evident from his statement, “Clay is life. Clay can be moulded as per the artist’s desire.” The sculptor has been awarded many prizes in his long and creative journey including the Arniko Art Award and Gold Medal in 2000. He labels his figures as ‘modern sculptures’ and that is quite fitting, because Kalapremi is hailed as a contemporary sculptor.

#### THE NEO IMPRESSIONISTS OF KASTHAMANDAP

In 1994, under the leadership of Prashant Shrestha, an accomplished artist at 26, eight artists came together under the umbrella of ‘Kasthamandap Art Group’ (KAG). On March 30, 1999, when he was just 31 years old, Prashant passed away suddenly. As one sits with the present members of ‘Kasthamandap’ in their studio in Kupondole, one hears his name mentioned often, and with reverence. One can see that Prashant’s spirit lives on and will continue to do so. Today, KAG is a name to be reckoned and its original seven founder members have made a name for themselves. Asha Dangol, Bhairaj Maharjan, Binod Pradhan, Erina Tamrakar, Pradip Bajracharya, Pramila Bajracharya and Sunila Bajracharya, all in their thirties, make up KAG, and each has had a fair measure of success, some, as is natural, more than the others. In general, the group admits to being influenced by the Impressionists. However, each has managed to carve out a unique identity of his/her own.

#### MOLTEN LAVA

Ashmina Ranjit’s ‘Hair Warp-Travel through Strands of Universe’ exhibition at NAFA Art Gallery in 2000 was a memorable one. In addition to charcoal sketches of strands of intertwined hair as crowning glories, also on display were installations in the form of huge red braids of accouterments to do with ethnic hair-dos of Nepal. Ranjit is an artist who is bold enough to make a distinction between skill and creativity in fellow artists. She says, “An artist may be very accomplished, but it is creativity which uplifts art to a transcendent

level.” Her own works (many of which are installations) strive to reach such heights. ‘Women and Sensuality’ in 1998, meant to “express the feminine perspective towards women’s sexuality”, had some oils that created quite a stir - a profusion of blood red depicting depths of stark womanhood. Another work that created waves was an installation titled ‘Shakti Sworup - Menstrual Blood’ which arose from the artist’s quest to “understand, express and visualize the strong emotions stirred by flowing blood, along with the fears associated with it”.

#### DRIVEN

Manish Lal Shrestha’s slight stature belies his considerable status in the Nepalese art world. Still young, at 32, he is enviably successful. He continues to remain driven. ‘Sound of Intimacy II’, ‘Sound of Hope’, ‘Sound of Existence’, ‘Sound of Existence’ and ‘Sound of Silence’, are a few of his successful exhibitions. “‘Sound of Hope’ was a turning point in my life,” he reveals. In this, the large canvases had almost a quilt-like appearance, the effect due to numerous pieces of coarse handloom painted in various hues, and some with bells, sewn together. He says, “This exhibition taught me that artistic creativity can be conveyed through many means.” Manish is a staunch admirer of Georg Baselitz, whose most famous work - the 200cm x 162cm ‘Head is a Pot’ - enthralls the young artist. “I revel in its simplicity,” he declares. Simplicity is something Manish himself is striving to achieve which is evident from many of his later works where one will find few colors and even large sized canvases bereft of much detail except the minimum, conceptualized.

#### THE VISUAL INTERPRETER

Sujan Chitrakar, in his early 30s, is one of the more gifted artists of the times. On this, there seems to be a general consensus among his colleagues and peers. The reason he is so highly regarded owes itself to his innovativeness, to validate which he says: “I prefer to be called a ‘Visual Interpreter’”. His desire to increase art appreciation among the general public resulted in the creation of what

he calls ‘Artivity’, some examples of which were first on display during the international workshops and exhibition held in 2006 by Sutra Art Centre in Patan Durbar Square. He had then used common vendor pushcarts as mediums through which to display his work. He says, “I want to trigger public interest in art by involving the public themselves in the activity of creating art.” He teaches at the Centre of Art and Design, Kathmandu University, and regards teaching to be both a great responsibility as well as a challenge.

#### ARNIKO LIVES!

Dharma Raj Shakya says that working in stone is one of the hardest of artistic professions. But that hasn’t stopped him from sculpting thousands of pieces including the two famous nine feet-high lions in Basantapur Durbar Square’s Hanuman Dhoka, which people refer to as the ‘Dharma Raj Lions’. A statue in his own likeness stands tall in the White Stupa Temple in Beijing, China. How did he manage this? Well, it so happened that when Chinese authorities were searching for a model on whom to base the making of Arniko’s statue, they came to know that Dharma Raj Shakya of Patan was, besides being a talented sculptor himself, amazingly similar in appearance to the legendary master. “So, that was how I got to have a statue of myself built in China!” jokes the doe-eyed Dharma Raj. Among the many awards he has accumulated, the Arniko Youth Art Award in 2002 holds special meaning. “Maybe because it is named after Arniko,” he admits.

What goes round comes around and the wheel, as they say, appears to have come full circle! With so many talented artists at work, art in Nepal is thriving, that’s for sure. ■

Parts of this feature have been excerpted from the writer’s forthcoming book titled, “Informally Yours – Artists and Architects of Nepal – Volume I” (publisher: Pilgrims Publishing, Varanasi). Amar B Shrestha is also author of “The Dark Mermaid”, an inspirational story of a young Nepali girl’s valiant efforts to succeed despite difficult odds. It is available at Pilgrims and other leading bookshops in Kathmandu and on most online bookstores including Amazon, Barnes & Noble and Borders.





# Mud, Sweat and Madness on the Mountain

*Age is no bar for a good time and racing up or down a hill can prove to be more about knowing your own strengths than just about the speed and the track.*

**Text & Photos By RAVI MAN SINGH**

**W**hat on earth was I doing on that godforsaken racetrack? I wondered, sweating my guts out at 56 years of age. Thick, slimy mud showered down on me, my lungs felt like they would burst from the puffing and panting and my knees were near ready to buckle from the strain. My bike whined in fierce protest. Along with the madness and self-doubt however, came moments of hope and ecstasy, grit and courage, joy and jubilation and the

consuming desire to push on and to win. As a rookie, with only 9 months into my cycling career, I had never thought in my wildest dreams that I would participate in a championship race, let alone win. I had signed up for the race on a whim and to my surprise, had won my first ever, cycling championship.

The first MTB Madness Mountain Bike Championship cross-country race was organized by Kathmandu Bike Station. A recently opened mountain bike shop in Pani Pokhari, it is run by the ►

enterprising duo of Prayas Tamang and Buddha Lama. Slated for August 28, 2010, the race was divided into six categories: Juniors (under 18 years), Women (open), Elite (19-30 yrs.), Veterans (30-40), Masters (40-50) and Grand Masters (above 50 yrs).

### IN TWO MINDS

Still uncertain about my participation, the official form for the race languished on a table in my living room for several days. “No rush,” I said to myself. First off, I lacked the confidence. To bolster my morale, I talked with Rupesh who runs Epic Adventures, an upscale bike shop located in Jhamsikhel, Lalitpur. Besides selling branded bikes, the store also conducts cross-country tours and expeditions for local and foreign mountain biking buffs. “Why you must! Even if it means just participating,” said Rupesh sounding positive. “Plus, the race includes a category that fits you like a glove.” His words were comforting. “Maybe I should give it a thought,” I mused. I submitted the form the next day.

Exactly three weeks remained for training and inspection of the racetrack.

Then the rains started. My plans to visit the track were frustrated by the monsoon. The sun eventually showed its face and I ventured out on the track. I had company— fellow bikers, Khasing, 23 and Sulav, 13—both would-be contestants for the race. We were quite the motley crew.

The race venue was Budhanilkantha - a burgeoning uptown bazaar popular for the historic shrine of the reclining sapphire Bishnu. The start and finish point was the Budhanilkantha School. The official track began on a wide, paved road (pitted though with watery pot-holes), led across a mild incline and left the main road (to the Shivapuri National Park) to turn towards a dirt track (a thrilling down-hill ride) before dropping sharply to the left towards a foot trail that cut across paddy fields and solitary mud houses. From there we traversed a

slimy, narrow path that fell away towards a stream, rode up a tricky hillside that had seen a recent slide (we had to haul our bikes between big boulders here), making our way carefully across a narrow bridge before racing downhill on a wide track riddled with fissures and potholes to rejoin a dirt road at a bridge over the Bishnumati River. The dirt road then climbed up—a formidable uphill ride (I christened it the *Jyanmara ukalo* - “the killing incline”). The slimy road ran across paddy fields lined with a cluster of houses, until it met a paved road that converged on to the starting point. This made one lap (5.5km) of the race. Sulav, Khasing and I did only one lap for the day, which was enough to give us quite a scare. On one of the slippery mud slopes, Khasing lost control and hurtled down in a heap into the paddy field. Then, I slithered down—against

The slimy road ran across paddy fields lined with a cluster of houses, until it met a paved road that converged on to the starting point.



## FIRST MTB MADNESS MOUNTAIN BIKE CHAMPIONSHIP: AN OVERVIEW

The cross-country (XC) race was Kathmandu Bike Station's maiden venture into racing. The owners, Prayas Tamang and Buddha Lama made it a point to organize the race conforming to UCI (International Cycling Union) general rules. Race disciplines, age category, and course requirements (like gravel paths, forest tracks, fields, significant amounts of

climbing and descending) were met with.

The cross-country MTB race, with 103 bikers in six categories, comprised 7 Women, 16 juniors, 41 Elite, 25 Veterans, 12 Masters, and 2 Grandmasters. The race results were as follows:

Category	Laps	Distance	Timing
<b>Elite (19-30yrs)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>27.5 km</b>	-----
1 <sup>st</sup> ) Ajaya Pandit Chhetri (Reigning National Champ)	...	...	1:42:16
2 <sup>nd</sup> ) Narayan Gopal Maharjan	...	...	1:48:07
3 <sup>rd</sup> ) Padam Sabehang	...	...	1:50:00

The prize money included Rs. 25,000.00, Rs. 15,000.00 and Rs. 10,000.00 respectively for the top three elites. Awards for the top three winners in other categories included trophies, certificates, t-shirts, and mountain-flight tickets.

<b>Women (Open)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16.5 km</b>	...
1st) Freya Mills (Australian national)	...	...	1:31:14
2nd) Indira Rana	...	...	2:13:08
3rd) Sandhya Kumari	...	...	2:17:10
<b>Juniors (12-18 yrs)</b>	...	...	...
1st) Aayaman Tamang (Reigning National Champ)	...	...	1:15:02
2nd) Lelish Maharjan	...	...	1:16:05
3rd) Sulav Shrestha	...	...	1:43:25
<b>Veterans (31-40 yrs)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>27.5 km</b>	...
1st) Chandra Bahadur Chhetri	...	...	2:01:54
2nd) John Cuthderson (Australian)	...	...	2:27:01
3rd) Kishor Sahi	...	...	2:27:01
<b>Masters (41-50 yrs)</b>	<b>5</b>	...	...
1st) Laxmi Bahadur Maharjan	...	...	2:29:56
2nd) Jeff Basler (American)	...	...	2:46:38
3rd) Michael Rosenberg (German)	...	...	2:54:21
<b>Grand Masters</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16.5 km</b>	...
1st) Ravi Man Singh	...	...	2:11:50

The event was organized in aid of Early Childhood Development Centre (ECDC) as charity for educational scholarships for prison children. Kathmandu Bike Station and Makita Industrial Power Tools (sponsor) jointly handed over a cheque for Rs. 51,000.00 to ECDC before an impressive line-up of foster kids. The event was supervised by Race Director Mr. Rakesh Shrestha and Chief Marshal Mr. Rupesh Man Shrestha and was chaired by the President of Nepal Cycling Association, Mr. Chhimi Gurung.

To sum it up, the race event was a resounding success by any international standard. For the organizers, it was no small feat, though. In the face of overwhelming odds—the incessant rains, difficult terrain, and the landslide that washed away the dirt road at one location—only days before the race—the organizers spared no effort to pull the event through into a grand success. Kathmandu Bike Station truly deserves a mention.

The author can be contacted at mansinghravi@gmail.com.

my better judgment—did an “endo” flip (a bicycle accident in which the rider is thrown forward over the handlebars), and landed head first into the sludge. Sulav chose to walk his bike.

### THE BIG DAY

The big day finally arrived. Sulav and I were competing, but Khasing opted out as he had problems with his bike. I had not slept well the night before. When I arrived at the race venue, the site was already abuzz with feverish activity. Every single biker, men and women wore colorful jerseys and slacks with snazzy crash helmets to match. Word got around that the two-time national champion Ajay Pandit was competing. I had no idea who was who. To me however, every biker looked cool and intimidating, especially the tall, brawny “*kuire*” (foreigner) bikers, some of whom looked as if they could be in my age group.

The race was to start at 9am, but the weather did not look promising at all. There was no sun and a dull overcast sky made a downpour look imminent. However, the race was set in stone, rain or shine. The event attracted hordes of curious onlookers. Locals thronged the streets, loads of bicycle buffs, fans and cheerful families and friends milled around, while media persons scurried around flaunting their cameras.

Every rider had a number tag fastened on the handlebars, and another pinned up on the back of the jersey, different colors to correspond with the categories. The excitement mounted with every passing minute as the riders were called to the line. The line-up was impressive and overwhelming: a hundred riders. By the time the race started, I was a nervous wreck.

### THE KICK-OFF

With the whistle going off, the race started amidst loud cheering and clapping. The elites occupied the front row followed by the juniors and women. ►

The veterans, masters and the grand masters filled the rear. We tore down the road, my adrenaline hopping mad. I no longer felt edgy.

I did fine as I pedaled furiously up the first incline. Bikers swished past me, but I left some behind too. I was jubilant, and my confidence soared on the first downhill. I considered myself fairly good and fast on that particular off-road track, which I had done several times. My computer read the speed at something like 32 kilometers-per-hour. "Not bad," I said to myself. The bends were tricky, rather treacherous with loose gravel and sheer drops. I feared for the bikers' safety; a fall could be very dangerous. "Swoosh!" a biker blazed past me and disappeared around a bend. Maybe I was not so fast, after all. Then, spinning

along a wooded stretch, I stopped and stared in disbelief. The wide dirt road that stood there only two days ago had vanished to a landslide. In its place was a narrow path, just wide enough for a bike cutting between massive boulders.

Cheers and clapping went up from waiting volunteers and fans as the race marshal directed the bikers towards the sharp left curve, down a narrow single track. It was time for me to brave the dirty and slippery-as-hell trail. Confident, I plowed through the mud, a knowing smirk on my face that the steep, slimy slide, where I had taken a fall earlier, approached. I slipped a little ahead and the next thing I knew, I was a couple of feet down into the bushes. Luckily, I emerged unscathed.

### MUD BATHS

As it turned out, the mud slide was muddier because of the rains from the previous night. I got off and carefully steered my bike down the slope. Suddenly, a biker slid past me, skidded, tried to keep steady and then flipped over. I winced as the poor chap landed head first into the mud, his bike on top. Later after the race, I learned that just about all the bikers had fallen off their bikes on that slope.

Breathless and muddied I continued on. Only half-way up the steep *Jyanmara Ukalo*, I was gasping for air. A couple of bikers sped past me as if it were a normal weekend ride for them. I got off, as expected, but comforted myself that I was not the only one. Others followed suit. I spotted a lady-biker sitting by the track.



“Hey, what’s wrong?” I gasped. “I’ve been falling all the time,” she sounded almost tearful. “Come on, you can do it. Get up and get going,” I said, trying to cheer her up. As I cleared the top, I looked over my shoulder. She was on her way up. Almost on the verge of giving up the race, she later took third place.

After the slow haul up, the straight stretch at first seemed like a piece of cake, but then, the unthinkable happened. My front wheel sank deep into the rutted track, made me pitch forward and I was off my bike and in the mud.

After remounting my bike, I soon found a sealed road where a group of volunteers (the feed station) clapped and cheered as some stretched out their hands to offer us water-filled plastic cups. After that, the finish line just lay

After the slow haul up, the straight stretch at first seemed like a piece of cake, but then, the unthinkable happened. My front wheel sank deep into the rutted track, made me pitch forward and I was off my bike and in the mud.

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around the corner, hardly 100 meters away. I pedaled hard, a sudden burst of energy revive me. Amidst loud, rousing cheers, I breezed through the finish line, completing the first lap. I pedaled furiously past but could not miss a smiling face, waving wildly at me from the crowd—my wife, Radhika. I wondered how Sulav was doing.

Lap two was uneventful for me, but not for everyone. I went past a duo furiously pumping up a tire. The going was getting progressively tougher and slower for me. Even the first incline had me almost wheezing. It must be age, I reminded myself. Trodden over relentlessly by the racers, the muddy trail had become messier. The mud-caked chain and drive-trains grated and rasped and every thrust on the pedal seemed an ordeal. The only welcome sight was the cheering and clapping bunch, who worked wonders to raise my failing spirit.

#### HERCULEAN TASK

The last lap was seemingly unending. By the time I cleared the punishing *Jyanmara* incline, I was a total wreck. Fatigue was getting the better of me. At one stage, I nearly felt like abandoning the race, but pride came in my way. Dying for a drink, I tried to reach for my bottle and found that I had dropped my water bottle. “Hang on in there...this is the last lap,” I kept mumbling to myself, almost in a stupor. Then, much to my relief, I spotted the waiting crowd with flailing hands who held water bottles and cups. The sudden realization that I had only 100 meters between me and

the finish line made me delirious. “Yes!” I almost yelled.

#### I DID IT

After a glass of water my limbs suddenly felt stronger. With a last gasp, I tore off down the remaining distance, legs pumping like crazy, as if there was no tomorrow. Fifty yards, thirty, twenty, ten and five; I cruised through the finish line as the waiting spectators erupted into a rapturous applause. Even before I stopped, I saw smiling faces and eager hands thrust towards me. “Congratulations, you’ve won!” all of them exclaimed. I could not believe my ears, a moment frozen in time. Then, Sulav turned up grinning from ear to ear. My little partner had clinched the third place in the juniors’ category. Way before the prize ceremony, word came that the top ranked Ajaya Pandit had won again. In the women’s category, a foreigner took first place but her strong contender (also a foreigner), who had outraced her in the first lap took a fall, and had to be rushed to the hospital. Many riders had pulled out of the race; some had lapped out while others because of minor injuries. Quite a few bikes had broken down. Ayaman Tamang, the national junior champ, swept to victory and the Grandmasters’ title, which I won, had only three contestants: one had pulled out at the last moment, and the other did not complete the race. As it turned out, it was almost an uncontested victory for me. What of it? I still became a champ, didn’t I? ■





The Chancellor of Nepal Academy of Fine Arts believes it is the country's youth that will take Nepali art to new heights.



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## An Evening with KIRAN MANANDHAR

*An informal evening with Kiran Manandhar, Chancellor of Nepal Academy of Fine Arts turns into a reflective and introspective journey back in time.*

By AMENDRA POKHREL

For any Nepali painter, or an artist for that matter, Kiran Manandhar, the Chancellor of Nepal Academy of Fine Arts, is at the pinnacle of his career, heading the most prestigious body in the Nepali art scene.

Had he not become a famous painter he would have become, well, a less famous painter. In his own words: “Even someone who would paint banners.” Manandhar fell in love very early on in life with his implements: pencils and eraser as a child and brushes and colors as he grew up.

The story of his life is nothing short of a melodrama in which he struggled with family members, teach-

ers and society, but finally emerged victorious against all odds. That is because he himself, was never at odds with what he wanted in life. He had set a course for himself and developed a conviction right from his childhood that would not let him waver from this path.

“I can still feel the blood rush to the palm of my hand when I think of my mathematics teacher,” says Manandhar. “I was naughty and on top of that I was very poor in the subject.” After the teacher would teach something, he’d be asked about what he has just learnt. “I’d then hold up my notepad in which, instead of the sum, I’d have sketched the teacher’s figure, ▶



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resembling a cartoon,” he says. “What would you expect? It was sketched by the wobbly hands of a kid.”

When Kiran returned home from school, his father admonished him for not being serious towards studies. His parents seldom let him sketch at home and snatched away his colors, papers or brushes if they ever found him fiddling with them. However, he continued to sketch at the then under-construction, water-garden in Balaju and in Nagarjun forest with material provided by his friends. “I’d mark myself present at

school and head towards the jungle,” he says without a hint of guilt but with a certain glee. Of course he had a reason to be glad, for it was his mischief that brought him closer to the nature that inspired him and to people who would lay the ground work for his calling.

When ECS met Kiran Manandhar one recent evening, he spoke wholeheartedly about Nepal’s art scene, the problems besieging it and what he, as a chancellor of Nepal Academy of Fine Arts, is doing to make things better.

#### ART & NATURE

Natural instincts can be a major guiding force if we stay true to our nature. Especially, to an artist, nature is like a teacher. I cannot paint without sound. I catch the rhythm and carry on with the work. Every day I scatter some grains around the house and many pigeons and sparrows throng the house. I work as I listen to the sound of their chirpings.

Painting is like gardening. Just as a gardener maintains the beauty of his garden by throwing out weeds and unnecessary plants, a painter should be able to discard superfluous thoughts and elements.

For my colors, I seek out old houses built using bajra – the alternate building material used before cement was introduced to Nepal. The bajra crumbling out of decrepit buildings is dirt for most, for me it is color. I also go to rivers to find stones that have acquired a unique green color because of the river. I think we have to experiment with these things.

#### ART & SOCIETY

As I see, there are three main reasons why our art has not flourished. One, we were not free as a society for a long time. Two, our society until recently, considered painters as typists, who could only write invitation cards for weddings. Three, it has only been six months since an institution dedicated to promote art – the Lalit Kala Academy – has been established.

The situation is slightly better now and all of us should work to develop Nepali art. However, we should not follow what international artists are doing blindly. Instead, we should develop reflects our society and our culture. Modernization does not mean following what the world is doing.

There was Impressionism, Expressionism and Cubism in the West, so why can’t we develop something

like, say 'Mandalism'. A mandala captures an entire universe including the creator, the preserver and the destroyer. Again, other cultures within our society like Rais and Tharus and Maithili people they have their own expressions for any artist to take his cue and from which to develop a separate art form.

When I worked on the theme of a new mandala, I used different colours in place of traditional ones. Many senior artists rebuked the work but the logic was to take inspiration from our traditions and to create art that is relevant to present time. If we confine ourselves to following what has already been done, how can we belong to the present? We have to rethink and challenge our social values when time requires us to do so. It is a kind of sacrifice.

#### INTERNATIONAL ART SCENE

There are five most developed places in terms of their art market and successful artists —New York, Paris, Germany, Tokyo and India. Even if we look at India, we have a great many things to learn.

If you talk about India and Europe, the government has made it mandatory for people to set aside 3 percent of construction costs for investment in the arts. They might invest on paintings, install a statue, help in the publication of a book or buy huge photographs. This lends a lot of support to the art community. They spend millions in construction and even if artists benefit by three percent of the investments, it is quite significant. Through this academy, (Nepal Academy of Fine Arts) we are trying to convince the government to have similar provisions in the new constitution.

If you notice the construction of houses today, even the simpler ones cost around 60 lakhs and then there are houses that cost more than a crore. It's not like the people are poor here either; it is just that they are not art-conscious.

In India and other places, artists can mortgage their work to get loans. They are much ahead in terms of understand-

ing the value of art. This support on top of getting great prices for their work is conducive for the development of an art scene.

#### ART & YOUTH

More than anything else, I vouch for the younger generation because they have the potential to change things and to take it forward. I tell this generation three things: that during the learning phase

they have to be able to sacrifice. Forget about money and continue practicing until you attain perfection. Practice is important because whatever we learn gathers dust just like a mirror, no matter how many times you clean it.

As an art student in Benaras, I had days when I went hungry, was beaten by the police for sleeping at the railway station and had to sketch for money at the station as my family stopped sending ▶

As a gardener maintains the beauty of his garden by throwing out weeds and unnecessary plants, a painter should be able to discard superfluous thoughts and elements.



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money after they learnt that I was studying art instead of engineering. You have to sacrifice. There is a struggle in every work, but sacrifice brings maturity to it.

Secondly, young and aspiring artists must maintain good relations with senior artists to know the hows and the whys. They should also research about the art market and about artists, both national and international, to keep abreast of what is happening, and should read up on art too.

#### INSTITUTIONALIZING ART

The program I am trying to introduce is to make better arrangements for artist residence for foreign artists, publish a bulletin or an art magazine and forge alliances with foreign art institutions including those in the SAARC region to expand market exposure of our art. All this will help Nepali artists to be a part of an international fraternity of artists. This will help promote an exchange of ideas.

An artist cannot go far individually. The investment in material and publicity is so huge that they have to go through an institution. Another problem is that we do not have a standard mechanism for evaluating art. The prices, set arbitrarily, tend to vary. Exploitation of artists and buyers has great scope here, as there is a dearth of art critics and art dealers. Art critics have to be independent entities – people who are dedicated to studying and understanding art so that they can assign proper value to an artist's work. Proper valuation is important for an artwork to be accepted internationally. In international markets, the buyers take art as investments, as assets - not just as a decorative item - and expect the price to go up. In European countries, the price of a piece goes up by 15 percent annually. However, if you sell an artwork for \$ 50,000 to one person and for \$10,000 to another, it will be a great loss to a buyer. Ultimately, it will set a negative impression about

the art of a country. Knowing this is important.

We cannot ignore the earning aspect of an artist. It is also a profession and to expect an artist to work without caring about money or basic facilities is wrong. Artists have families too and they have to survive as well.

Take the case of the great painter Van Gough whose paintings sells for millions these days. He never saw wealth in his life; it was a sacrifice. A restaurant once famously threw away his paintings and the artist himself. Today, the same restaurant charges 25 Euros for a coffee that costs 6 Euros because of a painting by Van Gough protected by bulletproof glass hangs on a nearby wall.

However, you cannot expect an artist to receive remuneration for his work after his death. If an artist has accomplished something today, he should be paid today itself. Does Van Gough know that the world worships him for his works? Such a great artist had to die an unhappy man. That does not seem right, does it? ■



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There's Something about

# Kiwi

*The kiwi fruit, with its exotic taste and its newbie appeal, is more available now than before, with its cultivation proving to be good business.*

By NANDITA RANA



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No wonder, the privilege to nibble on some juicy, locally grown, exotic fruits as afternoon munchies, is now rather possible. One of the fruits gaining heavy momentum in Nepalese horticulture is the Kiwi.

The winds of change are finally blowing over the Nepalese fruit market. Ten years back from now, exotic varieties of fruit were almost impossible to find. We are bombarded with a plethora of seasonal delights, but only a few varieties of common fruits make it to the market. Thanks to the assistance from various international organisations however, horticulture in Nepal is picking up interestingly and local farmers are experimenting more now than ever. No wonder, the privilege to nibble on some juicy, locally grown, exotic fruits as afternoon munchies, is now rather possible. One of the fruits gaining heavy momentum in Nepalese horticulture is the Kiwi.

The kiwi was until recently, limited to certain private households with its cultivation confined to few acres of land assisted by Japanese organizations - JICA and JAITI Nepal. "I remember planting one of the first Kiwi saplings in Budhanilkantha (a town to the far north of Kathmandu) – at the residence of one of Nepal's former Prime Ministers. It must be in the 1980s, some thirty years back," recalls Karma Wanchuk Lama, the unofficial, local Kiwi expert. His expertise springs from a passion for the fruit and from his profession as a farmer of more than four decades.

Lama's backyard in his Maharajgunj residence is a delightful change to the urban landscape that surrounds it. It brought back memories of the orchard at my grandfather's place, where my brother and I would often play 'fruit fights' - throwing tiny, budding apricots or guavas at each other or teasing our pet dog with them. For Lama, who has been a horticulturist for over 40 years, his backyard is where he tends to some exotic varieties (in the Nepalese context) of fruits and vegetables, mostly brought from Japan and China. He leads us to a Kiwi vine where a bunch of slightly golden, oval fruits hang and shows us the male and female plant. Only the female plants bear fruits when pollinated by

flower bearing male plants. He examines the stems and says, "These tendrils need trimming, or else the normal growth of the fruit will be inhibited." Visiting Lama in late November is not at all a bad idea, although October would have been better. "Kiwi season in Nepal is best around late September and October, or Dashain time," opines Lama. What seems like a healthy fruitage to me with more than 150 golden, ripening ones is not much according to Lama. "Kiwis are yielded till the month of Magh (equivalent to early February in the English calendar), and this is the little that's left of the fruits for this season." He picks some from the ripe bunch for us. A kg of kiwi depending on its variety, can cost anywhere from NRs 300 to 500. "October is a very busy season," adds Lama. "I mostly have families, especially expats placing huge orders for the fruit, and also some renowned hotels."

His backyard garden of course would not justify the economics of supply for the huge, increasing demand of the fruit. Lama's kiwi cultivation therefore, spans an area of more than 45 hectares of land in Sailung, Ramechhap district (87km northeast from Kathmandu), which is also Lama's homeland, and in Taskar, Makwanpur (132 km from Kathmandu). Other individual farms are located in areas of Bajrabarahi, Lalitpur with approximately 300 kiwi plantations in the area alone. The farm in Taskar, Makwanpur has a current yield of approximately 1300 kg per season, which is twice the yield of the starting years. The farm in Ramechhap, which is still in the initial phase for commercial production, however, yields around 500 kg of the fruit per season. "Commercial cultivation is a slow growing business," adds Lama. "A young plant takes up to three years to mature and needs a lot of tending during this period. It needs appropriate temperature and water conditions, and is best suited in places more than 1400m above sea level." ▶

“As a trainee farmer, it was a great learning opportunity and has made a huge impact in my profession.”



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Commercial kiwi cultivation is spread over an extensive area no doubt. However, an hour of sunlight per day is adequate for growth. “Land that faces south-west is best for the plant,” says one of Lama’s associate. As far as extra nutrition is concerned, Lama uses organic animal dung for manure, which according to him is essential up to the second year of the plantation, and not very essential afterwards. A mature plant can yield about 100 -150 kg of the fruit after five to six years.

Intercropping is another viable feature that commercial kiwi cultivation provides and Lama so far has been enjoying mustard and ginger in his farm in Ramechhap along with kiwi. “Tea can also be intercropped in the kiwi vine,” adds Lama. “It is a wonderful citrus fruit with high contents of vitamin C. It is also a great taste enhancer.” From his own personal experience, he adds, “If you cook any curry with the fruit, the result is just fabulous. You could add only a few slices of the fruit while cooking, especially meat curry, and you can see how it improves the taste tremendously.” Juice as well as wine produced from the fruit’s pulp is equally nutritious - a blend of

exotic sweet and citrusy flavour, which even Lama has tried to manufacture.

“When I first started out, nobody was willing to experiment with kiwi farming,” says Lama, who was already acquainted with the fruit and its commercial significance after working almost 12 years in Bhutan. “As a trainee farmer, it was a great learning opportunity and has made a huge impact in my profession.” A certified horticulturist, after returning to Nepal, he attended training programs from JICA Nepal and has supervised the cultivation of different varieties of apples, grapes, plums, apricots and kiwis. Lama suggests that the Hayward varieties are the best in Nepal among others including Bruno and Alison. Meanwhile, he is willing to try out new ones including the Koshin variety, which is indeed an exclusive kiwi cultivar and cost him NRs. 50,000 for a male and female sapling.

In his garden, Lama tends to these two new additions with utmost consideration. Amidst the assortment of Chinese spinach, Japanese fig, Japanese apple, Japanese yam and Macadami nuts, his kiwi plants receive equal attention. His garden is in fact wholly organic, and he uses a special container to trap the in-

sects that might harm his kiwi plants. A medicinal replica of the scent of the female flies is used to attract the male insects, which is then trapped inside a container. “I learnt this technique from one of the Japanese kiwi doctors,” added Lama. Tending to the young sapling, Lama laments over the present state of horticulture in Nepal. “The lack of expertise and technical assistance has taken a heavy toll on farmers. As long as we don’t have expert supervision, a large scale production of kiwi is almost impossible.” He further stresses that, “The development of the fruit’s cultivation seen in Nepal, so far has been limited to individual initiatives, especially of the farmers and they have been tending to it manually mostly, without much technical support.”

For all the efforts that Karma Wanchuk Lama has rendered into kiwifruit cultivation, he wishes nothing more than its recognition in the domestic market. “As exclusive as the kiwi fruit is, with its high vitamin content and multiple health benefits, all I want is for people to have access to the fruit locally and enjoy its richness like any other fruit in the market.” ■

# FARMERS' MARKETS



Organic vegetables & fruits

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Sausages

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Pickles & salsa

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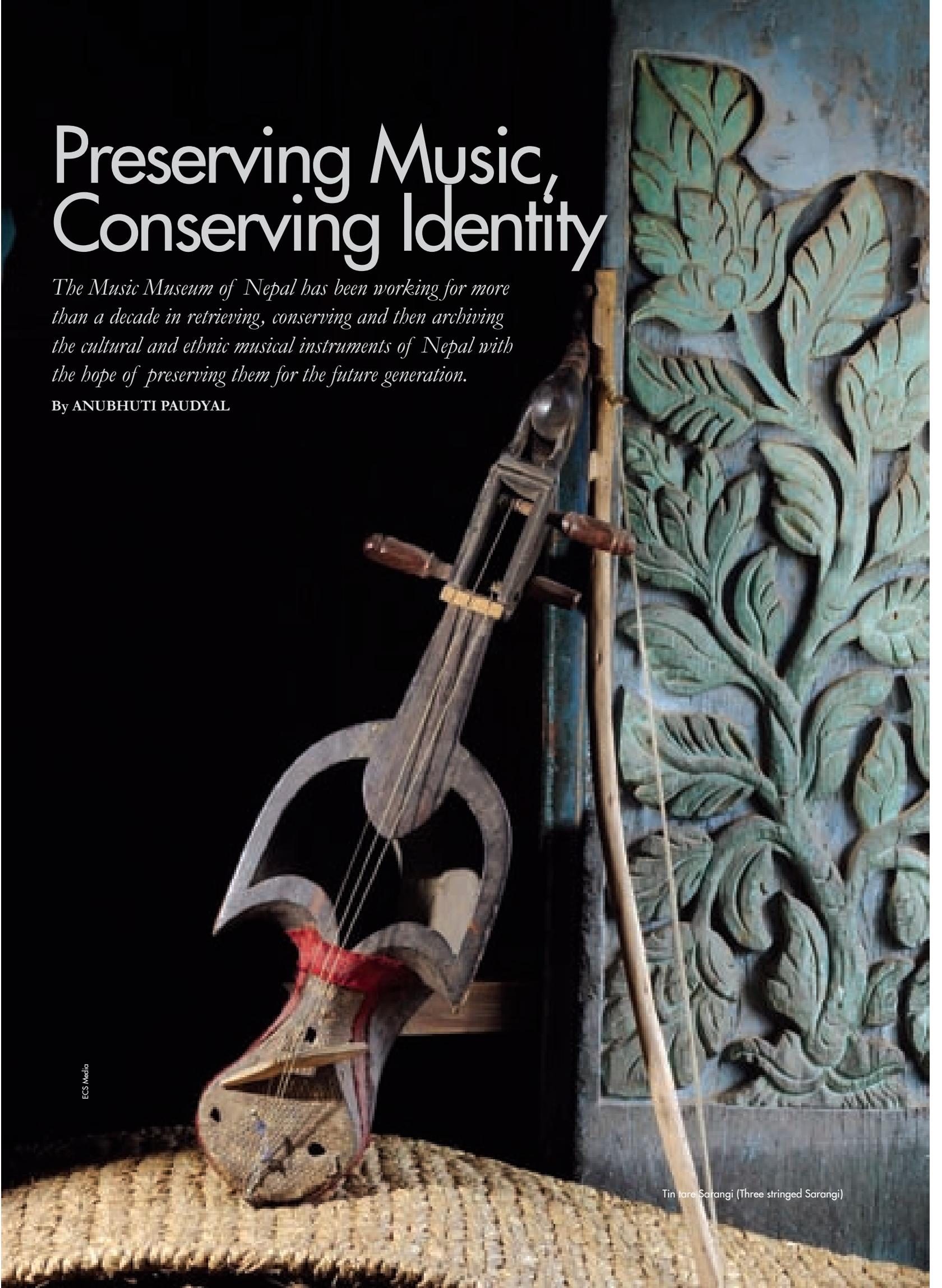
Kantipath, next to Global Bank

Jamsikhel, next to St Mary

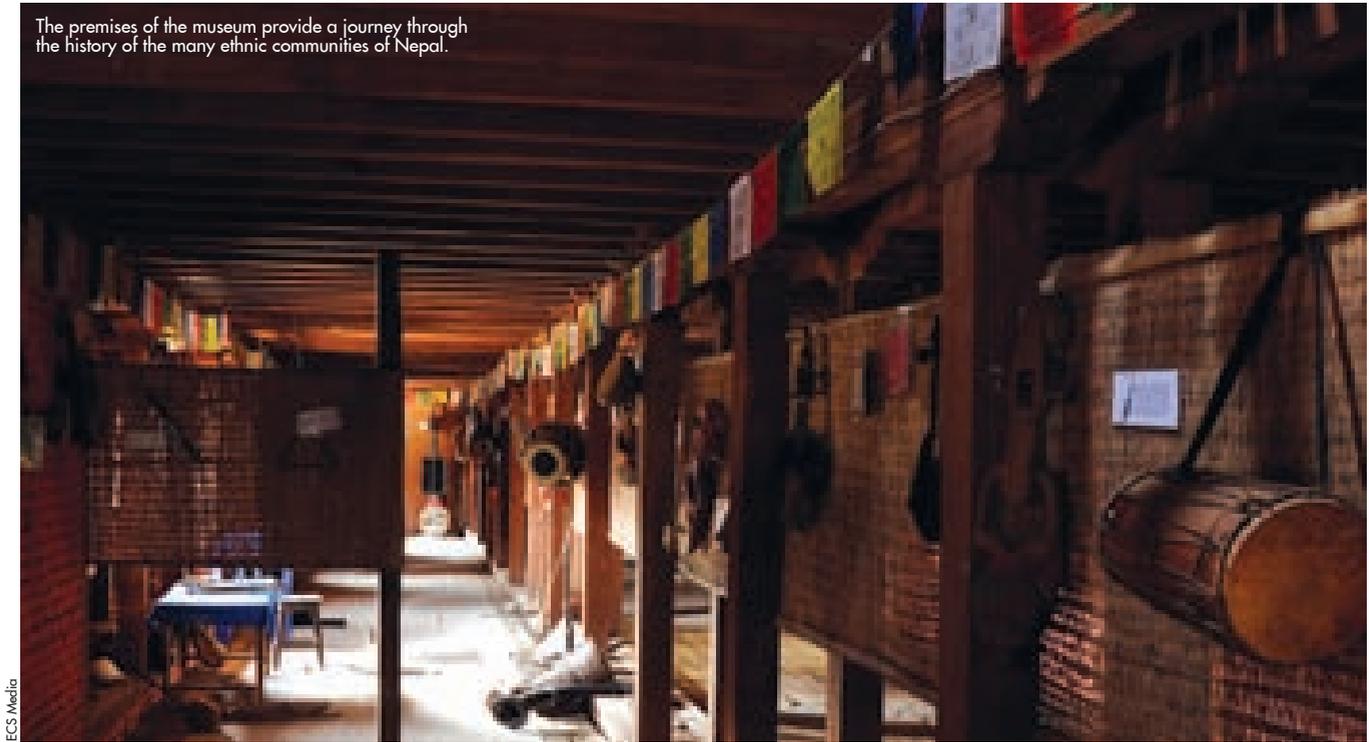
# Preserving Music, Conserving Identity

*The Music Museum of Nepal has been working for more than a decade in retrieving, conserving and then archiving the cultural and ethnic musical instruments of Nepal with the hope of preserving them for the future generation.*

By ANUBHUTI PAUDYAL



The premises of the museum provide a journey through the history of the many ethnic communities of Nepal.



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**B**y The trolley bus stand at Tripureshwor might not have much use these days after the service stopped, but a yellow board nearby atop a wooden, traditional building does have its significance. Music Museum of Nepal was established in 1995 A.D by Ram Prasad Kandel as a tribute to his Guru Swami A dananda Saraswati. It was a mere collection of musical instruments from different cultures throughout Nepal before it was registered as a museum in 1997 A.D.

“I am not a musician, nor do I sing. I do not know why I promised my guru to work in the field of conservation of musical instruments of Nepal, but I did. And I have spent the last 15 years building this museum,” shared Kandel. A committee runs the museum and provides monetary assistance to take care of the museum’s expenses. Fifty-six members from diverse cultural backgrounds work here. Some of them have

no knowledge at all about music at all. However, all of them have one thing in common - an ardent desire to work on retrieving and conserving cultural and ethnic musical instruments of Nepal.

#### **NEPAL AS A HOME TO INSTRUMENTS**

The members of the Music Museum of Nepal make it a point to visit places all over Nepal in search of musical instruments. One might regard the process simple, but in truth, it requires intensive knowledge of the culture, geography and history of the places they visit. “So far, we have travelled to 45 districts and have come across 602 musical instruments. I am pretty sure there are more than 1000 instruments in Nepal,” shares Kandel. Nepal is known for its diversity in culture and castes and there are different instruments for different occasions belonging to a single caste or culture. One can imagine the diversity and number of instruments from around the country.

The process of collecting the instruments requires extensive knowledge about the community. Some of these instruments are hundreds of years old and hold great significance in the lives of people of the community. To them, these instruments are a way of life, an integral part of themselves. Many of their stories revolve around these instruments and the instruments do not just speak about the present. “If people find many Sankhas in a particular place during excavation then the place must have been under Vaishnavs. Musical instruments can tell us about the history of the place and vice versa,” says Kandel. He adds, “The search cannot be confined to a single place, it has to be diverse. Some instruments are used hundreds of kilometers apart in two different places by different groups of people. Music is not something you can concentrate in a certain area. The search for musical instruments is a tedious process and requires patient experts.” ▶



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Piwacha

While Tharu men use a particular instrument to coax women into marrying them, traditional healers have instruments they use to heal ailments.

### **RICH CULTURE, RICH MUSIC**

Today Music Museum of Nepal is home to 350 different musical instruments. The wooden building holds within itself cultures and castes representing Nepal from a micro level. The instruments include popular ones like the Sarangi and the Vina with some rare ones like the Pivachha - a Newari instrument from Kathmandu, which is in the state of extinction, because people do not play it anymore. Jor Basuri, from the Sunuwar caste of eastern Nepal and the Tin Taare Sarangi from the Terai are some of the other instruments. The instruments are categorized into nine groups based on how they are played and on their appearance. Some have strings, some are hollow and some need fingers while others simply need sticks to produce sound.

Different occasions see the instruments being played. While Tharu men use a particular instrument to coax women into marrying them, traditional healers have instruments they use to heal ailments or perform rituals as common as marriage and as random as stopping hailstones. Music is truly and rightfully, used for different occasions across Nepal for purposes that are sometimes common and at times extraordinary. Murchunga, Nyahung, Bhokkar and Ghando are some other popular instruments in the museum. For those who have some knowledge on music, the museum can be extremely entertaining and for those who do not know about Nepali music, the experience is enlightening. Along with a variety of instruments, the place provides a collection of unique instruments too. There is the largest sarangi - a 7 foot 3 inch-structure and also the smallest one at 7 inches. Both structures are the largest and the smallest sarangi that can be played.

### **REALITY STRIKES**

While music can be entertaining, the process of working on retrieving musical instruments and archiving them can be challenging. Ram Prashad Kandel and his friends have worked right from collecting and building the musical instruments to

Music is not something that is physical for it to remain with us forever. It needs to be protected and preserved.



Kangling



Jor Murali

ECS Media

establishing the museum, without any significant support from outside the committee. “We have tried getting support from the government and international agencies. However, we are not musicians, ethnomusicologists or recognized public figures. Therefore, it is probably difficult for agencies to trust us. We work with donations from committee members. We contribute and then work on preserving the musical instruments. We initiate a program and then work to complete it. The thing is, when you initiate something good, somehow it ends well. So far, we have had our hiccups but somehow our programs have been successful,” shares Kandel.

#### MUSIC AND TOURISM

People call music a global language. It is the heart of any song too. Kandel shares his experience about a performance in Liverpool where Nepalese musicians had participated. In one of the performances by popular Nepali Madal player Prem Dev Joshi, the audience was moved to tears. He was surrounded by people and appreciated for his music. This somehow proves the fact that music is not something that recognizes boundaries. Music Museum of Nepal is not just preserving Nepalese music and culture, but is also working on creating an identity for

Nepalese music. “Music is a huge industry in the world today. Our youngsters are more attracted towards saxophones and guitars rather than our traditional instruments. I believe that if people were to work diligently, there are better prospects of success with traditional instruments. What is the point in standing behind ten guitar players and playing when you can stand ahead of three Sarangi players and be appreciated?” asks Kandel.

The incident in Liverpool supports his claim. Music is universal. Traditional music is rare and therefore has greater chances of being appreciated. Tourists visit Nepal for its diversity, be it geographical or cultural. If we can promote our music, then along the way, we would be more appreciated for what we have to offer. The diversity in music in Nepal is immense but much needs to be done before it spreads across the globe representing Nepal as Mount Everest does.

In addition to collecting and preserving the instruments, Music Museum of Nepal gives lessons to the interested students on playing these instruments. While there are many youngsters today interested in guitar and violin lessons, the number of those interested in Panche Baaja or Murchunga is sadly low. However, the organization

proudly instructs these students and hopes that someday they will represent Nepalese music in the international arena.

“We do not study our culture. We do not keep records. Music is not something that is physical for it to remain with us forever. It needs to be protected and preserved. Our musical instruments aren’t being played because slowly people have forgotten their importance and are moving towards other cultures. If this continues, we will surely have nothing left; no music, no instruments” says Kandel. While the museum is the largest collection of traditional musical instruments of Nepal, it the government has not recognized it as a national treasure. Except some students and a few musical enthusiasts, most do not even recognize it as a national heritage. However, the place has a lot to offer. It could provide immense knowledge on the culture of Nepal. It presents unique musical instruments spread wide and far from Kathmandu and throughout Nepal. It could provide lessons to those interested in traditional music. For those who do not fall under any of these categories, it could provide knowledge on music and of music, everyone’s a fan. ■





Photo by: Sajana Shrestha



Photo by: Pujan Harsha Bajracharya

# kathmandu, kathmandu.

*An Exhibition by contemporary Nepali photographers*



Photo by: Sachindra Rajbansi

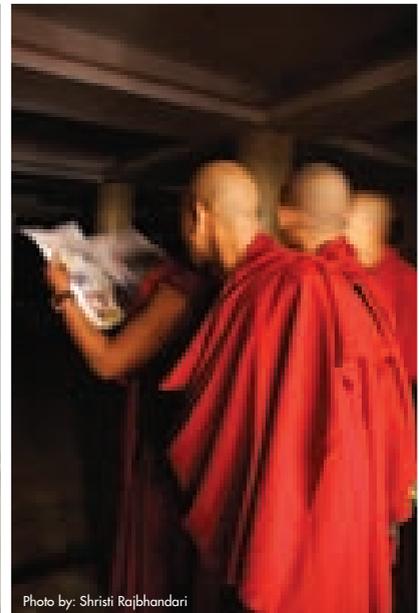


Photo by: Shristi Rajbhandari



Photo by: Priti Sherchan



Photo by: Prasit Sthapit

**K**athmandu, oh Kathmandu! How does one tell your story without stereotyping and producing one cliché after another?

“That is how it is with certain places and subjects, which have been photographed so much and are so cluttered

with clichés, that they vanish behind a wall of imagery so hopelessly stereotyped that it is impenetrable.” Christian Caujolle (Agence VU) said this about Benares before seeing American photographer Michael Ackerman’s work on the much-photographed city. Caujolle was however, struck by how unique and powerful Ack-

erman’s representation of Benares was. Ackerman’s work is now a haunting yet beautiful book titled ‘End Time City’, in which he presents what he calls his “raw, heart-felt, visceral engagement” with Benares.

Twenty emerging Nepali photographers recently participated in a four-



Photo by: Pujan Harsha Bajracharya



Photo by: Pujan Harsha Bajracharya



Photo by: Prasit Sthapit

week photography program during which they attempted to document people and places familiar to them with a similar raw, heart-felt approach. They endeavored to look beyond what they saw; to show beyond the obvious.

The course was organized by photo. circle and aimed to introduce participating photographers to a wide range of

visual styles and aesthetics in photography, with special emphasis on building visual narratives. The work that was produced - intimate and insightful stories of everyday life in Kathmandu - was exhibited from 7-13 April at Nepal Art Council. The images you view in the pages that follow, are a selection of the works that were exhibited. ■



Photo by: Sajana Shrestha



Photo by: Prasit Sthapit

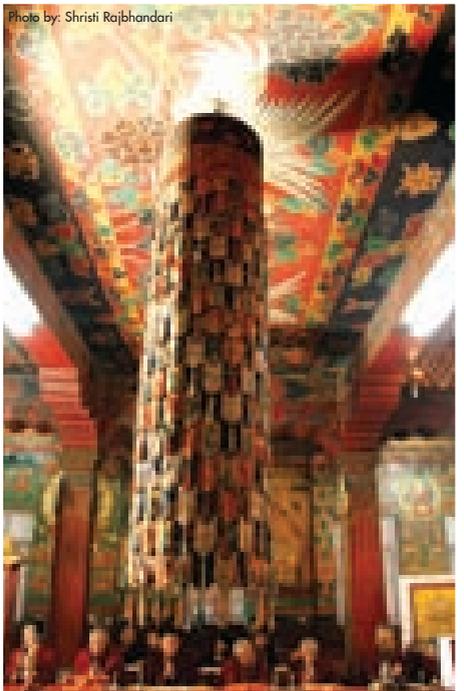


Photo by: Shristi Rajbhandari

# PLEASING THE DESTROYER OF THE UNIVERSE

Text By UTSAV SHAKYA, Photos By HARI MAHARJAN



The legend of Maha Shiva Ratri is described by a story of a hunter who had to wait for weeks to find prey to satiate his hunger. Eventually, the hunter comes across a small stream where he knows deer come to drink in the evenings. As evening falls, the hunter climbs a *Bel* tree, incidentally a particular favorite with Lord Shiva and on the base of which rests a Shiva *linga*.

In order to attract deer towards the tree, the hunter plucks leaves from the tree and throws them on the ground. A deer finally appears but upon seeing the hunter, explains how its family would worry if it did not return home. Although hungry, the hunter takes pity on the deer and lets it go. Similar scenes are repeated all night,

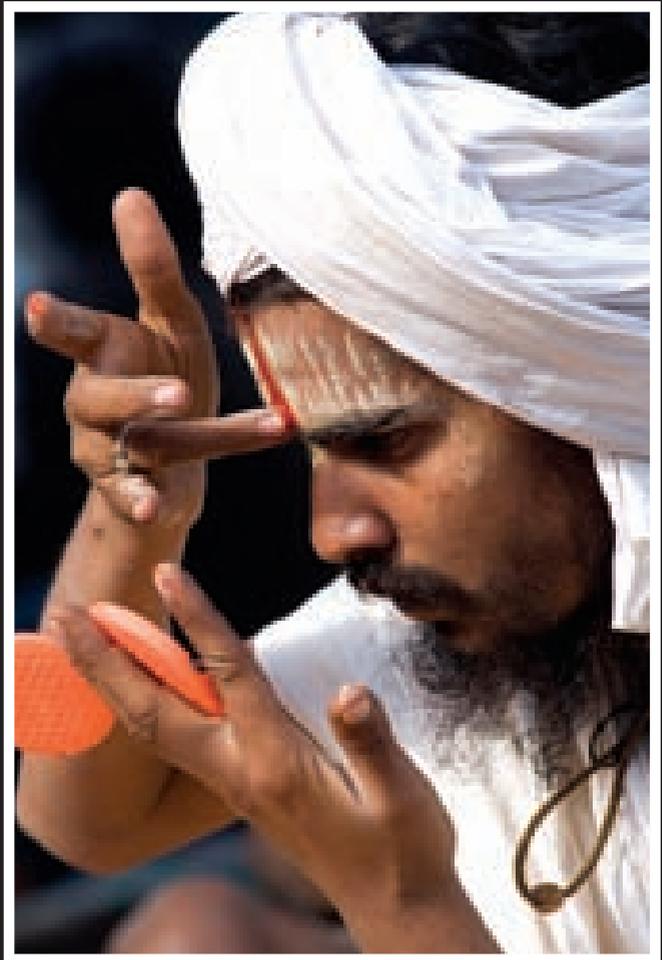
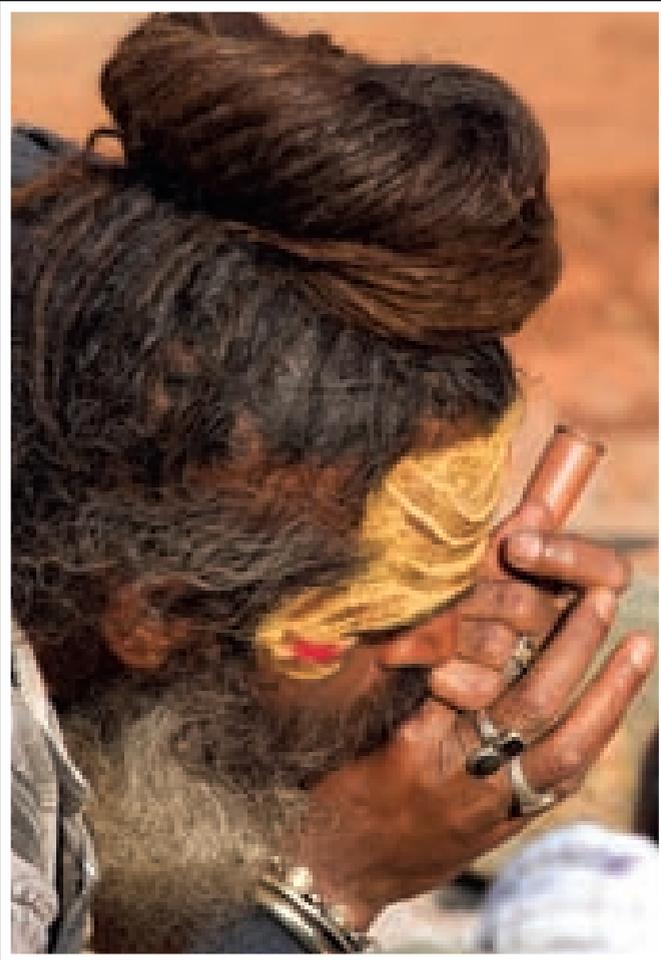
the hunter continuing to pluck and throw leaves on the ground and the deer pleading for their lives with excuses. Unknown to him, the leaves fall on the Shiva *linga* under the tree, accidentally pleasing Lord Shiva.

The following morning, Lord Shiva appears in front of the hunter, blessing him with wisdom. The hunter, humbled by this gesture gives up meat and vows to spend his life doing good deeds. Inspired by this mythic tale devotees of Lord Shiva fast on this day in hopes that they too will please Lord Shiva. Today, Shiva Ratri attracts scores of Hindu devotees from all over the region, keeping the mythology alive and contributing significantly to the country's tourism sector.















# CARAVAN TO NEPAL

## 1960s STYLE

PART 2

*“The dream of crossing Asia wasn’t particular new. Marco Polo pioneered the way in 1271.... His book described many ‘large and very noble cities... precious stones and pearls in abundance... delightful gardens... and the finest fruit’.”*

*(McGregor Smith, Jr.) (McGregor Smith, Jr.)*

By DON MESSERSCHMIDT

In 1963, during the cold season, a caravan of 47 travel trailers, with 105 men, women and children from America, arrived in Kathmandu over the Rajpath. For their drive into the country, King Mahendra kindly ordered the transportation authorities to close the road. It would have been too difficult for the group to negotiate the hairpin curves if they’d had to contend with other traffic.

The story of the trip was published in the (now rare) book entitled ‘After you, Marco Polo!’ by McGregor Smith Jr. In it Smith characterized the amazing adventure as “a radical departure from the packaged nothing-can-go-wrong tour to anywhere.”

Last month we published part of Chapter 10: ‘Embroidered Underwear—Nepalese style’ in which Smith begins by describing the beauty of the hills: “When we looked down into the first deep, hidden valley the mountain-side appeared to be cut into thousands

of facets, like jewel. Red mud terraces were rubies. Where small ponds held water they were sapphires or glistening diamonds, or bright emeralds where the new rice plants sprouted.”

When the caravanners reached Kathmandu they parked the trailers safely inside the National Stadium, then set out to see the city, including a Hindu ceremony at the palace. In this conclusion to their sojourn they see the city, and have strange encounters with a local laundry and fading electricity (even then!)...

Enjoy the tour. DM

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### EMBROIDERED UNDERWEAR—NEPALESE STYLE

### A CONTINUATION OF CHAPTER 10 OF ‘THANK YOU, MARCO POLO!’ BY MCGREGOR SMITH, JR.

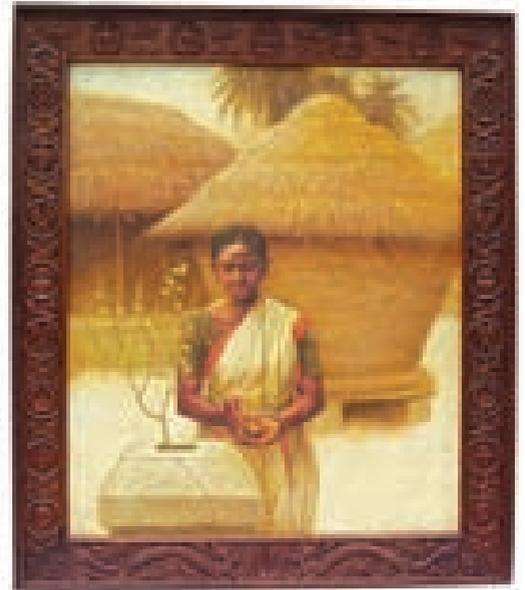
Near the National Stadium we visited some of the oldest pagodas in the world. Nepalese architects invented

the pagoda centuries ago and spread the design to Burma, China and Japan.

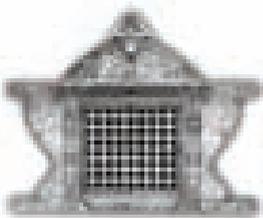
We were parked in the Stadium and on our first day there a laundryman in an old panel truck visited us. His ten-year-old son, who spoke English, told us his father owned the most modern laundry in Nepal. Together they filled up the truck, which the boy promised would return in two days. Four days later, the night before we were to leave Kathmandu, Ralph Cramer, laundry chairman for the caravan, notified police our laundry had been stolen.

That night Michael Chatterjee, an Indian immigrant to Nepal, came to our rescue. We had met him at church. He was a self-styled missionary and headmaster of “Mike’s Happy Free School.” He rented an old, unused stable where he lived, and he conducted his happy free school outside in the yard. To earn money, he taught boxing to the national police.

When he heard our laundry was missing he went to work on the case ►



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like a detective. The laundry chairman described the truck, the man and the boy. Mike laughed and told us not to worry. Our missing clothes were in the best laundry in Nepal, he assured us. He and I drove in my truck as close as we could to the laundry. We parked on a wide avenue with modern streetlights and walked past a police station down a muddy alley towards a long shadowy shed. Ice was forming in the puddles as we approached the yellow lights glowing through the windows.

The corrugated iron shed housed a row of wooden tables. An electric wire dangled from the ceiling over each table. A light bulb and an iron were attached to each wire. Three men, shivering in thin white coats, ironed in front of tall mounds of laundered clothes. The owner of the shop rushed to shake hands and tell Mike he was glad we had come. Mike interpreted his story. His truck driver had disap-

marked so much laundry before. Two caravanners had their clothes identically marked with four purple X's. There were also extra green triangles and three sets of red X's.

At one a.m. we arrived back at camp with my truck loaded with neat packages of laundry. We weren't sure whose laundry was whose. The laundryman, who accompanied us, was still figuring out bills. I paid mine as quickly as possible and climbed into my warm trailer. The windows were frosted, but I could follow the route of the laundryman as he knocked on trailer doors, followed by noisy transactions. The commotion was still going on when I finally fell asleep, exhausted and near hysteria. Jackie said I was laughing. I kept remembering the orange lights at the laundry getting dim and the look on the faces of the pressers as their irons started to cool. By morning most caravanners had discov-

Another trailer broke off a wheel when it hit a rock that had fallen on the highway near one of the high passes. Since it had dual axles, the trailer continued on three wheels to a parking area where Versteegh could set up his portable machine shop to weld the spindle that had broken. We had one more close call which came, luckily, after a long descent and on a relatively straight stretch of road. A trailer suddenly dropped to the asphalt, dragged only by a pair of leveling bars used to prevent sway. The ball, which had been welded to the hitch, snapped off. When Versteegh examined it he found the steel ball had disintegrated from metal fatigue....

After leaving Nepal, the laundry chairman called a caravan meeting to swap laundry. Almost everybody brought something to exchange - socks, pajamas, bedsheets or whatever, all with their colorful adornments. The rude shock of the mix-up had worn off and we could laugh about it. For a long time to come, whenever we saw the threads sewn so carefully into our clothes, we thought about the laundryman of Kathmandu.

## As the lights began to grow dim..., the pressers looked glumly from the lights to their irons. The laundryman seemed to hold his breath. Then, slowly, the light bulbs regained their ruddy orange complexion

peared. His own driver's license was suspended, so he was afraid to drive past the police station to our camp. As he talked excitedly, the lights began to grow dim.

"Too bad! The voltage is dropping," Mike said.

The pressers looked glumly from the lights to their irons. The laundryman seemed to hold his breath. Then, slowly, the light bulbs regained their ruddy orange complexion.

"I'm afraid some of the clothes are mixed up," Mike said apologetically.

Each piece of laundry had been marked by sewing on a colored "mark." Every sock, piece of underwear, shirt ... everything was marked with triangles or X's sewn with purple, red, yellow or green thread. The man doing the sewing, Mike said, had never

ered they had someone else's yellow X's or green triangles. Ralph Cramer made an announcement over the PA system requesting everyone to keep calm.

"We'll get the laundry mess straightened out," he declared "as soon as we get back to India."

Getting back to India entailed crossing the Rajpath again. A small landslide had covered a hundred-foot section of the road we had come over. Workmen cleared a narrow channel for us to drive through. My trailer slipped sideways on the loose rock and wedged against a boulder. The resulting dent was my first battle scar of the trip. I couldn't back or go forward without gouging the rock deeper into the aluminum. The workmen rushed to help, lifting one side of the trailer while others rooted out the boulder.

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**From Nepal the Caravanners drove south through India, across West Asia and up into Eastern and Western Europe. Eventually they and their rigs went home to America by steamship across the Atlantic. It was a fascinating year-long adventure by travel trailer round the world. DM**

This story is excerpted from 'Thank You, Marco Polo: The Story of the First Around-the-World Trailer Caravan' by McGregor Smith, Jr. (USA 1966). The photos are from the book, unless otherwise identified. The book is long out-of-print and rare. A few copies are available on the Internet for between \$95 and \$375.00.

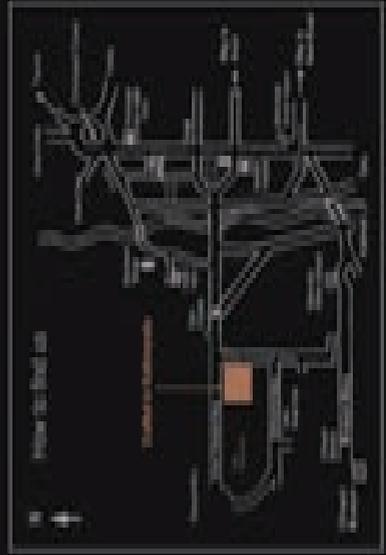
Don Messerschmidt is a contributing editor to ECS Nepal magazine, an anthropologist and historian, and a fan of Airstream trailers. He can be contacted at don.editor@gmail.com.

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## FEATURE



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## A Tryst with Destiny

*When Tibetan rugs made an entry into the global scene, attention shifted from the word refugees to rugs and for many years, the industry enjoyed the fruits of its own labor. The year – 2011, some 50 years later they still live in a country they cannot call their own as they struggle with destiny to keep their heritage alive.*

By **SUNITA GURUNG**

**B**y After the Chinese invasion of Tibet, almost 80,000 thousand Tibetans followed H. H. the Dalai Lama and fled to India, Bhutan and Nepal. Those who sought asylum in Nepal found refuge here and were allotted some land within the city area for rehabilitation. Although most

had fled with just the clothes they wore and a few belongings, they brought with them their most valued possession - their knowledge of making rugs. Post the exodus, essential commodities were provided and only a few skilled Tibetan carpet weavers could use their expertise by weaving at home.

Late Toni Hagen, a Swiss geologist and a humanitarian who dedicated years of his life to Nepal, played an instrumental role in persuading the Swiss government to begin humanitarian assistance and development aid. Among his most celebrated works, his book 'Building Bridges to the Third World' has an

entire chapter based on the chronology of this historical incident. Thus in the year 1960, the International Committee for Red Cross & Swiss Association for Technical Assistance (SATA) now called Swiss Development Co-operation (SDC) jointly established the Jawalakhel Handicraft Center with the kind co-operation of the then Government of Nepal. This led to the birth of an industry that was destined to thrive for many years and to self suffice the inhabitants.

Credit goes to the Swiss Agency for Technical Assistance (SATA) for their contribution in the development of the carpet industry in Nepal through financial & technical support to the Tibetan refugees' re-settlement programs. Launched as a source of livelihood for the Tibetan refugees, marketing in the beginning was limited to tourists. Their efforts to make a mark in the international market finally paid off in the year 1964 when the first commercial shipment left for Switzerland. It did not take long to transform itself into a nationally recognized commercial commodity and remains the most important export product from Nepal even today. By the mid 1970s, rugs made by Tibetans living as refugees in Nepal were being exported to Europe in small quantities. In the 1980s, the export of these rugs to Europe boomed with Germany as the largest importer. An industry had evolved, fashioning an integral part of the Nepalese economy.

While there has been much debate about the political and social issues surrounding these skilled artisans, there is no denying that their cultural heritage helped the Nepalese economy a great deal and can continue to do so. Mr Chimi Dorjee, Manager of JHC has this to say - "Initially carpet weaving evolved as the primary means of support for Tibetan refugees in Nepal. They provided direct financial assistance to Tibetan refugee families. Today, we have been able to set up clinics where medical treatment is available, schools for their children, age care facilities for the elderly and we have provided housing and employment too. It is unfortunate that due to the political situation of the country and the global recession, export stands at just 30% of what it used to be. Instead of bulk exports, we have to rely on tourists alone. Under such circumstances, it feels more like walking down a precarious path with very little source of encouragement."

Majority of the carpet weavers are Tibetan women within the age group of 25 to 55 years. This centre, which had seen much better days as a hub of commercial and social activity, still has its mystical charm intact. Busy women fill the weathered hall, working energetically on the looms. As each weaver sits down with a graphic illustration in hand, endless balls of colorful yarns and a cotton base on the loom, the process is nothing short of magic being re-created. While their nimble fingers dance on the aging looms to give life to the illustration with wool, Buddhist prayers seem to float in the air, adding a serene touch to the scene. Each committed movement gives way to a superbly crafted work striking a perfect balance of art and a tradition worthy of the attention it created when it took the world by storm. This ancient traditional craft, which originated as a nomadic artisanship has seemingly traversed in a time machine to give the world a fantastic display of graphical perfection.

Struck by this ingenuity, Mr. Charles Bevan often used to buy carpets during

Tibetan highland sheep - is considered one of the best qualities of wool in the world. The Tibetan highland sheep live at high altitudes and develop wool that is elastic and strong, with high lanolin content producing a "soft hand". Second, Tibetan rugs are made with the unique Tibetan knot, which increases the density per knot over the traditional knot used in all other countries. The combination of these two factors results in durable rugs that are both soft and flexible, providing optimum warmth.

Now, after more than seven years, only one or two businesses can assure Bevan of full-time supply. He remarks poignantly, "The present status quo paints a rather dismal picture. The carpet industry like most other industries is plagued with unions demanding money and encouraging weavers to join them. Their main demand of regular wages rather than payment per product is a possibility only with bigger companies. This has forced many companies to downsize and to

As each weaver sits down with a graphic illustration in hand, endless balls of colorful yarns and a cotton base on the loom, it falls nothing short of magic recreated. As each weaver sits down with a graphic illustration in hand,

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his official tours to FAO, Nepal in 1986/7. When he realized that the costs and returns made it a good business prospect, he started a company called Rugs by Design with two other partners. He says, "In Nepal there are very few industries with export possibilities and rugs are one of the major ones. When I started my business in 2003, the Maoist troubles had just started and it was not that alarming. I recall visiting a carpet factory once around 2004/5 to be told that they employed 400 weavers. There were some minor problems with rumors about the use of child labor, but the prospects looked good. We considered our main problem as finding buyers in England."

Finding buyers however proved to be the easier part. Tibetan rugs are unique from others and the cultural history of its weavers added to its appeal. There are two ways in which these rugs differ from other normal carpets. First, the traditional weaving material - wool from

outsource their work to weavers in their own homes. Most do not think the industry will collapse completely, but it will remain small and focus on higher density rugs (80 & 100 knot). Weavers make a better income from such rugs, which have a better market in the U.S. But sadly this will mean even fewer jobs being provided by the industry and less income for the country." Undated data suggests that there are just about 200 factories of a total 900 remain.

However, the art is still alive in the many weavers who still hold this knowledge close to their hearts. As one of the few things that they could inherit from their motherland, it is invaluable to them. With the right support from concerned parties, the Tibetan rug industry is something that has the potential to change lives and preserve an exotic art form. ■

# Cane Furniture

*Its durability, affordability and designs that weave the modern with the traditional, have created a positive buzz around cane furniture.*

**Text & Photo By EUNICE CHAN**

**W**ithin the last few decades, there has been an increase in popularity in cane furniture in Nepal. Today, it is common to own at least one piece of cane furniture. It could be stools, tables, chairs, bookshelves, clothes rack or chests. Recently, the trend has moved to smaller household items such as floor mats, baskets, lampshades, cushion covers and even bags. The usage of cane to make products is now so popular that can and related plant materials are used to make miniature models and toys. Walking along the streets of Kathmandu, seeing men pushing a trolley full of colorful footstools and shop fronts displaying a wide variety of cane furniture are common sights.

Established in 2004, Fiberweave Cane Furniture situated at Kupondole has been supplying good quality cane furniture to locals, expatriates and hoteliers ever since. Aiming to empower women, Fiberweave products are handcrafted by women from Kathmandu who receive prior training of at least four to five months.

Do you know the difference between cane and bamboo? Consumers are often confused between the two. According to Rajesh Shrestha from Fiberweave, cane has solid poles while bamboo has hollow stems. Cane can be bent into any shape while bamboo is quite stiff. Rattan is another commonly name used for cane. Normally, cane can be found in tropical countries where there is plenty of sun and precipitation. Indonesia is currently supplying 90% of the world's demand for cane.



Established in 2004, Fiberweave Cane Furniture situated at Kupondole has been supplying products are handcrafted by women from Kathmandu who receive

The cane used for Fiberweave's products are mainly from Indonesia. Indonesian cane is preferred over Indian cane because of its higher quality. They are processed to avoid pests and then shaped before they are exported to Nepal for production. The cane poles or cores are used for the main structure of the furniture and other by-products such as peels are used for weaving and binding. As locally grown cane is smaller in diameter, they are mostly used for the binding and weaving part.

Cane furniture belongs to a class of its own. It is elegant and eco-friendly

and rapidly gaining popularity among locals and expatriates. They are also light, convenient to use and cost much less than wooden furniture. Cane is considered environment-friendly too because it is a vine-like plant that grows along the trunk of a tree. While it takes decades for a tree to mature before it can be felled for its wood, cane can be grown and harvested within a short period of one to two years and in turn. This helps us to preserve our forests and the ecosystem. Furthermore, although cane is a highly flexible material, it is extremely durable and requires minimal maintenance. ■

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## Power cutoffs ?? Now face internet cutoffs

The Internet Service Providers Association of Nepal (ISPAN) staged a protest by submitting a memorandum to the Nepal Telecommunication Authority on the 6th of April. The protest focuses on ISPs' belief that they are being unfairly held responsible for the misuse of internet services by private individuals. It is possible for internet services to be illegally used to bypass licensed voice operators like NTC and NCell to make and receive international phonecalls. This leads to a loss of revenue for licensed operators and the government.



Police authorities believe that ISPs are responsible for abuse of their services, while ISPAN refute these claims. ISPAN has announced that starting from April 10th the protest will involve the disruption of internet services from 9pm to 2 am, increasing daily until the issue is resolved. ISPAN has apologized for the inconvenience that this will cause.

Politics aside, we just want you to be ready for the internet cutoffs.



**Demi's Demure Visit**  
As L&T Reports that long after Bryan Adams came to Nepal, another international superstar made her presence felt in the capital. According to a statement, Demi Moore, was in Nepal 'Not as a celebrity but, as a human who is moved by the sufferings of other humans'.

Last week, the 'Ghost' star was working on a documentary about human trafficking for the UN's Freedom project. She was accompanied by Mani Nepal's Founder and CEO Hero of the Year, Anuradha Karki. While visiting Bharosa and Lumbini, she talked with girls who were saved from trafficking and are now under the protection of Mani Nepal. She was so impressed by Karki's work that she called her the 'guide of the nation'. She also stressed that human trafficking is a serious crime and people should be vigilant in order to report such activities. Moore, who has initiated the campaign 'Real Men Don't Buy Girls' with husband Ashton Kutcher, was in Nepal for five days. She left Nepal on Thursday April 1, with an assurance that she will return very soon.

## TALKING ABOUT WEIGHT

Fat talk - a habit and forth conversation where each of two healthy-weight peers blames the other is fat while claiming to be fat themselves" (Galk and Englin Maddox). A new study states that women, especially college girls, who engage in fat talk tend to be more dissatisfied with their bodies than others.

The study, by the University of Wisconsin USA, suggests that college girls, especially girls, who engage in fat talk have greater dissatisfaction with their bodies and are more likely to have internalized an ultra-thin body ideal than those who engage in fat talk less frequently.

The study showed that the frequency of fat talk was associated with increased dissatisfaction with women's own bodies. It is surprising that over half of the participants reported that they believe fat talk actually makes them feel better about their bodies.

According to Dr. Prashansa Wajal at the Hospital talking about your

## turn to P3 Absolutely Thunderous



The twist of the throttle against the stop, the tacho needle climbing towards the red line and the roar of the immaculate engine would turn even an angel into a mischievous sprite.

Pre-release edition on stand now

# Kupondole Crafts

*The Kupondole lane exudes a different ambience with all its handicraft shops. Some of the most popular and widely known handicraft showrooms are located in Kupondole. Each of these shops are full of a myriad of different handicraft items – from those created from felt through moulds to those gently shaped on spinning wheels.*

By YUKTA BAJRACHARYA

## CLAY CREATIVE

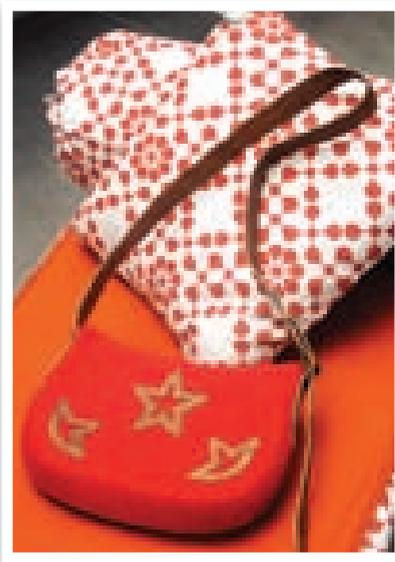
### Ceramic Products from Mahaguthi

Ancient Egyptian Mythology has it that the deity Khnum spun the first humans out of the potter's wheel. In today's hi-tech world, this might not be plausible but the fact that the potter's wheel has been able to spin and shape wonderful creations (no less than humans themselves) is a fact. If you go by the notion of "seeing is believing", then take a look at our ceramic picks from Mahaguthi – the popular fair trade enterprise which boasts of a diverse range of A-one quality ceramic products.

Its showroom in Kupondole holds more than 500 varieties of ceramic products ranging from egg-stands to beer mugs and cutlery sets. These ceramic wares have been designed by designers from Mahaguthi and are made by local producers mainly from Janakpur, Dang and Thimi. The products and product-making techniques also result from the various producer-based workshops organized by Mahaguthi.

The primary advantage of these ceramic products is that they are produced locally. The fact that this occupation allows producers to sustain themselves ensures that the heritage attached with pottery and ceramic lives on as a feasible occupational option. Also, shares Sameer Chhetri of Mahaguthi, "We allow customization. As per the wishes of our customers, we can design unique products that will not be available in other places."

The prices of these products range from Rs. 45 to Rs. 1200 depending on the product. These simple, earthy colored and elaborately decorated items are available at Mahaguthi.  
CONTACT: 5521607



## FEEL THE FELT

### Felt products from Dhukuti

You cannot help but notice the variety of felt-made goodies that are placed in the various corners of the Dhukuti showroom at Kupondole. Felt products carry a charm of their own and the plus point of buying them at Dhukuti, is that they offer an impressive collection of felt products. Felt accessories such as key-rings, finger-puppets, bags, decorations as well as wear-ables such as caps and bed-room shoes are available in cheerful colors and designs. Items for household usage can also be found.

Felt is the oldest form of fabric known to mankind. It can be made using various unique processes. The products from Dhukuti however, are made by producers using a technique called "wet felting" instead of the industrial chemical processes widely popular to produce felt. Wet felting involves the use of friction and soapy water to matt and condense the natural wool fibers. The material is then pressed to create the desired product.  
CONTACT: 5535107



## BEAD IT

### Bead accessories from Sana Hastakala

Bright little beads strung and shaped as accessories for your body – find them aplenty at Sana Hastakala, Kupondole. Whereas the beads are imported from countries like Czechslovakia and India, the products are hand-made and designed in our own home grounds. The showroom showcases 45 to 50 different types of bead products which are made by a group called Kunj Artistic Bead Works based in Thankot. While the items are mostly designed by Kunjana Mishra of Kunj Artistic Bead Works, some are also made according to the designs given by the customers.

The beaded items available vary from simple string bangles to innovative brooches, rings, hair-ties and sophisticated necklaces. All the items are priced above Rs. 100

CONTACT: 5522628

## LOKHTA LOVE

### Lokhta paper products from various outlets

Lokhta paper is created from the shrub of the Lokhta plant, which is found only in the high altitudes of Nepal. The bark of this indigenous Lokhta plant is harvested, chopped, soaked, cooked, pulped, hammered and dried to create the Lokhta paper. Lokhta paper has been prepared in this age-old technique of traditional Nepalese artistry for many years now. This paper is unique in many ways. Hand-made and hand-dyed, Lokhta paper is impervious to germs and non-perishable in water. Additionally the paper is made from renewable sources and is environmentally friendly. It can be recycled easily.

Lokhta paper has made its way into daily lives and is quite common in households today. It is used, for example, by government officials to write valuable legal documents and by craftsmen to make masks. The monks of Tibet have always used it to print their manuscripts and write down their pious texts.

The paper can also be manipulated creatively to produce products such as notebooks, photo frames, letter pads, cards, photo albums, lamps and decorating items. Lokhta paper can be found in plain monotone colors as well as with intricate designs and symbols. Products made from Lokhta can be found in most shops selling hand-made paper products in areas such as Thamel, Basantapur and Lalitpur. More specifically, the following shops house an impressive collection of Lokhta products:

Mahaguthi: 5533197

Sana Hastakala: 5522628

Association for craft Producers: 4275108



# SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

Applying modern designs and contemporary methods, Nepali artists are experimenting increasingly with traditional materials.



**MAHAGUTHI**  
Bamboo Cup Plate set  
Price: 135



**MAHAGUTHI**  
Bamboo Mug  
Price: 135



**DHUKUTI**  
Animal design solder bag  
Price: Rs 730



**MAHAGUTHI**  
Batik Photoframe  
Price: Rs 130



**MAHAGUTHI**  
Case roll S  
Price: Rs 250



**MAHAGUTHI**  
Batik visiting card holder  
Price: Rs 130



**NEPAL KNOTCRAFT CENTRE**  
Sinka Lamp Shade Square  
Code: 7875,  
Price: Rs 1200



**DHUKUTI**  
Pencil kits  
Price: Rs 297



**MAHAGUTHI**  
Clay Spiral teapot  
Price: Rs 150



**NEPAL KNOTCRAFT CENTRE**  
Square Basket with handle  
Code: 7879,  
Price: Rs 190



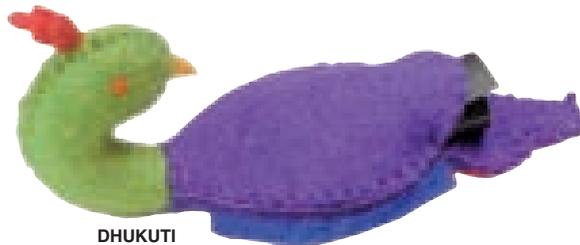
**NEPAL KNOTCRAFT CENTRE**  
Hexagon Tray  
Code:7884,  
Price: Rs 325



**MAHAGUTHI**  
Diamond Shape Mug  
Price: Rs 120



**DHUKUTI**  
Finger pocket  
Price: Rs 127



**DHUKUTI**  
Finger pocket  
Price: Rs 127



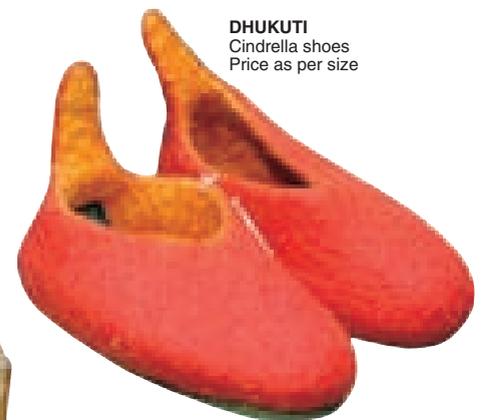
**MAHAGUTHI**  
Buddha eye Aeroma pot  
Price: Rs 155



**MAHAGUTHI**  
Batik Note Book L  
Price: Rs 250



**DHUKUTI**  
Pencil holder  
Price: Rs 166



**DHUKUTI**  
Cinderella shoes  
Price as per size



**NEPAL KNOTCRAFT CENTRE**  
Dolls Furniture  
Code: 7882,  
Price: Rs 250

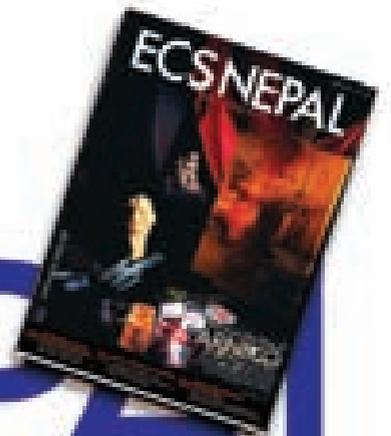
Said to be tear drops of  
Lord Shiva, Rudraksha seeds are  
considered to be very auspicious.  
They are of different muktas (faces)  
and the rare one-mukhi  
is the most valued.



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Identity matters

# ECS NEPAL



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# Dhukuti

*craft with elegance & virtue*



- A** Pillow Case Set of 2  
Code: BLP118, Rs.614
- B** Duvet Cover  
Code: BLD194, Rs.1443
- C** Stripe Cushion Cover  
Code: CCI232, Rs.672
- D** Painted table  
Code: CPT269, Rs.4477



**Shopping Bag**  
Code: BGS759, Rs.376



**Kit Bag**  
Code: BGK176, Rs.175

**Laptop Bag**  
Code: BGS754, Rs.560

**Purse**  
Code: BGP323, Rs.114



**Yellow Mat Vase-L**  
Code: CLC966, Rs.7000



**Yellow Mat Vase-M**  
Code: CLC969, Rs.3500



**Round Planter**  
Code: MLX441, Rs.7487

**Round Planter**  
Code: MLX442, Rs.5124

**Round Planter**  
Code: MLX443, Rs.3514



**Cheese chopping board**  
Code: GLB101, Rs.304



**Copper Circle Bowl-L**  
Code: MLS154, Rs.1257

**Copper Circle Bowl-M**  
Code: MLS152, Rs.919

**Copper Circle Bowl-S**  
Code: MLS153, Rs.488



**Association for Craft Producers**  
**हस्तकला उत्पादक संघ**

GPO Box 3701, Patel Bhanwan Mode, Kathmandu, Nepal.  
Tel: 4278108, 4278071, Fax: 4272678, Email: program@craftsnp.org.np, Website: www.acp.org.np

Retail Outlet: Dhukuti, Kuponole, Phone: 5535107  
Exporter: Nepal Craft Trading (P.) Ltd., Email: export@craftsnp.org.np



www.ecs.com.np

# TRAVEL

FEATURE | PLACE OF THE MONTH

FEATURE

# Trials and Travails on the Trail

*Against all odds and assumptions, a trek to Everest Base Camp without a porter or a guide is possible and makes for quite an adventure.*

Text & Photos by LEAH OLSON



**P**ink froth. Pink, mucous-y froth coming out of my nose and mouth. Froth that will eventually fill my lungs and drown me. The thought goes through my head as I lay on my bed, head bent over the side, retching out my last three meals into a plastic bag.

I am nested under three layers of blankets in a typical boxy teahouse room in Dingboche, just two stops away from Everest Base Camp. However, an unfortunate concurrence of events means that now, instead of picturing my triumphant arrival at Base Camp, I am envisioning my un-timely death from HAPE (High Altitude Pulmonary Edema) due to altitude sickness.

I arrived in good spirits in Dingboche (4,530 meters) only five hours before the sickness struck. After dropping our bags at the Moon Light Lodge, my trekking partner, Eric and I walk up and down the town's main path. We chat with fellow trekkers about the delights of Snickers and inspect teahouses (all seemingly named some derivative of Himalayan Hotel, Sherpa Lodge or Everest View). We return to the Moon Light for dinner and huddle around the stove, fueled by dried yak dung, which chokes the air with sickly sweet smoke. I gulp down a few momos, then excuse myself as I start to feel the blood drain from my face. Back in the room, I curl into a miserable ball and delve back into the book I picked up at Namche Bazar - *Into Thin Air*, by Jon Krakauer. A quintessential Mt. Everest climbing book, it recounts the tragic 1996 spring climbing season. It just so happens that I'm at the part where Ngawang Topche, a Sherpa for one of the expeditions, gets HAPE. I was taking great pleasure in this Everest account, especially passing through all the villages and by the peaks described in the book, but now, reading about Ngawang's plight makes me feel even more sick.

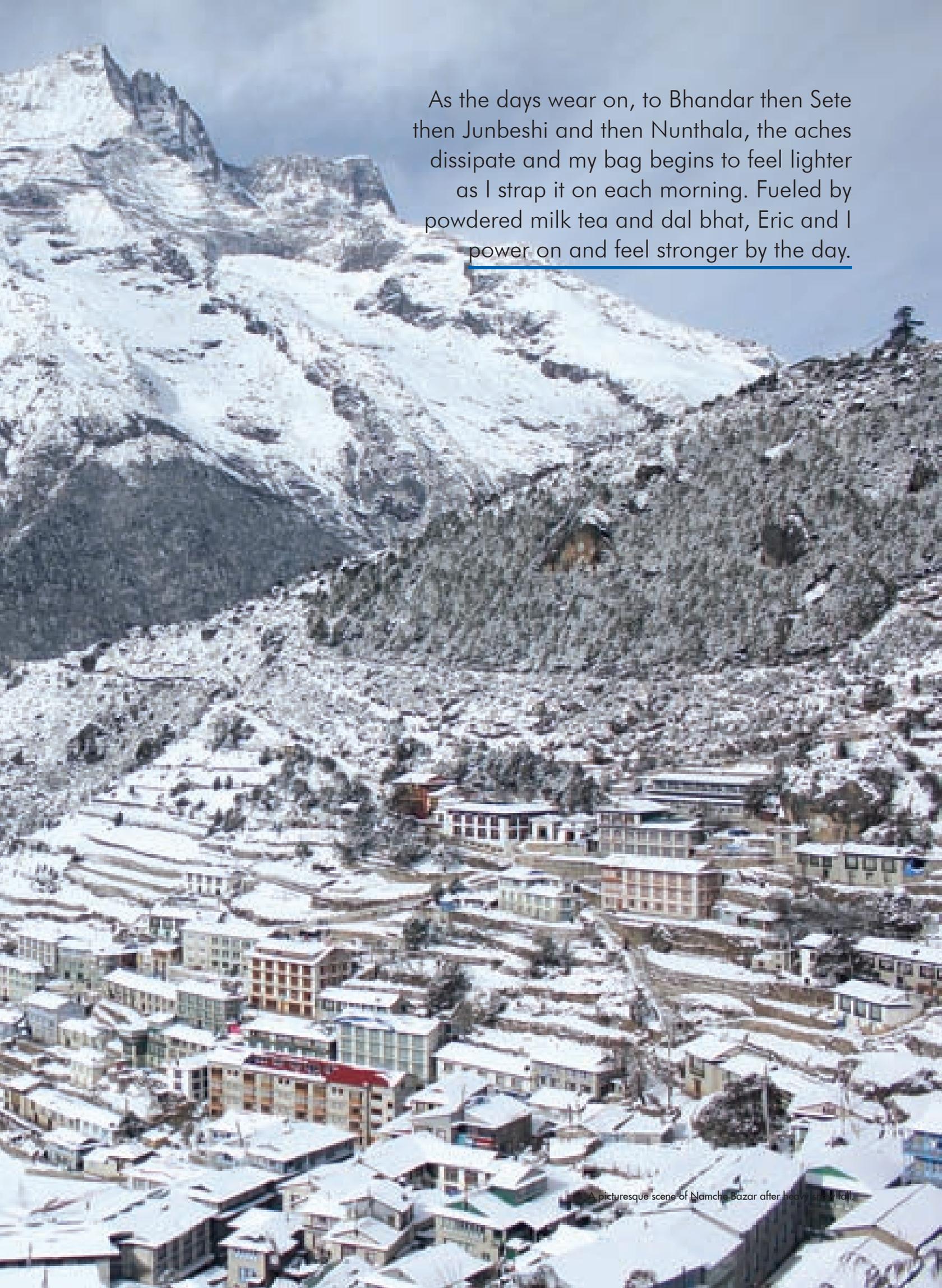
The journey to Everest Base Camp, one of Nepal's most well trodden treks, started on a much higher note. Twelve days earlier, Eric and I began our walk out of

Jiri - a neat little bazaar town where, before the Lukla airport existed, most Everest expeditions began. From there, the route took us on a thrilling roller coaster ride of steep ascents and descents, over snowy passes, through the green middle hills and rhododendron forests. To add another dimension to the challenge, we decided to travel the route without a porter or a guide. To meet the needs of two voracious appetites, our backpacks brim with snacks and supplementary meals, which equates to very hefty loads. After the first day, a six-hour walk from Jiri to Shivalaya, with a 20-kilo bag harnessed to my back, I wonder at the feasibility of traveling all the way into the high Himalayas with this load. I splay out on my bed in Shivalaya feeling the ache of muscles in my shoulders and legs that I did not know existed.

As the days wear on, to Bhandar then Sete then Junbeshi and then Nunthala, the aches dissipate and my bag begins to feel lighter as I strap it on each morning. Fueled by powdered milk tea and dal bhat, Eric and I power on and feel stronger by the day. On the ninth day of the trek, we trudge into Namche Bazar, the gateway that separates the rolling foothills from the real mountains. At the edge of Namche, a sullen guard stops us to note down our names, nationality and passport numbers. "No guide?" he asks, scanning up and down the trail. "No guide," I reply.

The fact that we are traveling with neither a porter nor a guide makes us a bit of an oddity on this well-worn trail. Most other trekkers look at our bags and at us incredulously, with a hint of pity when we say we are doing the trail alone. However, thus far, problems finding the route have been few and far in between. One errant turn took us on a not-unpleasant path through shockingly green rice terraces near Bupsa and a second on a heart-pounding hike up a near-vertical hill before Lukla. Although Eric and I are attempting this trek with no local assistance, we are never truly alone. The trail is in some places more like a road than a path; a winding channel coursing ►





As the days wear on, to Bhandar then Sete then Junbeshi and then Nunthala, the aches dissipate and my bag begins to feel lighter as I strap it on each morning. Fueled by powdered milk tea and dal bhat, Eric and I power on and feel stronger by the day.



with caravans of mules and yaks, as well as bandy-legged human porters. Whenever the weight of my bag becomes too much, I consider the lives of these porters. They carry loads perhaps double or triple the weight of my own every single day. This is their life; no doubt a challenging way to make a living. I think of them when sitting in tea houses along the route, for everything in the towns above Namche was carried there on the back of a porter: plywood, tin roofing, vegetables, toilet bowls, milk powder, rice and more.

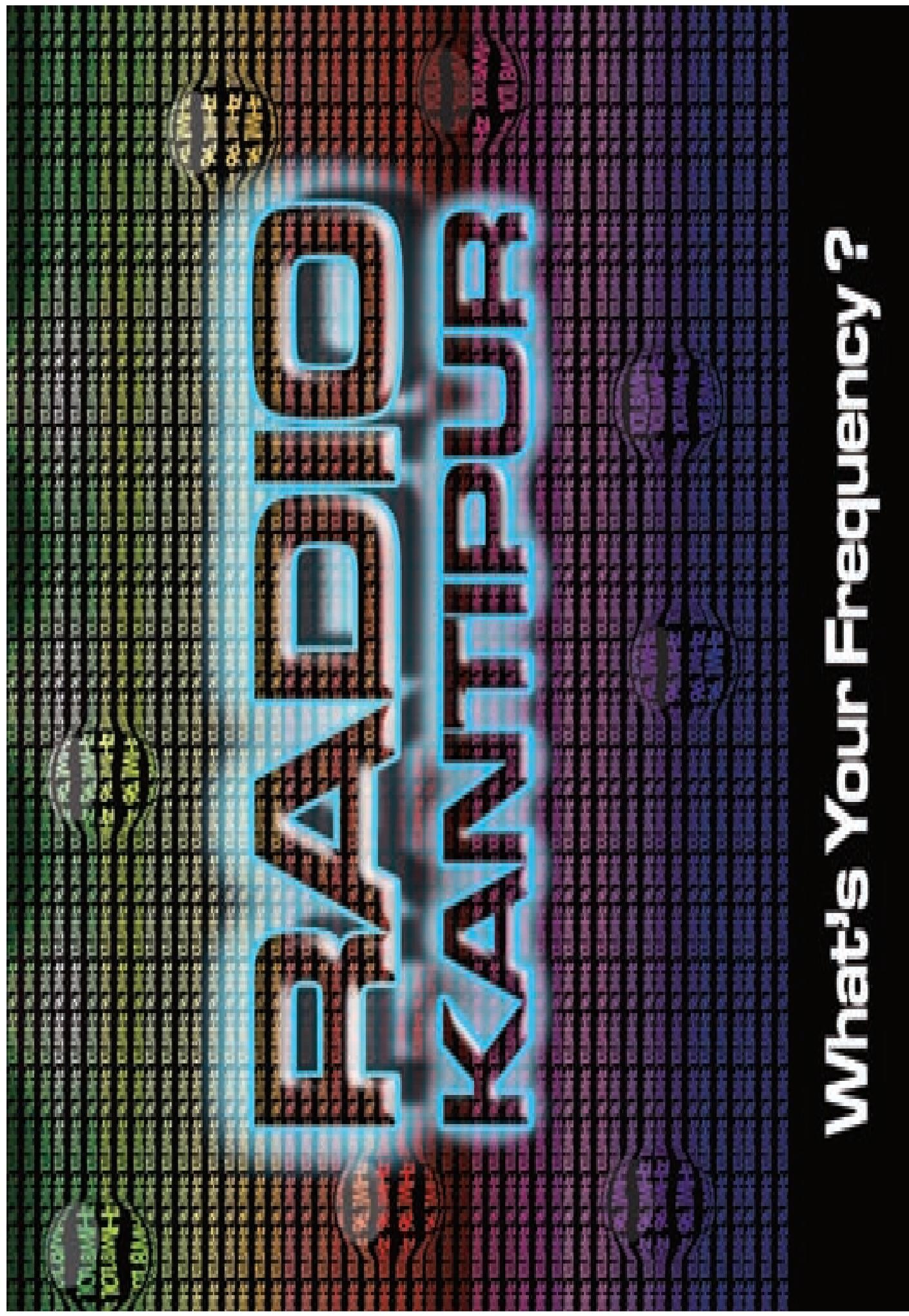
It is not the assistance of a guide that I covet, but the higher we go and the thinner the air gets, it is the help of a porter that sometimes makes me envious of other trekkers. Until Namche Bazaar, I felt myself getting stronger under the load of my pack, but as the altitude increases, I become winded and fraught with exhaustion on minor hills. But along with the increased difficulty, with every conquered hill and at the end of every day, the sense of accomplishment becomes sweeter. Thankfully the bout of sickness in Dingboche was simply an episode of food poisoning, not symptoms of altitude sickness, so after a day of recovery I strap on my backpack and weakly trudge up a

promontory ridge that leads us through the one-house village of Dughla to our day's destination, Lobuche. I silently give thanks that my visions of death-by-HAPE never materialized and muster my waning strength under my backpack. Wispy-haired yaks dot the otherwise barren landscape. The bells around their necks ring as they eat, lending a mystic feeling to the otherwise silent surroundings. The bent hook of Ama Dablam becomes smaller behind us as the giant faces of Pumori and Lhotse materialize.

Eric and I, two ants in this monstrous landscape, labor up the rocky slopes to Gorak Shep, the final collection of lodges before Base Camp. I think about the mountaineering legends that walked these glacial paths before us: Sir Edmund Hilary, Tenzing Norgay, George Leigh Mallory and Reinhold Messner. It seems we are in the presence of greatness, but the greatest is still to come - the black crag of Mt. Everest. We dump our bags in Gorak Shep and continue to Base Camp. After walking with my own bag for sixteen days, I think the final leg to Base Camp will be an easy journey without the added burden. Unfortunately, I am wrong. Even without the bag, the

air here is thin as rice paper and walking continues to be laborious. But, after an hour of making my way through loose rocks, patches of ice and grey boulders, the milky blue glacier on top of which Everest Base Camp sits comes into view. It feels like another planet, maybe the moon. We wind our way down to Base Camp, which at this early time of year is nothing but an empty rock field on top of the Khumbu glacier. Even though there are no tents and no expedition team members to chat up, it is still spectacular. The cracking of ice below our feet breaks the heavy silence.

Surrounded by black crags, we know we have made it. The memory of struggles, missteps and sickness dissipates into the magnificence. Eric and I congratulate each other for making it with no porter and no guide, which just a few days earlier seemed a plan of little sense. Knowing that we made it here all by ourselves, using our own strength, we could not be happier. Sucking in a breath of thin air, a wave of satisfaction settles over me. This contentment, surrounded by silence and mountains, makes every step and every breath worth it. ■



What's Your Frequency ?

# In a blanket of clouds

*Nagthali consists of terrain that is unfrequented, isolated, and mostly shrouded in clouds; none of them reason enough from trekking through the area.*

Text & Photos by AMIT SHRESTHA



If there is one thing that pulls me back to sublimity, it is the grand immensity of the mountains, the width and breadth of the Himalayas and the freedom of imagination that strolls about me when I am struck by the lightening speed of unaccounted senses. Technically speaking, there are spaces within and with out each of us that sow the seeds of beauty in every notch of our being. Beauty is inherent for human nature, and the quest is only logically exuberant. In that very quest, I find myself straying in and around the mountains, exhausting my limits, just to find that little space to plant impressions of beauty as I experience them.

Following onto that addiction, if that word does any justice to my reverence, I embark on unplanned journeys. Some are pure accidents, and others simply the result of poor map-reading abilities. However, there are very few, if any, 'lost track' journeys that I have regretted. In fact, some of them have been the most rewarding and

enlightening ones of the lot - one of them being a hefty stride to Nagthali.

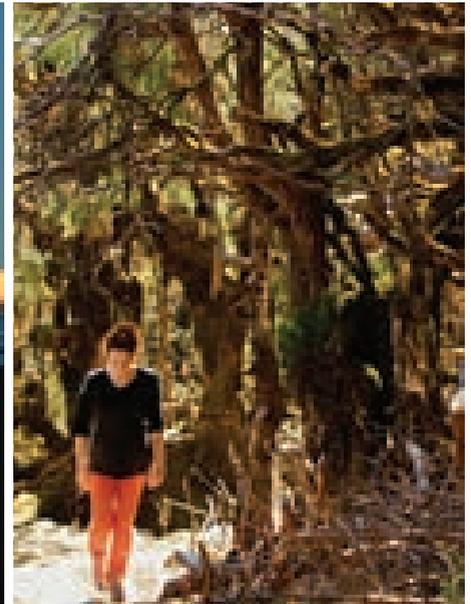
Let me present the facts first – the longitudes and the latitudes. Nagthali lies in uninhabited terrain on a hilltop in Langtang region that stages a close view of the Langtang, Kerung, and Ganesh Himal. A place unidentified by GPS might be difficult locating. It falls just outside the less known Tamang Heritage Trail; the closest I can come to associating Nagthali with its surroundings. However, if one intends to find it, it can be found.

When one is on the Tamang Heritage Trail, Tamang villages are obviously the yolk of the journey. But to depart onto lesser known desolate lands is a luxury on its own – be it to face the solitude, or to find oneself nurtured by pristine nature, or just to explore the depths of our consciousness. Whatever the motive, service is rendered.

From Tatopani, the trail ascends through a deep, damp forest of old rho-

dodendron trees. One is forgiven for getting lost in the dense forest with virtually non-existent trails. I find myself divided in various occasions, not being able to choose a path or sometimes, it is all onto me to sculpt one. No matter which path you choose to wander on, all of them lead to a huge pointed rock at the hilltop visible throughout the forest. Brindang, a small settlement, is based a little far below the rock.

It is early morning, and the sunlight penetrates and glows through the dews on leaves as if each dew-drop holds a sun within itself. After a couple of hours of huffs and puffs on the climb, Brindang is a pleasurable pause for sun basking and sweat drying. This small settlement boasts a community of six houses, all cluttered one after another. As with traditional Tamang settlement, each house is only a room big and shelters 6-8 members in a family. After being in Gatlang for a couple of days, I am pushed back



After the harvest, the farmers suggest me to visit the village's old gompa, atop a hill. I was never good at facts or history in high school. In fact, dates and numbers caused me hallucinating dreams of mustard flowers baking in the sun.

to seriously reconsider my definition of space per capita.

Each family owns a piece of farm – growing maize, rice and seasonal vegetation. On that very occasion, I come across farmers harvesting maize and cannot resist the temptation of giving them a hand. The songs of harvest, the air fluttering away its chorus, mud on my hands and wet feet – all remind me that life sometimes, is made out of episodes so short and momentous, that we forget to think of life itself and live within it. Such moments are invariably the ones that leave the deepest impressions in our minds and hearts. I shared little more than a few smiles and some drinking water with the farmers. But I realize those smiles are more strongly held in the soft corners of my mind than any spoken words since morning.

After the harvest, the farmers suggest me to visit the village's old gompa, atop a hill. I was never good at facts or history in high school. In fact, dates and numbers caused me hallucinating dreams of mustard flowers baking in the sun. The gompa offered me just that – broken scriptures, dampened architecture, and a big prayer wheel. I offer my respects

with seven rotations of the wheel. What the farmers did not mention however, was the view from beyond the gompa. It is as if the viewpoint projects a “mini” view of what Nagthali does. The tease factor is herewith me to stay for another couple of hours before I collapse in the laps of Nagthali.

The terrain becomes vacant of life forms except trees and shrubs. The effort needed to walk to Nagthali from Brindang is easily dismissed, because the self disappears, and the ego evacuates among the cloak of clouds floating with you. All the while, the imposing Langtang II (6561 m) mirrors the scale of dominion it casts upon the deep valleys and gorges. With all my senses active, the only living souls I come across are two eagles struggling hard to make their flight above the clouds. Not surprisingly, they may be just as amused as myself to see a moving object, and to their glee, a potential meal. While they continue to hover above me, I react to my temptation of taking a few photos of them. But the pounding altitude heartbeats convince my muscles to move on with the climb, and I succumb to the decision.

Before come out of the cocoon of thoughts swimming in my head, I realize I am already above the clouds at 3300 m. I grin with swathes of mirth, either because the eagles are no longer hovering like helicopters or because I can see a broken spectrum of my own shadow cast upon the clouds below. I cannot decide. Maybe it is not necessary. I am quintessentially looking at the orchestra of nature, and listening to a symphony carried through the clouds. Nagthali arises at hindsight and true to its rumors – it inhabits four lodges, all serving to meet your basic needs of shelter, food, and discharge. However, the water service may be questionable – either frozen or muddy – depending on which time of the year one arrives. But is that the first thing I am concerned with when I am flooded with the embrace of the mountains, so close so that I could hear my own heartbeat echoing in absolute silence of the evening? Not the least.

I stand in awe, paralyzed at the magnificence of Mother Nature. No visual expression or photograph will do any justice to the feeling of being there – above the thick, white cloak of clouds and the soft evening sunlight lighting the tips of the snow-capped mountains. The radiance is reflected in my soul, and I lay bare for the cold wind to penetrate each cell of my being, and wash out any stains of impurity. There is so much beauty in this land. It is there for us to find if we know of the secrets that lead to it. I feel like I found a piece of the secret and it fills in the void, just as an artist fills in colors in his canvas to project his imagination of beauty. ■

# 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.

Contact ECS 442.6439, 98510.07.900 or [services@ecs.com.np](mailto:services@ecs.com.np) to book a place.

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Many excellent staff are registered with us, including cooks, guards, gardeners, maids and drivers. Our list is constantly updated. Interviews are carried 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. 7,000

## 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 **FEE:** Rs. 2,500

## 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

## CHINESE COOKING

### FOR HOUSEHOLD STAFF

Participants will be able to bake the following items.  
1. Kungpao chicken 2. Fried prawns in chilly sauce  
3. Carrot cake with Orange glaze 4. Wonton soup  
5. Spring roll with sweet and sour sauce

**DATE:** 29 May 2011 **TIME:** 1.00 pm to 5.00 pm  
**VENUE:** Maharajgunj **FEE:** Rs. 1,200

## INDIAN COOKING COURSE

### FOR HOUSEHOLD STAFF

Participants will be able to cook the following items.

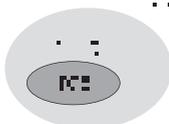
1. Butter Naan
2. Pumpkin Pudding
3. Methiko Parautha
4. Kerako Raita
5. Bhatora

**DATE:** 26 June 2011,  
**TIME:** 1.00 pm to 5.00 pm,  
**VENUE:** Maharajgunj,  
**FEE:** Rs. 1,200



# ECS

Maharajgunj, Kathmandu  
Phone: 442.6439/98510.07.900  
[services@ecs.com.np](mailto:services@ecs.com.np)  
Office Hour:  
11:00am to 3:00pm  
(Monday through Friday)



ECS Services offers staff employment services (cooks, watchmen, gardeners, housemaids and drivers); courses for household staff (cooking and health); Nepali language for expatriates and English language for household staff. We hope that these services provided by ECS help make your life more comfortable.

# United World Trade Center

Fifth floor:



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Second floor:

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VOGUE

U & B

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First floor:



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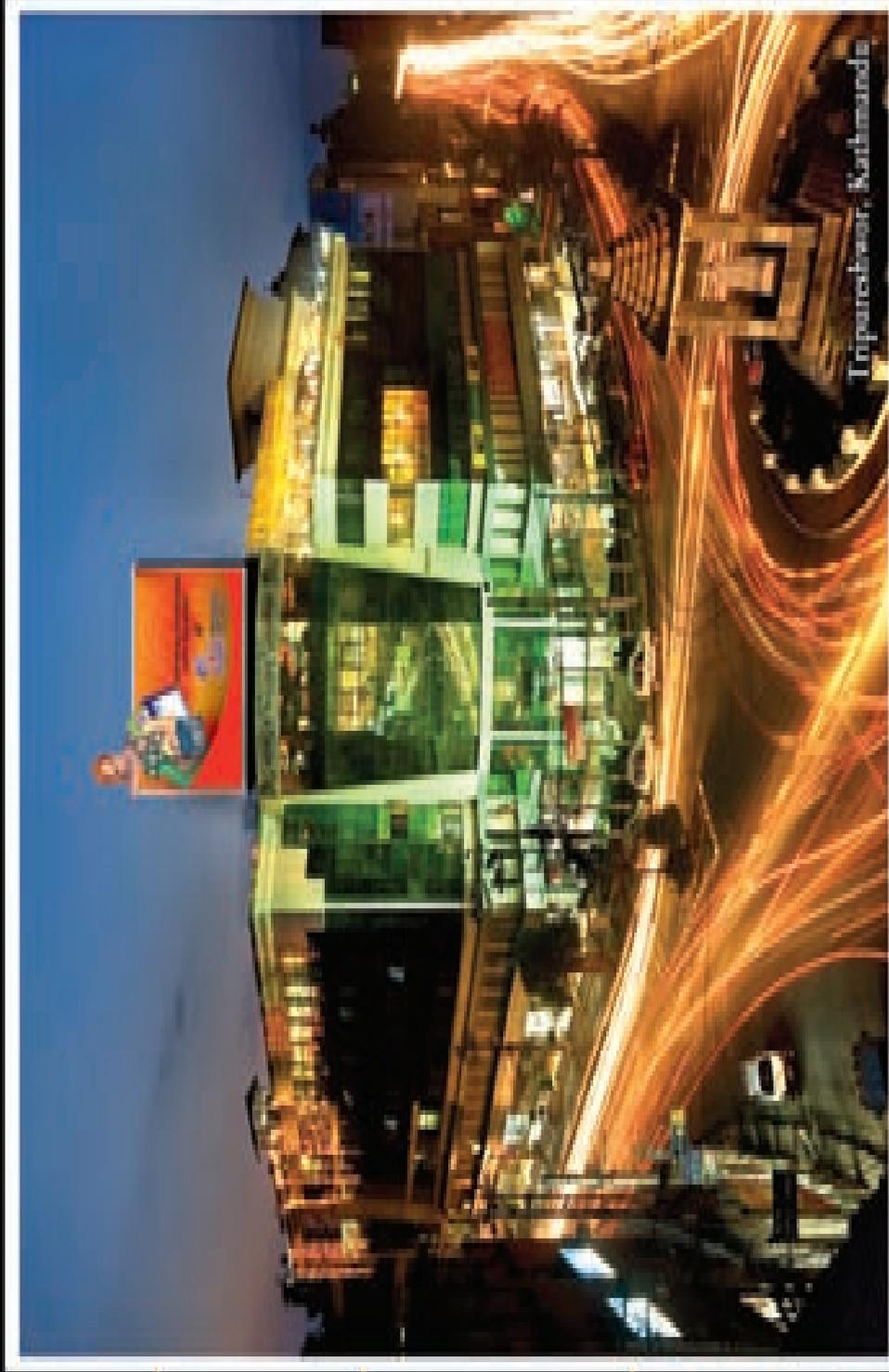
JOHN PLAYERS

Ground floor:

SŪVARI

HOT STATION *Style*

Bajra & Blay



# Restaurant & Bars

## NANGLO BAKERY CAFÉ

### BAKERY CAFÉ NEW BANESHWOR

Tel: 4488528  
Chicken sizzler Rs 250  
Chicken mo mo Rs 120  
Taglatella at sungi Rs 190

### BAKERY CAFÉ PULCHOCK

Tel: 5010110  
Buffet set lunch Rs 310  
Chicken barbeque Rs 195

C: Mo mo Chicken Rs 130

### BAKERY CAFÉ BOUD-DHA

Nepali lunch set Rs 240  
Club sandwich Rs 225  
Bandel tareko / sandeko Rs 205

### BAKERY CAFÉ TEKU

Tel: 4265987

Margherita Pizza Rs 165  
Chicken Burger Rs 145  
Grilled fish with rice Rs 200

### BAKERY CAFÉ TINDHARA

Fpaghetti alla bolognes Rs 190  
Masala dosa Rs 105  
Mutton Mo mo Rs 160

### CHINESE CUISINE

#### THE GHANGRI CAFÉ

Pulchowk Lalitpur  
Tel: 5528703  
Chicken Sumai Mo:Mo Rs.70  
Cordeu Blue Mutton Rs.150

### CAFÉ DU TEMPLE

Patan Durbar Square  
Tel: 5527127  
Spaghetti Bolognese Rs.175  
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

### BODERLINE CAFÉ AND BAR

United World Trade Centre  
Tripureshor, Tel: 4117010  
Chicken Ala Kiev Rs. 180  
Garlic Chicken W/ Chips Rs. 170  
BBQ Chicken Pizza Rs. 220

### 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  
Cuttlet Rs. 260  
Bulgogi Rs. 250

### FRENCH CUISINE

#### COURTYARD RESTAURANT

Kamaladi  
Tel: 4253056  
Signature Cuisines  
Roasted Chicken Rs. 295 ++  
Grilled Fish Rs. 280++  
Chicken Steak Rs. 270++  
Half & Half Pizza Rs. 350++  
Spagetti With Black Olive & Crapers Rs. 240++

### 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: 4411818  
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

### THE FACTORY RESTAURANT & BAR

Thamel  
Tel: 4701185, 4701187  
Chilled Gazpacho Rs.150  
Cottage Cheese Steak w/Ratatouille Rs.320  
Fried ice-cream Rs.220

### 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

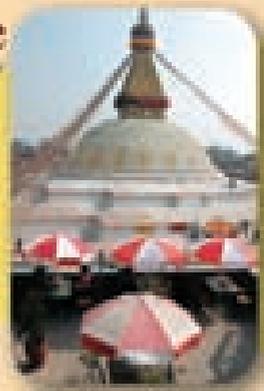
### CAFÉ DE PATAN

Patan Mangalbazar  
Tel: 5537599

## Cafe Du Temple



Branches: Kathmandu Tel: 2144129  
Patan Durbar Square, Lalitpur Tel: 5527127  
Sanku (Maha) NR1 1031042  
E-mail: info@cafedutemple.com.np  
www.cafedutemple.com.np



### 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  
Keweb Cut Chicken Rs.390  
Jalan Praon & Bacon Rs.550  
Pork House Stake Rs.490

### WALTER'S RESTAURANT AND BAR

(Continental Gourmet )  
BabarMahal Revisited  
Tel: 4253337  
Fried Salmon With Cumin Rs. 850  
Sea Food  
Platter Rs. 950  
Creper A La Goat  
Cheese Rs. 550

### OR2K

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

### BAITHAK

Babar Mahal Revisited  
BabarMahal

## HYATT REGENCY KATHMANDU

Taragaon, Boudha, Tel: 4491234

### ROX RESTAURANT

Melting Chocolate: NRs 750  
Smoked Trout & Salmon  
Cuttlet: 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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## EATING OUT

### SOALTEE CROWNE PLAZA

Tahachal, Kathmandu, Nepal

#### INDIAN

Kakori  
Tel: 4273999 Ext: 6555  
Kakori Seekh Rs. 750  
Raan E Awadh Rs. 1575  
Doodhiya Paneer Rs. 575  
Lehsani 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  
Chicken Lung Fung Soup  
Rs. 275  
Soya Wine Chilli Pomfret  
Rs. 1050  
Sapo Chicken Rs. 600  
Honey Pork Ribs Rs. 575

#### 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 Hour 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  
Tenderloin Steak Rs. 220

#### K-TOO BEER

Thamel,  
Tel No: 4250440  
Steaks 365-955, Mexican  
Chicken Fajita 440,  
Apple Momo 220

#### KILROYS OF KATHMANDU

Thapathali  
Tel No: 4250440  
Garlic + Ginger Sauteed  
Prawns

#### PICASSO "ARTISTE DE LA CUISINE"

Jawalakhet, 5009076  
BBQ Pork -Rs 800++  
Pork Chopm With Mullled  
Red Wine Rs 750++

#### TEHZEEB RESTAURANT

Durbar Marg  
Tel: 4233037  
Shawmi Kebab Rs. 275  
Shahi Panner Rs. 225  
Biryani Aap Ki  
Pasand Rs. 275

#### 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, Man-  
galbazar, Tel: 5538980  
Newari Set- Rs. 250  
Roast Chicken- Rs. 185  
Nepali Thali (veg)- Rs. 225

Tel: 4267346

Feast Of Rana Maharaja  
Normal Menu Rs. 1040  
Royal Menu Rs. 1430  
Delux Menu Rs. 1595

#### UTSAV

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

#### CAFÉ & BAKERY

**Bu Keba The Organic Village**  
Bakhundole, Lalitpur  
5524368  
Buck wheat Pan Cake- Rs  
280  
Mediterranean Platter- Rs 480

#### CAFÉ CHEENO

Krishna Galli  
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  
Blackened Norwegian  
Salmon Rs. 999  
Chicken Fricassee Rs. 399

#### KFC RESTAURANT

Durbarmarg, Tel:  
4226287

Signature Cuisines  
Hot & Crispy Chicken (Large  
Bucket) Rs. 949 ++  
Hot Wings (Large Bucket)  
Rs. 949++  
Zinger Meal Rs. 269++  
Veggie Feast Meal Rs.  
219++  
Krushers Rs. 99 ++

#### MIKE'S BREAKFAST

Naxal, Tel: 4424303  
Country Breakfast Rs.  
435++  
Mikes Special Breakfast Rs.  
330++  
Breakfast burrito Rs. 345++  
Special Waffle Rs. 345++  
Suevos Rancheros Rs.  
330++

#### THIRD EYE BAKERY

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

#### VINTAGE CAFÉ & PUB

Durbarmarg, Tel: 4254831  
Vintage Platter Rs. 400  
Wins Rs. 250  
Vintage Steak Rs. 350  
Crispy Corn Rs. 200  
Chicken Sandeko Rs. 250

#### BAR AND LOUNGES

**ABSOLUTE BAR**  
Hotel Narayani Complex,  
Pulchowk  
Tel: 5521408  
Bandel Tareko Rs. 300.00  
Chicken Chowela Rs.  
300.00  
Fresh Garden Green Salad  
Rs. 100.00

#### ATTIC BAR

Tejbehawan, Lazimpat  
4442615  
Bacon Potato Roll- Rs 200

Chicken Wings with Hot  
Garlic Sauce Rs 350

#### BRONCO BILLY RESTAURANT & BAR

Harihar bhawan, Pulchowk  
Tel: 5526212  
Chicken Quesidillas Rs. 300  
Beef Chimichanga Rs. 350  
Chicken Tacos Rs. 350  
Mexican Steak Rs. 500  
Grilled Salmon Rs. 700

#### 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

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Lazimpat Tel: 4411818

#### THE AMBIENCE RESTAURANT & BAR

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

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## THE EVEREST HOTEL

New Baneshwor, Kathmandu, Tel: 01 4780100

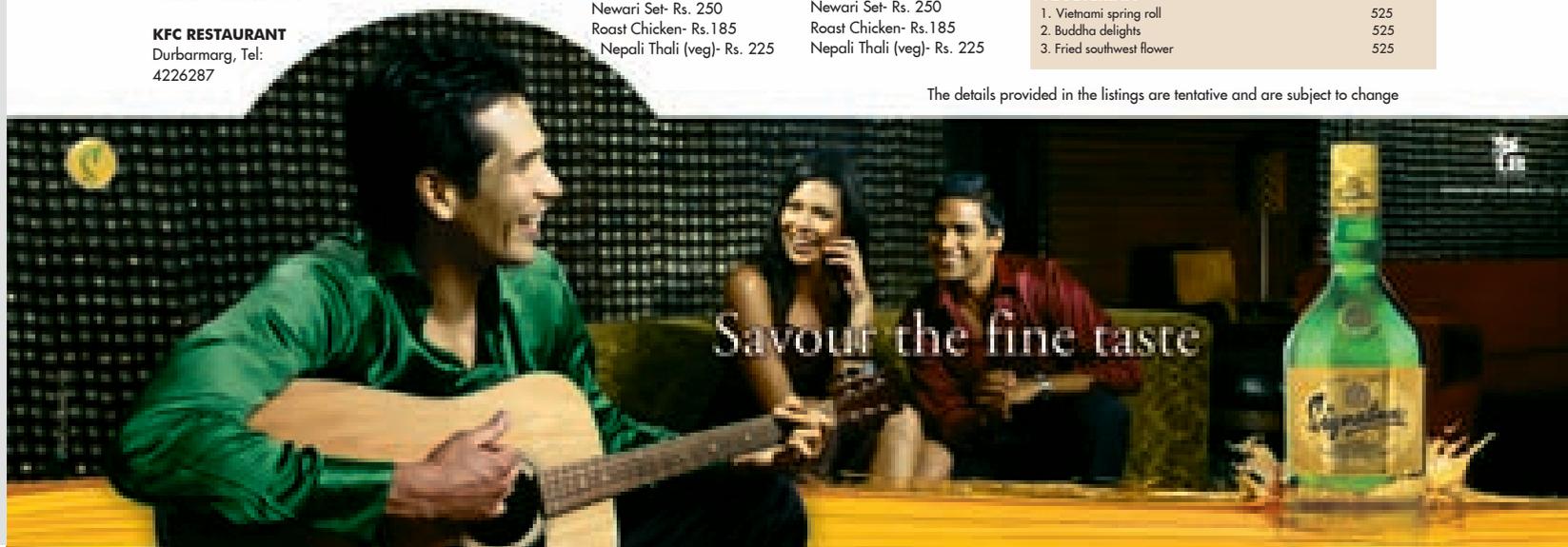
#### NON VEGETERIAN

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| 1. Lobster in mushroom & wine sauce          | 2150 |
| 2. Crispy fried salt & pepper duck           | 995  |
| 3. Squid honey chilli                        | 675  |
| 4. Crab hot garlic                           | 695  |
| 5. Makeral Beijing style                     | 695  |
| 6. Peking whole roast duck                   | 2950 |
| 7. Roast duck with sweet crispy skin         | 995  |
| 8. Tai pai chicken                           | 725  |
| 9. Whole trout in double flavor              | 1100 |
| 10. Steamy sizzler steak with mushroom sauce | 725  |
| 11. Crispy fried Szechuan Fish               | 625  |
| 12. Multy flavoured Shredded chicken         | 725  |

#### VEGETERIAN

- |                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| 1. Vietnam spring roll    | 525 |
| 2. Buddha delights        | 525 |
| 3. Fried southwest flower | 525 |

The details provided in the listings are tentative and are subject to change



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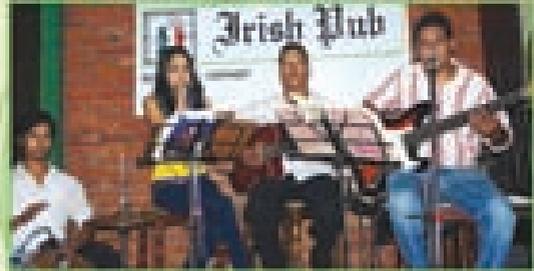
Curtain Cloth | Tapestry Cloth | Carpets | Furniture  
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Opp. Ghansi Dept. Store, Baluwatar, Kathmandu. Tel: 4430342



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Ananda Bhawan, Lazimpat, Kathmandu  
 Tel: 4430271, 4020176. E-mail: [irishpubnepal@gmail.com](mailto:irishpubnepal@gmail.com)  
[www.irishpubnepal.com](http://www.irishpubnepal.com)

Discover The Taste of Ireland

# RAFT TREK CLIMB BIKE

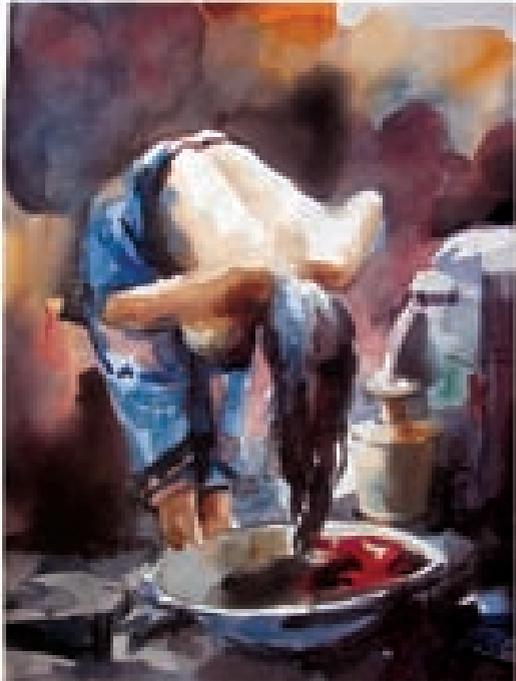
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 Web: [www.nirvanartgallery.com](http://www.nirvanartgallery.com)



## Shree Furniture Industry (P) Ltd.

Dhumbarahi-4, Kathmandu  
Tel: 4378038, E-mail: mail@shreefurniture.com.np

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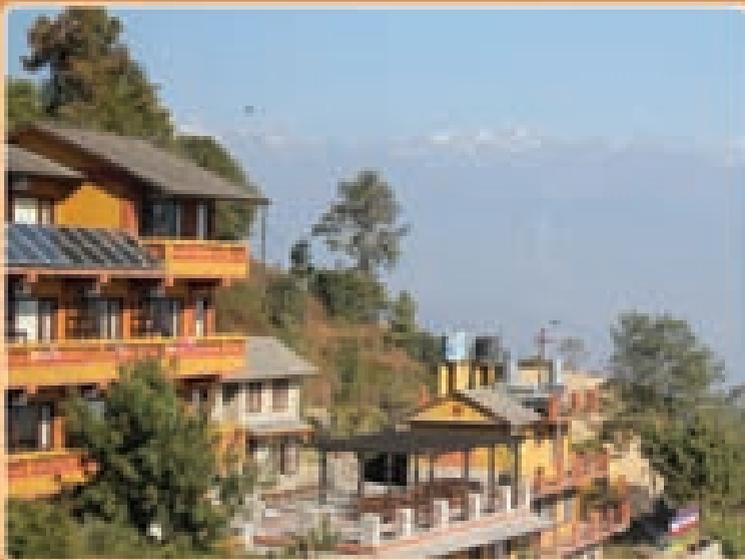
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Web Site : [www.hotelcountryvilla.com](http://www.hotelcountryvilla.com)

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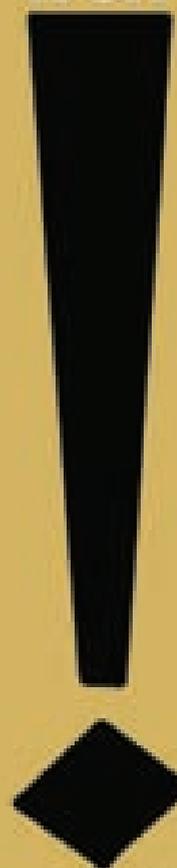
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# Rejection, my 'Darling,' in broad strokes

By DON MESSERSCHMIDT

I recently submitted a poem to a contest based on votes from readers. Then I sent an email asking friends and acquaintances to read it and vote (or not) on the contest website.

'On The Road Past Thrumsing La, Bhutan's Wild Mountain Spirits' reflects my impressions about nature, mountain spirits, and "foggies" encountered while riding across Bhutan with Dochen, my friend and driver. It starts like this:

*'many, many foggies' says my driver, grinning  
as we enter soup-thick cloud along the bluff  
below the pass called Thrumsing La  
Dochen has that way of speaking English,  
laughingly  
so jovially therapeutic  
he sets the tone for what's an otherwise long rough mountain ride across  
Bhutan  
up-down-around the twisting road . . .*

Some voters posted complimentary remarks: "Wonderful!"

- "I appreciate the wealth of life and place you develop with this poem"
- "Oh, thank you for taking me on that winding ride through bright and varied vistas, and allowing me to experience the joyful Dochen and sacred encounter of the 'foggies'" and • "In reading your poem I could feel and sense what you saw with your eyes. Very beautifully done..."

Thank you, kind readers!

Then an email came from a critical reader, a stranger, rejecting the poem outright in rather broad strokes. Now mind you, not everyone may like the poem, but severely negative criticism is exceptional. "Darling," he began, then went straight to the point (with bad grammar, syntax, spelling and spacing, and many ellipses...): "Its useless.It posses not any poetic qualities. [...] Common sense and common rules are missing... To vote and win is not what a true poet practice. "

"I am a poetry teacher and my students compose better than these," he wrote. "Only emotion and feelings donot make poetry. There has to be a balance of intellect, playfulness, careful use of assonance and alliteration, pun, stress, [...].Better luck next time."

I replied: "better than these' is highly subjective. Every poet has his or her own muse, style, quality, emotion, result. It is a lot like viewing modern art. Some like it, but someone else thinks it trash. It is all subjective..."

In return he called me "darling" again, then while laughing in my face he turned spiteful: "It is not so much easy darling... to write a trash, plagiarize from net, and trying to do publicity for getting some awards is not modernity... first read yourself..your interest...your mind...your intuition...your inner reality... then only at your old age come to me and say that u are in the process of becoming a poet... there i shall agree with u..Not now."

Accusing me of plagiarism is the ultimate put down, a very blunt weapon. (Who is this guy!)

What's needed instead is sincere advice and constructive commentary. Show me where and how to make improvements or explain techniques that might enhance the creative outcome.

And I must ask: Can poetry be taught? Did Byron, Tennyson, Shakespeare, Devkota, or Robert Frost take lessons?

And what, precisely, is a poem, to be so critical of one? "...no one ever has come up with a satisfactory definition of poetry, just as no one can define music or art," writes Frances Mayes in *The Discovery of Poetry*. "Those who want to proclaim what is or isn't poetry have thankless work cut out for themselves. No umbrella is wide enough to cover the myriad versions, subjects, and forms," she says. "If a poem interests you, better to just go along with Walt Whitman's assertion, '...What I assume you shall assume,/For every atom belonging to me, as good belongs to you'."

And the moral is? - Several. But none advises quitting. Writers and other creative artists must have thick skins and be prepared for rejection (every writer's soulmate). It's easy to trash a poem, and though difficult it is far more helpful (and positive) to suggest ways to improve it. My critic's only good advice is his very last, a recommendation to one and all: "Keep on trying to write."

Don Messerschmidt is a contributing editor to ECS Nepal magazine. He can be contacted at [don.editor@gmail.com](mailto:don.editor@gmail.com). You can read the entire poem about Bhutan (and judge for yourself) on his blog 'Himalayan Snows' at [dmesserschmidt.blogspot.com](http://dmesserschmidt.blogspot.com).

Then vote for it at [writelink.co.uk/springfever/entryDetail.php?id=114](http://writelink.co.uk/springfever/entryDetail.php?id=114). You can see Frances Mayes' book, *The Discovery of Poetry* (2001) at [www.HarcourtBooks.com](http://www.HarcourtBooks.com). As 'A Field Guide to Reading and Writing Poems' it is an excellent primer.

# FAST TRACK

By ANIL CHITRAKAR



Talk of building a fast track road from the terai into Kathmandu has been going on for ever, it seems. In 1850 Prime Minister Jung Bahadur Rana made the historic trip to England and then on the way back stopped in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). The son of the then Chief Justice of Ceylon, Laurence Oliphant accompanied the Nepali entourage on the way back to Kathmandu. Laurence wrote a detailed account of the journey including the portion that is still talked about as the “future fast track” to Kathmandu. The book, *A Journey to Kathmandu with the Camp of Jung Babadoor* by Laurence Oliphant, was first published in London in 1852.

His observations in the 1850s may help us understand the reason why we still have to go west from Kathmandu for 110 kilometers before turning south, and then east again to get to Hetauda; or take the winding 133 kilometers long Tribhuvan Rajpath to this day instead of the “fast track”. There is a section in the book where Laurence describes the 18 miles section of the road between Hetauda and Bhimpheedi which he felt “...might be much improved by a little engineering”.

He goes on to write, “*The present policy of the Nepaul government is to keep the roads by which their country is approached in as impassable a state as possible, vainly imagining that in case of war, the badness of the roads would offer an insuperable obstacle to our progress and compel us to relinquish any attempt to penetrate to Kathmandu. This delusion ought to have been dispelled by the occupation of Muckwanpore by Sir David Ochterlony; not that it is a contingency they need take much trouble to provide against, since it would never be worth our while to do more than take possession of the Terai.*”

*The present state of the roads renders it impossible for goods to be conveyed into Nepaul except upon men’s backs; and as the traffic would be considerable in various articles of commerce, the prosperity and wealth of the country would be incalculably increased by an improvement in the means of transit....”*

This was published in 1852. This time i.e. 2011 the private sector wants to take the lead and is partnering with over 21 Village Development Committees that are enroute to build the four lane fast track that will take an hour to get us to Hetauda. The distance between the two cities is only 37 kilometers as the crow flies, but the road design is going to be around 50 kilometers with a long tunnel near Bhimpheedi. The promoters also tell us that the area in between has possibilities for satellite settlements that will help ease some of the pressure off Kathmandu.

As USAID celebrates 60 years in Nepal, it way well be worth noting that the two cities were linked by a ropeway for many decades. The ropeway is one of many infrastructures the US tax payer has gifted to Nepal over the last six decades. You can see the remains of it at Teku next to the remains of the German funded waste management plant.

Nepal has remained a sovereign country throughout history and this is a definite non-negotiable. We do however need to get the people out of poverty and help each of them to realize their full potential. We need to take advantage of the economic boom in our neighborhood while ensuring we do not lose out on any of our values. The trade between India and China has exceeded fifty billion dollars. We need to be part of this new economy. ■

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