

# The Nepal Digest

The First Nepali e-Magazine

Year 15, Volume IV, Issue 1, Published On Thursday April 29, 2004 (Baishakh 17, 2061 B.S.), New York, USA

## About The Nepal Digest

The Nepal Digest (TND) is a publication of TND Foundation, global not-for-profit information and resource center (registered in New York, USA) committed to promoting issues concerning Nepal. All members of [TheNepalDigest.org](http://TheNepalDigest.org) will get copy of [The Nepal Digest \(TND\)](http://TheNepalDigest.org). Membership is free of charge and is open to all.

The Nepal Digest is the first Nepali electronic e-magazine in the Internet. The Nepal Digest hopes to create a free and democratic electronic platform -- free of all political views, free of cultural biasness, against prejudices and unjustness of all kinds.

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You can submit your articles, views and news at its website

<http://theNepalDigest.org/submit.htm> or via email [contact@theNepalDigest.org](mailto:contact@theNepalDigest.org). The TND team appreciates your support.

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## Message from the Editor

By Ujjwal Bhattarai

Dear Readers:

The month of April in 2004 has been a month of quite many accomplishments for **The Nepal Digest** (TND). It is my pleasure to bring out the highlights:

"Office of Broadcast Support" from "**US Department of State**" has a unique program to allow foreign journalists to visit, observe, and understand the USA. Under this program, for the first time ever, team of 3 journalists from "**Channel Nepal**" was invited to visit and meet Nepalese living in the USA. This team consisting of Sulakshana Dhakal, Dilli Basel and chief cameraman Rajendra M Rajbhandari is on its maiden voyage of both East Coast and West Coast for 2 weeks. En route, they will be meeting with Nepalese from various walks of life and try to sense the concern of Nepali Diaspora to the current political situation of Nepal. The team is preparing a documentary trying to understand how Nepalese in the USA feel about Nepal's sorrows and what they think should/can be done.

The Channel Nepal team led by Mr. George Santulli, TV Producer/Director of US Department of State, met with TND team on April 27<sup>th</sup> for an interview. TND considers it quite an honor and a matter of glory to be included for this important documentary being made under the supervision of US Department of State. I would like expressing my thanks, personally and on behalf of TND, to Mr. Santulli and journalists from "Channel Nepal" for this opportunity they provided. According to Mr. Santulli, the documentary will be broadcasted in 56 countries.

Another piece of recognition came from [NepalNet.Net](http://NepalNet.Net), which specializes in ranking Nepal related websites, has selected TND as "**Best 51 Websites of 2001**" along with popular sites such as "BBC Nepali Service", "CIA Fact book of Nepal". NepalNet's 10-member volunteer editorial board selected TND on the basis of usefulness of information related to Nepal, site design, navigation, and popularity of the site. TND has been awarded a 5 star overall rating (5/5) by the review board.



NepalNet also featured TND "**Website of the Month**" for April 2004.

While I am at it, let me also add that TND subscription is only a few numbers shy of 5,000. If you are among next 20 subscribers of TND, you could be the luckiest 5,000<sup>th</sup> subscriber. Good luck and thanking all of you for your support as always.

Thank you.

Ujjwal Bhattarai  
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## Who said what?

### TND Research

"The palace and the parties must unify – urgently – under an all-party government as the first step to restoring democracy and presenting a unified front against the terrorist insurgents" - **C. Rocca** (while delivering a lecture on US-South Asia relations at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia)

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"We have already been cheated several times, sometimes in the name of royal audience and foreigners' assurances. So we have decided not to be betrayed again."

-**Girija Prasad Koirala**, along with political heavyweights of the agitating five-party coalition who declined King's offer to meet

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"This isn't America; the government did not invent intelligence material nor exaggerate the description of the threat to justify their attack."

-Israeli newspaper **Haaretz** about the killing of Sheik Ahmed Yassin



## Letter to Editor: "The Wrapper called People"

- **Dr. Upendra Gautam**

Greetings from field of movement, which is basically characterized by negativism: it does not have pro-people leader, a vision, a program. As it does not have these, there is no point talking about political honesty and commitment. But each one of the movement managers wants to be prime minister. Greed for power rules supreme. For him every thing that glitters is state power. But he must camouflage his greed for power with the wrapper called "people." Whatever the name, tone and color of the ideology, and the movement that this "ideology" drives, it is the people who are exploited, extracted and rendered increasingly powerless.

Given this context, Nepal which imminently stood at the threshold of republicanism after the June 1 Narayan Hiti massacre, could not positively go for this political change. So far we so-called Nepali IIs (Internet Intellectuals) have not been able to analyze the political system in terms its real r/evolution and functions. We have been so much after the structures (the wordy signposts) that we neither cared to deliver nor we appreciated others (including our fellow country men) who offered help us to deliver. Constitutional monarchy or republicanism for me has no functional value if it does not work accountably in the interest of the people (South Korea moved towards a developed country status under a "dictatorship"; China is democratizing and going towards private property right under a "socialist constitution", more republican states jointed least developed country category in the last 25 years, and the kingdoms in South Asia increasingly lost their independence-Sikkim was merged into Republic of India where more insurgencies have surfaced in all these years of democracy).

And in the context of Nepal, where 'the people' must mean the people who are now poor, deprived and greatly abused did seldom receive a supporting hand of the state as the state became the instrument to plunder the poor people with each political change. Only with words we can not achieve positive constitutional monarchy or positive republicanism. For this we need to have a leadership with vision and program. We need to regulate our borders, ensure identity of our people, plan and build development centers to manage health, education and settlement of rural population.

We need to utilize our comparative advantage and build water product and services based infrastructures. The nation-building functions and related challenges will help create right political leadership. After 10 years or so, thus, we can be secure enough to positively decide about the nature of the political system through a properly organized referendum. Now, the priority is to secure ourselves from external terminators. And this demands first protecting Nepal's identity with development.



## Debate: "Democracy or Republic"

- **By Ramesh Parajuli**

Hello Everybody,

Its really nice that we have now started to pen down our ideas on 'why' we should care for the chaos that is widespread in Nepal. Its not that earlier we didnt care or, for that matter, share our views re: the situation of Nepal. We have been sharing our ideas, expressing our dissatisfaction/frustrations in the private domain whereas few amongst us, eg Surendra dai, have been putting their voices in public domain as well.

We all were/are really frustrated to see the 'democratic' Nepal being deviated towards a wrong way because most of us had in a way or other participated in the movement against Panchayat. I can understand the frustration of a Nepali who has seen from close how corrupt and mean our leaders

had become. Yet, I also support the ongoing 'movement' (I put it under quote for i doubt that its an andolan) launched by the political parties however do not agree with the agendas of the parties. There must be an andolan to oust Gyanendra & Co.(I personally don't consider him as a King) and to establish a real democratic Nepal.

I see the possibility of making this opposition against what they call "regression" to a movement for the betterment of future Nepalis. If this opposition transforms into a movement, I believe, it will lead us to a true democratic era of a democratic nepal.

Of course, those of us who are out of Nepal at the moment have certain limitations but we must try our best to make the present opposition transform into a real movement. I clearly see Nepal being a republic soon but however there are some amongst us who have doubt and still are not ready to go for the republicanism.

I think, there are two things that we could/should do simultaneously. Foremost, we must think of ways to support the present opposition (paving its way to a suceessful movement) against the King, and next, start discussions on different questions re: future Nepal. Since many of us still have hesitation in supporting the present opposition, so I think its right time pondering on that question as well - apart from taking initiatives or devising mechanisms to support the opposition. Besides, we should ourselves start *SAMVAD*(dialogue) on a wide range of issues pertaining to nepal.

The major issue could be whether we need a King or not for future Nepal.

Since I see the possibility of Nepal being a republican state in future, I would like to invite you all in the discussion on how Nepal should stand and move forward without a King. I would like to discuss every possibility including what might happen at "G and co"'s exit and preventing possible anarchy that may subsequently follow.

For skeptics, I would like to assure you guys that should nepal be without G and co (by the means of movement) there will be no Girija and MKN type to lead us. If such a movement happens (i'm dying to see it) the movement will naturally leave aside such leaders as well (because they will not be able to get along with the idea of republicanism and don't know what to do) and establish a new leadership of younger generation. But there is a possibility of nepal going taliban way (not the religious fanatics, i mean) therefore we should start having samvad and discussing every possible outcomes. And, of course, the necessary steps to make a safe and democratic transition.

These are the beginning ideas and we could formulate a concrete thought, if you think on the same line and see a need for a *SAMVAD*(dialogue), I am ready to join in.

Thanks a lot.

***Jaya Prajatantrik Ganatantrik Nepal!***  
**(Long Live Demorcratic Republican Nepal)**



## Immigration Questions and Answers

- By **Ramesh K. Shrestha, Attorney-At-Law**

(Ramesh K. Shrestha is a practicing attorney in New York City. His office is located at 377 Broadway, Suite 801, New York, NY 10013. Tel: (212) 625-3394, Fax: (212) 431-4460, Email: [Rshresthalaw@aol.com](mailto:Rshresthalaw@aol.com). His practice concentrates on Immigrant and Nonimmigrant Visas, Business Immigration, Extraordinary Ability, National Interest Waivers, Labor Certification/Permanent Residency, Detention/Bond, Removal/Deportation Defense before Immigration Courts/Executive Office for Immigration Review, Department of Justice.)

He will answer TND reader's immigration related questions. Questions can be asked by visiting our [submit page](#) or simply by emailing at [contact@thenepaldigest.org](mailto:contact@thenepaldigest.org). TND sincerely thanks and appreciates Mr. Shrestha's contribution. - Editor)

**There are 2 questions in this issue.**

### **Question #1**

Rabi Thapa from Washington DC, USA asked

I am in the United States since January 2003. I came here as a student and due to some personal problems, I had to quit school. I quit school on this Spring Semester. I have a question. If I wish to join the University again, can I do that or not? What is the case about being out-of-status.

Another Question is if I get the DV Lottery, how can I use it. Is there any possibilities to be eligible to use the DV-lottery from the United States in my case?

Dear Thapa ji:

It appears that you have failed to continue your school as an F-1 student. As a result, you are no longer on the F-1 status. An F-1 is required to take full-time course for at least two (Spring and Fall) semesters in order to maintain the F-1 status. Once your are out of status, it cannot be reinstated unless the discontinuance was caused by exceptional circumstances such as your illness. However, you must be able to show that you are planning and making efforts to attend the following semesters. If the USCIS is satisfied, it will reinstate your F-1 status.

If you are out of status, you are ineligible for adjustment of status under DV program.

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## **Question #2**

Baburam Parajuli from Jhapa, Nepal asked:

Dear ramesh ji,

Namashkar,my wife has just recieved her dv4 visa and we are planning to come to the US soon. I want know when will we recieve the green card and the permanent resident status after coming to the US. Even after getting the status does it imply that we have to remain in the us for some required time to be eligible. Hope you can enlighten me on these questions, and we would be very grateful.

Thanking you.

Baburam Parajuli

Dear Parajuli Ji:

Once you arrive in the United States at a port of entry, you will get a green card stamp on your passport. In other words, you will be admitted into the United States as a permanent resident. You will receive your Green Card by mail later after few months. There is no such requirement that once you are admitted as an immigrant, still you need to stay in the United States for some time to become a lawful permanent resident.

Regards,

**Ramesh K. Shrestha, Attorney-At-Law**

(Disclaimer Notice: Legal answer provided must not be construed as a legal advice rather it is an answer general in nature. One must seek legal advice from an immigration attorney for his or her particular legal matter.)

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## **Politics: "Cambodia 1974, Nepal 2004"**

### **Cambodia 1974, Nepal 2004 How to Avoid Nepal's Descent Towards a Failed State ?**

**- By Kul C. Gautam**

Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF\*

I just returned from a 3 weeks visit to Nepal. Although I went there on home leave, I could not go to my home village as the security situation has deteriorated everywhere outside Kathmandu valley and

a few major towns. I therefore took advantage of my prolonged involuntary stay in Kathmandu to informally meet with senior government officials, political leaders, diplomats and civil society leaders to assess the situation and to explore what, if anything, could be done to bring peace and reconciliation.

It is my considered judgment that Nepal is rapidly descending towards a failed state syndrome. There are eerie similarities between Nepal in 2004 and Cambodia in 1974. Let us hope that what happened in Cambodia in 1975 will not happen in Nepal. But if the international community does not act more proactively now, there is likely to be not only a failed state but a humanitarian disaster.

### **Shadows of Cambodia**

In many striking ways, Nepal in 2004 reminded me of Cambodia in 1974. As in Cambodia in 1974, the Government of Nepal controls the capital city and major provincial towns, while much of the rest of the country is either a lawless no-man's land or under the control or influence of the Maoist rebels, a group very reminiscent of the Khmers Rouges both in terms of their ideological convictions and the brutality of the methods they use.

Like Phnom Penh in 1974, Kathmandu in 2004 has become the refuge for many displaced people from the countryside – with those who cannot afford to go to Kathmandu congregating at district headquarters or migrating to neighbouring India.

The elite of Kathmandu valley live in a bubble of safety, protected by high fences and security guards. As the Lon Nol Government of Phnom Penh in 1974, high officials of His Majesty's Government of Nepal proclaim confidently that they are weakening the Maoists, even as the Maoists are able to lay siege in and blockade 16 districts simultaneously; mount surprise attacks on military garrisons in district headquarters; disrupt transport and communication throughout the country at anytime; and create a sense of insecurity and panic among the general populace.

In an eerie similarity with Cambodia of 1974, there are reports of the Royal Nepalese Army becoming ill-disciplined and committing human rights abuses with impunity. There are reports of the military becoming a power unto itself, out of control of civilian authority.

### **Background of the Conflict in Nepal**

The Maoist insurgency is a home-grown, radical leftist movement that seeks to abolish the monarchy and establish a socialist republic. Initially the Maoists championed certain populist causes and enjoyed some popularity among the poor and the oppressed. However, the movement has now degenerated and thrives on violence, intimidation and extortion as the principal basis for its power and influence.

Though driven by an outdated ideology that has failed elsewhere in the world, the Maoists profess to champion certain progressive social and political agenda, including letting the people decide the fate of the monarchy through an elected sovereign Constituent Assembly. But the fact that they are armed and are unwilling to renounce violence, casts doubts on their sincerity to seek a peaceful, democratic solution.

In 8 years of insurgency, over 10,000 people have been killed, including hundreds of children. Large numbers of schools, health posts, bridges, hydro-electric plants, village development offices and telecommunications towers have been destroyed. Banks are regularly looted. Schools are frequently closed. Students are abducted and coerced into joining the Maoists movement. There are reports of many people simply "disappearing" and of extra-judicial killings and human rights violations by both the Maoists and the government troops.

To complicate matters further, there is an unhealthy jockeying for power between the King and parliamentary political parties.

King Gyanendra ascended the throne under inauspicious circumstances, following the massacre of most members of the royal family. He dismissed an elected government and assumed de facto executive powers. While the King professes to believe in constitutional monarchy and multi-party democracy, his actions point towards an activist, authoritarian monarchy. The King's detractors accuse him of constantly maneuvering to outsmart the parliamentary political parties and to rule through loyal political cronies, with the support of the military.

All of Nepal's friends in the diplomatic community say that they have been pressing the King and the parliamentary parties to reconcile, but to no avail, largely on account of the King's intransigence,

although the leaders of the political parties are also blamed for lacking clear vision, being unprincipled and corrupt.

Nepal's short-lived multi-party democracy in the 1990s was functioning relatively well at the local level and was beginning to produce good results. But at the national level, the parliamentary political parties had acquired notoriety for mismanagement, corruption and constant bickering for power and perks. Many of their leaders were seen as lacking vision, maturity and accountability. Yet, as elected representatives of the people, they have a rightful claim to form and run a democratically legitimate government. They are currently deeply distrustful of both the King and the Maoists, whom they regard as undemocratic forces. They have continuously rebuffed the King's gestures to join his hand-picked government as unconstitutional and insincere.

The Maoists are taking advantage of the lack of unity between the King and the political parties.

### **Failed Efforts at Negotiations and Mediation**

Compared to many other complex political crises in the world, the conflict in Nepal ought to be more manageable. Fortunately, Nepal's conflict has no racial, ethnic or religious connotations; no temptation of drugs, oil or mineral riches; and there are no colonial, superpower or other external forces trying to fuel or profit from the conflict. With enlightened leadership, it should not be so difficult to find a common ground among Nepal's political protagonists.

Yet two rounds of cease-fires and peace talks between the government and the Maoists have collapsed. And it seems doubtful that there is enough mutual trust or a unifying vision among the Nepali parties to reconcile their differences to end the conflict, without some helpful external mediation.

There have been many offers of international mediation and support, including by the United Nations, the European Union, and some non-governmental organizations. Recently, the Maoists have sent messages to the UN through a variety of channels, saying that they are prepared to enter into negotiations under UN auspices. Nepal's parliamentary political parties and civil society too seem to be in favour of UN-brokered peace talks. However, the government has systematically rejected any outside mediation on the ground that this is an internal conflict and the Nepalis can and ought to deal with it without outside "interference".

Nepal's neighbour India is known to be opposed to any third party mediation. And the US government, viewing the Maoist insurgency from the optic of terrorism, has generally taken a hard-line position. But everybody agrees with the recent statement of the UN Secretary-General that there is no military solution to the conflict.

In explaining why Nepal cannot accept third party mediation, including that of the UN, some Nepali political leaders have argued that as Nepal is surrounded by two giant neighbours, third party involvement would somehow be offensive or unacceptable to them. Contrary to this view, it is my judgement that precisely because Nepal is surrounded by two giant neighbours, it needs a neutral, impartial organization without any vested interest, like the United Nations, to facilitate the peace process. Since eventually the peace process will entail disarmament of combatants and monitoring of elections, the UN would be uniquely qualified and acceptable to all parties.

It is also my assessment that while India would not welcome any third party mediation, including that of the UN, if Nepal really wanted it, India would grudgingly accept UN's help. India too is exasperated by continuation of conflict in Nepal and its negative impact on India.

### **The King's Shenanigans**

The King has recently called for general elections by April 2005 to restore a constitutional government. But outside the immediate entourage of the King, nobody believes that free, fair and credible elections can be held while the insurgency continues. Most of the parliamentary political parties are likely to boycott the proposed elections, as they see it as a ploy by the government to stage fraudulent elections.

Recently the King has started visiting various parts of the country to receive "felicitation" by local people. These royal visits, under heavy security umbrella, seem intended to show that the King is popular and can travel to all parts of the country, even in the Maoist strongholds. These visits are considered very damaging and counter-productive by Kathmandu-based diplomats and other political observers. Besides being a big drain on the national budget, the royal visits also require redeployment

of security forces to provide protection to the King, thereby leaving other parts of the country vulnerable to Maoist build-up.

There are reports that following the King's visits, the people seen to be "felicitating" him, or just expressing their anguish to the monarch, become subject to reprisals by the Maoists.

### **People Caught Between Maoist and Military Atrocities**

Life has become unbearable for ordinary villagers. Roving bands of Maoists visit villages demanding food, extorting money, forcibly recruiting people – increasingly including children. In recent months, the Maoists apparently demand that people declare whose side they are on – the Maoist or royalist – with no option of neutrality allowed. Those that do not declare to be on the side of the Maoists are asked to leave the village, or else life could be made miserable for them

Since over 3 years ago there is no police presence in the country side, as all police were withdrawn to district headquarters for their own protection. The police and the Royal Nepal Army are now under "unified command" and are basically confined to the capital city and district headquarters. From there occasionally they go out on patrols to villages to flush out the Maoists.

An ominous pattern of military behaviour seems to have developed as part of these patrols putting people in an impossible situation. It is reported that if a 100 soldiers go out on a patrol to a village, 90 or so would go armed and in military uniform, whereas the rest would go ahead of the armed troops wearing ragtag civilian clothes, including Maoist bandanas, and pretending to be Maoists. These fake Maoists would then greet the villagers they encounter with "red salute", putting them in a difficult situation of either having to return "the red salute" greeting and be identified as Maoist sympathizers or not to return the salute and be identified as "pro-royalist", as the army too does not want to see anybody as neutral.

Many villagers are thus framed as "Maoists" or their sympathizers (since most people in villages have had some kind of contact with the Maoists, it is not difficult to set them up as "sympathizers"). When the armed patrol arrives, the fake Maoists would identify villagers they encounter as "Maoists". If the villagers protest that they are not Maoists, they would be asked to run away, and as they start running they are shot and wounded or killed. Thus ordinary people find themselves in an impossible situation with whatever they do making them vulnerable for reprisals by either the Maoists or by the royal army.

### **Outline of an Action Plan**

In a paper I presented to a development forum in Nepal on 19 March 2004, in my personal capacity, I suggested the following actions that the key political protagonists – the King, the Maoists and the political parties ought to undertake.

1. Reconciliation between the King and the political parties, with the former making some bold, courageous and genuine efforts to entrust the formation of a multi-party government to the major parliamentary parties.
2. The parliamentary political parties to adopt a code of conduct for their future behaviour that gives people some assurance that they would rectify some of their past mistakes, and will govern with greater integrity and accountability in the future.
3. The Maoists to renounce their acts of violence and intimidation as a prelude to resumption of peace talks.
4. The signing and implementation in a monitorable manner of specific commitments on protection of people's human rights by government security forces and the Maoist militia.
5. Initiation of peace talks, perhaps under the auspices of the United Nations.

### **Petition of Nepali Diaspora**

These action points have been warmly welcomed by many leaders of civil society and a wide cross-section of parliamentary parties in Nepal. In fact, inspired by these ideas, a group of Nepali Diaspora in North America has just launched a worldwide signature campaign ([www.petitiononline.com/nepdiasp/petition.html](http://www.petitiononline.com/nepdiasp/petition.html)) with an urgent appeal for acceptance of the UN Secretary-General's offer of good offices for peace talks, reconstruction and humanitarian assistance.

However, the level of intransigence, especially of the King/government and the Maoist insurgents is very high. The King seems to feel assured of international support as the insurgency is portrayed as

part of the global war against terrorism. And the Maoists seem buoyed by their success in making the country ungovernable and generating growing support for their anti-monarchy movement among mainstream political parties. Thus both sides lack sufficient incentive to seek a negotiated settlement at this time.

**UN's Vital Role**

In the absence of proactive efforts by the international community, especially the UN, I fear that Nepal is destined to become a failed state like Somalia or Liberia, or Cambodia of an earlier era. The cost to the international community of rescuing Nepal from its ever deepening crisis is only likely to grow. It is my considered judgment and advice that Nepal should be a prime candidate for a more proactive, preventive conflict resolution approach by the UN without waiting for further deterioration.

The UN is one of the few institutions that is highly respected in Nepal. Outside the top government circles, there is widespread public support for and expectation of UN assisted mediation for peace, reconstruction and humanitarian assistance. If the situation is allowed to deteriorate further, I fear that the international community would one day have to invoke the principles of "the responsibility to protect" civilian population from untold suffering, and rescue the country from violent anarchy.

**"Days of Tranquility"**

To alleviate the immediate suffering of the population, I have recommended that the UN country team consider calling "days of tranquility" to provide urgent humanitarian supplies and services as UNICEF and the UN have done before in other conflict situations. I have mentioned this proposal to some key Maoist leaders, and to the government. They have both agreed to it in principle, although both sides claim that the onus lies on the other to bring about any tranquility. In my soundings, I found the Kathmandu-based diplomatic community and Nepali civil society very favourable to such an initiative. If properly handled, it could even serve as a confidence building measure to help de-escalate the conflict and generate momentum towards negotiations.

To make such "days of tranquility" really successful, both the government and the Maoists would have to explicitly agree to abide by the "Basic Operating Guidelines" that the UN agencies in Kathmandu have put out collectively. These guidelines call for the UN agencies to have free and unhindered access to civilian population in need, without any threat of violence, intimidation, extortion, etc. Unfortunately, it is far from certain that the parties to the conflict will strictly conform to the UN operating guidelines. But we must try and persuade them.

Even as we pursue such humanitarian assistance for civilian population in need, especially for women, children and vulnerable groups, there is, in my judgment, a need for the international community to encourage all parties to the conflict, and Nepal's friends and neighbours to accept the UN Secretary-General's offer of good offices for resumption of peace talks.

At present the government seems least ready to accept any mediated negotiations, although it too regards the UN Secretary-General's offer of assistance as positive, and eventually as necessary. But I fear that the government's delaying tactics will only lead to prolongation of the conflict, ensuing humanitarian catastrophe, and eventually a greater burden for the United Nations and international community to rescue the country from a more chaotic situation.

While given their actions and violent methods, one cannot fully trust the Maoists' credibility as seeking and accepting a peaceful, democratic solution, it is preferable to engage them in talks than in warfare. In Nepal's present desperate situation, the ordinary people's yearning for peace must trump over politicians' calculus for power-sharing.

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Mr. Gautam is Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF. The views expressed in this paper are those of the author in his personal capacity, and not necessarily those of the United Nations or UNICEF.

This article was initially published on Mr. Gautam's website <http://kulgautam.org/>



## Politics: Long Live Pluralism

- By *Kanak Mani Dixit*

It is true that the agitation said to be against the 'regression' has not yet turned into a mass movement. It is necessary to identify the factors that have created such a situation. Till today, streets haven't warmed up; and other than committed cadres of different political parties and the professional groups naturally aligned to them, neither the urban dwellers of Kathmandu and Patan nor the educated and the neo-rich sections of population have come out on the streets on their own.

On the one hand, neglect of democracy for a decade by the political parties seems to have caused apathy among the residents of the valley. The other principle reason is the general feeling that the parties are agitating mainly to get into the seat of power. Parties are not being able to convince a sceptical populace that it's not so; that the basic objective of the agitation is to bring the derailed democratic and constitutional process back on track.

It's generally when the educated and the middle and the upper middle classes step out that the masses also pour out on the streets. Today, these categories have come to the realisation that the king and the army together are not able to achieve 'quick and easy' elimination of the Maoists rebellion. However, their reaction is limited to the dismissive statement that 'the palace, the parties, and the Maoists are all incompetent'. Even though such a statement sounds very analytical and liberal, it doesn't offer a way out of the mess that the society is trapped in today.

If all the three forces are bad, who is to lead the people and the society? Among those who offer such views are some members of the civil society, especially those engaged in the professions, who think that 'no one is competent; we could have run the 'system'.' But anyone who has read history knows that the 'technocratic fix' or mechanical solutions bereft of politics wastes the time and resources of nation-building and doesn't take the society anywhere.

Incidentally, professionals claiming to have spent so many years in the development field must be made to answer the following question: "As advocates of 'good governance' and 'development', do you consider that democracy is a necessary condition for good governance and development?" And if it's indeed a requirement, should you not be raising your voice in favour of democracy even without aligning yourself with any party? Or do you believe that the democracy is not in danger? Does the responsibility of fighting for democracy lie solely with those engaged in politics? To put it bluntly, is there a lurking desire for 'benevolent despot' hidden in a corner of your heart?

### **Search for Vision**

Sociological studies show that for a country with social structure such as Nepal's, it is multiparty democracy-howsoever neglected may it be at present-and not guided democracy, that is needed to remove historic aberrations and inequalities, and to extend economic and social development to all corners and every section of society. But everywhere we hear the litany, "We need visionary leadership". And the meaningless search for a Nepali Lee Kuan Yeu or Mahathir Mohammed continues. If some care is not taken, before long these people will extend the search to Parvez Musharraf or the Late King Mahendra.

A leader with 'vision' is not something that one selects through executive search; such leaders come to the fore due to the force of circumstances. Again, visionary leaders appear at the last moments of darkness, as at the end of Rana regime in Nepal or at the time of India's independence from the British rule. In the meantime, there is no alternative to keeping whatever leader is available tied to the right track. Besides, why this pinning for visionary leadership when there are enough politicians committed to democracy (And there are more than enough such individuals within the political parties) in the country?

What is required therefore is not to seek solutions where there are none, and go back to try and understand the inherent objectives of the movement. The parties and their leaders do not seem to have succeeded in helping generate such an understanding, and perhaps they themselves are not too clear about it. Even so, the road taken by the parties is the correct course, for the other two forces on the ground are not even democratic; nobody doubts that reality.

There are those who hope that the present movement will lose steam and eventually peter out. That may even turn out to be true in the short term. But such people fail to take into account the fact that unlike the other two forces, political parties are resilient for the very reason that they represent the people and draw their energy from the masses. On the other hand, the Royal Palace depends upon the fickle upper classes while Maoists use the power of the gun to remain relevant, which is why they

do not have the resilience of the parties. Howsoever we may dislike the parties, power is sure to revert back to them sooner or later.

True, nobody likes to speak for the parties, mainly due to the despicable behaviour of some leaders, their corrupt ways, and their proven incompetence in running the economy and the affairs of the state. Yet, the parties are being made to suffer from bigger sins than they have committed, as is evident from the barrage of propaganda against the people's representatives that has been heard over the last three or four years from the upper-most echelons of the foreign embassies, donors, and the valley's comfortable classes.

Cowed as they are, the party leadership has not been able to respond and counter the allegations in a convincing way. This inability to respond also explains why the parties have not been able to enunciate the political principles behind their movement to the people. Rather, they are busy burning tyres (easier to ignite than firewood) and hurling stones and brickbats, hiding behind the line-up of protesting students. Since parties are neither ideologically clear nor articulate, they have not been able to project the all-important (and correct) message, which is that the protest against 'regression', in the larger context, is a 'struggle in favour of pluralism'.

It is a fact that only through political pluralism will it be possible to serve the interests of the country and its people, provide representation of diverse communities, usher social change and economic development. Neither an imposition from the royal palace, nor ignition from bottom by the Maoists will deliver progress to the people. Communities whose goals and aspirations are sharpened by competitive politics in a democratic set up are able to build not just token but genuine representation, which leads towards accommodative society where the worth of all individuals is respected. No matter how much we curse political parties, they are the only ones to push the society forward through this experiment with pluralism.

And all that civil society can do is support that process.

For these reasons, the movement of political parties is correct, because out of all the three forces, this is the only force committed to pluralism. Neither the Royal Palace nor the rebels in the jungle have any inclination towards pluralism.

### **'Ground Zero'**

King Gyanendra's attempts to become an active political leader have begun to tarnish the very image of Nepali monarchy. Meanwhile, the extreme slogans being raised at the 'ground zero'-the junction of Bag Bazaar and Ratna Park-have shown clearly that one does not need to enter the jungle in the name of an armed rebellion in order to raise the most sensitive of issues.

In the end, it is only the representative political force that practices pluralism - the parties - that can take this society forward, because it is a force that recognises human values and rights. To advocate for the parties in such a manner does not imply that one has to kiss Girija Prasad Koirala on the cheek or embrace Madhav Kumar Nepal. From the procedural point of view, it needs to be said publicly that parties are the only practitioners of pluralism, and they are the only ones to take this country forward; this is where the people spearheading the movement have lagged behind so far. Constant blames from all sides seem to have weakened the resolve of party leaders to advocate such a stand in a consistent way.

Everybody knows that if the palace shows the slightest flexibility in the days to come, leg-pulling will immediately begin within and between the protesting parties. But this proclivity has to be understood in its proper context.

Unhealthy competition among political parties is not a phenomenon unique to Nepal, and nowhere in the world do the parties exhibit noble intentions on their own. It is the responsibility of the members of civil society, the intelligentsia, professionals and aware citizenry from all over the country to keep the political parties on the straight and narrow path. During the last decade, we had tended to leave it up to the parties to run the country, believing that our job was done after they were elected to office. In future, however, our guard has to be up more than it has been in the past.

What the parties will do, however, are the challenges of the future. The challenge of the present is to make a choice regarding the three competing forces on the national scene today-the Royal Palace, the Maoists, and the political parties. I choose to opt for political parties. Not for having fallen in love with them, but because of my belief in pluralism.

(This article is translated from Nepali article published on Kantipur daily, Tuesday, April 20, 2004, Op-ed Page. -Ed.)



## Politics: "Article 127 for Solution of Present Political Crisis"

- By Dr. Pramod Aryal

### **Kul Chandra Gautam's analysis and use of Article 127 for solution of present political crisis in Nepal**

Nepal, suffering from Maoists insurgency since 1996, is in political standoff.

Mr. Kul Chandra Gautam has analyzed it to be similar to the situation in Cambodia in 1974. He has outlined that there should be reconciliation between the King and the political parties, with the former making some bold, courageous and genuine efforts to entrust the formation of a multi-party government to the major parliamentary parties. However, he did not explain how this could be achieved. In my opinion, any understanding that has to be made between political parties and

King should be within the present constitution to make it evolutionary process. I suggest effect use of article 127 by forming the government under article 128, and giving the power to this government as described in article 129 would effectively bring the constitutional process in track and make this constitution more inclusive and evolutionary.

#### **Mistrust between King and political parties:**

Political parties from the dissolved parliament term King's use of article 127 to dismiss the elected government, contrary to PM Deuba's recommendation for extension of election date as the recommended by all party meeting by invoking article 127, is unconstitutional. King, on the other hand, asks political parties to join the government he has appointed to resolve the problems from insurgency and his willingness to be constructive monarch has created mistrust between the political parties and King. Nepal is now seeing street protest on daily basis that opposes the active role of monarchy, hence has made things more complicated to bring reconciliation between political parties and King to resolve all pertaining issue by negotiation, as almost all of Nepali would prefer. In this scenario, a proper amicable understanding should be sought under article 127, which will have following salient features.

- 1) King as the custodian of the constitution and Sovereignty of people preserved.
- 2) Prerogative of Prime Minister to dissolve parliament should be upheld.
- 3) In National crisis party boundaries should be erased and the system should work under single umbrella.
- 4) The constitution should be inclusive and evolutionary.
- 5) Use of arm force will be functioning under the civilian government but not under control of single party.
- 6) Present solution should act as a preceding for future if such situation will arise.

#### **1) King as the custodian of the constitution and Sovereignty of people preserved.**

Constitution of Nepal, 1991, Article 127, Power to Remove Difficulties, is defined as: "If any difficulty arises in connection with the implementation of this Constitution, His Majesty may issue necessary Orders to remove such difficulty and such Orders shall be laid before Parliament."

As described in Article 27 (3) "His Majesty is to preserve and protect this Constitution by keeping in view the best interests and welfare of the people of Nepal", in constitutional crisis first half of the article describes the role of King as the custodian of the constitution. Second half of this article preserves the sovereignty of people. As described in article 3, "The Sovereignty of Nepal is vested in the Nepalese people and shall be exercised in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution," which is exercised through the parliament.

Thus, His Majesty as a custodian to the constitution can issue necessary orders to defuse the problems arising in the implementation of the constitution. However, since Nepalese are the sovereign, those orders should be laid before the parliament, which is representation of sovereignty of people, to ratify and honor the sovereignty of the people. Thus any reconciliation between the political parties should be under the article 127.

#### **2) Prerogative of Prime Minister to dissolve parliament should be upheld.**

Since the article 53 (4) clearly stipulates, "His Majesty may dissolve the House of Representatives on the recommendation of the Prime Minister. His Majesty shall, when so dissolving the House of Representatives, specify a date, to be within six months, for new elections to the House of Representatives." If Nepal is to follow West Minister style parliamentary democracy, then the

prerogative of Prime Minister to dissolve parliament should be unchallenged because a sitting PM has right to go for fresh mandate if s/he thinks so. This will preserve the sovereignty of people because they are the final judges who can accept or reject the policy brought by the government.

At present whether PM Deuba's recommendation of dissolution of parliament was political blunder or not should not be the issue, because Deuba himself has admitted that it was his blunder. But saying so, we should not challenge this constitutional prerogative of prime minister, hence demand of reinstatement of parliament should be dropped at this hour to preserve this prerogative. Rather we should go for all party government formed as in under article 128, using the article 127.

### **3) In National crisis party boundaries should be erased and the system should work under single umbrella.**

Since Constitution of Nepal, 1991, is silent on what happens if election could not be held within the constitutionally stipulated time. What should be done if five years as explained in article 45 (3), or one year as explained in 45 (4) or six months as explained in 45 (5) or six months after the dissolution of parliament as explained in article 53 (4) exceeds in future also. There should be some amicable solution to give proper outlet to such constitutional shortcomings. Invoking of the article 127 to form a government under article 128, following option could be better, that will, in the time of national crisis, erase the party boundaries and bring the nation under single umbrella of national government.

Any government, either formed under articles 35 (1) or 35 (2), will cease on the first day after the completion of constitutionally stipulated time for holding election of parliament as described in above mentioned articles. New national care taker government will be formed, within the spirit of chapter 21, Transitional provisions, under the article 128 and will have powers defined in article 129 and there after. The composition of the council of ministers will be as follows:

Prime Minister from the largest party in dissolved parliament.

Deputy Prime Minister/Defense Minister from the second largest party in the dissolved parliament.

Foreign Minister from the third largest party in the dissolved parliament.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister from the fourth largest party in the dissolved parliament.

Home Minister from the largest party in the dissolved parliament.

Finance Minister from the second largest party in the dissolved parliament.

At least one member from each of national parties designated by election commission in the dissolved parliament.

Proportionate representation, of the political parties based on the votes garnered in previous election, in the council of ministers.

Two or three independent (not affiliated to any political parties) to be appointed by His Majesty under the recommendation of PM designated.

[Question might arise how it would be valid to decide on the basis of the representation in dissolved parliament when public opinion might have been changed from the election. But for this at least razor thin demarcation should be sought where present and past public opinion can merge, and come close to the spirit of the constitution. Since election commission accepts a political party's national status till next election on the basis of votes garnered in the election, we can take similar spirit in evaluating such situation.]

Thus in the national crisis entire nation could be brought under single umbrella.

### **4) The constitution should be inclusive and evolutionary.**

The history of constitution in Nepal is relatively short (since 1948), and during this short period there have been 5 constitutions. The first constitution, the Government of Nepal Act, was promulgated by Prime Minister Padma Shamsheer Rana in 1949, but was suspended by Mohan Shamsheer. After the fall of Rana regime in 1951 King Tribhuvan had enacted interim constitution.

Formally, Nepal had a new constitution in 1959. But King Mahendra suspends this constitution in 1960 and promulgates another constitution in 1962, commonly known as Panchayat. Nearly after thirty years, in 1990, new constitution was promulgated. The major drawbacks in these constitution have been non-inclusive in nature thus discarded by one or other group, and non-evolutionary nature where the differences could be accommodated and give the continuity to the constitution. Even Lack of proper inclusiveness and evolutionary character in these constitutions has hindered the maturity of the constitution and foresee situations like that is prevailing in present Nepal. Thus, at present, seeking solution to the present political crisis should be sought within/from the constitution of 1990 to make it evolutionary.

If a national government is formed as mentioned above then the constitution will be inclusive. Even, if the Maoists, after the negotiated settlement have to be included in the government, then can be include because the article 128 (3) clearly explains about this. And if need comes to make radical amendment, even in the situation where parliament is non existing, the government with its power under article 129 can recommend for such amendments, thus will support in evolutionary maturity of the constitution.

Question might be raised whether this would be constitutional or not. In order to avoid arbitrary nature, whole thing should be sent to Supreme Court for ratification. Asking whether the present form of government is within the spirit of constitution and proper use of chapter 21 in order to retain the constitutional process in the time where some discrepancies in the implementation of the constitution has arose. And at the same time asking for any remedies that has to be done to clarify the discrepancies. This will definitely provide proper division of power, and will be as much accommodative as it can be.

**5) Use of arm force will be functioning under the civilian government but not under controll of single party.**

One of the contentious issues in Nepal is the mobilization of army. In 1951, after the fall of Rana regime, King Tribhuvan had retained the position of supreme commander of arm force of Nepal, which has been retained by all subsequent monarchs. As the head of the state, King being the head of the arm force should not be an issue, however, its mobilization under civilian authority should be adhered.

Article 118 clearly explains the mobilization of army under national Security Council, comprising of Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Commander in Chief of army. In the proposed structure of government, having Prime Minister from the largest party in the dissolved parliament, and Defense Minister from the largest opposition party, the arm force will be under the control of civilian rule, albeit not under single political party's command in the time of crisis. This should help in building professionalism within the arm forces, because commander in chief is also the member to the Security Council and he can advocate for professionalism than siding for single party's interest.

**6) Present solution should act as preceding for future if such situation will arise.**

As mentioned above, the constitution should be evolutionary, the decision that will be made now should act as the preceding for future crisis, if there arises one. To avoid the discrepancies, the government should make appropriate laws using article 129, and major decisions should be made by the House of Representatives to be elected. Rest of the agenda's in Mr. Kul Chandra Gautam's article are of political nature that have to be dealt by the government to be formed as mentioned above.

This will have a long-term impact in constitutional evolution and multiparty democracy. Maoists must also learn a lesson from present crisis that nothing is absolute and indispensable, and evolution of constitution should be sought in political manner so that the changes desired could be brought from same constitution than drafting a new constitution.

Even if there is need of constituent assembly, first present constitution should be amended to incorporate such option, and then the election of constituent assembly should be held. Or understanding could be reached among the political forces how to make present constitution to evolve and have the constituent assembly also draft a new constitution. An amicable option could be, election to the house of representative under this constitution, but that will function as constituent assembly, also. First, after the election, the house of representative would amend the constitution and incorporate of provision of constituent assembly, and will ratify that this house will be converted into constituent assembly which will draft a new constitution.

Since the election is expensive affair, after the drafting amendment and promulgation of new constitution, the assembly will again transform into house of representative, so that multiple elections could be avoided. This will give continuity of the present constitution and accommodate 15 years of experience for its evolution.

(Author is a Research Fellow at Vanderbilt University. - Ed.)



## Politics: "Non Resident Nepalis and Conflict Resolution"

- By Kamala Sarup

Speaking to this scribe at New Jersey Planner and Project Manager at with the City of Phoenix, and an Adjunct Faculty in Planning at Arizona State University in Phoenix, Arizona Ambika P. Adhikari stressed that "Naturally, the Non Resident Nepalis (NRN) naturally have only a limited role and influence in the events of Nepal. The NRN can help in many sectors, such as investment, technology transfer, lobbying for Nepal, sending money to Nepal and providing skilled services to the motherland. However, the central programs in economic and social development will be driven internally in any country, and Nepal is not an exception. Enlightened and forward looking government and community leaders in Nepal will tap NRN's to help in nation building. This is exactly what was done in Nehruvian India, present day China and in several other countries such as, Korea, Israel, Chile and the Philippines.

The NRN is a new phenomenon for global Nepali community. Some formalization of NRN status was achieved in 2003, when the global Nepali Diaspora realized its strength and came together. The Diaspora was finally noticed in Nepal also. Now the NRN is organizing itself, and initiating certain program for Nepal. For example, the Nepali Diaspora just recently is mobilizing itself to promote a peace process in Nepal. Many prominent Nepalis living outside Nepal, such as Mr. Kul C. Gautam, Assistant Secretary general of the UN, Dr. Bindu Nath Lohani, Secretary of the Asian development Bank, Mr. Upendra Mahato, a business tycoon in Russia and several high level professional in North America and Europe have enhanced the profile of the NRN's and have inspired the NRN's to rally for a common cause. The Nepali Diaspora is not near what the Indian, Chinese or Israeli Diasporas have achieved, but the NRN phenomenon has begun and its impact will grow". From 1997 to 2000, Ambika was the Country Representative of IUCN- the World Conservation Union in Kathmandu Nepal. For several years he was the Project Director at DPRA in Toronto and Washington D. C. developing projects in Nepal, India, Mexico, Canada and the USA. Despite his busy schedule Ambika P. Adhikari, has been continuously writing articles in international journals.

We, the Non Resident Nepalese spread across the world have been keenly watching the situation as it has been unfolding in Nepal. We are very much shocked and outraged at the large-scale killing of civilians and the unabated attacks on the Armed Forces. We have been viewing with dismay and consternation, the conflicting, inconsistent, ineffective and largely reactive responses from Government against these challenges. This has resulted in the loss of lives of thousands of innocent civilians, rendered hundreds of thousands of people refugees in their own country and destruction of billions of Rupees worth of property and infrastructure.

Ambika P. Adhikari former Reader of Architecture and Planning, and also the Project Architect and Coordinator of Western Region Campus Project in Pokhara, at Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu Nepal further added " For the past eight years, Nepal is experiencing a sad state of conflict. The international community can facilitate the peace process in Nepal. They can also encourage the Government to initiate dialogue with the Maoists. For example, by limiting options for the Maoist, international community can also steer Maoists to the table for talks. However, the role of international community can not be central in the resolution of problems in Nepal. The three protagonists, Maoists, the King and the parliamentary parties have to come to a realization that they all loose in this stand-off, and the cycle of violence, which may propel Nepal to become a failed state. With the stalemate, the biggest losers are the Nepali people.

UN has offered its good offices for possible mediation, but the present government has declined any international role to resolve Nepal's conflict. I think, the government's view is shortsighted; they should not rule out external mediation, especially that of the UN. For example, the peace process in Sri Lanka, although experiencing a setback right now, was helped by Norwegian mediation, the perennial Israeli-Palestinian conflict has also been eased at various times through international mediation of the US, Norway, UN and other parties. No one becomes smaller by accepting respectable international involvement; sometimes it can actually help save face of warring factions. The UN is perhaps in the best position to offer mediation in Nepal, because even the Maoists on some occasions have said such will be acceptable to them. However, all the three Nepali protagonists have to themselves realize this". From 1997 to 2000, Ambika was the Country Representative of IUCN- the World Conservation Union in Kathmandu Nepal.

"In my opinion, the mistrust between the king and political parties has widened. Although the parties have also made many errors in the past, it appears that more recently, it is the king who is ignoring

the parties. However, the parties should also unequivocally apologize to the people for the errors they made. Their mistakes primarily were rampant corruption, lack of accountability, failure to spread development across the country and insatiable hunger for power.

I must say that the 12 years of democracy also brought many good developments, and transformed certain sectors of the economy. For example, educational programs proliferated, a massive expansion of infrastructure occurred, a robust, colorful and watchful media emerged – which still exists, power sector soared, economy got liberalized and science and technology flourished. Most importantly, democracy provided dignity to the Nepal citizenry, and gave sensitized them about their rights. Numerous honest and sincere leaders and workers reside within the democratic political parties, especially within the Nepali Congress as I know. However, they have been overshadowed by individuals who have become infamous". For several years he was the Project Director at DPRA in Toronto and Washington D. C. developing projects in Nepal, India, Mexico, Canada and the USA.

It is true, peace-building in Nepal is about the resumption of economic activity, the restoration of basic services, the reconstruction of schools, the revamping of public administration, and the resolution of differences through dialogue. Any agreement must guarantee that the human rights of all the citizens are respected. All must be able to return home or to receive compensation. We have a choice between two futures - a future of peace and integration, or a future of violence, poverty and isolation from the world. If this Maoists violence continues, it would jeopardize our efforts to promote stability and security in the country. But if we succeed, we can make it possible for the Nepalese people to live without fear and we can ensure that the Nepalese people do not have to fight. We may yet realize our vision of a Nepal at peace, united, prosperous and free.

According to Adhikari "At least two attempts were made for talks and negotiations. Once during the democratic government and other under the king. Both times, the talks failed. I think, both the government (at present the King's appointment) and the Maoist should realize that the present stalemate is not the best alternative. Both sides are losing, and the Nepali people are losing in a massive scale. More than 8,000 persons have died in the past eight years of violence; that is an average of 3 persons being killed each day. For Nepal, this is unprecedented and totally unacceptable. In fact, it was unthinkable throughout Nepal's history before the Maoists. Nepal had many problems in its socio- economic development but widespread violence was not one of them. " Ambika received his Doctorate in Urban and Regional Planning from Harvard University, and obtained post graduate degrees and fellowships at MIT (SPURS Fellow) and University of Hawaii (Master of Architecture).

How can destructive conflicts be transformed into constructive negotiations? If we have to recommend three basic solutions for Nepal, what could they be? His reply on this query was "We have seen ends to long internal conflicts in countries such as Peru, India (except Kashmir), and Mexico. We have also seen never-ending violence in the Middle East, Sri Lanka and Ireland. No cycle of violence has ever achieved the well being of the involved parties. At the end it is always a negotiated settlement that helps the warring parties and the society move forward. In Nepal, we can least afford the violent conflict. Continuing violence is foolish, destructive and does not serve any purpose. Initially the Maoists espoused some important social agendas related to equality, end of discrimination, balanced development and upliftment of the desperate poor. Those ideals have not been helped with the continuing violence. The violence has become an end in itself, and the Maoists are losing all their political capital and moral stance. My three recommendations will be:

There should be an immediate ceasefire between the Maoists and the Army. The King should empower the government and the army to enter into such ceasefire.

Maoists should put down the arms and come to negotiating table; the government should lift the terrorism label and pardon the Maoists if they surrender the arms and sincerely come to the table.

The government (and Military) and the Maoists should accept either internal mediation, or preferably a UN mediation to broker dialogues. Neither side would lose face, while each side will get something so that it becomes a win-win situation, whereby the Nepali people will gain the most.

He further said "Nepal has tremendous development potential. Nature has been generous to Nepal in providing spectacular natural beauty, endowing natural resources such as water, and bio-diversity and a temperate climate. Further, Nepal has enormous social capital supported by an advanced culture, family and social values and a tolerant outlook. Nepal also sits in favorable geographic situation flanked by two stable, rapidly developing and some of the oldest and most developed cultures in the world. Nepal has several endowments, Everest, water resources, and Lumbini, and tremendously

hard working people. It should not take more than 10 years for Nepal to take off in a direction of prosperity, where the primary needs of the vast majority of the population can be met in this time frame. Within twenty years from today, Nepal can become a middle income, mid-size economy globally. All that is needed is a stable political system, driven by honest and creative leaders, an enlightened political and economic management and patience by the people. That is the recipe for success, and a rapid development in Nepal is possible. The programs can include promoting tourism, developing water resources, harvesting of medicinal plants, vastly improving education, and advancing trade." Ambika P. Adhikari has published five books, and numerous refereed and other articles in international and national journals.

Political instability - including corruption, and the Maoist insurgency - has contributed significantly to the difficulty in implementing lasting human rights reform in Nepal. The Nepalese people want the war to come to an end and their urgent essential problems addressed immediately. Cease-fires, negotiations, meetings, though are most acceptable ways of conflict resolutions of any insurgency, and it is essential to restore peace and improve security and human rights situation. Media coverage is needed, getting powerful political leaders willing to speak about it, as well as getting various Human Rights organizations and NGOs to make it an issue.

Obviously a long drawn out process of reconciliation is necessary for a permanent peace. It is known that Maoist war has promoted insecurity. It is too early to comment on the success of the peace process but it must go forward and it has a long way to go. We should support such efforts which will help people of Nepal to deal with conflict in a non-violent manner. We must share our values that give freedom, dignity, democracy and tolerance the highest priority. The Maoists will have to honor their commitments. We want a total cease-fire. We cannot have partial peace, a limited cease-fire. We are serious about peace. I hope that the political family of Nepal will now work together to build a peaceful future. If they do so, the world will applaud their courage and the entire region will benefit. We should deal with our society in a nonviolent, non-aggressive way.

Ambika P. Adhikari further says " The Association of Nepalis in the Americas (ANA) is primarily a socio-cultural organization established in 1982 to bring together Nepalis and friends of Nepal living in the Americas. ANA has several activities including publication of quarterly newsletter, organization of national convention annually, maintaining several programs of interest for professionals, women and youth both in the US and in Nepal and helping newcomers settle in North America. Additionally, ANA was also instrumental in establishing the Nepal Educational and Cultural Center (NECC) in Washington DC, the first Nepali Temple in North America; supporting several charities and scholarship programs in Nepal; and promoting important peace and humanitarian causes affecting Nepalis and Nepali Diaspora worldwide, such as the NRN issue. ANA is also mindful of helping preserve Nepali culture for the second and coming generation of Nepali Americans

The 22nd Annual convention of the ANA is being held in Phoenix, Arizona from July 2 to 4th , 2004. We expect around 2,000 participants in the program which will consist of cultural, educational, social, youth and several other activities and programs. We invite all Nepalis and friends to participate in the convention. For more information on the convention, please visit [www.ana2004.org](http://www.ana2004.org)

Although the ANA is a socio-cultural organization, in the times of crisis in Nepal, ANA could also throw its weight in favor of peace, democracy and human rights. Because members of ANA hold different points of view and may subscribe to different political ideologies, it is not prudent for ANA to take partisan sides, or be active in political events. The non-profit status of ANA as an organization also makes political activities inappropriate for the ANA. However, ANA members can quickly rally behind compelling and uncontroversial causes".

Ambika P. Adhikari feels satisfied to do any good work that produces result for society, and humanity. He says "In a vast and competitive environment such as that of the USA, it is not always easy to derive fulfillment from what you do, as the system is often impersonal. However, generally, in Nepal, even small improvements in work style, management, polices and implementation of programs can produce visible results, which provides more satisfaction and fulfillment. Although, emotionally, I would like to continue to work in Nepal, the reality is that in today's world, we can think globally and accept that fact that we have become more mobile and adaptable than ever before. At the end, though, I would like to do my small part in helping Nepal in whatever way I can, preferably from Nepal".From 1998 to 2000, he was a member of Water and Energy Commission – the highest policy making body in Nepal in this sector, Ambika P. Adhikari observed.

The Nepalese people abroad remain deeply concerned about how the Nepalese politics is becoming increasingly polarized and unstable governments are destroying the country. Because of poverty, and

an ongoing leadership crisis, things had gone from bad to worse in recent years in Nepal. If the Government and Maoists leaders want peace, then resolving the issues of the relationships between the people and the communities with equality, tolerance, and friendship is necessary. The people who have been displaced from their lands and homes by the current conflict, should be allowed to return to their homes and lands in peace and security. Let the government listen and act now.

Nepalese people know Nepal needs constructive support to focus on a constructive future and escape the horrors of further violence. Monarchy, democracy, human rights, sovereignty and national interest must be made the meeting point and basis for the peace talks. These issues should by no means be compromised for any reason. Politics should be for the welfare and interests of the people and nationality, national solidarity and moving the democratic line by enlisting the participation of all the linguistic and ethnic communities in the campaign of nation building. Government should realize that employment is one of the measuring rods of a robust economy because unemployment invites violence and is risk for peace and security. It is now time for the nation to immediately create permanent peace. While the forward movement of the peace process continues there are problems of increasing political polarisation in the country. The lack of clear, strong and effective policy on Maoists issue has so far cost Nepal very dearly.

The community of Non Resident Nepalese is trying our best to set the record Therefore, we strongly appeal and urge that any negotiations to be held with maoists should be within a set of very clear and well-defined parameters. At this crucial moment in the history, Nepal needs to stand up against violence. Nepal should make her own choices, independent of pressures and stop worrying about the repercussions. No country will help or respect another country that is unable to defend herself.

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## Opinion: "Indian Grand Design in Nepal"

- *By Khagendra Thapa*

India hates the fact that we were friends with British when it was under the British boots. Post colonial India thinks and behaves like the dead British Empire. India has to remember that the Gorkha soldiers fought for it when it fought wars against Pakistan and China. The Gorkha soldiers were deliberately placed at the forefront and suffered heavy casualty. The reward the Gorkhas have received from India is expulsion of Bhutanese of Nepalese descent from Bhutan, exploitation of our rivers without proper compensation for Nepal, imposition of unfair treaties on Nepal whenever it has weak government, mistreatment of Nepalese in India, exporting of poor quality goods to Nepal, helping Maoists and other anti Nepal activities, and lot more.

Well, with friend and neighbor like India we do not need any enemies.

Only King Mahendra was able to deal with India effectively. India is having its hay day in Nepal especially after the India imposed fake democracy since 1990. The Nepali Congress party, an Indian surrogate, has given everything India and its citizens ever wanted from Nepal. Well done, Congress party and its leader Girija. You have succeeded in bankrupting Nepal economically, morally, physically, politically, culturally, and socially. I hope the Congress party and its leaders got a good reward from India. Thanks for exporting our sisters to India as prostitutes and our brothers as cheap laborers.

The grand Indian design of making us kill each other has worked wonders. Thanks to India both Maoists and Nepalese Government buy arms in India. What a deal! You create room for Indian citizens in Nepal without using holocaust and make us pay for it. Hurray, it is even better plan than Hitler had. The Nazis had to kill the Jews. You see the Indians are smarter than Nazis. They make us kill each other to make room for their rising population and make us pay for it. My God, when I think of it, I can only admire the British colonialist. It is amazing how smart they made the Indians.

Nepal has unpatriotic, stupid and highly incompetent leaders. HM King Gyanendra should take strong and decisive actions against foreign agents such as Girija and his followers. Only then we may have a little hope of surviving as a people and as a nation. The best thing to do under the circumstances would be for Maoists to stop being tools for India and realize that what they are doing in the name of peoples war is wrong. If they are smart and patriotic they should turn their guns and bombs against India and its surrogates and not against innocent poor, hungry, defenseless, helpless, and destitute Nepalese people. We have suffered enough. Stop being idiots. Your ego has destroyed our people and their hopes and aspirations. Your actions have made our enemies laugh and our friends cry. India

has capitalized a lot since the advent of India imposed fake democracy. It is busy fishing in the troubled waters of Nepal.

Only hope for us is to unite against our national enemy and fight like Bhakti Thapa.

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## Analysis: "Current Developments Cause for Concern"

- **By Dr. S. Chandrasekharan**

The current situation in Nepal could be described in one word- critical.

First, the law and order situation - Despite assurances from the government, the law and order situation has gone from bad to worse. The Army had let it be known that after the cease fire was called off, the Maoists are on the defensive and that they are no longer in a position to make large scale attacks with thousands of cadres as it had happened before. In the initial stages in the last half of 2003, it did appear that the Maoists have resorted to small scale actions though their activities extended to all the districts.

In our update no. 36 we had pointed out that there could be no military solution for the Maoists problem facing the country. We also said that the Army with its increased strength, specialised training and acquisition of sophisticated weapons is under the impression that the Maoists can be brought under control militarily. We also pointed out that the Maoists are also not what they were in 1996. Their strength has increased exponentially and by then had acquired sufficient arms for a prolonged conflict. Once the Maoist problem is reduced to manageable proportions then elections to the parliament could be considered. This was the prevailing plan of the government also.

But the Bhojpur incident of March 3, 2004 (update no. 42) where over a thousand Maoists attacked the security posts, administrative and communication buildings inflicting heavy losses of men and material on the security forces showed that the Maoists had not lost their ability to attack massively even district headquarters as they had done before and that their strength had not diminished.

But worse was yet to come. On March 22, Maoists over a thousand in number again attacked Beni the district headquarters of Myagdi District. This attack took a heavy toll of security personnel with over 33 army and 18 policemen killed. Another 36 persons including the CDO ( Chief district Officer) and the Superintendent of Police have been taken prisoners. The Maoists have claimed that they have recovered one two-inch mortar, 3 LMGS, 15 infantry rifles (5.56 mm Inalsa), 8 SMGs, 35 SLRs, 70 .303s, 15 rifles and 47000 rounds.

Information received on 7 April reveal that the Maoists have released all the 36 members to the ICRC on 6 April, at Thawang in Rolpa district. Thawang is in the heart of the Maoist territory in mid western Nepal. (See page 66 of the book "A Kingdom under Siege" by Deepak Thapa, 2003)

The Maoists struck again, this time at a security post in the village Yadukuha in Dhanusha district on April 5. Nine Police officers were killed and 20 are reported missing.

In the Myagdi incident besides AK 47s and M-16s, the Maoists used for the first time 81 mm mortar and security analysts claim that this indicated that the Maoists have also been shopping for arms outside. It is known that the Maoists have some links with the Indian insurgent groups like the ULFA and such arms could have been bought in the South East Asian illegal arms markets.

Opinions differ whether the 81-mm mortar used by the Maoists was obtained from outside or from the arms captured by the Maoists in their earlier attacks on the Army. 81 mm mortar is a battalion weapon and it is said that the Army does not want to acknowledge that it had lost "an area weapon" in one of their encounters.

For the first time Indian interests and Indians have been attacked. Media reports indicate that on 3 April, many Indian oil tankers (18?) were set ablaze near Dhangadi in far western Nepal. One Indian truck was stopped at Rupandehi and when the occupants protested, they were shot at, injuring three.

There are reports that at least 20 Indian businessmen based in Bardia district fled Nepal after they were issued with an ultimatum to leave the country. Another 40 business men have also been asked to leave Nepal in Kusumba Bazar, Bardia.

So far the Maoists had refrained from attacking Indian interests. The current incidents are probably due to the arrest of Mohan Vaidya alias Kiran by West Bengal Police, a few days ago and the Maoists feared that he may also be handed over to the Nepalese authorities informally as was done in the case of Matrika Prasad Yadav. Kiran is the third Politburo member of the Maoists to be arrested in India, the other one being C.P.Gajural, arrested in Chennai for carrying false identity documents for flying to Germany, besides Matrika Prasad Yadav.

The attacks on Indian interests should be cause for concern. Indian assets and Indians are found all over Nepal particularly in the Terai region and perhaps the Ministry of External affairs thinks that a strong statement from the ministry would do. Perhaps it may not suffice.. What India could do will be

\* The Security agencies should have a proper and coordinated plan in dealing with the Maoists found in India. It is said that Matrika Prasad Yadav was actually arrested in Delhi along with two others Suresh Magar Ale and Upendra Yadav. The whereabouts of Upendra Yadav are still not known while the other two were handed over informally to Nepalese authorities after declaring that they were found in Lucknow! Matrika is the only person of Indian origin in the top leadership of the Maoists. This has upset the Terains a great deal.

\* If the attack on the Indian vehicles was to show to India their displeasure over the arrest of Kiran and to prevent Indian authorities handing him over to Nepal, then it is not serious. But it is another matter if the attack is part of a larger plan of Maoists to take on India. It may be recalled that in the initial stages of the conflict, Prachanda had declared that while they were dealing with the Nepalese Police, they may then have to take on the Royal Nepal Army and finally the Indian Army itself. The Nepalese authorities are right now in no position to protect Indian interests. If the exodus from Nepal continues there could be a backlash in India too as more Nepalese of Nepal are living in India than the other way about!

\* The source of the 81-mm mortar used in the attack on Beni should also be looked into. If it had come from outside sources, it would then acquire another dimension with Maoists not only having links with the outlawed Indian outfits, but also indicate their ability to obtain sophisticated weapons through the now famous weapons/ drug route from southeast Asia to Bangladesh ( with quite a help from Bangladesh authorities) onto Assam, West Bengal and Nepal. The consequence would be a reverse flow of sophisticated arms from Nepal to the Maoists in India who have by now become more active. The call of the Maoists in this region to form a coordination Committee of Maoist parties and organisations in south Asia ( CCOMPOSA) in June 2001 should be kept in mind. The Maoists of Nepal came in for special praise in spreading protracted peoples war should also be noted.

\* India should also note that its fundamentals of policy on Nepal for Constitutional monarchy and multi party democracy are being undermined by the two main pillars- the King and the political parties. Instead of finding ways to make a common approach towards the bigger problem facing the country, the five agitating parties are continuing with their strategy of trying to force the King the so-called regression moves of October 4.

\* On the fourth day of renewed demonstration, a 30,000 strong crowd assembled in Kathmandu on April 4 resorted to violence, resulting in the destruction of public vehicles. Many senior leaders like Bamdev Gautam of UML and Arjun Narsingh K.C. of Nepali Congress were injured. If the political parties were fighting for restoration of constitution, their methods used on April 4 could hardly be called constitutional.

\* The King's speech at Pokhara on March 28 was for once very conciliatory. There was no criticism of the political parties and he made the announcement of going ahead with the elections and handing over the governance by next November 2005. The way out for the political parties would be to prepare for the general elections instead of asking for restoration of the parliament which at any rate is due to lapse before the end of this month. G.P.Koirala as an elder statesman could be more generous in getting the Deuba group back. His offer to Deuba Group for status quo ante should be grabbed by Deuba and details worked out, rather than quarreling over minor matters seeking coordination instead of a merger.

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## Fiction: An Interview with the "Charitrahin Chelee"

- By Lava Gaunle

Mr. Khakurel for the second time encounters with a member of 'The Charitrahin Chelee' (a underground group of so-called characterless lady who's slogan is to 'Tear off Shawl', recently announced the agenda of freedom).

Mr. K: Me on behalf of the viewers really appreciate yours' efforts for freedom.

Ms. L: Thank you very much for recognizing us.

Mr. K: It's my pleasure. Should I ask you a few questions on behalf of our viewers?

Ms. L: Sure, why not.

Mr. K: Your body's sovereignty is vested on you, it's good idea but you have mentioned in agenda that you people do wear anything either brief or without brief.

Ms. L: You are absolutely right.

Mr. K: According to Hindu religion it is forbidden to interact with male while you are in maternity period and the period of menstruation, however you people want to close with family in these all occasions.

Ms. L: Certainly.

Mr. K: If so, when you are in your monthly period what will you do? If you don't used pad, will you use tampon which obviously the cotton material?

Ms. L: Thank you for your finding. It's to be rethink.

Mr. K: Well, you have argued on bigamy as well as the polygamy that they are not allowed to public fields, however you are behind to list such figures. Sanjay, a columnist of weekly paper has already been forecasted the names, how do you comment?

Ms. L: We want to go more depth than that.

Mr. K: Your agenda stresses on the protection of pedophiles, babe rapes but the cases are regularly happening, how you and your group seems pity to the victims?

Ms. L: We will prove this in practice very shortly.

Mr. K: Some people argue that you have ten-member group and haven't sufficient back forces. In this situation how your group successfully come up with the agenda?

Ms. L: No, you can't limit us in number. We ten are equivalent to hundred of thousands people.

Mr. K: That would probably be on the basis of your higher education, born with a silver spoon in your mouth, and seductive body structures.

Ms. L: Not only that. You can add more.

Mr. K: Well, yours' declaration soughs that you people have several similar organs as that of male. So, what is the difference between a male and a female?

Ms. L: Obviously we are different in physic but same in mind.

Mr. K: We appreciate your views. According to the nature, if a male had sex with ten females he could be a father of ten children at a time in contrary, a female had sex with ten males it is almost impossible to be a mother of ten.

Ms. L: No, No Mr. Khakurel, I disagree to your statement. The number of production of children never can signify our parallel position.

Mr. K: Well, I realize it. You have approached yours' character on the basis of certificate of ISO No.9003. Would you please magnify from where you have got this certificate and will it prove that this number is the best indicator of your character forever?

Ms. L: Mr. Khakurel, if you don't know the issuing body of this certificate why do you raise this question? Australia - New Zealand Joint Accreditation Committee has issued certificate for International Standard of Operation of Management.

Mr. K: Well, I will support your argument. Should you introduce me what are the characteristics of Australia and New Zealand?

Ms. L: Both are advanced and there are much opportunities of freedom.

Mr. K: The things I really couldn't understand but I will try to present my views as per my knowledge. Aussie and New Zealanders (Australian will be advanced if they can minus their tribal group 'Aboriginals' and 'Maori' of New Zealand as well) still are active to have more drinks and sex without condoms. Australia is the only country in world where the highest rate of gangbang is occurring, and the New Zealand is absolutely dominant by Australia.

Ms. L: Wait, wait, we will discuss further in this issue latter on, now I think we must split out?

Mr. K: Thank you a lot for your active participation.

Ms. L: Thank you too.

[Based on Author's unpublished fiction entitled "An Unwanted Sound". Author can be reached at [lgaunle@yahoo.com](mailto:lgaunle@yahoo.com)]

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### Social: "Ask what the country has done for you"

Social: "Ask not what the country has done for you - Ask what you can do for the Country"

**- By Bindu Chaudhary**

What makes news is not when a dog bites a man but when a man bites a dog. Before the Maoist insurgency, what generally used to be news is not a news anymore and vice-versa. Casualties and murder once upon a time used to be a news, but no more. What makes news today is not listening about any casualties at all. If anybody called Nepal a peaceful country now, that would be a big news. News about abductions, shoot-outs, suicide, murder... no more increases blood-pressure or causes heart to palpitate faster. We are all becoming immune to such events; children are growing up with the sounds of guns instead of the rattles. It is such a shameful apathy. Armed conflict has brought no good to the nation. People are frustrated and have started losing hope. They are terrified about their uncertain future and that of the country. Many are being killed and many more others are killing themselves.

After the Maoist insurgency, the number of suicide cases have escalated. This is but a cry for help. Statistics show that on an average, 4.18 people died of armed conflict per day in the last five years, but to the utter surprise and dismay, on an average, 6.72 people a day killed themselves. It is a pity of a nation that 7,640 people lost their lives due to the armed conflict, and it is a pity of the Governance that more than 12,277 people had to take away their own lives during the same period of armed conflict. It is also important to note here that since suicide is not illegal in Nepal, not all cases are reported to the police. Therefore, one cannot rule out the possibility that the number of suicide cases could be higher than reported. Suicide has become the second leading causes of untimely deaths in Nepal after the Maoist insurgency.

Suicide is an indicative of the environment and the social structure, because the tendency towards suicide depends less on the individual psychology or the physical environment, but more on the individual's association with the broader society and faith in the outside world. It is hence that during war time when the relationships seem to get apart due to bereavement, when people seem to lose hope due to violence and torture in the environment; when they feel isolated due to restraints in normal activities, the frustration level and mental distress gets high. There are studies and reports which confirm that one of the dreadful side effects of war is self-murder.

The UNICEF report Impact of Armed Conflict on Children by Graça Machel, the expert of the Secretary-General of the United Nations writes about the effect of armed conflict on adolescents, saying that the extreme and prolonge circumstances of armed conflict can interfere with their identity development and that the distressing experiences, hopelessness, and sudden changes in family circumstances such as death or disappearance of parents may lead them to lose trust in people, view their lives very pessimistically, suffer from serious depression or even commit suicide.

Similarly, a landmark report issued by the World Health Organization in 2002 on Violence as a Global Health Problem mentions that on an average day, a person commits suicide every 40 seconds, that more than 1,400 people are the victims of homicide, and that nearly 35 people are killed every hour as

a result of war or armed conflict. The report adds that in the year 2000, 815,000 people lost their lives to suicide, more than double the number of people who die as a result of armed conflict every year (306,600).

The Kashmir Record and Research Council (KRRC) in India too has reported the increasing trend of suicide in the valley of Kashmir after the military activities. According to a recent Associated Press review of Army casualty report, fifteen American Army personnel and two Marines have committed suicides in Iraq over the past seven months. In addition, over 500 American soldiers have recently been evacuated from Iraq for mental health reasons.

G.J. Fairburn, in his book *Contemplating Suicide: The Language and Ethics of Self-Harm* gives nine categories of suicide: His first category is "no hope suicide", in which the individual feels hopeless and thinks that there is no way out of their present distress. This form of suicide is linked to depression and the distorted worldview. The second category of suicide is the "existential suicide"- the person may be happy in his/her life, but may be too anxious or frightened about the future and that fear acts as a force to commit suicide.

Fairburn gives an example of a fear of nuclear war in the future and the person feeling that the life cannot take the trouble caused by the incident as an example of existential suicide. Fairburn's another category of suicide is the "dutiful suicide", like the sati system wherein it was expected of a widow to die on a pyre of the husband.

The persons who come under the category of "altruistic/philanthropic/ sacrificial suicide" are the elderly or the terminally ill who kill themselves to help others. "Revenge suicide" is another possible motivation for suicide that is committed by a person to harm others or to make them feel sorry, guilty and distressful. The "political or ideological suicide" are committed in order to make a political point, and he gives an example of the Buddhist monks who set themselves on fire to protest the Vietnam war. Another category of suicide he calls is the "judicial suicide", where a person takes his/her life believing that there is a legalistic reason to it and that they deserve death because of their wrongdoing. In the "other- driven" suicide, a person commits suicide because of the actions of others, for example Socrates was ordered that he committed suicide. The final category of suicide, Fairburn calls is the "mass/ multiple suicide", which can include anything like suicide pacts involving a couple or family, to mass suicides. There could be many reasons to mass suicide, including the motivations of the different categories mentioned above.

The reasons for people committing suicide during war could be more of a type of no- hope, existential, ideological, judicial, other- driven or the mass suicide. In situations of armed conflict, many factors that may cause severe social and mental stress and encourage them to end their trouble permanently could be: the death, separation and loss of family and friends; witnessing and experiencing violence and torture, loss of home and destruction of the physical environment; loss of income and livelihood opportunities; material deprivation; changes in social interaction; restrictions in movement; living in an environment exhausted by stress, threat, fear, insecurity, frustration, apathy and hopelessness; besides a feeling of guilt about not being able to protect their children and family from being killed or suffering, etc.

Also, the reasons for suicide could be different for different people depending on their individual circumstances and their coping capabilities. During war, there are media reports of not only the general public contemplating suicide, but also the terrorists and army/security force. The reasons for them to end their lives may vary because of the different challenges and life threats that are unique to each of them. One of the reasons, besides the others, for the rebels and the security forces to end their lives could be the stress and strain related factors because of the kind of work they do and the possible burnout or emotional fatigue due to their constant exposure and involvement to violence and killing.

Nepal is a country so tiny and the population so meagre, one cannot afford to lose any more. Martin Luther King, Jr. has rightly said, "History will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the strident clamor of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people." The concerned should come out of their vested interests and act like "good people" to at least hold the hand of those who are ending their lives. People have already started showing burnout symptoms- and perhaps suicide was their last cry for help.

Let suicide merely remain a news- a story once upon a time. Let people not get immune to the news of people killing themselves, if the country has to be saved from becoming a full blown grave. It may not be far when people start to question the famous **"Ask not what the country has done for you -**

**Ask what you can do for the Country.**" Save people from getting killed, save people from killing themselves before there are nobody to govern, or before the country starts to lose citizens who could probably have saved the country.

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## Environment: "Kathmandu's Air Quality - A Scenario"

- *By Paras Acharya*

Air pollution is a growing problem in Kathmandu valley. The valley is especially vulnerable to air pollution due to rapid and haphazard urbanization and significant increase of vehicular transport on narrow streets. Furthermore, the bowl like topography of the valley restricts wind movement and retains the pollutants in the atmosphere. This is especially bad during the winter season when inversion, where cold air flowing down from the mountains is trapped under a layer of warmer air, creating a lid, which keeps the pollutants sealed within the valley.

The main problem in Kathmandu's air is the high concentration of fine particles. Other pollutants such as CO, SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub> are within national and international standards but PM<sub>10</sub> is significantly higher than standards, particularly in urban areas during the winter.

### Pollution Sources

A comparison of emission inventories done in 1993 by a World Bank Project and in 2001 by Ministry of Population and Environment shows that PM<sub>10</sub> from vehicles increased by more than four times in eight years. Vehicle exhaust now accounts for 43 % of the total PM<sub>10</sub> load in Kathmandu.

Pollution from vehicles is mainly because of the large number of vehicles on congested streets, poor quality vehicles, poor quality fuels and lubricants and weakness in the emission inspection and maintenance system.

In the past five years, the number of vehicles in Bagmati zone, most of which ply in Kathmandu valley, increased at an alarming rate of 17 % per year. At this rate, the number of vehicles will double in about five years. This is causing serious problems of traffic congestion and air pollution. Poor road infrastructure also adds to the problem. A study conducted by Department of Transport Management indicated that the number of vehicles in Kathmandu exceeded the valley's carrying capacity by about 30,000 in 1999/2000 fiscal year. Since then more than 75,000 vehicles have been added to the streets of Kathmandu, while the road infrastructure has remained more or less constant. The total road network within the valley is 1339 km.

Although Kathmandu has a system for emission testing, this has not been very effective, as many drivers tamper with the air to fuel ration to lower the emissions. Although about 25 % of the vehicle fail the test, there is no system to punish these vehicles. Quality of fuel and lubricants being used in vehicles is another cause for poor vehicle exhaust. Use of diesel with high sulphur content increases emission of fine particles. Use of poor quality lubricants in wrong amounts also causes an increase in emission. A study shows that about 98 % of the two-stroke three-wheelers in Kathmandu are using various quantities of loose oil instead of the recommended quantity of 2T oil.

Brick kilns are another major source of air pollution. There are about 125 brick kilns, mostly unregistered, in the valley, out of which 90% are Bull's Trench that are inefficient and cause pollution. Recent studies carried out in Tikathali VDC in Lalitpur and Jhaukhel VDC in Bhaktapur indicate that the air pollution in brick kiln affected areas is three times higher than normal.

### Status of Ambient Air

The following conclusions can be drawn from the air quality data recorded over the past year.

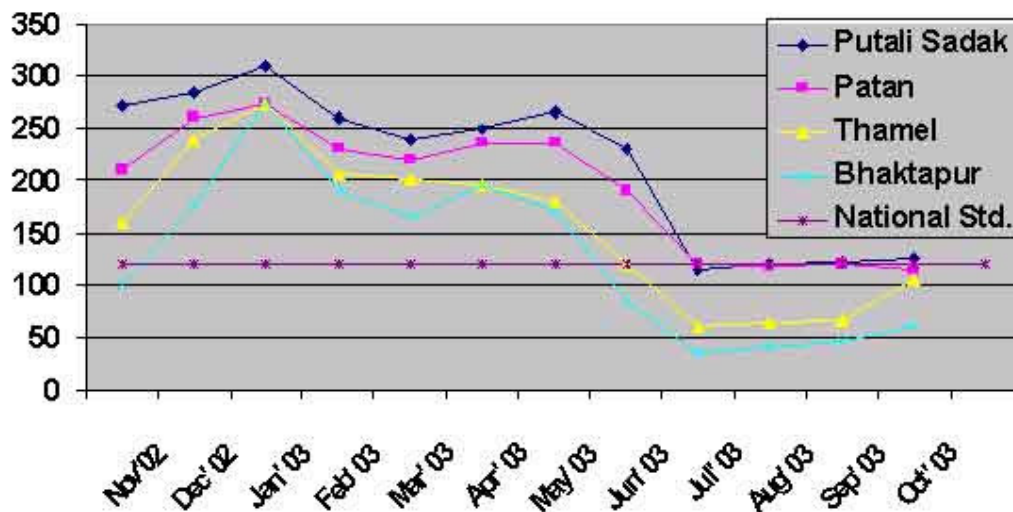
1. In the dry season, PM<sub>10</sub> level along busy roads such as Putalisadak and Patan Hospital exceeds National Ambient Air Quality Standards ( NAAQS) on 99% of the days.
2. In the dry season, PM<sub>10</sub> level in the residential area of Thamel was above the NAAQS during 90% of the days. This indicates that Kathmandu residents can not escape the pollution even when they are in their homes.

3. There is significant seasonal variation in air quality. PM10 levels are highest in January, which is the peak of the dry winter season, and is lowest in July, which is the peak of the monsoon season. During the monsoon, rains flush down the particles in the air. In the January 2003, the average PM10 concentration in Kathmandu Valley was 255.6 micro gram per cu.m., but six months later in July 2003 the level had dropped to 64.2 micro gram per cu.m.

4. In Kathmandu it is clear that vehicles are the main sources of air pollution. This can be verified by the following observations:

5. Areas with heavy traffic (Putali Sadak and Patan Hospital) are the most polluted.

6. Pollution levels drop on weekends when fewer vehicles are on the road. Average PM10 level on the 5 weekends in May, 2003 in Putali Sadak was 219.4 micro grams per m<sup>3</sup>. However, on weekdays it was 290.4 micro gram per cu.m., which is 32% higher than the concentration on weekends.



## Impacts of Air Pollution

### Impact on Human Health

The main impact of Kathmandu's air pollution is on the health of its residents. Air pollution mainly causes problems in the respiratory system. Records from Kathmandu's hospitals indicate that the number of patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Diseases (COPD) has increased significantly over the past ten years. In Patan Hospital, the number of COPD patients has doubled in the past five years. The records also indicate that the number of COPD patients is highest in the winter season, when air pollution is also at its peak.

### Impact on Tourism

Findings of a survey conducted among 1,702 tourists between May and June 2001 indicate that air quality is the number one area where tourists feel improvement is needed. Data obtained from the Kathmandu airport from 1970 onwards shows that the number of days with good visibility (> 8000m), decreased in the winter months from more than 25 days/month in 1970 to 5 days/month in 1992 (World Bank, 1997). This is bound to affect tourism.

### Conclusion & The Way Ahead

His Majesty's Government first responded to the growing problem of air pollution in Kathmandu in 1991 by stopping the import of three-wheelers in the Valley. Since then, it has taken a few other steps as well, but these have been ad-hoc decisions and the rising levels of pollution in Kathmandu clearly indicates that a lot more needs to be done. Overall, the government needs to make a serious commitment to improve Kathmandu's air by drawing up a comprehensive action plan with the involvement of all stakeholders and then taking bold steps to implement the action plan. Improvement

of public transportation system & road networks, promotion of environment friendly transportation such as electric vehicles, trolley bus etc and raising awareness on proper vehicle maintenance & use of clean fuel etc are some important issues that needs to be focused.

(Author is a Final Year undergraduate Environmental Science student at Kathmandu University. - Ed.)

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## Children Issues: "Discussing Suicide with Children"

- *By Ruchi Ahuja*

Every year, 30,000 Asians take their own lives by committing suicide. At least 15% of people with depression complete the act of suicide, but an even higher proportion will attempt it. While depression is one of the most treatable mental disorders, it is also one of the most under diagnosed and under recognized.

One of the scariest emotional experiences people suffer in their lifetime is to experience a severe form of depression. Over 1 in 5 Asians can expect to get some form of depression in their lifetime. Over 1 in 20 Asians have a depressive disorder every year. Depression is one of the most common and most serious mental health problems facing people today.

Many people still carry the misperception that suicidal thoughts or behaviors are deserved -- that when a person has reached this point in their lives, there is no burning back. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Depression is not a character flaw, nor is it simply feeling blue for a few days. Most importantly, depression is not your fault. It is a serious mood disorder that affects a person's ability to function in every day activities. It affects one's work, one's family, and one's social life.

How do we explain suicide to small children or young people?

Age is a factor in understanding and the types of information to provide. Some children are with a one or two sentence answer; others might have continuous questions they should be allowed to ask and to have answered.

When a child hears that someone "committed suicide" or died of suicide, one of their first questions might be, "What is suicide?" One way to explain is that people die in different ways - from cancer, heart attacks, car accidents, or old age for example. Suicide means that a person caused his or her own death intentionally. If he presses for more detail, use your discretion to help the child understand as much as is appropriate.

Some examples of explaining why suicide happens might be:

+ "He had an illness in his brain (or mind) and he died."

+ "Her brain got very sick and she died."

+ "The brain is an organ of the body just like the heart, liver and kidneys. Sometimes it can get sick, just like other organs."

+ "She had an illness called depression and it caused her to die." If someone the child knows, or the child herself, is being treated for depression, it's critical to stress that only some people die from depression, not everyone. Remind her there are many options for getting help, like medication, psychotherapy, or a combination of both. A more detailed explanation might be:

+ "Our thoughts and feelings come from our brain, and sometimes a person's brain can get very sick - the sickness can cause a person to feel very badly inside. It also makes a person's thoughts get all jumbled and mixed up, so he can't think clearly. Some people can't think of any other way of stopping the hurt they feel inside. They don't understand that they don't have to feel that way, that they can get help."

It's important to note that there are people who were getting help for their depression and died anyway. Just as in other illnesses, a person can receive the best medical treatment and still not survive. This can also be the case with depression.

A child needs to understand that the deceased loved them, but that because of the illness he or she may have been unable to convey that or to think about how the child would feel after the death. The

child needs to know that the suicide was not their fault, and that nothing they said or did, or didn't say or do, caused the death.

Some children might ask questions related to the morals of suicide - good/bad, right/wrong. It is best to steer clear of this, if possible. Suicide is none of these - it is something that happens when pain exceeds resources for coping with that pain.

Whatever approach is taken when explaining suicide to children, they need to know they can talk about it and ask questions whenever they feel the need. They need to understand they won't always feel the way they do now, that things will get better, and that they'll be loved and taken care of no matter.

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## ANA: Havasu Falls- Beyond Imagination

- *By Smriti Dhungel Gyawali*

Havasu Falls is situated in the western edge of the Grand Canyon. People mistake them for the Havasu Lake, which is also in Arizona. The only difference is the ten-mile hike needed to bring you closer to a living paradise- if there was a heaven on earth; it is here...it is here... it is here.

For starters, I am definitely not a hiker and more so to be precisely accurate- not a camper. However, since we finally had our permits to visit Indian Territory, I decided to move with the pack. We were six in number. Rod who always studied the minute details and traveled in accordance to his basic necessities and the rest of the "gin bang," meaning us. We preferred to pick up anything that could make our camping more closer to home. We backpacked everything from stoves, fresh vegetables to rice and "Ghundruk- Bhatmas". It seemed exciting.

The hike down the Canyons was scenic. There was no other transportation other than the mule that the Indians rode to transport goods to the village. The walk seemed endless and I started to wonder whether the extra load on my back was worthwhile. My fellow hikers Mukunda dai, Sudhan , Kanchana and my husband Niraj seemed professionals having already hiked the Grand Canyon and other places. They kept good pace, but for me, every step for the seven-hour hike down the Canyons was a strenuous challenge.

Finally, as we reached our destination and as we gasped for air, time stood still for a moment. The first glimpse of the falls was simply breathtaking. The majestic Canyons towered the descending waterfall that plunged into an azure blue lake encroached by a sandy white beach. One could only marvel at the unbelievable splendor of the daunting and jagged Canyons sustaining the eloquent white waterfall that gushed out from the top of the Canyon. It is beyond what any vocabulary can describe. It was a living mirage and a beautiful oasis for all the weary travelers in the thirsty desert of Arizona. I felt part of a spiritual experience, which the Indian Tribes perceive as sacred.

The experience will remain sweet nostalgia. Having walked all the way and back itself made me realize the good old phrase, "when there is a will, there is a way," and as for the view- Absolutely amazing.

TIPS- A short compilation on places to visit in Scottsdale and Arizona

- **The City of Scottsdale** has a great selection of parks that can meet many of your personal needs.
- **Casino Arizona at Salt River** -Guests will find 1,500 ticket-pay multi-denominational slot machines, including 80 high-limit slots, live Blackjack, 50 poker tables, and live fast-action Keno. There's also a mahogany paneled high stakes poker room. The Starz Sportsbar offers video poker slots and numerous televisions for viewing sporting events.
- **Cinema Super Club** Going to Dinner and a Movie has taken on a whole new meaning in Scottsdale!! At Farrelli's Cinema Supper Club, you can enjoy great food while watching a current release, full-length feature film on the big screen!!
- **Rawhide Wild West Town** is celebrating 32 years of providing quality 1880's style family entertainment with worldwide recognition as a "must see Arizona destination." Gunfights, stuntmen, Main Street and theater style entertainment, stagecoach rides, a petting zoo, bull riding (mechanical &

the real thing), gold panning, over a dozen games, rides, attractions and 12 unique shopping experiences.

· **The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation tour** is committed to advancing the ideas and principles of organic architecture, organic education, and conservation of the natural environment. If you are interested in architecture, this tour will be worth taking.

· **Helicopter rides to the Grand Canyon** Papillon Helicopter Company flies both to the South and West Rim of the Grand Canyon with three exclusive landing sites at the bottom of the Grand Canyon! Papillon continues its commitment to provide you the most value and service for your Grand Canyon Experience!

For more information on Arizona view [www.ana2004.org](http://www.ana2004.org)

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## Art: "Tibetan Buddhist Wall Paintings of Mustang, Nepal"

- *By Marcia R. Lieberman, Philip Lieberman, Lama Ngawang Jorden*

Brown University and the University of Chicago

This electronic publication provides a photographic survey of the wall paintings of three gompas or monastery-temples of Mustang, an ethnically and culturally Tibetan district in northwestern Nepal, on the edge of the Tibetan plateau. Its 1,309 photographs and the accompanying explanatory text appear on both DVD and also on the Brown University Web site, under the URL:

<http://dl.lib.brown.edu/BuddhistTempleArt>.

Tibetan art is an expression of the Buddhist perception of fundamental reality through visual means. The converse of the Western concept of illustration, this art of the mind, of unforgettable energy and beauty, is intrinsic to Buddhist religious practice. The 15th-century wall paintings of Jampa and Thubchen gumpa of Lo Monthang are rare surviving exemplars of the classical period of Tibetan art. The even earlier paintings of Luri gumpa reflect Indian and Kashmiri influence. The text that accompanies these images presents a discussion of the basic concepts of Tibetan Buddhism and a guide to understanding Tibetan art, including explanation of its iconography and symbolic code. It provides descriptions of the three gompas featured here and discussion of their paintings, with additional detailed information in two appendices. Historical background on Mustang and the gompas is included.

Included along with photographic images of the wall paintings, are photographs of Mustang's landscape and its people.

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## Sports: "South Asian Federation Games Challenges"

**By Sushil Thapa**

After a string of postponements the 9th South Asian Federation Games (SAFG) finally unfolds in Pakistan on March 29th. Since the games, the biggest sporting spectacle in the region was pushed into oblivion because of uncertainties its existence has looked very shaky. Hopefully, this time we do not witness another last minute postponement or fall out. The lackadaisical manner in which the games has been conducted so far has reduced it to a farce, as a matter of fact. The regional meet has lost much of its gloss as well as significance, resulting in decline of its popularity considerably.

Clearly there is lack of seriousness and commitment on the part of participating nations to enhance the regional games badly struggling to make an impact. So preoccupied are nations with their respective domestic issues that they have hardly enough time to pay heed and nurture the games as required. and desired. As a result very little has the region benefited from SAFG in terms of development, economy and politics. Instead we are seeing sports standards plunge to an all time low, smaller nations unable or struggle to host the games and countries locked in sharp political differences.

Speaking strictly of sports we are awfully lagging behind in competitive sports be it amateur or professional. More disturbing is the fact that there are no positive indications at such that sports development is moving towards the right direction at the moment. It would be appropriate to say that SAFG is literally limping sans a definitive objective.

Unless sports is made a national priority and embraced with a serious mind set, deep rooted commitment and reasonable goals by respective governments it is hard to imagine sports prosper or take root in the region. Countries like Bhutan, Maldives, Afghanistan and Nepal with very limited or no physical facilities are desperately in need of help to build their sports system. Thanks largely to sports oriented government officials there exists international standards facilities in India and to some extent in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

Leave alone other nations in South Asia a heavyweight like India with a long sports tradition, enjoying a robust sports infrastructure has failed to make inroads in sports globally. Instead it continues to badly struggle and finds itself like a lost entity in world sports. In all fairness I have to say that the success of SAFG largely depends on India's view and support which is questionable unfortunately. Past experiences points that India has placed less emphasis on the games for the simple reason that SAFG has no competition for its athletes who have dominated every edition. Should India continue to think in the same line a big question mark is bound to hang over the future of SAFG. Let us hope, that does not occur and India plays a more positive and productive role to bolster the games to new heights. More importantly, a collective effort is required to accomplish the mission. Accommodating some of the break away former Soviet Union states in SAFG can be a smart move. Such a move can give both thrust and respectability to the games. In addition, it also raises the bar for competition, thus making it more competitive and qualitative. It takes a whole lot of effort and endeavor than just merely building infrastructures and organizing events like the Asian Games or SAFG to produce world class athletes. Above all we must develop a conducive environment and sports culture in order to groom our athletes with any impediments.

In retrospect every edition of the SAFG has been a one horse race affair with India the dominant force in terms of performances and medals. Barring a few disciplines it has been a cake walk for Indian athletes who have steam rolled rivals with ease. The ninth edition should be no exception and they are most likely to consolidate their stranglehold on the competition further. Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh might spring a few surprises in events like boxing, athletics, wrestling, shooting and swimming but once again India stands on the threshold of ending up with the lion's share of medals.

Nepal's participation came as a hugh relief to all because of uncertainties that had been brought in by the ongoing feud between the National Sports Council and National Olympic Committee led by Rukum SJB Rana. A last minute temporary truce worked out between the squabbling parties finally assured Nepal's participation. We cannot expect great results from our under prepared athletes who are bound to deliver their best. A handful of medals is the most we can look forward to. High hopes are pinned on our martial artists who are expected to come out with gold winning performances. Our young booters face yet another challenge to reinstate our lost glory.

To conclude it is imperative that we all work for the enhancement of SAFG if we want to make it more meaningful and purposeful.



## Education: "How to Reform Universities?"

- *By Bidhan Acharya*

The political system has been always attempting to patronise the higher education in Nepal. University teachers are proud to be the part of political parties and some of them are in formal positions of both varsity and party. Political leaders and parties meet and pass resolutions on the role of their students' wings. No doubt, the role of students is obviously significant in promoting democratic practices in a country. However, the Universities have also to practice educational activities other than the democracy. Therefore, a demarcation line between the politics and exercise and higher education is be set by the people at large, including politicians and the university teachers.

The eldest varsity in the country, Tribhuvan University is often a talk of town for not whatever it has done but for whatever it has not been able to accomplish. Other Universities have also been largely ignoring the lessons learned by TU and they are replicating the TU modes in a greater quantity. It is

possibly therefore; the type of sickness experienced by TU is also gradually overwhelming in the other Universities.

Nevertheless the Universities are the subsystem of the total national system, and they cannot be untouched by the national ups and downs. No one can assume an organ as in a state of sound health while the whole body is sick. This sickness has seriously defeated the higher education and the performance of the students is not improving. Authorities and even teachers and personnel as well as students themselves are also responsible for dragging varsity in this poor state of higher education, but the major accusation goes towards the big political parties, which ruled over the country for more than one decade.

Though history is the background for the present posture, it's not appropriate to waste time in criticising the past. However, reformations must be made for furthering the institution by standing on the present point of time. It's the high time to suggest for the structural changes in Universities.

#### **Handover of the Campuses:**

First and foremost, when Nepal entered into a multi-university era almost one decade ago the concept was that newly established Universities would share the load of TU in higher education. A couple of Universities established, and TU's load is not shared by anyone else. Newly established Universities converted into cosy boarding schools with specific offer of 'cash-crop disciplines' that attracted those well offs who would have gone abroad for that sort of education.

It's better to go in a regional concept of the Universities. Government requires establishing another University in mid/far-western region. Every University must be defined with its educational catchments area and there are also some logics behind arguing Campuses under that area must be gradually handed over to the respective Universities. However, a thorough homework is required that the portion of resources of those campuses should also be given to those Universities and the teachers and personnel must not be deprived of the facilities they are receiving in the current times. Nevertheless, such a shift of umbrella must be done with respect to the area of academic discipline rather than to the spatial delimitation. If the discipline and courses do match, the private campuses could also be encouraged to seek affiliation of the respective universities.

A separate technical University is to be established to look after the academic enhancements regarding medicine, engineering, forestry and agriculture. It can be located in Rampur, Chitwan. The vice-chancellor and other authorities from a different discipline may not justice the real need of these technical subjects. And all technical campuses should be handed over to this University with their resources and brains.

The other universities are enjoying a nuclear family-type structure, while TU is in the format of extended of the extended family system with more than 20 thousands personnel and 400 thousands students. The quality related comparison could not be made among these universities. Nevertheless, ensuring qualitative education requires competition in teaching, research and service delivery. Therefore, it is not only the university leadership to step forward but also the government itself to establish adequate number of Universities and hand over the TU's constituent campuses to other Universities.

#### **Stop Affiliation to Alien Discipline**

The boarding-school Universities have generously granted affiliations to the engineering, medical and computer science courses of a number of mushrooming commercial colleges. Those universities without such disciplines in their academic mainstream have to hire experts (of course, most from TU) for the affiliation process. Affiliation is not a one-time activity, but requires consecutive operations of examination, evaluation of students and inspection of the institutions. Without related manpower in university's permanent structure how can a university be best promoter, controller and developer of such private colleges? A government-initiated action is needed that the Universities without programmes of related disciplines under their own umbrella should not be authorised to provide affiliation to the respective colleges.

#### **Reform Administration:**

Tribhuvan University's administration is overstaffed, inefficient and less productive, and same scenario is replicated in other government universities. Competent personnel have jobs less than their capabilities and incompetent ones are enjoying the facilities they don't deserve. A strict scrutinising of

personnel is required and it could be reduced to a minimum possible number. A single-person office secretariat runs the whole Department in foreign Universities.

Major conceptual problem is that there is a lack of understanding the interrelationships between academic programmes and administrative management. This deficiency of understanding is in the both parts of academic and administrative employees of University. Teachers and administrative personnel have no harmonious relationships in total. The University managements have failed to create a co-operative and conducive environment that mitigates the conflicts. A severe operational level policy is required in these Universities to do two major activities: first, curbing the administrative cost and second, creating the cooperative working environment between teachers and administrative personnel. Use of Microcomputers in record keeping can make the several Departments efficient.

**Stop Political Invasion:**

Political units (of teachers, administrative personnel and students) have been severely influencing the decision making of TU for a long period of time. It has been gradually spreading over other Universities. All kinds of Sanghs and Sangathans (associations) of anyone of these three categories want to overwhelm the central authorities as VC, Rector, Registrar or Deans. Many-times such influences cross the limitations and University records improper decisions in the history. The VC appointed during the rule of a certain political sphere is often created hurdles by the opponent's cadres. Additionally, the popular scene of our Universities includes the conflict of personal interest and of the interest of powerhouses behind them jeopardising the University authorities themselves. Similarly, political and ideological differences ensue in government decisions depriving resources to University make hundreds of thousand students and thousands of employees suffered. Such political invasions and non-co-operative acts are to be stopped and the University are to be treated as autonomous entities for which all-time ministers and governments have the equal responsibility. Even if the team of authorities (VC, Rector, Registrar) is appointed in the period ruled by whichever political party, all parties have to have a commitment towards helping this team for the national development.

**To Conclude:**

If the University authorities are made puppets in regard of resource allocation and the decisions they take to satisfy the so-called masters in-front and behind the curtain, they will have only the job of counting the days of tenure and do nothing except enjoying some university-given facilities. A group of selfish teachers and administrative personnel usually create a vicious circle and always surround the VC, Rector and Registrar. The routine and challenging job of authorities is to break this vicious circle and make appropriate reformations with which the Universities in Nepal would take a stride for millennium academic enhancements.

(Author is an Associate Professor, at Centre for Population and Development, Purbanchal University, Biratnagar.-Ed.)



**Business: "Buddhism and Business Management"**

**- By Maharshi R. Shrestha**

In most societies, the so-called leaders are themselves confused, engrossed in hatred, greed or delusion, so they become the blind who lead the blind. In Buddhism it is believed that the presence of one such person is very important, and can have an important influence on society. In Buddhist terminology, the term 'emptiness of action' or 'non action' is used. To act in a way that arises from non – action is to act in a way that truly influences the situation in a nonviolent way.

In "Small is Beautiful", E. F. Schumacher reminds us that Western economists seek maximization of material gain as if that they hardly care for people. He says that in the Buddhist concept of economic development, we should avoid gigantism, especially of machines, which tend to control rather than to serve human beings. With gigantism, we are driven by an excessive greed in violating and raping nature. If bigness and greed can be avoided, the Middle Path of Buddhist development can be achieved, i.e. both the world of industry and agriculture can be converted into a meaningful habitat.

With the growing complexities of business especially industrial business-the use of meditation techniques has become popular during the last few years. However, they have been used mainly as stress relieving techniques for executives subjected to the tensions of achieving targets. Management of a medium scale industrial business requires organization, quality control, production, purchasing,

marketing, fund flow, administration, etc. Each of these operations requires clear thinking, planning, coordination, execution, cost accounting, and profitability projections.

There are presently several colleges which teach this type of management. There are special techniques of management for large organizations with turnovers of one hundred million U.S. dollars and over. Research and development methods are also available for upgrading the technology of these business. Where exactly does meditation come into the picture? To get an answer, we have to look to more industrialized countries such as the United States and Germany. The nature of the societies produced by advanced industrialization has been characterized by heavy alcohol, drug and cigarette consumption, pandemic divorces and broken families; economic recession and job insecurities; and strong feelings of competition and frustration leading to heart attacks, suicide and so on.

People who become business managers come from this fragmented society, Business schools teach them to work for more profits and higher salaries, and the stress involved leads to greater consumption of drugs and alcohol, and various health problems such as hyper-tension. The level of equanimity in such societies deteriorates. The business owners, executives and managers develop feelings of pride, prejudice, jealousy and arrogance and experience their concomitants: depression, anxiety, stress and other harmful effects. The one part of Buddhism is meditation. The Vipassana meditation technique improves the lives of executives and business managers by transforming their attitudes. Prejudice is replaced by compassion; jealousy changes into joy at the success of others; greed and arrogance are replaced by generosity and humility, and so on.

This transformation of attitude results in stress reduction, and mental equanimity and balance. It is a creative force capable of inducing a dynamic work approach in subordinate staff. The positive change is brought about by a change in the attitude and actions of the executive-to polite and compassionate behavior, gentle speech, and a mind full of love and friendliness. This positive change in consciousness is the aim of genuine meditation practice, and it forms a new and advanced basis for business and industrial management. Business management is presently judged by profits or "money-making" ability.

Managers are evaluated by their ability to make more money by increasing product turnover, developing new technologies with better payoffs, or decreasing costs through new inventions. In return, they want higher salaries and more requisites. Although there is nothing inherently wrong with generating profits and an increase in incomes, the real aim of an economic venture is to create a wealth which combines money with health and happiness. Vipassana makes a significant contribution towards improving the mental health and happiness of individuals-vital components of wealth. Vipassana meditation is a surgical operation of the mind. When practiced properly the pace of purification can be dramatically increased. The technique frees one's mind from greed.

A healthy mind is alert and capable of meeting the demands of a situation. It naturally comes out of addictions and indulgences. The practice of Vipassana results in the diminishment 'of craving. A business conducted with the base of such a mind would have resulted in the growth of the textile industry rather than creating sick production units. The Vipassana technique does not create by itself a new technology of management. It contributes to the improvement of management by correcting the root of the problem-impurity of mind-so that a business is continually nourished by the pure food of right thoughts and action.

It is excessive craving and greed which poison the minds of managers; this impurity is corrected by meditation. Vipassana also changes one's attitude towards competitors. When a business cuts out a competitor, there is a chain reaction: a vicious cycle starts. Many businesses have been ruined by this attitude. Vipassana purifies the mind and fills it with wisdom which enables the practitioner to appreciate that there is room for everyone to coexist. The purification resulting from Vipassana practice results, as it were, in fertile soil where seeds of healthy business management are nurtured.

The soil of healthy minds brings forth management practices where the primary aim is to generate peace and happiness in the society, with the secondary aim of generating money as a means for buying goods and services, and attaining economic emancipation and a higher quality of life.

(Mr. Shrestha can be reached at [maharshi1976@yahoo.com](mailto:maharshi1976@yahoo.com))



## Technology: "Computers in Nepali"

**- By Allen Tuladhar**

From: "allentuladhar2003" <[allentuladhar2003@yahoo.co.in](mailto:allentuladhar2003@yahoo.co.in)>

Date: Tue Apr 13, 2004 7:18am

Subject: Nepali in Computers

Hi:

As you might be aware, we have been awarded the contract to localize the Nepali version of Windows and Office under an agreement with Microsoft Corp., USA.

Please find an announcement of this in the form of a press release. Various information on this effort is available in <http://microsoft.unlimit.com>.

However, to ensure that we have discussion going on the various efforts for this inclusive of Nepali fonts, translation efforts, keyboard drivers, the spell-checker for Office suite of applications, Nepali glossary, sorting issues and all other issues, a discussion forum has been set up. Should this development be of interest to you, kindly do apply for membership to this group. The URL is <http://groups.msn.com/NepaliinComputers/homepage>.

Looking forward to ensure that we are able to compute in our own language in Nepali itself in future.

Regards,

**Allen Bailochan Tuladhar,**  
CEO,  
Unlimited NuMedia Pvt Ltd

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## Activities: "Protest rally in Washington DC"

**- By Anand Bist**

Hundreds of Nepali professionals, Nepali Organizations, students, human rights advocates, activists and friends of Nepal are planning to come together in Washington D.C. to demand for peaceful solutions to ongoing political crisis and to show our solidarity to on going anti regression protest in Nepal.

Democracy in Nepal must refrain from undemocratic conduct, and people living abroad must extend solidarity to those who are victims of human rights violations at the hands of undemocratic government.

The aim of this rally is to call on the United States Government, the Congress, International Community, Human Rights Agencies, friends of Nepal as well as Nepali democratic forces to find a peaceful solution to the critical political situation in Nepal.

Date: Friday, April 30, 2004

Place: Freedom Park  
South West of White House  
(15th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue)  
Time: 1:00 PM.

Place: Capitol Hill -U.S. Senate House (near the Water Tank)  
Time: 2:30 PM.

Place: Royal Nepali Embassy,  
2131 Leroy place NW Washington DC

If you have any question or need further information, please contact.

**Anand Bist,** 718-507-1393 res-917-864-2398 (mobile)  
**Shailesh Shrestha** 718-604-6804 res-6463342158 (mobile)  
**Somnath Ghimire** 718-472-2018 res 917-742-7566 (mobile)

More info available at: [www.ndycusa.org](http://www.ndycusa.org)

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**Announcement: "23rd ANMA ANNUAL CONVENTION"**

**Cultural Diversity in Nepali-American Unity**

2004 promises to be an exciting year for Columbus, as the host for two major cultural events. First, our city was brought into international limelight with Columbus Museum of Art's art exhibition: "The Circle of Bliss: Buddhist Meditational Art (February 5 - May 9), with 150 works of art from all over the world, that highlights the rarely-loaned national treasures from His Majesty's Government of Nepal. The second cultural event that we are very pleased to bring to is the 23rd Annual Conference of the Association of Nepalese in the Midwest America, for which Columbus has been selected as the host city based on its multicultural diversity. It is with great pleasure that the Nepali-American Organization in Ohio (NAOO) cordially requests the honor of your presence at this conference. The event will be held at Radisson Inn in Worthington during Memorial Day weekend (May 29 - 30, 2004).

The program, organized by NAOO, is hosted for the second time in Columbus, after eight years. It is designed to celebrate as well as to critically discuss educational, political, and cultural issues relevant to Nepal as well as Nepali-American experiences in the Midwest. The conference will be attended by several hundreds Nepalis as well as friends of the Nepali community from all over the United States. The events include a variety of cultural performances of dance, poetry readings, and drama and will bring interested writers, scholars, and artists in the community. Further, an exciting forum related to Nepal-US economic, political, and cultural partnerships would be part of this event.

Since the 1960s, thousands of Nepalis from the Himalayan kingdom have made central Ohio their home. The Nepali community has grown dramatically within the last decade, further adding to the multicultural nature of Columbus. Whether as civil servants, educators, small business owners, doctors or musicians, Nepali-Americans continue to actively participate in civic activities in Columbus. Members of Nepali-American community have been active in promoting issues on Nepal as well as the history and experiences of Nepali-Americans in local schools and organizations. We are confident that this event will enable us to share the rich cultural and ethnic heritage with the larger Columbus community.

Your presence during this event will be a true honor for the Nepali-Americans and a significance marker of celebrating Columbus' cultural diversity. We very much look forward to welcoming you at the event.

**Association of Nepalese in Midwest America (ANMA)**

Association of Nepalese in Midwest America (ANMA) is a social organization founded in 1982 in Chicago, Illinois for the Nepali immigrants, people of Nepali origin and the friends of Nepal in North America, particularly in the Midwest region of the United States. ANMA was subsequently incorporated as a non-profit tax-exempt organization in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1989. Since 1982, ANMA has been very active in serving needs of people of Nepali origin by organizing social and charitable activities, preserving and promoting Nepali culture, and providing platforms to discuss important issues related to Nepal and the concerns of the second generation Nepalis growing up in US.

Every year, ANMA organizes its annual Nepali Convention in different cities in the United States. The list of cities that have hosted ANMA conventions in the past include Chicago, Denver, Atlanta, Washington DC, Detroit, Cincinnati and Minneapolis.

The main objectives of ANMA Conventions are to preserve Nepali identity, culture, religion, languages and traditions. It also provides Nepali youth with opportunities to participate and compete in various sporting events such as Midwest soccer, basketball, table tennis and volleyball tournaments. Above all, it provides Nepalis and Friends of Nepal opportunities to meet, and to discuss and exchange ideas for mutual benefits.

Highlights of the convention

1. Intellectual Forums.
2. Youth and Women Issues.
3. Health Issues.
4. Immigration and Other Legal Issues.
5. Poetry Reading.
6. Fund-Raising for ANMA Charitable projects.
7. Honoring People for Service to Nepal and Nepalis.
8. Cultural Programs.
9. Sports Tournaments (Soccer, Volleyball, Table Tennis).

Special Features

1. NRN Issues leading to formation of a National Coordinating Committee of NRNs - coordinated by NAC (Nepalese Americas Council).
2. Presentation on Development Works in Nepal by SEBS.

This year, the Nepali-American Organization in Ohio (NAOO) is hosting the 23rd ANMA Convention in Columbus, Ohio, a beautiful Midwest City.

Date: Saturday May 29 - Sunday, May 30, 2004  
 Venue: Radisson Hotel Worthington (\$69.99/Night)  
 Registration: \$60.00 (\$5.00 discount if registered by May 5)

Please mention "ANMA" Code to receive Convention Discount at the Hotel  
 For more info please visit our website  
[http://www.anmausa.org\(Organizer\)](http://www.anmausa.org(Organizer))  
[http://www.naoo.org\(Host\)](http://www.naoo.org(Host))

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### Announcement: "Sur-Sudha visiting US"

**By Dr. Jeet. Joshee**

The Nepali Contemporary/Classical music group Sur Sudha is finally visiting the United States of America this coming summer. Efforts were made through NAC to get them a P (performance) visa to come here.

There are about 10 concerts scheduled throughout the United States, schedule of which will be informed later on. All the proceeds (after all expenses) from the concerts will go towards the construction of the Briddhashram Project in Devighat Nepal. We all know of the significance of this project as you all have already helped raise funds for it.

Thank you all.

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### Reflections from a decade back: "WOMEN IN THE VEDIC AGE"

("Reflections from a decade back" is a regular feature of rejuvenated TND. Pramod Pandey compiles this section from materials published approximately 10 years ago. - Ed)

**Compiled by: Pramod Pandey**

Originally from: S.P., Massachussettes, USA  
 Date: June 13, 1994  
 Source: INDEPENDANT RESEACH STUDIES  
 Subject: The Vedic women: An Objective Analysis

#### **WOMEN IN THE VEDIC AGE: THE INFLUENCE OF THE RIGVEDA AND THE PROBLEMS WITH A VEDIC HISTORY**

In today,s world, the Hindu religion has acquired a reputation as a sexist and cruel religion, promoting the live burning of women-sati. But before slandering this religion that the south people of Asia have been living by for centuries, an excavation of its past and origins cast a new light on the position women held in prehistoric times . The Rigveda, the earliest text the religion is based on, draws a

grand picture of the glorious life daughters, wives and sisters enjoyed, yet still does not answer the question as to what extent this literature was practiced.

The Hindu religion developed out of the four Vedas; Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda. Of these, the Rigveda is not only the most ancient literary monument amongst the world's living religions but also the most important Veda upon which the religion is based. Since 1500 B.C., the text has been handed down, though for centuries orally, with the most painstaking care, so that since that time, nearly 3000 years ago, it has suffered no changes whatever. This is why it is regarded as such a significant model upon which to draw the ancient history of East Asian civilization. The hymns that have survived from that period also contribute to the construction of the past. Unfortunately these are the only materials available to us and therefore predictions about the lifestyle and society of that time is a some what vague estimation.

The Vedas consist of a number of hymns, mainly addressed to gods and some to the few goddesses the Aryans worshipped. Amongst them is Aditi, identified with the earth. She is supposed to free those who worship her from sin and suffering. She is the mother of the world, or of common nature. Described with the tenderness of a mother and the brilliance of the light during the dawn, she hold the power to forgive and protect.

The pastoral Aryans, who practiced the ancient Hindu religion, were also agriculturists and hunters. In the words of Romesh C. Dutt, "Agriculture was the principal industry of the Indo-Aryans forty centuries ago, as it is of their descendants in the present day. It is believed that the name Arya which the race gave themselves comes from the root Ar , which means to till, as if the civilized Aryans wished to distinguish themselves by this name from barbarians who lived by hunting or pasture." The soil and mud upon which they worked their bare hands into, raised their families on and regarded as a mother to them was personified as Prithivi. Hymns written to her are illustrious in praise and asking her for her graciousness upon them so that their crops may grow and flourish under her blessings. "She quickens the soil, for she scatters rain, and the showers of heaven are shed from the lighting of her cloud. She is great, firm and shining....."

Sarasvati, the goddess who will protect you and conquer your enemies is described as follows, "She is the best of Mothers, of rivers and of goddesses" (R.V. 2.41.16). She is personified as the rivers, the waters that give and creates life, water in which the Aryans washed their sins and fertilized the earth.

Besides these maternal figures, such as mother earth, mother of the world and best of Mothers, are also representations of beauty, sensuality and promiscuity amongst the goddesses. Usas, the goddess of dawn, had many lovers- Agni, Surya, Pusan and the Asvins. Her beauty inspired the poets and her strength warded off the evil spirits in the night.

Besides the goddesses mentioned above, there were many others. Sita, the heroine of the Ramayana, is mentioned in the Vedas as the field furrow who produced the crops.

Hinduism is one of the few religions that worship the goddess in more forms than that of the feminine mother. In sacred scriptures is sometimes found a goddess called a father or a son (A.V.7.6.1) ; likewise, a masculine divinity may have the appellation "mother". Undoubtedly the authors of the Vedas had great respect for the female role in society. The society also did not hesitate worshipping a goddess in the same respect as a god. For the simple farmer and shepherds, he had much more to gain by pleasing the female Prithivi, Sarasvati and Aditi who represented nature than Indra the warrior and leader of many battles. Even though there were some goddesses who gained their identity as the wife of a god, many had their own distinct personalities, independent of any of the other male gods. The people obviously respected the independence of women and therefore worshipped them in the image of the tender and physically weaker sex- women.

It is suspected that about 20 of the authors of the Rigveda were women. Some of these may have been mythical personages; but internal evidence shows that Lopamudra, Visvavara, Sakata Nivavari and Ghosha, the authors of the Rigveda 1.197, V.28, VIII.91, IX.81. 11-20 and Z.39 and 40 respectively, were women in flesh and blood, who once lived in Hindu society. Undoubtedly these women were great scholars for them to have been praised by society yet none of their work survived the wheel of time for us to make our own judgements on. Besides these women's work, a few poems written by women poets are available, leading to the conclusion that education was not denied to women.

Women students were divided into two classes, Brahmavadinis and Sadyodvahas. The former were lifelong students of theology and philosophers; the latter used to prosecute their studies till their

marriage at the age of 15 or 16. During the eight or nine years that were thus available to them for study, they used to learn by heart the Vedic hymns prescribed for the daily and periodical prayers which, like men, they used to offer regularly both morning and evening. Brahmadivinis used to aim at a very high excellence in scholarship. Besides the Vedas, many of them used to specialize in Purvamimamsaa which discussed the diverse problems connected with Vedic sacrifices.

To be able to study such sensitive doctrines that opposed the Vedic tradition, discussion must have constituted a major portion of their education. Therefore public speaking amongst men must also have been a common procedure for these women. There were lady scholars termed as Kasakritsnas who studied the Kasakritsni. Undoubtedly there existed a fairly large number of female scholars in society to have been able to generate the need to create a special word to describe them. When the term Kasakritsnas is used in the Vedas, it is used with dignity, imposing no form of impudence or disrespect to these women who were bold enough to challenge some of the preachings in the Rigveda and found pleasure in intellectual pursuits.

Another instance when the presence of women in a certain field generated the introduction of a new word was women teachers who came to be known as Upadhyayanis or Upadhyayas. Some practiced the career out of interest and some due to necessity. Though not all of them were highly educated, they still were able to obtain this very high and worshipped position in society as the giver of knowledge. If both male and female students and their parents had enough regard for these women to accept the knowledge that they provided, women were definitely embodiments of intelligence in Aryan society.

But the question that arises is - exactly how many women became scholars compared to men? The education standards were the same: during the period of studentship (brahmacharya), the student was required to leave his/her family and home to live with the teacher (acharya) and acquire as much knowledge as possible. But this accommodation was not very convenient for women and therefore most of them would acquire education from their fathers, brothers at home and stop when they came to marriageable age. The number of women acharyas was not very great and when one was available, the parents may have sent their daughters to study with them. Very few actually went forward and pursued further education.

In terms of marriage, was an educated women attractive? The Atharvaveda observes that a maiden can succeed in her marriage only if she has been properly trained during the period of studentship. Yet verse 17 of Rigveda 8.33 say, "Her intellect hath little weight" . What education for a girl is considered appropriate? What kind of an education did they receive, was it to learn the domestic household duties only? Did the lady scholars suffer scorn and rejection from the men when it came to marriage? These questions that come up, remain unanswered just by looking at the literature of that time only. The extent of women's liberty is vague.

When it came to marriage, the young women had the freedom to choose their husbands. The approval of the father or of the eldest brother in the absence of the father, was usually practiced though it was not a requirement for the marriage. Arranged marriages were practiced if the bride and bridegroom both were willing. The young people would socialize and met at sacrificial gatherings, festivals and weddings. Sometimes the mothers would even encourage them and offer advice. Courtship was not uncommon and relationships before marriage was not condemned. This is seen in much of the poetry written by men wooing women. But the extent of the relationship is yet another unanswered question. Did it even involve the freedom of premarital sex or were they only brief encounters to acquaint each other before actually taking marriage vows?

Dampati, the vedic word for the couple etymologically means the joint owners of the house. Both husband and wife were considered equal partners in the household. However, reality usually is different than theoretical solutions provided. In actual practice, however, joint government or dyarchy, with absolutely equal rights and privileges to either half, is an impossibility in all spheres of life. Domestic government is no exception to this rule. Discord, disorder and deadlocks will arise in domestic management on some occasions if the husband and the wife are each allowed an absolutely equal power, and happen to possess conflicting and opposing views. To resolve these deadlocks, ultimate supreme authority has to be given to one of the two parties.

In the Indian patriarchal society we can assume that it was the husband who gained this privilege. When a new bride enters her new home, she is received with pride and high status. In the new home the young wife is subject to her husband, but at the same time mistress of the farm-laborers and slaves and of parents and brothers-in-law.

Over thy husband's father and thy husband's mother bear full sway. Over the sister of thy loar, over his brothers rule supreme.R.V. 10.85.46.

She enters the family to rule and not as an object of subjection and slavery. The marriage vows that the bride and bridegroom take are both the same, thus the woman is not committed to utter obedience to her husband. The marriage is a two way alliance, the woman is not the only one required to remain faithful to her wedding vows nor is she a servant to her in-laws commands. She is the matron, the one that holds the family together and takes care of the finances as well as raising the family. The husband's duty is to provide for the family and in these respects is considered less significant compared to the mother's duties. Thus the women maintained more importance in the family in certain respects.

Another aspect of the importance of a wife was with regards to sacrificial customs. Amongst the humble classes every householder was the priest of his family, lighted the sacrificial fire, gave offerings and libations and recited the sacrificial hymns. Women prepared the Soma-libations and joined their husbands in the sacrifices, some even composed hymns. The Yajamana, the one who performs the sacrifices, offers his prayers with his wife together. The duty of chanting musically the Sama songs seems to have been usually performed by the wife. Sacrifice was very important amongst the people in the Vedic Era because it was considered the door to salvations. Thus it was also important to have a wife to help with the ceremonies. But even though the wives took part in the rituals side by side with their husbands, it can be observed that their role is not one of importance and the sacrifices could be carried out by the man alone without the help of a women.

Child marriage was not practiced because a girl was not fit for marriage until she could accept her husband in her private bedroom immediately after marriage. This would be around the age of 16. Because of the minimum marriageability age, elderly men marrying young girls was also not observed. Though dowry was discredited, it was sometimes secretly entertained, especially when the women had a physical disability. But even though marriage was sought for both men and women, it was not forced upon at any cost and thus purchase of a bridegroom was not highly regarded. The Vedic literature often refers to the spinster; amajuh one who grows old in one's parent's house, is the significant expression used to denote an old maid. It is found that sometimes, the suitor would have to please the woman's father by gifts to gain his approval.

Yet the problem encountered is that the women never actually enjoyed utter independence. First they were under the mercy of their father or elder brother and then their husband: the female figure was always dominated by a masculine figure. Marriage was the preferred goal and bachelorhood was usually only observed when the maiden was unable to secure a husband.

(To the widow of the deceased)

"Rise, come to the world of the living, O woman! He is lifeless by whose side thou liest. Become the wife of him who holds thee by the hand and who wishes to be thy husband. Rigveda, X.18, 7 to 11

This line from the Rigveda indicating that the widow is lying besides her dead husband suggests that there had been an earlier time when the cruel tradition of sati had been practiced. But now, in the Vedic era, the unfortunate women is asked to leave the deceased and find a new husband. A woman's life did not end with her husband. In fact remarriage after the death of the husband was frequently practiced. This power to find themselves a second life partner prevented them from being left at the mercy of her relatives. This and the fact that no dowry was needed led people to believe that a daughter in the family was not a burden.

The general society practiced monogamy, mainly due to financial reasons; the husband's duty was to provide and the average everyday Aryan man could not support two spouses. Even the Vedic gods were monogamous. But in the upper class rich and ruling section of society, often a man would have more than one wife. The kings and nobles often found it a useful instrument in strengthening their political power by contracting numerous but judicious matrimonial alliances. Polygamy was a means to express wealth which puts the women in the position of objects of display. So it might be said that women were more valued as individuals in the lower and poorer class.

Daughters were less unpopular during this era because they could be initiated in Vedic studies and were entitled to offer sacrifices to gods; sons were not absolutely necessary for this purpose (Later the importance of ancestor-worship increased and sons alone were regarded as eligible for offering oblations to the manes; daughters could not perform this very important religious duty). However, a son was always preferred over a daughter. The Veda describes methods of avoiding the birth of a

daughter and always blesses the wife with the birth of many sons and grandsons. The arrival of the daughter was not celebrated as the arrival of a son, but was accepted.

Women could not gain power through wealth either. After the death of the husband the wife took care of the property, but it still belonged to the sons. If she did not have any sons then it would go to the relative burdened with taking care of her. Thus the wife did not receive property from her parents or her own house. The unmarried daughter was entitled to a small share of her father's inheritance to enable her to make a living but this was only granted to old maids. If the father died while she was still at an early age, it was taken for granted that she would marry and so she was left at the mercy of her eldest brother with nothing to support herself should she chose not to marry.

Even if there were no sons in the family, the inheritance went to the sons or grandsons of the daughter. Brotherless maidens were not very desirable to marry because of the fear that the father-in-laws might want to name the son-in-laws their heir and thus cause these men to lose their right to their own father's properties. To avoid such situations adoptions were sometimes practiced but not desired.

The history drawn from the Veda is very ambiguous. It is literature and often it tends to be glorified. How much we can rely on it as evidence to predict our history is very difficult. A lot of studies regarding the Vedic Era were done during the early 20th century in India during the colonial rule. One of the methods the colonialists used to degrade the nationalists was demonstrating the peculiarities of Hindu civilization, and the barbaric practices pertaining to women. In turn the nationalists searched for a glamorous Hindu past to identify with and found it in the Vedic age. But the motive behind their search could have over garnished the era and provided a misleading notion about the "lost glory". The history of the Aryan civilization has also been affected by the fact that many German historians looking for a glamorous past interpreted the Vedas, since they are of Aryan origins too. But I think it is possible to say that the women in the ancient Hindu society enjoyed much more privileges than most of the other religions of today at that time. Even though we don't know exactly how the society functioned, we have an idea as to how people respected the feminine figure in the form of goddesses.

Another problem with commenting on the position of women is that the Vedic age only talks about the upper class society, mainly consisting of the Aryan settlers. The situation of the aborigines of the Indus river who were conquered by the Euro-Aryan people is not mentioned. Most of what we assume about the women in the Vedic age is about only the wives and daughters of the Aryans.

One of the ironies of the situation is the fact that women were not permitted to attend the Sabha (assembly), yet "Assembly" is personified as the daughter of Prajapati ( title for some of the gods like Purusha, Indra, Savitri and Soma). This gives the impression that not all that was preached in the Vedas was actually practiced in reality.

The feminine figure of the Vedic age is one under recent controversy. Our search for a glorious past to which we could look up to lead to the unravelling of the past, but also blinded us with high expectations. The liberation of women in our ancient histories is something we would like to associate with, but the solution is unfortunately not a very clear one. Can we truly say that Hindu society has deteriorated into a more conservative and sexist religion? Such questions are ones that we are still searching the answer for that as we look deeper into the past, we uncover more of the truth. Regretfully, this Vedic period was so long ago that there is very little evidence left to be explored and our search for our complete past will forever remain somewhat of a mystery.

-S.P. Massachussettes, USA  
June 9th, 1994



## Literature >> Poem: "Clear Water"

- *By Manjul*

water  
virginity's face

water  
the eyes of a woman raped

water  
a child snatched from death's bony mouth  
held in warm arms

water  
the baby lying fearlessly  
in mother's lap

water  
truth's truth  
life's life

does this water  
turn its gaze on you  
as it does on me?



मिठो बेइमानी  
रातको रोचक रंगिन काखमा  
निर्धक्क निर्बस्त्र निदाउनु अघि,  
रात संगै रमाएर रातको रेशमी  
अंगालो भित्र बाधिनु अघि,  
अध्यारो को आकस्मिक आगमनमा  
अन्कनाएको आजको अनुहार भरि  
सुर्यास्तको लाली अझै बाकी देखिन्छ,  
सुर्य संग बिदा भए पछि जहिले पनि  
“ आज” धेरैबेर सम्म गाला भरि रातिने गर्छ,  
रात पोखिएर अध्यारो फैलिनु अघि  
आकाश भरि क्षितिज भरि  
सूर्यले पोखेको मादक दृष्टि  
रातको काखमा जानेबेला सम्मका लागि  
आजका आंखा, ओठ र अंग अंगहरु  
मताउन सफल हुन्छन,  
आजलाइ रातको काखसम्म  
पुर्याउने बाटो बताउन सफल हुन्छन,  
आफ्नो अगाडि आएको आज  
देह देह बिना सन्देह रातलाइ स्वीकार्य हुन्छ,  
प्रभातसंग आउने आफ्नो प्रियतमको  
  
प्रतिक्षा भरि भए पनि  
आफुभित्र अरु कसैको छवि छिपेकै भए पनि  
रातलाइ झुठो मायामा झुक्याएर  
रात प्रति फेरि एकपल्ट “आज”  
अलिकति बेइमान भैदिन्छ,  
फेरिपनि “आज”ले रातप्रति  
मीठो बेइमानी गरिदिन्छ।

भारती गौतम



## What World is Writing About Nepal?

- By TND Team

Sudha Ramachandran wrote on **Asia Times** under "Nepal cashes in on cannabis"

"Districts like Parsa, Bara and Mahottari of the southern plains are the largest producers of cannabis." .... "Drug money, they say, is financing the Maoists' weapon purchases."

(Full article at [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South\\_Asia/FD21Df05.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/FD21Df05.html))

.....

Chitra Tiwari wrote on **The Washington Times** under "Nepal's political crisis continues unabated"

"King Gyanendra, however, does not seem concerned. He continues to visit district headquarters, where his supporters organize welcomes. His nonchalance at a time of crisis has led some commentators to compare him to the Emperor Nero, who "fiddled while Rome burned."

.....

David Rohde wrote on **The New York Times** under "Katmandu Asks: Is Gyanendra Smoking as Nepal Burns?"

"Frankly, we don't know what he wants," said a senior Indian diplomat here. "He has managed to create a two-front war for himself." ....

"He tells us that he's a strong backer of constitutional monarchy, of multiparty democracy," Mr. Malinowski said. "I think everybody is concerned that there is a drift."

(<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/04/25/international/asia/25NEPA.html>)

(Dear readers, please send us an article published by foreign media to be included under this section. Email to [contact@theNepalDigest.org](mailto:contact@theNepalDigest.org) -Ed.)

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