

The Nepal Digest

The First Nepali e-Magazine

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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 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. The TND team appreciates your support.

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Editorial

By Ujjwal Bhattarai

Dear Readers:

Welcome to the August 2003 issue of TND (The Nepal Digest).

The "Blackout 2003", a power outage that affected more than 50 million people in East Coast of US and parts of Canada, was an unique experience. The inability to turn on light, to cook food, and to operate trains, street lights, ATMs, or AC was inlightening to many in some sense who have forgotten how dependent we are on modern amenities these days.

It reminds us of Ezra Pound, an American poet, who once said "Man is an over-complicated organism. If he is doomed to extinction he will die out for want of simplicity".

From our motherland: The peace-talk is once again at the cross-roads and we want to remind both parties that Nepalese people demand that it bear some peaceful and lasting outcome.

Enjoy fresh TND!

Ujjwal Bhattarai
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Food for thought: Quotes from Jamling Tenzing Norgay's book "Touching my father's soul"

"Mikaru ['white eyes' or Westerners] ar much like cattle. They are happy wandering about aimlessly all day long..., they are constantly getting sick..., and you have to lead them by nose over difficult terrain or they'll fall off the trail... But if you feed them well, they'll produce a lot of rich milk for you." - Sherpa Woman

"You don't conquer Everest -- you sneak up on it and then get the hell outta there" -Ed Viesturs

Both Quotes from Jamling Tenzing Norgay's book "Touching my father's soul"

News: Diversity Program (DV-2005) becomes electronic DV

The congressionally mandated Diversity Immigrant Visa Program is administered on an annual basis by the Department of State and conducted under the terms of Section 203(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Section 131 of the Immigration Act of 1990 (Pub. L. 101-649) amended INA 203 to provide for a new class of immigrants known as "diversity immigrants" (DV immigrants). The Act makes available 50,000 permanent resident visas annually to persons from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States.

The annual DV program makes permanent residence visas available to persons meeting the simple, but strict, eligibility requirements. Applicants for Diversity Visas are chosen by a computer-generated random lottery drawing. The visas, however, are distributed among six geographic regions with a greater number of visas going to regions with lower rates of immigration, and with no visas going to citizens of countries sending more than 50,000 immigrants to the U.S. in the past five years. Within each region, no one country may receive more than seven percent of the available Diversity Visas in any one year.

ENTRIES FOR THE DV-2005 DIVERSITY VISA LOTTERY MUST BE SUBMITTED **ELECTRONICALLY** BETWEEN SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2003 AND TUESDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2003. APPLICANTS MAY ACCESS THE ELECTRONIC DIVERSITY VISA ENTRY FORM AT 'WWW.DVLOTTERY.STATE.GOV' DURING THE 60 DAY REGISTRATION PERIOD BEGINNING NOVEMBER 1. PAPER ENTRIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Visit www.travel.state.gov for more info.

Letter to Editor: New Nepali Website By Sujan Gautam

Dear Editor:

We have recently setup a website (www.nepalforum.org) dedicated for the purpose of discussion on political activities in Nepal (and world). We intend to make this website a premier venue to discuss politics and also establish it an authentic source to report Indie news from Nepal. At this time participation is very important to help the website grow and ultimately fulfill its purpose of being 'the premier venue to discuss politics in Nepal'. So, I would like to request you to announce about the website to your audience.

TND has been a great resource for Nepali ex pats and you have a good host of intellectual contributors and readers. Your audience's comments would be an asset to our website.

The website is being hosted with the generous help of online policy group (www.onlinepolicy.net) and it is non profit. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Sujan Gautam

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Immigration Q&A: By Ramesh Shrestha, Attorney-at-law (3 Q&A in this issue)

(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. 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. TND sincerely thanks and appreciates Mr. Shrestha's contribution. - Editor)

There are 4 Q&A in this issue:

Q.1. Barkha from India asks,

I am an Indian citizen and want to permanently settle down in Nepal, how can i go about it?

Dear Barkha:

As far as I understand, Indian citizens do not need to obtain a visa to stay in Nepal pursuant to a treaty between Nepal and India. You can stay in Nepal indefinitely provided you prove that you are a citizen of India. If your plan is more than just living in Nepal, it is my recommendation that you consult a lawyer in Nepal. Good luck.

Q2. Niraj from the United States asks,

Ramesh dai:

I am currently in f1 status and gradated in computer science. My relative has a gas station and he is an American citizen. Is it possible if he sponser me as his employee, can I get green card?

Niraj Bhai:

Employment based petition is one of the ways to obtain a permanent resident status. A U.S. employer can file a petition for a foreign national to work for him/her by establishing that:

- 1) It is a bonafide employer.
- 2) The business is in operation which can offer a full-time job to the alien. In other words, the job offer is bonafide.
- 3) The alien is adequately qualified for the job based on his/her educational background and experience. The alien's qualification is directly related to the job offered.
- 4) The employment of the alien will not impose an adverse impact on the American workforce. In other words, the hiring of the foreign national will not displace a qualified, willing and interested US worker.
- 5) The employer has ability to pay the offered salary.

If you think your relative employer and you can meet the above requirements, you can be sponsored. Considering the facts that you are an IT graduate and your prospective employer owns a gas station, it appears, first you will have a problem in satisfying the #3 requirement of the above. However, if you are independently qualified for the offered position based on your other qualification and experience, you might want to explore the possibility.

Good luck.

Q3. Nisha from United States asks,

Hello Ramesh Dai:

I am working on a H1B status. My position at my office recently got promoted from Software Engineer to Senior Project Engineer. My H- B still entitles me as Software Engineer.

Do I have to get a new H1? If so, what are the procedures? Your suggestion is much appreciated. Thanks in advance.

Nisha ji:

It appears that there is a change in employment. Minor changes in job duties or salary increase do not require a new petition, only material changes do. A promotion to a higher position within the same occupation would not normally require filing an amended new petition provided the applicant utilize the same academic training. A new H-1B petition must be filed if 1) place of employment is changed if the change would invalidate the LCA; 2) change of person's duties from one specialty occupation to another; 3) material change in the terms and conditions of employment. It is important that you check the foregoing factors and see which one is applicable to your case. You are advised to act accordingly.

Regards,

Q4. Anand from the United States asks:

Hello Ramesh dai,

I am a permanent residence here in the state and been here for about 4 years and 8 months. My girlfriend is in nepal and i want to bring her here somehow. What is the quickest way to bring her here. Should i go to nepal and get married and file for the dependent or should i wait and get my citizenship first and apply for a fiancee visa for her. How long it takes to get a citizenship and how long is the process for Fiancee visa. I would greatly appreciate your help.

Anand Ji:

You are just a legal permanent resident (LPR), therefore, you cannot file a fiance petition for your girl friend. Only a US citizen can file a fiance (K-1) petition. However, you can marry her and can file a relative petition for her. But it will take a long time to get her here through this petition. Thus, it does

not look good for you at this time. Since you are very close to satisfying the residency requirement for naturalization, perhaps, it will be better for you to go for naturalization first. Once you become a US citizen, situation will be more favorable to you. You can file a fiance petition or a relative petition depending on your marital status. The processing time for a relative petition filed by a US citizen is much less than that of an LPR relative petition. The processing time for a naturalization application and fiance visa petition varies from region to region.

Ramesh 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: "Crooks out, crooks in" By Vijaya K. Sigdel

More than fifty years since the first, and thirteen years after the second revolution, Nepal is still refusing to change. Instead of passing from one epoch to another, not only decades but also centuries have co-existed here. The locomotive of change that is accelerating around the globe has yet to find it's way to Nepal. Our existence appears more intertwined with the past than with our destiny; or, perhaps we simply cannot escape our past to initiate a better future. The progressive forces have been fighting a perpetual battle with the reactionary forces ... and have gained precious little success.

We will not understand this phenomenon of lacking vicissitudes in our country until we comprehend the chemistry of our social fiber. The powerfully entrenched force has shaped our history and culture, continues to determine our wretched backwardness. These forces have also conditioned our worldview, behavior and perception of one another. They have molded the ways we behave, structured our relationships with one another and the world around us. Not only have these forces corrupted our culture; they have corrupted our very minds, crippling generations. This may conceivably explain why we seem so utterly powerless to transform our society.

The crux of our country's problems is the unfairly structured social system that stifles all movement towards progress. One doesn't have to be a genius to understand our country's social base. The Royal Family and a few elite interests always come first. Secondly, a sizeable number of semi-feudal lords, politicians and businessmen's penchant for opulent lifestyles take precedent over the vast number of our society's impoverished people. These reactionary elements maintain a symbiotic relationship with the Royal Palace in order to enhance their own power and fortunes at the people's expense. By using the Palace's power and influence, these skillful manipulators acquire things that they cannot otherwise achieve through Singha Durbar. As a result of this socially blighted relationship, the institution of the Monarchy is propelled to be regressive whereas our society has been driven into the vicious circle of degeneration. And, not surprisingly, the Nepali people have always come a distant third. Now, under democracy, unless this order is reversed, the magnificent words of the Constitution that the "sovereignty rests on the people" are in danger of remaining a hollow dream and shallow promise for us - thus, turning the Constitution into just another document. It is clear that our power elite are ignorant of John F. Kennedy's exhortation: "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable...If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich."

Unless and until we put the people first in our thinking, planning and actions, and make democracy a reality for all the people in every sense - political, economic and social - we are bound to encounter crises of unimaginable complexities. If we fail to restructure our society with utmost urgency, Kennedy's prophecy is destined to come true in Nepal. When it does, democracy will completely collapse and Nepal will plunge into a dark abyss of injustice for many years to come, if not indefinitely. We will fail, not because the enemy of democracy will overpower us, but because we will have failed to make a total commitment to radically transform our country's social, economic, and political landscape, thus making it more humane, just and equitable.

It is abundantly clear that establishment forces aren't interested in any meaningful change or in moving the country forward. They still refuse to accept the fact that Nepal has entered a new era in which the elite must learn that they can no longer demand more than their fair share. The guardians of the status quo - the powerfully entrenched, the rich and comfortable, the privileged and bureaucrats - are making certain that, even under democracy, the butter solely falls on their bread. A privileged few are getting richer while the vast majority of the poor are falling into more desperate situations. The

majority of the people never get any opportunities; for them it is forever those tantalizing promises of bholi bholi, parkha and heraula, which always mean "never." As one prominent jurist put it, "Justice too long delayed is justice denied." This has been our national tragedy throughout our history. One of the giants of the literary world, Victor Hugo, wrote: "There was always more misery in the lower class than there was humanity in the upper class." Almost two centuries later and halfway around the world, Hugo's words echo the plight of most Nepalese. Our own painful experience throughout history has also taught us that the privileged classes never give up their power and privilege voluntarily; the masses must demand it.

The King's decision to assume executive power was clearly intended to circumvent democracy and maintain privilege by the Royalty and their lickspittles. The appointment of Mr. Chand and subsequently of Mr. Thapa, as Prime Ministers, were simply clever attempts to beguile the public and keep this arrangement intact. As far as the people are concerned, Mr. Thapa doesn't even pass the smell test, never mind the Constitutional test. If it is an improvement over the previous appointment, Mr. Thapa's sole virtue is cunningness while Mr. Chand is simply known as a dimwit. What these two men have in common is that both of them have, at best, a dubious past. Replacing one set of crooks with another is bound to intensify rather than solve the present political and constitutional crisis. In fact, it is one of the saddest commentaries in our history. When he forced Mr. Chand out, the King had the opportunity to unify the country by bringing the leaders of the major political parties into the government. In the face of Nepal's present grave crisis, we need a government that is equal to the challenge of time; the King has appointed a prime minister who cannot even form a government, much less govern.

It is also a sad irony because the King is considered to be a very intelligent person, but he has utterly failed to grasp the political development and the gravity of the current perils in Nepal. The cost of his brinkmanship will be enormous to the country. He would have helped the country and himself had he asked a few questions before appointing anyone of the ex-Panchas: If these people were so good and honest, why is the condition of the country so bad? What did they do during 30 years of the Panchayat System that is worth noting? How are these people, who plundered the country, brutalized the people and were responsible, in large measure, for the pathetic situation the country is in today, going to pull us from the abyss? What makes Mr. Thapa uniquely qualified? What did Mr. Thapa do, or even say, during his long political career in the Panchayat System, that can in some measure be highlighted positively? How did the ex-Panchas become so rich while the rest of the country lives under crushing poverty?

I am afraid that none of these questions can be answered in a positive light. Instead, Mr. Thapa epitomizes with what is wrong in Nepal today. Realistically, he fits the description of Robert Frost's hired man: "and nothing to look backward to with pride, and nothing to look forward to with hope." Mr. Thapa was the master of corruption, nepotism and patronage during the brutal Panchayat System. Even when he was prime minister for a brief period a few years back under the democratic system, he created a special position in each of our embassies abroad and shamelessly appointed his relatives and cronies.

If justice had ever seen the light of day in Nepal, Mr. Thapa would be facing a different outcome in life today. But we live in a country where righteousness and justice have never been a part of our consciousness. We maybe the only country in the world where no ethical or moral standards are required to hold positions of high public office. Instead, the government has been a revolving door for the biggest crooks in the country. We might as well hang up a sign saying: "No honest person need apply."

Apparently, it is not surprising that Mr. Thapa was appointed prime minister. He certainly has the credentials and temerity for saving a failing regime; he did that in 2036 and he hopes to do it again. He has brought his old band of master thieves to the cabinet to accomplish this task. Now we are supposed to support it and believe that these people will restore democracy and peace, and conduct free and fair elections in the country. Let us not kid ourselves, it is not going to happen.

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Politics: Ceasefire and Maoists Talks By Kamala Sarup

The over-all situation in Nepal seems to have considerably improved now, because the atmosphere of intense fear has gradually changed into that of hope. If the general expectation of people for lasting

peace could be transformed into reality, Nepal could once again be a land of unmatched natural beauty with for ever cheerful, friendly and hospitable people.

The cease-fire, or the temporary agreement to stop the use of arms, between the government forces and the Maoists is indeed a very welcome political phenomenon. If the fighting parties do not come to terms, they might go back to violent means again and again, but we must always strive for solution, conclusion and ultimate peace again and again. We have a deep desire that this time around there will be no break down of talks and a true and lasting peace will be achieved, for we know not only the two fighting adversaries, but all the neutral innocent people of Nepal want the nation to be free, prosperous and happy. And to be truly free and really prosperous and happy, we require an open democratic atmosphere of mutual understanding, toleration and cooperation. We must have peace to achieve this kind of democratic goal in which every individual and group has an equal opportunity of participation in the administration.

As far as the 1990 constitution is concerned, it is in deed a good one, but no constitution can be and should be made totally rigid and for all time. Like the people and their needs, like the trimes and their demands everything is in a flux and the constitution is also not above and beyond the universal law of change. The existing constitution should not come in the way of joining hands between brothers and sisters, nor as an impediment to time-honoured change. If we proudly advocate the sovereignty of the people, we must also without any reservation recognize their exclusive right of amending the constitution according to their needs.

Maoists can openly discuss their concepts and ideology and participate in popular democratic activities. It is good to be able to do so without taking recourse to violent means. Peaceful means are more convincing to the people, stronger and ever lasting. They have got this opportunity, which, I feel, they will not let go in the heat of their ideological sentiment. Armed struggle or the use of arms can succeed not only in Nepal, but anywhere in the world, if it is launched under an able commander. History has an ample proof of it. But it is not a question of overthrowing a regime or conquering a country. The main issue is the achievement of peace, security, progress and prosperity for our nation. We love Nepal and the Nepalese people. Our main objective is and should be a free and fearless life for us all.

Democracy is another name for the emancipation of the common people and also equal opportunity for all the citizens. Our ultimate goal is to achieve true democracy and to achieve that goal for the happiness of all our people, we should let al ideas, all concepts and all philosophies to have an interplay for the free selection and adoption in which every individual and every section of our people will have an easy access and willing participation for a better tomorrow. As our political systems are incapable and far too short-sighted to address the basic moral questions, which have significant impact on Nepal's political stability and prosperity.

If our leaders fail to lead the moral crusade for justice and human dignity, if they fail to enunciate the essentially humane of politics, the oppressed, the deprived, the humiliated, and the dispossessed will chosen to forget the humaneness of politics, but will use its solidarity it entails for violence. If politics does not become part of the solution, it will motivate hate so trust and peaceful dialogue is essential at various levels. First, there must be dialogue among political leaders equally important is dialogue among people, among leaders, among scholars, and among lay people.

Different political parties should support democratic pluralistic society and peaceful political transition to democracy should increases opportunities for individuals and groups to interact politically with the government to achieve major political changes. We do not know the position of the political parties which have different attitudes and different ways of thinking according to their preferences and often whims. In our society people only talk about their rights and find themselves conscious about their position. They do not think in the larger interest of nation-building which is not an easy task. We do not think we have an important responsibility to our nation. If nation survives we are there if it is not there where we are going to find ourselves? One thing our leaders should remember: democratic ideals may not be yielding any reasults if we lack sustained efforts to empower people both politically and economically. Economic injustice provides a fertile ground for conflict and globalization makes it worst.

The most fundamental thing is nation-building with all components of national society contributing to it in a selfless manner and, of course, with a view to promoting national harmony. We are a small nation with two giants as neighbours. National unity must remain the priority goal of political process, both right and left. Nepal has been suffering not because we lack manpower, resources and national unity , but because we lack visionary leaders who can guide the nation to a path of development. We do

not need to go beyond SAARC so let's have visionary and dedicated leaders. The quality of present day leaders in Nepal is questionable. Their loyalty is doubtful. Their interest is vested. Their way of thinking is limited. It is because of this reason we are suffering today.

Nepal has been suffering not because we lack manpower, resources and national unity, but because we lack visionary leaders who can guide the nation to a path of development. We have leaders who do not read and therefore do not understand what is happening beyond Thankot. They amass property without feeling a sense of cheating, they care for their coterie and psychopants who always guide them to do mischievous things. Compare our leaders with others. We do not need to go beyond SAARC. The quality of present day leaders in Nepal is questionable. Their loyalty is doubtful. Their interest is vested. Their way of thinking is limited. It is because of this reason we are suffering today. We have to make efforts to change the society consistent in the changes in our thinking. We Nepalese should understand that charity begins at home.

If we do not take our own home as an analytical construct, we are bound to suffer a failure. So the most fundamental thing is nation-building with all components of national society contributing to it in a selfless manner and, of course, with a view to promoting national harmony. We are a small nation with two giants as neighbours. National unity must remain the priority goal of political process, both right and left.

Political parties can assist civilian movements in framing and carrying out well-conceived strategies for nonviolent conflict, setting the agenda for negotiations. Numerous structural factors help to mold a nation's negotiating style, including geography and geopolitics, governmental structures, economic indicators, demographic makeup, and legal and educational systems. From the Nepali standpoint, a negotiation is something entered into by competing parties in an effort to find a mutually beneficial compromise. To be sure, this schema is not always faithfully reproduced in practice.

The government-Maoists talks should be in the interest of the nation or else the country would have to bear huge damage. Dialogue and peace are the need of the day. The movement begun against injustice and corruption by political parties should lead to peaceful talks at the round table conference. Success for the cease-fire and peace talks and every citizen should play a facilitating role in ensuring success of the dialogue. The cease-fire has brought forward with the notion that resolution of all national problems can take place through dialogue. Nepali people want the government-Maoist talks should not fail at any cost.

Already, the humanitarian situation in Nepal is of great concern. The Nepalese people population is highly vulnerable, with thousands of children under five chronically malnourished, and thousands of Nepalese lacking access to safe water and sanitation. Without the prospect of some forward movement on the political front, it is difficult to imagine how the current cycle of violence and counter-violence can be stopped. The fighting had brought the country to the verge of implosion, to a chaotic nothing. The role of the civil society in every sector of the society is more important when politics and political leaders fail, it is the civil society that plays the lead role and comes forward to lead the nation and the society for the better future.

Currently peace process has been initiated owing to the sincere and serious efforts of the present government to restore peace, stability and security in the country. Maoists have also realised the importance and necessity of peace and stability. The cease-fire announced by both the government and the Maoists is the result of the widespread desire and will of the people, civil society and international community.

An active civic society is always needed for leading the social movement because strong civic society is the foundation of democratic development and creation of a just and equitable society. In any time of conflict, it is the civic society that plays the lead role in bringing about a tangible and lasting solution to the problem facing the nation and the people. Nepal, too, is not an exception.

The lack of trust and respect for politicians makes us all wonder whether the proposed negotiations will lead to permanent peace? There is no hope for peace unless the major political forces the King, the Maoists and the parliamentary parties recognise the urgency of a negotiated peace and are willing to take bold initiatives to address the concerns of the common people.

Political parties in Nepal should rally for bigger social transformation and stability through social conscientisation, and to bring about social reforms.

To promote a permanent peace and respect for diversity through citizen participation in programs that develop a consensus around peace issues. To contribute to the definition of a permanent national

peace policy through action, ideas and research aimed at the construction of a society based on policies of social justice and sustainable, humane development.

Negotiation is only one of many ways that organizations and societies deal with conflicts so how interest-based negotiation can be combined creatively with other rights-based and power-based procedures such as arbitration, adjudication, voting, and third-party intervention in order to constitute a "dispute resolution system."

Nepalese people bear the brunt of the country's violent armed conflict. Thousands have been killed in recent years, and thousands more have been kidnaped for ransom. Small children, some as young as thirteen or fourteen, have been recruited into the irregular forces - guerrillas and paramilitaries - that play a primary role in the conflict. Fleeing their homes to protect themselves and their families. The violence targeted against the local infrastructure community forestry projects, small hydro plants, bridges, telephone stations, and office buildings. The closure of educational institutions, businesses and cession of ordinary life in the country in response to their frequent calls for "bandh" helped only to make the lives of ordinary people more difficult.

Negotiation means that you not only set your Objectives for a negotiation, you also understand why those are your Objectives. It is a humanistic approach to negotiation that utilizes the strategies and tactical tools of successful negotiating to achieve optimal results. Strengthening independent actors? capacity in civil society can contribute to stability by broadening participation and enhancing prospects for democratic accountability and responsiveness.

Civic society-building can be organized by extgernal actors such as NGOs, regional or international organizations and understanding. Some might simply tell the story, ask a few relevant questions, and let the conversation, and the Conflict resolution is never easy, but it is especially challenging in Nepal.



Politics: Time to analyze the Maoist demand in peace perspective By Kalyan Dev Bhattarai

Maoist are communist, they have taken arms, adopted violence, demands republican state, have killed many innocent people, are not liked by donor agencies, and aid giving countries like USA, India, Britain, etc. and thus they are different to us and should be viewed differently. Such perception will not work in 21st century. Not only that any analysis based on such perception will not give you correct solution to solve the country's biggest problem faced so far.

The country is virtually at stand still, the development work are stopped, Maoist rule more than 75 % of country's rural area, 7 years of arms conflict have killed more than 10,000 innocent people. Maoist or police or Army who ever is killed, they are all Nepali and leave behind widow, orphan, old parents and Shattered home and so on. This is the time to think and analyze based on this harsh reality, if we want lasting peace in the country.

Other reality is the fact that during the emergency army did their best to wipeout Maoist from their core area, but was unable to do so! Now to consider again the similar strategy will be ostrich scenario.

Country's experiences of last 7 years of arms struggle, emergency declaration of nine months, have shown clearly that suppression of the struggle by military action will not solve the present problem, rather it will aggravate the situation to the extent that the sovereignty of the country itself will be in danger.

The Maoist struggle is due to the social, economical political, disparity between the two class of the people one covering less than 5 % of the population who have more than enough, and second covering more than 80 % of the population who do not have even the bare necessities. In this situation 15 % of the middle class intellectual was also forced to support the Maoist struggle subtly. Because the governance of last 13 years created such a situation in the country where the 15 % of the middle class were inevitably heading swiftly to wards the second group of have not, leaving aside few, who are corrupt, and puppet of the political leaders.

Amending or replacing the old constitution is generally a part of peace process of the kind, that Nepal is engaged now. Some people may like or not, Maoist has demanded as their bottom line the replacement of present constitution through the constituent assembly. Many people consider this

demand as appropriate, timely and democratic demand and country has no other alternative, than to accept this democratic demand gracefully and bring the lasting peace in the country. I am one of them.

For limited few, it will be difficult to accept at this stage, that there are no other alternatives available in the country. For such people one of the available alternatives is just to refine the present constitution, through the parliament by the representatives of the political parties. This solution is not acceptable to majority mass simply because, they do not trust the political parties any more and cannot believe that they will amend the constitution for the betterment of the people. The governance of last 13 years fully supports this mistrust of the people to wards the politicians. Further Maoist will also not accept this solution and thus cannot be consider as a practicable solution to solve the present problem.

The other alternatives supported and demanded by the trigger hungry people, commission agent, arms Mafia, and blind supporters of foreign countries be it India, USA, or Britain and etc. They suggest for the military rule, and massacre of the innocent Nepalese people, in the name of terrorist with the help of USA strategy, Belgium Arms, Indian military and British guidance.

However this alternative is neither democratic nor will be for the betterment of the country. The basic truth is that since the last 53 years the rural areas, general people and ultra poor people, were not only neglected, but also the problems of poverty, Terai "Jana Jatis", women, dalit, religious suppression and social disparity etc were never taken seriously and given proper attention. Not only that during the last 13 years due to ill governance the ordinary citizens were also treated as a second class citizen by the so called politicians and their puppets. The huge liquid assets collected by those people through bribery and commission, made them power full enough to do any thing they like making the mockery of the democracy. They considered them self as the only force to rule the country and synonym of democracy.

This created such genesis of conflict where the rebellion perceived the constitution is faulty and unfair to such deprived class covering more than 80 %. In reality there is nothing wrong in this conception because the various activities related with so called development was also concentrated in the few selected areas catering interest & requirement of the special class peoples, neglecting the other rural & sub urban area where the majority of the people lived.

The other basic fact of today is that now the country cannot sustain the violence activities any more, economically, politically, socially & culturally. In this context, the present peace talk must be ended successfully and agreement must be reached to bring the Maoist also in the main stream of politics by proper negotiation and giving all the concession that is possible, and required to bring peace in the country.

In the present conflict of Maoist & state I do not think any of the two parties can come out as victorious because none of them can have out right victory over other. Compromise through negotiation is the only solution of present day problem, and to lead the nation in the path of development.

Maoist have shown enough flexibility & given enough proof to belief that this time they are really serious enough to solve the present problem by negotiation. What is missing is the serious reciprocity and transparency from the Government. After agreeing to some issues in the 2nd talk, why the Government, is not able to implement the agreed points? What forced the state to arrest in a dramatic way the office secretary of the Maoist contact office? . Was the agreement reached during 2nd round of talk was without the consent of king?, If not why there is reluctance from the government side to implement the agreement? Does not this reluctance suggest that to day even army is disobeying the king?

If king has not given the consent to the agreement of 2nd round of talk. How the negotiator could come to the agreement? Peace loving people need honest answer to these genuine questions.

It is quit natural to raise these question that if the agreed issues are not implemented them what is the point of further talk? I don not want to discuss the issue of whether to limit the army to 5 km radius was right or wrong in this article. My only concern is if the state agrees to any issue it must implement it to honor the agreement other wise peace take has no sense & meaning.

All Nepalese citizens must get the proper answer of this question from state.

In this juncture the country do need the constituent assembly not only to bring lasting peace in the country but also to generate the felling of ownership to wards the new constitution. And to show

practically that the sovereignty lies in the Nepalese people & they are authorized to make the rules to govern themselves by themselves for themselves.

The recent letter of Dr. Baburam Bhattarai to Government clearly shows the peace talks has now entered to the very important issue of power. Reply to such letter requires patriotic feeling, dedication to democracy and honesty, with clear ideological vision, which are totally lacking in the present government. The evidence of this is the reply letter itself of the Government, which was published in Saturday's daily papers.

Thus the present situation clearly suggest that the present peace talk will not go smoothly, because there are couples of hurdles & barriers for the peace talk. First barriers are the arms dealers, commission agent, who do not want to see the peace in the country. These groups are linked with the external forces & will be highly benefited by the unstable condition of the Nepal and will do everything possible to create such an atmosphere in the country that peace talk is failed & Maoist will be forced to restart their arms struggle. Such situation will provide good opportunity to external forces to enter Nepal in the pretext of combating the so-called terrorist. Once the external forces are entered they will remain here for their own interest & Nepal will be turned to Afghanistan, Iraq, Sikkim etc.

The 2nd hurdle is the present day political parties of the country who has ruled the country for last 13 years and in process have plunder and looted the country & raped the democracy many times at their wills. For these political parties peace is second choice, primary choice for them is to grab the power by any means & loot the country. They are afraid to bring the Maoist in the main political stream because if this happen the corrupt power hungry political parties will be side lined by the people. To safe guard their interest they want such a situation in the country, where their reach in power is insured & Maoist are side lined & forced to accept the present constitution after simple modification. Their present movement and all other related machinations are directed to achieve this target. However the desire of the politicians will not be possible in the present situation because, the people have no trust to wards them & consider them the camouflaged plunders of the country, who have shattered the dream of Nepalese people, that it will be governed by rule of law after the success of the 1990 movement.

The people will now slowly forced these politician to change their target & agree to form new constitution through constitution assembly & give one more try to win the trust of the people. Which is difficult enough but not impossible if they honestly repent on their past deeds & ready to ask for pardon from the general public & deposit all the money they have accumulated by corruption, bribery to the country's treasury. Until they are ready to take this bold and hard step, people will never trust them again & belief their utterances & will not take them seriously any more. Finally they will be left alone & miserably sidelined.

The third hurdle is the palace if self. Palace, do not want to loose its extra constitutional authority, which was vested to King by the foolish politician due to their lust of power & money requesting him to use article 127 of constitution without any opposition. At present situation the NC & UML is not the problem to palace, because their top leaders can be put to prison easily by CIAA & other similar organization any time king wants, without any problem. .

The palace is afraid of Maoist, who have started their arms straggle with the demand of republican state and cautious enough to declare military rule and bring back the autocratic rule of Panchyat period as advised by his puppets. In this sense it can be said without any hesitation that at present the democracy is being protected due to the presence of Maoist force in the country & they are acting as the protector of the democracy, where as so called democratic Parities have gifted the power to the Place. What a scenario! Thus the King's desire will be to bring the Maoist in the main stream of politics in such a way that his authority is ensured and the present day politicians are totally side lined and Maoist agrees to the power sharing with the King.

Such scenario is difficult to happen because Maoist are not only the political force like NC & UML, but are ideological forces also with enough arms distributed almost evenly among their cadets all most all over the country. Any mistake or undue concession to King or unacceptable flexibility from the Maoist top leaders will jeopardize the basic unity & discipline of the Maoist cadres. Such scenario will make the situation more complex to Maoist leader than what it is at present In my personal opinion Maoist top leaders will never bring such situation in the country for their own survival and safe guard of their credibility. Thus it is almost impossible at this period of Nepalese history for the King to get what he wants or wishes for. To day king have very little choice than to accept for the constitutional assembly? Or to risk his own existence.

Lastly we all intellectual people must understand clearly that the international political scenario have forced the USA to look for any so called terrorist group which are none Muslim. Due to the failure of US policy in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Muslim community to day believes America's so called war against terrorist is only to weaken the Muslim community. This reality have generated ample pressure to USA to find any non Muslim soft target - where they can attack in the name of Terrorist and counter the criticism of Muslim community. This political scenario have compelled the USA to consider Nepalese Maoist as Terrorist group even after the Nepalese Government has taken back the charge to start peace talks.

This international political scenario will force the USA to influence and instigate the Nepalese army not to agree the 5 KM radius agreement of 2nd round talk and any other such concession provided to the Maoist during the peace talk by the political people. I consider such situation and USA's attitude quiet natural in the present international political scenario. However the responsibilities lies with the Nepalese army, not to bow down to the American pressure and think seriously considering the need of peace in the country, desires of the people leaving aside the petty self interest of the high ranking generals. At this time the true fact is that the future of the Nepalese people lies in the major decision of the army, their attitude, and ability to analyze the international political scenario and their devotion to their duty to wards the nation and Nepalese people.

It may look harsh to write and difficult to accept and digest the fact that to-day the opinion between the palace and army also seems to differ, which is clearly indicated by the interference of the army on the political decision of limiting the army activities within the 5km radius during the 2nd round of talk with Maoist. It is difficult to believe that this decision was done without the consent of the king by the negotiator. My conclusion is that the strategy of the army and the king looks different at this stage and request and suggest the army to accept and follow the king's strategy to bring peace in the country by providing reasonable and required concession to the Maoist, before it is too - late.

Because along with the support of the "special class people" whose main objective is also not to bring peace in the country, USA at present due to international political scenario is forced to do every thing possible to break the peace talk. Considering this entire scenario and realizing the harsh truth we all must realize that, to day not only the peace is at stake but also sovereignty of the country is at stake.

In this scenario I suggest if we want peace in the country & want the Maoist to come to main political stream the constitutional assembly for new constitution is the only solution. Where all the political parties including King and Maoist also will get equal opportunity to make the new constitution in their favor with the support from the people whom they all claim are with them!

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Opinion: Nationalist Nepalese and their high expectations

By Anil Pandey

(Author is a nationalist currently living in California and is preparing to publish his book on contemporary Nepalese issues.)

The Panchayat system was overthrown thirty years after its establishment because it was alleged that it was a dictatorial type of system. Leader Ganesh Man happened to be a staunch supporter of so called democracy on the strength of his two Brahmin colleagues and due to his being a Newar leader, all the Newars of the three cities of the Kathmandu Valley turned out to be strong supporters of democracy. After the downfall of Ganesh Man, caused by his two colleagues, the Newars probably found out the conspiracy of the two Brahmins.

However, Let bygones be bygone. What has been done cannot be undone. There has not yet been any Newar leader capable of improving and controlling the situation. All the conscious lovers of the Newar community understand the living realities of the situation. After the death of Ganesh Man, the shrewd Congress leaders, out of their crooked political strategy and with the support of CPN-UML tried to assassinate the political career of the political heirs of Ganesh Man. Political leader Prakash Man has already been the first victim of the conspiracy. P.L. Singh will be the second victim. Independent socialist leader Padma Ratna Tuladhar also is likely to be another victim. It has been a common practice of the shrewd Congress leaders to exploit the Newars - financially and otherwise. To fulfil their vested political interests and obtain support of the Newar Community for the party, NC leaders issued tickets in the past election to a handful of Newar leaders to contest election from the Congress influenced areas and use them as the puppets of the Party afterwards.

The total population of Nepal at the time of the 2056 election was kept at 2 crores and 25 lakh. The number of voters totalled 1 crore 32 lakh and 50 thousand. Out of the total votes cast, the current Nepali Congress had secured 32 lakh, which accounts for 13 percent of the total population. There are 113 parliamentarians and 25 ministers, out of which seven ministers occupying major portfolios, represent the Girija family. After the fall of the Rana regime, we are now being ruled by a small unit of the Girija regime. While analysing the country's political situation of the past ten years, it becomes apparent that we are now being exploited under the minority dictatorial rule of Girija Prasad Koirala. The Nepalese people, who freed themselves from the clutch of the Rana regime in 2007 B.S., have now fallen prey to the exploitation of the Girija regime which comprises 7 members of his family. In the existing Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, which had been jointly framed by the Ruling Party and the Main Opposition Party, there is no any constitutional provision or mechanism for checking the tyranny of the ruling party. No one knows for sure as to when the tyrannical rule will come to an end. On the one hand, the dormant and inactive Nepalese people cannot do anything against the tyranny of the party in power, on the other hand, the Royal Institution, which is the source of great faith of all the Nepalese people has been rendered passive by the political parties. Democracy means the rule of majority and respect for the majority opinion, but in the existing system, majority of the nationalist Nepalese people are being disgraced, disrespected and suppressed.

Can the Royal Institution remain inert and passive in the event of ineffectiveness of the constitution? In this context, we are reminded of an old proverb, which says that the king sees no injustice. At present, the democratic principle of the multi-party system is neither nationalistic nor people-oriented. But it has, certainly proved to be a welfare-oriented system for the party people themselves, specially those in power. The high officials loyal to the royal institution, must have reported to the King the suffering of the people at large. If not, the subscriber of this article humbly begs to report that the views expressed in this article are not personal, but a reflection of views of the Nepalese people at large. I would also like to add that both of the parties- the Party in power and the Party in the Main Opposition are guided by foreigners, who wish that a corrupt system be maintained in the country. An important question arises as to whether the Royal Institution should remain passive folding hands helplessly to let such things continue for ever?

The ruling party leaders are declaring that there has been an increase in the flow of foreign aid with the restoration of democracy. Statistics released by the Ministry of Finance bears witness of the real situation. Donor nations also have been fed up with such activities, especially that of the Nepali Congress. It is likely that the Nepalese people may loose faith in the Royal Kingdom of Nepal, if someone does not do something fast. The Royal Nepalese Army is not loyal to the party. The same is the case of Nepal Police. Civil servants that have been party-oriented due to circumstances and some temptations, are not whole-heartedly loyal to the party. Against this background, nothing is likely to impede any bold initiative taken by the royal institution. Such a step would always be in favour of the Nepalese people. Such an event would help the Nepalese people in freeing themselves from the dictatorial rule of the minority party. This would also help them earn their living in a simple manner without any hardships. Such an intervention would, at least, ensure national integrity and peace. It would not, at least, create a situation of foreign intervention - with an example of Uganda, which sufered military intervention from the neighbouring Tanzania to depose of its tyrant ruler. The reason for this is that the existing United Nations is not a League of Nations in any sense. And our neighbours along the northern borders will not dare to play a foul role.

Such a step may cause a decline in the flow of foreign aid. In this context, let us take a look at the present global situation, there are cases in which the dictatorial military rule stands in the so-called democratic countries despite various international sanctions against them. All of us have an idea of foreign aid. The common Nepalese people are aware of the fact the much of the foreign aid flowing into Nepal is being misused by political leaders. Donor nations also know much about this. It may be recalled that foreign embassies in Nepal were operational even after the historic political even of poush 1, 2017. They will continue to operate in Nepal in spite of any political change. It is high time for the royal institution to win the people's faith by taking a bold political step. In this context, it has become imperative for the royal institution to win the people's faith by taking a bold political step. In this context, it has become imperative for the royal institution to take a steps towards providing welfare to the people at large. The King himself bears this responsibility to the people.

It is needless to argue, foreign embassies in Nepal also want to earn the goodwill of the majority of the people, instead of that of the party leaders. On the basis of ten years of experience, they must have realised that with the royal takeover, things would change for better, ensuring proper utilisation of the foreign aid for the betterment of the Nepalese people. As the government or party leaders are

only a means that act as an agent for planning and management of foreign assistance, embassies would be least concerned with as to who is in power. Considering that foreign aid is being invested in fulfilling vested party interests, donor countries are now in search of a reliable alternative to ensure proper utilisation of foreign aid.

In case majority of the nationalistic people loose faith in the royal institution and get inclined towards the multi-party system, the Nepalese people will have to shoulder a heavy financial burden and the royal institution will have to face unpleasant consequences. It may also be recalled that His late Majesty, King Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Shah Dev had, in a bid to overthrow the Rana regime at the cost of his throne, had taken shelter in the Indian Embassy in Nepal and later flown to India to seek support of the Government of India and the Main Opposition party for the success of the democratic movement prior to the establishment of democracy in 2007. The Rana Prime Minister (the so-called Shree Teen Maharaj) ruled Nepal for 104 years. People at that time, used to consider His Majesty the King (Shree Panch) to be the incarnation of Lord Vishnu. People, who would happen to see the King on the way would feel lucky. During that time, cases of roads being blocked due to security arrangements were very rare. For a long time, the Nepalese army was loyal to the Rana Prime Minister (Shree Teen). The bold step initiated by King Tribhuvan is written in golden letters in the history of Nepal. Now the situation has changed. It would be better if a revolt under the leadership of the King be led against the corrupt and blood sucking political leaders. This would provide an opportunity for the historians to write once again the history of the Shah dynasty in golden letters. As it was inconvenient for Her Majesty the Queen to speak on this subject, she humbly shouldered all charges levied on the King, as she is the daughter of a Rana family. So the need of the hour is to know how sincere and devoted high-ranking officers of the Royal Palace could cooperate with other members of the Royal Family in the design of the plan. The Nepalese people as well as myself are waiting for the materialisation of the plan.



Diaspora: Keeping Nepali Identity Alive in the Diaspora By Puru Subedi

(Author is the President of International Nepali Literary Society (INLS), based in Washington D.C. More information about him and INLS is available at <http://www.inls.org>)

What Comprises an Identity?

Who am I? What am I? What attributes define me? These are great questions one asks of oneself. Answering them to the self is critical to lead a normal and productive life. Ultimately, it is our own sense of who we are that invokes our actions and how we spend our lives. Thus these are very important questions and answers. If you identify yourself as a person who will never murder anyone; you are likely to not commit such a crime in your lifetime. If you identify yourself as a strong person; you are bound to utilize your maximum strength to fight with your environment. If you identify yourself as a vegetarian, you are very likely not to eat meat. If you identify yourself as a Nepali; you are bound to be interested in Nepali language and culture. Also, if you express Nepali cultural properties, e.g. speak Nepali and have a Nepali look, others will identify you as a Nepali.

Let's explore more. Identity, in other words, is a sense of self that produces consistent behavior within a person. If I spoke Nepali once; that alone doesn't become part of my Identity. But if I consistently try to speak Nepali, even if I don't know how, this is because of my identity as a person who is interested in speaking Nepali. To put this yet another way, an identity of a person is sense of the self that is consistent across long duration of time. The sense that changes from moment to moment is not part of a person's identity.

When others define our identity they might define by our name, age, sex, skin color, hair color, height and various interests at first sight. These primarily involve physical attributes used to distinguish oneself from others. Example, when someone says, "Nepalis are honest, hard working, and brave individuals", he or she is stating shared identity of certain group of people, namely people of Nepali origin.

As can be seen from examples above; there are two kinds of identities.

- 1) Personal identity: attributes that define a person; and
- 2) Shared Identity: attributes that define a group of related people.

How do we preserve our identity?

It is easy to preserve personal identity. If one identifies himself as a hard working father, for example, he could consistently work hard and continue to be a father of his children. He will have preserved this identity.

Preserving shared identity, however, requires higher level of thinking and organized activity. For example, let's take Nepali identity. Question is: how do we Nepalis consistently be honest, hard working and brave individuals? If individuals of Nepali origin behave contrary to stated identity; we will have failed to preserve our shared identity. Only way to preserve is to constantly remind ourselves of our true identity through Nepali literature, education, Nepali cultural cues and organized activities for the purpose.

It is indeed harder to come up with an answer to the question "Who am I?" in a deeper sense that encompasses shared identity. In order to clearly specify our identity, we have to talk about our people and experiences that formed us. In essence, we have to talk about our system of behaviors, beliefs, customs, traditions, language, religion, family systems and values that we share in daily lives. These boil down to our language and culture. Our culture is our identity. Our language and literature are integral part of our culture.

If we are not able to preserve our culture and language and pass it on to our succeeding generations, it is certain that they will have identity problems. The communities around the world are becoming more and more diverse all the time. With increased amounts and varieties of information, people, and situations that our children will find themselves in, they must have a firm grasp of who they are and what their culture is. Without such a grasp of self and identity, their lives will be ruled by insecurity and fear. Therefore, it is essential that we work hard to keep our identity alive so that it can be transformed from generations to generations.

We basically have to establish language, cultural education programs and make a habit to follow our tradition.

First of all, since parents are recognized as the first and most important teachers of children, the educational process has to start from home. We have to speak our language to our children and teach them about our customs, traditions, family systems and values at home.

Second, the community has to establish a formal way to teach our language, literature and culture at the various levels i.e kindergarten, school and university so that children, youth, scholars can gain the knowledge and possibly some of them will continue the educational process by teaching generations after them.

But with so many things to attend to, the typical parents are not able to allocate the time and resources to a serious effort to help their children become literate in our language and culture. Teaching language and culture becomes a low priority job for most of parents as we try and stay afloat in the sea of daily responsibilities. Thus, even with the best of intentions, most of us are simply not able to create a home environment conducive to teach language and culture.

Is there help from Nepali community associations?

Yes. The good news is that International Nepali Literary Society (INLS), a Washington D.C. based organization devoted to Nepali language and literature lunched a Worldwide Nepali Education Program about a year ago to promote, preserve and create awareness of Nepali language and culture through out the world. The program has following major goals:

1. To setup Nepali language education projects at various communities worldwide.
2. To facilitate obtaining High School language credit for Nepali as a second language.
3. To work towards the establishment of Nepali language program at major Universities.

INLS has been running a School of Languages and Cultures of Nepal in Washington D.C. as part of DC Nepali Education Project (DCNEP) under its Worldwide Nepali Education Program in collaboration with local Nepali organizations and concerned parents for a year now. It has developed nine year curriculum that includes kindergarten, school and college level classes. Each class meets once a week for one hour during the academic year. The school offered three Nepali language classes and one Nepali folk dance class in Fall 2002 and Spring 2003 semesters. Nineteen students graduated from the School with one year course of study on May, 2003.

INLS plans to transition this successful Nepali School model to other Nepali Diaspora in North America and around the world in collaboration with local community organizations. INLS is

collaborating with Rocky Mountain Friends of Nepal (RMFN) in Colorado to open the School in Denver, CO and Boulder, CO by July, 2003.

Nepali Diaspora should be concerned about keeping our Nepali identity alive. I would like to strongly request you to get involve in preserving languages and cultures of Nepal. If you or your local community organization is interested in opening a community school in your city, INLS can provide everything you need to get you started.

I suggest you to contact INLS at info@inls.org to discuss the details. More information about INLS Worldwide Nepali Education Program can be found at: <http://www.inls.org/nepali>

Puru Subedi

President,
International Nepali Literary Society (INLS),
Washington D.C.

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Chhalphal: "The Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site and the Search for Authenticity in Historic Urban Preservation"

By Professor Eduard Sekler

(Paying due respect to the art of Guff, Chhalphal Discussion Series was initiated in May 2002 by Nepali professionals and students in Boston to bring to fore not only the issues related to Nepal, but also to understand and acknowledge amazing amount and quality of work being done by Nepalese and friends of Nepal the world over. It was designed to be an informal forum for openly exchanging ideas. Currently, Shailesh Gongal moderates the discussion.)

ChhalPhal Talk, Introductory Summary

Professor Eduard Sekler is co-founder, and was the first chairman, of the Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust. He began his research in Nepal in 1962 and since then has been there 17 times, including missions for UNESCO as historic conservation advisor. He has led the team for the Masterplan for the Conservation of Cultural Heritage in the Kathmandu Valley and is the author of several publications about historic urban preservation in Nepal. Goetz Hagmueller, Carl Pruscha, and Erich Theophile, architects who made important contributions toward safeguarding the cultural heritage of the Kathmandu Valley, once were his students. On May 28, 2003, he gave a talk entitled:

The Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site and the Search for Authenticity in Historic Urban Preservation

A brief history of historic preservation in Nepal, accompanied by slides, was followed by a discussion of the World Heritage Convention and its application in the Kathmandu Valley. The Darbar Squares of Bhaktapur and Patan were selected as examples for the way authenticity may be preserved or endangered by historic preservation and other contemporary activities.

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The Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Site and the Search for Authenticity in Historic Urban Preservation May 28 2003

Dear Members of ChhalPhal and friends,

I am honored by the invitation to speak here tonight and grateful for your having come to listen to a talk that deals with topics that normally may not be on your mind very much. I am also happy because addressing a group of Nepalis here for me evokes many fond memories of similar occasions during my many stays in the Kathmandu Valley (KV).

Since I shall talk about a World Heritage Site (WHS) and authenticity, it may be useful to briefly discuss the meaning of these two terms. A World Heritage Site is a site entered in the World Heritage List that is kept by UNESCO in Paris, under the authority of the intergovernmental World Heritage Committee. This list and the committee in charge of it came into being as the consequence of the international Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of 1972. Countries apply for a site to be listed and the Committee decides, if the nominated site is "of

outstanding **universal** value and meets one or more of the following criteria and the test of authenticity.” The Operational guidelines of the convention put it as follows:

A monument, group of buildings or site - as defined above - which is nominated for inclusion in the World Heritage List will be considered to be of outstanding universal value for the purposes of the Convention when the Committee finds that it meets one or more of the following criteria and the test of authenticity. Each property nominated should therefore:

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- i. represent a masterpiece of human creative genius; or
- ii. exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design; or
- iii. bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared; or
- iv. be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history; or
- v. be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement or land-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change; or
- vi. be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance (the Committee considers that this criterion should justify inclusion in the List only in exceptional circumstances and in conjunction with other criteria cultural or natural);

and

B

- i. meet the test of authenticity in design, material, workmanship or setting and in the case of cultural landscapes their distinctive character and components (the Committee stressed that reconstruction is only acceptable if it is carried out on the basis of complete and detailed documentation on the original and to no extent on conjecture).
- ii. have adequate legal and/or traditional protection and management mechanisms to ensure the conservation of the nominated cultural properties or cultural landscapes.

Compare to the 337 sites inscribed by 1994, the number of sites by 2002, 30 years. After the adoption of the convention, has more than doubled to 730, with 125 States being signatories. Nepal, as you know, has 4 WHSs (Sagarmatha, Chitwan Natl. Park, Lumbini, KV). The KV WHS consists of 7 individual monument zones: Swayambhu, Bodnath, Pashupati, Changu Narayan, and the Darbar Squares of B haktapur, KTM. And Patan. Of these I shall only discuss Bhaktapur and Patan as typical examples.

A WHS benefits from the prestige attached to the designation, but it may also benefit from monetary and technical assistance financed by the WH fund; in turn it must be properly managed and protected or it may end up on the list of WHs in danger, or it may even be removed from the list altogether. An important aspect of proper management and protection is keeping intact a site's **authenticity**.

Today the term “authenticity” is frequently used, but not always with a precise definition of its meaning in the context in which it occurs. Consequently there are many opportunities for misunderstandings in an age when digital manipulation and mixing up the virtual with the real are widespread. In confronting such a situation, it is useful to discuss the issue of authenticity in some detail. There are few places where this can be done better than in the Kathmandu Valley, not only because of its wealth of precious historic buildings, but also because it is so inseparably linked to the Himalayas. A background of high mountains (fig.1) like these is a permanent reminder of what is meant when one speaks of authenticity in the sense of something truthful, genuine. These mountains, being natural facts, brook no doubt about their authenticity because here this quality is based on a facticity one cannot ignore except at a risk.

Prior to discussing some examples that illustrate issues of architectural authenticity in the Kathmandu Valley, the origin and application of the concept of authenticity deserve a brief mention. In ancient

Greece an *authentēs* was an absolute master, but also anybody who himself carried out something, or completed something by his own hand. The adjective *authentikos* (authentic)¹ consequently denoted something that had a certain, recognized author and therefore could be trusted and vouched for.

Writing about modern art and referring to the original sense of *authentēs* as somebody "having complete power over something," the literary critic Lionel Trilling could state: "the work of art is itself authentic by reason of its entire selfdefinition: it is understood to exist wholly by the laws of its own being..." But there is one art - the art of building, architecture - where the "laws of its own being" include laws that tie it unavoidably to the realities of "objective facts invariant under specified transformations" (Robert Nozick) and to the needs of society and of daily life. When these constraints are ignored in badly designed or badly constructed architecture, a building can kill - just as a mountain can kill if the constraints it imposes are ignored.

When we turn to a discussion of the issues of historic conservation now, we must remain aware of two significant facts; one is the number of historic buildings and historic space configurations in the Valley is vast, as a glance into the two volumes of the protective inventory of 1975 shows. It covers not only 888 individual historic properties, but also 32 preservation districts, 34 monument zones and 29 natural preservation districts. The other important fact is that there was no longer a fully functioning tradition of maintaining and restoring historic buildings in the mid-20th century.

A governmental office concerned with the preservation and restoration of historic buildings in the modern sense of these words exists in Kathmandu since 1952 only, when the Dept. of Archaeology was established, to be followed by the promulgation of "The Ancient Monuments Preservation Act 1956." However, already since the times of the Malla Kings and their successors, an earlier administrative body existed that was charged with the State-funded repair of ancient and public buildings. At the same time, works of maintenance, repair and restoration of ancient buildings, especially religious ones, were carried out by Guthis.

In the early days prior to the 20th century repair and restoration work of important buildings was carefully planned and carried out by the same craftsmen who worked on new buildings. Their work often was of high artistic and technical quality, but their attitude toward the old building they had to deal with differed significantly from what today a well trained architect conservator or restorer would bring to the same task.

The traditional craftsmen began their work with the conviction that they could create something new that could equal the old, if not surpass it. Since most of the commissions they received were religious in character and were expected to gain religious merit for the person who paid for it, it was thoroughly acceptable to provide precious new materials or richer new carvings, because in this way more religious merit would accrue. No great significance seems to have been attached to preserving faithfully ancient materials and decorations. What counted was the preservation of the religious, not the historical authenticity, and the patina of age was not yet appreciated.

An analogous attitude still prevails frequently in private local projects of today's Nepal, which, when paired with a desire to modernize, can lead to unexpected results that are entirely unwelcomed from the point of view of generally accepted good restoration practice. In western countries. A realistic approach to topical historic conservation work in the KV must include an awareness of this fact.

Turning to examples that illustrate well the issues involved in trying to respect the value of authenticity, I have selected Bhaktapur Darbar Square because of the recently reconstructed Cyasilin Mandap and the Patan Darbar Square Monument Zone because of the Radha/Krishna Mandir (restored by the Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust KVPT), the Ayuguthi Sattal (reconstructed by the KVPT) and the Keshab Narayan Chowk, now the Patan Museum.

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Personalities: Walking the World for Peace

By Sushma Joshi

A year after two airplanes crashed into the Twin Towers, thousands of people gathered on September 11, 2002, to remember the event. In Washington Square Park, New York City, hundreds spoke out

¹ Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed., Oxford, 1936, p. 125

against war on an all night vigil. The country was engaged in bombing Afganisthan, and there was talk of war against Iraq. Activists from all ages and backgrounds rallied to the call for peace.

As the night progressed, Keika, a friend from Japan, met up with Japanese friends who had walked for a month in a peace march from Albany to New York City. "The oldest person in the march is a Nepali monk, and he is seventy-three years old," she said. "He was one of the most energetic people in the walk." My interest piqued - I am also from Nepal - I walked over to the group of people, including some wearing the robes of monks, sitting beneath a tree.

Sitting with a straight back in red and saffron robes of a Tibetan monk was an older man with a distinctly Newari accent. "I am delighted to see you," he said, pressing my hands. He said he had been walking for the past two weeks. His name, he said, was Monk Krishnaman.

Krishnaman-ji explained to me that he did not have formal training like other Tibetan monks, but that he had been following his guru Chokyi Nyima's Kagyu tradition for the last ten years.

The Newars of the Kathmandu Valley, who practice Thervada Buddhism, are not usually found in the Tibetan, or Mahayana tradition.

Mr. Manandhar came to it in an unusual way, via his work at the American consulate. Working as a librarian for the American library for twenty-seven years, Mr. Manandhar was often asked to take Embassy visitors to see the sights of Kathmandu. He drove them to Boudha, where a large number of Tibetan monasteries and shrines are located. His exposure to Tibetan Buddhism convinced him he wanted to follow the Mahayana path, and that is how he ended up following that tradition.

"There are two reasons for me becoming a monk," he says. "The Hindu tradition says a man should spent his youth getting married and raising a family. When he reaches 60-65 years old, he should give up his householder life to pursue a life of ascetic study. In the Tibetan tradition, a family with four or five children gives one of those to a monastery to train as a monk or nun. My mother Krishna Laxmi Manandhar was one of the first patrons and donors of Anand Kuti, a Thervada monastery. Her wish was that one of her sons should become a monk. Her attempts to get her younger son to be a monk failed. So I fulfilled her wishes."

In 1982, the Reiyukai Institute, a cultural institute that acts like the Alliance Fracaise or the Goethe Institute of Japan, conducted an essay competition in Nepal. Krishnaman Manandhar submitted an essay titled "Sakyamuni and I." Written after three months of intensive study, the essay won the first prize, allowing the author a free one month trip to Japan. His mother, hearing about this, told him, "I stole a gold bangle to send you to study in Allahbad. You have justified that with your accomplishments." "I made my mother happy," he says.

His wife, from whom he remains estranged, is harder to please. Initial tensions between his wife and mother forced him to choose sides, and he ended up being on his mother's side, he admits. His wife, who moved out of their home, does not like him being a monk. "I asked her to join me as a nun," he says, "but she says her faith is not strong enough." "The same woman," he says, his face changing from monkish calm to householder turbulence, "can create heaven or hell inside the same home. My wife was suspicious of my every interaction with women, and she created the latter atmosphere." His son, who runs his own computer business, is doing very well. Dismissing undercurrents of marital and familial tensions aside with a flick of his hand, Krishnaman-ji says, "The whole world is my family. I never feel any homesickness."

The American Library, pleased to hear about the trip to Japan, also offered Mr. Manandhar a three month, all expenses-paid, study tour. While visiting the MET musuem in NYC, he realized that they had a collection of musical instruments from almost every part of the world, except Nepal. He corresponded with the museum. They said they would put Nepali instruments on display if he were to provide them. Mr. Manandhar went back to Nepal and approached the government for a national donation to the museum, but his proposals were ignored. Finally, after five years of fund-raising, and with a significant contribution from his own pension check, Mr. Manandhar sent a set of antique, functional panchay baja to the museum.

The then US Ambassador met with Mr. Manandhar after reading his story in the newspaper. Finding out that the instruments had been brought with Mr. Manandhar's personal funds, he wrote to the museum, voicing his thoughts about a museum appropriating objects gratis from a Third World donor, and advocating for reimbursement. The museum eventually sent him a \$1500 "honorarium", enough to pay for another trip to the US.

This kind of proactive approach characterizes Monk Krishnaman's approach to life. " This is what the Bhagvad Gita says: do your karma, but do not expect anything in return. If you do it to get something back, you will be disappointed."

This is a sound strategy, if we are to judge by his past accomplishments. The Monk has successfully raised funds for the children of Chokyi Nyima's monastery. He has also traveled the world in peach marches, his material needs taken care of by laypeople who support him generously wherever he goes. His charisma and strong leadership skills can be traced back to his family background - his father was Compounder Chandraman, the personal medic of King Tribhuwan. Chandraman acted as the liaison between the King and the underground political parties during the time when the Monarchy was strongly suppressed by the Rana regime. When their plotting was found out, four leaders were hung by the Ranas. Chandraman, miraculously, escaped - his account was straightforward and convincing. The Ranas, thinking he was a simple Jyapu (peasant), let him off lightly with confiscation of all property and a life sentence.

Mr. Manandhar's first peace walk was between Kathmandu and Lumbini in 2001, when the Japanese inaugurated the largest peace pagoda in Buddha's birthplace. The walk was 460 kilometers long, and took one month. Krishnaman-ji joined the peace march from Seattle to Ground Zero, NYC, after the WTC bombings. He started in Washington D.C and walked for a month. Other peace marches followed: from Albany to NY, and then from Los Angeles to San Francisco. Future projects and invitations to lead marches keep arriving.

His most urgent project, however, remains an interfaith stupa, build on the model of Swayambhu, that will represent six world religions. The land and the initiative, he hopes, will come from local Quaker families of Bucks County, PA, where he plans to go for a peace walk in September 2003.

"When we were on the peach march, people said prayers from their own religious tradition at the end of the day. Then we talked about our experiences," he says, "I thought about an interfaith stupa during that time. The Peace Stupa will have six stupas, representing Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Native American religions."

Whether as a monk or as a cultural ambassador, Mr. Manandhar is doing his share of bringing intercultural harmony to a troubled world. "If my health holds," he says, "I have been invited to lead a peace walk in Mexico. And then in Jordan." When it comes to peace, the world, it seems, is the limit.



Social: "Are you planning to flee your homeland, too?"

By Surendra Phuyal

(Mr Phuyal is a journalist with The Kathmandu Post. One of the Alfred Friendly Fellows 2003, he is currently assigned to work at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. This article appeared in The Kathmandu Post on Thursday, August 14.)

Far away from home, on the other side of the planet, I am meeting so many Nepalese. One does not expect to meet that many folks from home in a little-known American city like Pittsburgh. But if one goes to New York or Washington or California, I have been told, one can see villages of Nepalese. Indeed, village after village has been abandoned in rural Nepal as people migrate to well-off areas of the country, neighboring India and abroad in search of better opportunities. Who is to blame?

Inhabited by just a little over two million people, Pittsburgh is a medium-size U.S. city in western Pennsylvania. Like elsewhere in the U.S., there is no dearth of colors or diversity. There are as many ethnic communities here as there are neighborhoods-and as many cultures and backgrounds as there are rolling hills and rivers. There are Asians or Asian Americans, their roots in China, Korea, Vietnam and South Asia. There are Latinos or Hispanics who are growing in number not just here but all around the U.S. There are African Americans who were shipped in from Africa by the European migrants centuries ago.

And there are Nepalese, too.

When I arrived in this city which the confluence of three rivers-the Allegheny, the Monongahela and the Ohio--nearly two months ago, I wasn't expecting (m)any from my dear homeland here. But as days and weeks and months pass, the number of fellow Nepalese who I meet here is increasing. First there was only one-at an Indian restaurant in the city's Oakland neighborhood. Then I received a local

call from a Nepalese student who I met at the U.S. Embassy in Kathmandu. Then another, then another...

The population and status of Nepalese in Pittsburgh became pretty much clear to me when I visited Nima-didi, as the Nepalese in Pittsburgh who I know call the Sherpa lady, on a recent Saturday afternoon. The occasion was the open house of Nima's Nepalese-Tibetan handicraft shop in the decent Oakland neighborhood. Born and raised in Namche Bazaar, the bright Sherpa lady is married to a Pittsburgher. She came here in 1992.

Besides Nima, there were three others Nepalese in her small shop-Nima's octogenarian mother clad in traditional gyapto, twenty-something brother, Mingma Wangdi, and a nephew, Ang Dawa. Some chit-chatting, and more invitees started to show up. There were Nepalese students studying in Pittsburgh or other U.S. cities, there were Nepalese couples living and working here and there were Tibetan monks visiting their friends and disciples.

Also present were Nima's local American friends, most of whom seemed so much concerned about the situation in Nepal that they could well be called friends of Nepal. Mike the young man in his twenties was particularly inquisitive about the current situation in Nepal. And why not? He has already been to Nepal; he visited Nepal just last year. But he says he is not done. He is planning to make a brief business-and-fun trip in November.

There are other die-hard friends or fans of Nepal, too. Steve Levin, the veteran staff writer at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (for which I will be working through November), has visited Nepal thrice-twice in the seventies and once in the eighties; one of my neighbors in Squirrel Hill, Phyllis Popper, and her husband and friends spent months in Kathmandu and Pokhara when they were motorcycling across Asia in the seventies; and Elizabeth, wife of my colleague Dan Simpson (a former U.S. envoy to many African countries who is currently writing editorials), still recalls one of her best vacations in Tiger Tops, Chitwan.

And I'm sure there are several dozen others who have already visited Nepal, or are preparing to do so. They are not just in Pittsburgh or the state of Pennsylvania; fans and friends of Nepal are scattered all around the United States. (Early in the morning today, I responded to an email from a St. Paul Pioneer Press journalist who will be stopping in Kathmandu en route to Tibet shortly, suggesting him to hike around Kathmandu or Pokhara valley.)

But what really excites me is the fact that I am meeting more and more Nepalese here. In fact, one does not expect to meet many Nepalese in a little-known American city like Pittsburgh. But if one goes to New York or Washington or California, I have been told, one can see villages of Nepalese-of Sherpas of Helambu region, of Sherpas of Khumbu, of Gurungs and Thakalis of western Nepal, of Newars of Kathmandu valley and so on.

And that's not totally unjustified. A month before I came to the United States, I was part of a Melamchi expedition team that made a detour and climbed up the Tarkeghyang and Sermanthang of the Helambu region. I was stunned to hear that 'almost all the villagers have migrated to either Kathmandu or New York City'. Indeed, village after village has been abandoned in rural Nepal as people migrate to well-off areas of the country, neighboring India and abroad in search for better opportunities.

Ask a wo/man walking on the street of Kathmandu or Biratnagar where would s/he want to go if s/he were given an opportunity to move to a foreign land. The obvious answer would be USA, UK or Japan. Already, there are nearly 50,000 Nepalese in the U.S., or the 'land of opportunities', according to an estimation. The population is fast going up given that more and more Nepalese are winning Diversity Visa (DV) lotteries and packing up their stuff to board U.S.-bound planes.

Meantime, the scenario is expected to get even worse-or better?--in the months and years to come given that the eight-year-old conflict bedeviling our homeland is showing no signs of tapering off. The continuing tussle for power between different power centers in Kathmandu and the debilitating poverty in the natural-disaster-prone rural hinterlands are forcing more and more to flee their homeland.

Who or what is to blame? Decline in tourism? Backwardness? Poverty? Or mankind's growing yearning for material happiness?

(The writer can be reached at surendra_phuyal@hotmail.com)

Courtesy: The Kathmandu Post

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Medicine: Pharmacists in Health Care

By Asta R Prajapati

(Author is a pharmacist currently registered and practicing in UK. In this article, he tries to manifest the value of pharmaceutical care (which is a totally new concept for Nepal) as an integral part of health care system and its advantages.

This article was originally written for Graduate Pharmaceutical Association of Nepal.)

Pharmacists in Health care system

By

Asta Ratna Prajapati, BPharm, MRPharmS, MBA

Currently working as a pharmacist in Barts and The London NHS Trust, UK.

"A disease management strategy must match the structure, skills, and culture of each organization in the health care system. Structure should support the strategy; skills will enable successful implementation of the strategy; and a receptive culture will encourage the systems approach of disease management needs to emerge and thrive in a practical reality¹."

The sole aim of the health care system, I believe, is to ensure that people are in a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being. For this purpose, all Health Care Professionals (HCPs) should work together with a customer-focused and outcome oriented policy with follow up procedures in place, which has already been widely accepted and proven beneficial in developed countries like UK. All HCPs should use their knowledge and skills to maximum potential. The government, Planning commission and relevant authorities should make sure that all health resources are in use for the maximum benefit.

The management of drug therapy is one of the most important challenges in health care management. Drug related problems are considered as indirect costs to health care systems, and according to a 1992 study in the United States exceeded the direct cost of prescription medication.

Drug related problems include:

- an untreated condition for which a drug was indicated
- an improper drug selection for a condition
- sub-therapeutic doses / overdose
- failure to receive the drug / non-compliance
- adverse drug reaction
- drug interactions
- drug use with no indication

One of the most widely accepted models for the management of drug therapy is "*Pharmaceutical Care*". This is defined by the American Pharmaceutical Association as "*patient-centered, outcomes oriented pharmacy practice that requires the pharmacist to work in concert with the patient and the patient's other healthcare providers to promote health, to prevent disease, and to assess, monitor, initiate and modify medication to assure that drug therapy regimens (diagnostic or therapeutic) are safe and effective. The goal of Pharmaceutical Care is to optimize the patient's health-related quality of life, and achieve positive outcomes, with realistic economic expenditures*".

Dr. Peter Kielgast², outgoing president of the International Pharmaceutical Federation, (FIP) once quoted "in spite of soundness of the concept and the enthusiasm of the pharmaceutical profession, it was still not an integral part of any health care system". The pharmacy profession needs to be aware of the gap between the ideal and real practice in order to fully embrace the philosophy of pharmaceutical care.

Pharmacy is the health care profession that focuses on safe and appropriate medicines management. In order for pharmaceutical care to be appropriately developed and evaluated, we need to identify the effectiveness of the services provided and the potential benefits to both patients and professionals.

Known as the 'Drug Experts' in developed countries, pharmacists can contribute much more to health service users if they are fully integrated into health care systems and given an opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills for the benefit of patient care. This has already been realized in many developed countries like the US, Australia and UK, where pharmacists are already involved in:

- participation in the disease management team as the drug therapy manager
- monitoring for contraindications, adverse drug reaction, drug interactions, drug allergies, drug-food interactions and for drug interference with laboratory tests.
- monitoring drug profiles of patients
- antimicrobial therapy optimization
- pharmacokinetic dosing consultations for drugs with narrow therapeutic windows such as antibiotics (e.g., aminoglycosides and vancomycin), digoxin, phenytoin, theophylline and other drugs when appropriate.
- clinical pharmacist/physician rounds;
- drug information and medication inservices to other health care professionals.
- coordination and evaluation of new drug clinical research studies (phase I, II, and III drug trials) as well as post-marketing surveillance studies (phase IV);
- the conduct and documentation of pharmaco-epidemiology, pharmaco-economics and drug outcome studies;
- participation in continuous quality improvement process teams, in the Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee, and in other committees;
- drug formulary and clinical guidelines development and management.
- Research, education and training to other HCPs and patients.

The pharmacist plays an integral role in the health care team as a pharmacotherapy expert. The pharmacist is responsible for accurate and efficient distribution of medications but is also responsible for the pharmacotherapy outcome of patients. Besides ensuring appropriate use of medicines, pharmacists also have the ability to reduce unnecessary use of medicines thereby minimizing drug related adverse events i.e. to save money, which can be used to provide health service for poor without discrimination. Is our Nepal government and Ministry of health still in doubt that pharmacists can contribute to boost the national economy? Let us explore some evidences from developed countries:

Financial Savings:

- *In a recent study in the US³, it cost up to \$293 per month (29 percent) less to treat patients in a pharmacy-based disease management program than to treat comparable patients receiving traditional pharmacy services-----*
- *Studies in general practices and nursing homes in UK⁴ have shown that every £1 spent on employing pharmacists to review patients' medication resulted in £2 cost savings.-----*

Risk Reduction:

- *Adverse drug effects (ADEs) have a significant effect on the length of hospital stays and patient mortality. The rate of ADEs short-term hospitalized patients has been estimated to be approx. 6.5% in the US, approx. one-half are potentially preventable.¹ The hospital costs of preventable ADEs was estimated at \$1 to \$2 billion^{5,6}! ----*

Optimising Drug Therapy:

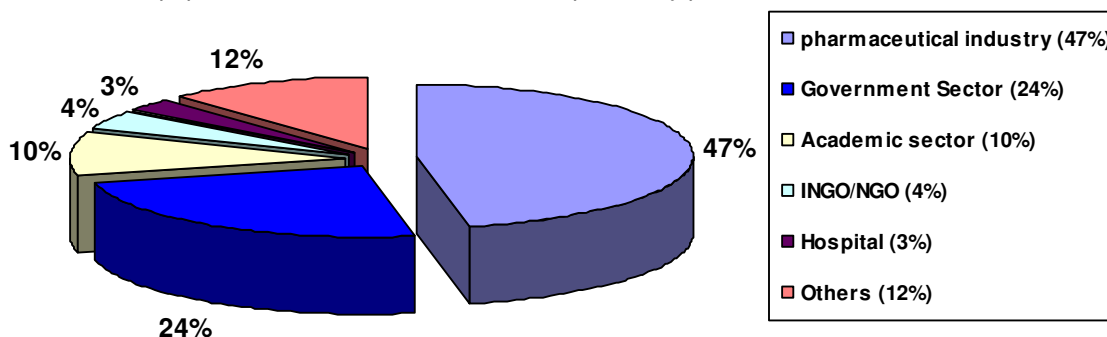
- *The cost of noncompliance, where pharmacists can play crucial role by counseling and with compliance aids, with drug therapy in New York State⁷ in 1995 was:*
 1. 8600 deaths per year
 2. 1.4 million lost work-days corresponding to \$100 million in income
 3. 10% of all hospital admissions (25% among the elderly)
 4. 23% of nursing home admissions

Other studies in the US⁸, estimate medication error (prescribing, dispensing, administration and monitoring of drug therapy) rate of 12% in a typical hospital many of which could have produced serious consequences without pharmacist intervention. A significant percentage of medical errors occurring in healthcare community are due to medication errors. Medication errors have imposed a serious threat to patient safety in the U.S., Australia and the United Kingdom, and have become a major public health issue in Canada⁷. Pharmacists are the vital role player to minimize medication errors by educating and training other HCPs and patients, and developing risk minimization procedures. These are only few examples.

If in developed countries like UK, Australia, Canada and the US, where hospital and community pharmacy have been established long ago and pharmacists have been well recognized for their clinical role, has such significant medication error rate we, the government, the pharmacists and other HCPs should be worrying about the condition in Nepalese health care system where pharmaceutical care is still to born.

The current situation in pharmacy practice is akin to that in UK in the 1960s when traditional compounding roles were being superseded by industry. Shortage and ineffective distribution of medicines throughout the country is well-known problem in Nepal. Other than affluent cities of Nepal, struggling economy made conventional medicines a luxury and out of reach of a population that struggles to access the basic essentials of life such as food.

Although WHO did not list the number of pharmacists in Nepal, in 1998 health professional statistical data list we know for sure that our country has now approx. 330 pharmacists². i.e. One pharmacist per 73 thousands population. Let see the distribution of pharmacy professionals:



Graph 1: Pharmacy Manpower distribution in Nepal¹⁰,

If you allow me, I would like to say that we are not only creating a boundary to limit the use of our own knowledge and skills that we (the pharmacists) have acquired during the undergraduate study program but also being left out of the whole health care system where patients come into contact.

Do we, as pharmacists, think we can make a difference for the healthcare service users? Question to ponder.....

As the then member of National Planning Commission of Nepal, Mr. Nirmal Pandey once quoted²: “expired, very low quality and duplicate medicines are commonly distributed in the country”, we, the pharmacists, should be given authority for the procurement and distribution of medicines to alleviate this problem. Although this is the provision of National Drug Policy we as professionals know that reality is totally different. While it is true that we do not have enough pharmacists (as the WHO, GMP demands at least 3 pharmacists in a pharmaceutical company), I believe that we should review the deployment of our professionals into different areas of health care particularly in hospitals & community pharmacy. This in turn, I believe, would result in the rising remuneration of pharmacists as a principle of the demand and supply theory.

The then president of Nepal Medical Association, Dr Kalyan Raj Pandey, accepted¹⁰ that doctors are too busy to counsel and monitor proper use of medicines in patients. If we deem ourselves as the drug expert, we should take this role.

"integration of pharmacists on medical teams and patient care units provides an effective method of promoting appropriate medication use"

Pharmacists have an essential role in health promotion. For example in UK, the role of pharmacists in the community for smoking cessation is a well-organized and extensively used service. This role has personal importance to me as I gave up smoking with the support of a pharmacist – without this help; I failed to give up many times. Looking at the statistics, there is a mortality rate⁹ (1998) of 1605 (age 45+) per 100,000 population from smoking related cancer and respiratory disease (cardiovascular disease not included) in Nepal. Back to statistics, Approx. 260% rise in per capita consumption in

annual cigarette consumption from 1970 to 1997 and approx. 605% increase in total sticks of cigarette consumption during these 27 years. Shall we think about the service and propose to the government?

While we, pharmacy professionals need to expand our roles we also need to make sure that we are competent, and trained to give the best to the service users. The pharmacists must establish a caring, *ethical* professional relationship with the patient.

The pharmacists must use skills in medical informatics and in the evaluation of diagnostic information (laboratory test and medical imaging data). The pharmacist must be skilled in the use of clinical practice guidelines and protocols.

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We can thrive in our profession with the inter-co-operation and liaising hand in hand with Ayurveda Doctors' Associan of Nepal (ADAN), Nepal Medical Association (NMA), Association of Pharmaceutical Producers' of Nepal (APPON), Paramedics' Association of Nepal (PAN), Nepal Medical Sales Representative Association (NMSRA), Nepal Chemist & Drugist Association (NCDA), Nursing Council.

Although there is Frustration among pharmacists (as I come across) lots of good news are coming out as well such as recent establishment of pharmacy council and initiation of pharmacists' registration process. It is quite good for pharmacy profession that Nepal is now in International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP), which means we are now exposed to, and able to contribute to the international world of pharmacy.

Systems do not change over night but continuing dedication, enthusiasm and disciplined hard work do build 'Rome'. Many issues require legislative changes, government interest and support, initiative & leadership from professional bodies, development of multi-disciplinary team approach culture and of course, individual motivation and dedication.

We have to adopt not only to change around us, but also to change ourselves; the biggest challenge of all – just as in developed countries.

I am thankful to Alex Hodgins, Principle Pharmacist, Mental health and Care of Elderly; Naomi Meadows, Endocrine Pharmacist; Sotiris Antoniou, Principle Pharmacists, Clinical, Education and Trainin, all from Barts and The London NHS Trust for their time and valuable suggestions.

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International Relations: Nepal attracts US attention, to India's dismay

By Dhruba Adhikary

KATHMANDU - Would the United States have enhanced its concerned interest in Nepal's Maoist insurgency had the tragic events of September 11, 2001 not occurred? It is difficult to say, but it is unusual that the US has suddenly chosen to increase contacts with the Himalayan kingdom that it has officially known for more than 55 years.

Washington and Kathmandu established diplomatic relations on April 25, 1947 - shortly before independent India and Pakistan were born. (Though small in size in comparison to her giant neighbors, Nepal was never under British colonial rule.)

Nepal started to accept US assistance shortly after the formal establishment of ties, adding up to about US\$700 million in 50 years. The size of the annual package grew only recently - to \$38 million - after the visit of US Secretary of State Colin Powell in January 2002. The military component in the package was allowed to be slightly increased in view of the need to make the Royal Nepal Army capable of effectively fighting Maoist guerrillas. Some of the grant money was spent in procuring small arms from the US and Belgium.

More than 7,000 people have lost their lives in as many years of armed insurgency in Nepal. The victims include Nepalis working as guards at the US embassy in Kathmandu, as well as in a US-aided development project in the western region. A ceasefire was agreed in January this year between the government and the rebels, but it is far from certain whether stuttering talks will bring peace to this largely mountainous country.

As is obvious from the figures, the US assistance is very modest, and Nepal's present difficulties are real. But India, Nepal's neighbor on the south, is perturbed at these developments. New Delhi's displeasure has been made public through periodic pronouncements, and by senior officials handling India's external affairs. Foreign Secretary Kanwal Sibal has spoken several times in Paris, New Delhi and elsewhere that Nepal must not take "outside assistance" to quell a domestic rebellion. "Anywhere else in the world, this small amount of military assistance would have been seen as trivial," wrote Indian journalist C Raja Mohan in *The Hindu* newspaper on June 18. "But in the context of Nepal, this has acquired a larger than life dimension," he added, indirectly scoffing at India's foreign policy managers.

Ostensibly on official prompting, some sections of the Indian media are obsessed by what they describe as the "growing American presence in Nepal". Giving credence to such perceptions, Indian ambassador Shyam Saran told a newspaper interviewer in Kathmandu recently, "The government of India is in close touch with the US government concerning the developments in Nepal, since both are friends of Nepal. There is no competition or rivalry between India and the US in Nepal," he added, leaving no doubts to readers that this indeed is the case.

In fact, in New Delhi's opinion, Nepal should always resolve its problems through bilateral consultations, as suggested by a controversial treaty concluded more than half a century ago. The Treaty of Peace and Friendship was initialed - on July 31, 1950 - when a revolution was going on in China. And the accord itself was signed by Nepali prime minister Mohun Shamsher Rana, whose autocratic regime was overthrown six months later in a popular pro-democracy movement that dismantled the 104-year-old autocracy.

Turning a blind eye to these developments, hardline bureaucrats in India's capital still prefer to offer interpretations requiring Nepal to understand the "spirit" of the anachronistic treaty. Indians want Kathmandu not to buy defense supplies elsewhere, even if they cannot always give assurances that the goods made in India would maintain minimum quality. If they had their way, army sources said, they would like Nepal to spend the American grants to purchase weaponry from Indian manufacturers.

But even the discredited treaty says that Nepal can procure its supplies from anywhere in the world. Article 5 reads as follows: "The government of Nepal shall be free to import, from or through the territory of India, arms, ammunitions or warlike material and equipment for the security of Nepal. The procedure for giving effect to this arrangement shall be worked out by the two governments acting in consultation."

There was no need for India to be alarmed when Nepal imported some defensive weapons, such as anti-aircraft guns, from China in 1988. Since Nepal did not need to use Indian territory for those imports, authorities in Kathmandu did not find it necessary to inform India about the consignments coming overland via Tibet. But New Delhi considered it an offense, and accused Nepal of breaching the "spirit" of the 1950 treaty. Subsequently, the Indian government imposed a trade and transit blockade on Nepal, at the start of 1989, which lasted for 15 months. Relations became normal only after June 1990.

Will New Delhi again think of taking such punitive action against Nepal for accepting a few air-borne military consignments from the US and Belgium? Will India take a step "to teach a lesson" to Nepal, as its prime minister Rajiv Gandhi did 14 years ago? Probably not this time. The political environment has undergone a sea change over the past years: there is no USSR to back India in a hegemonic role in the neighborhood. And the present-day reality is that the US is omnipresent in terms of its economic and military power. China, Nepal's neighbor on the north, has also become too big a factor to be glossed over.

The Indian establishment, however, seems reluctant to accept what is a stark reality. On the contrary, it is insisting on the implementation of an accord that has been billed "unequal" since the day it was signed. This is evident from the different status of the signatories: from Nepal's side it was the prime minister, Mohun Shumsher Rana; from India's side it was just an ambassador, C P N Singh. And it is believed that Mohun Shumsher Rana accepted the treaty in the hope that his signature would produce a quid pro quo in the form of Indian support to his falling regime.

But inconsistency in protocol matters alone did not make the treaty unequal. Articles 6 and 7 of the document, for instance, contain provisions for granting national treatment to each other's citizens on a reciprocal basis. "How can a small country of 23 million people be asked to extend 'reciprocity' to India, which has a population of over a billion?" wonders Mohan Man Sainju, a leading expert on developmental issues.

Despite these asymmetries, Indian authorities continue to cite the dated pact to reject Nepal's suggestions for regulating the 1,800 kilometer porous border that the two countries share. Presently, there is unrestricted movement of people from either side. It is conspicuous that none of India's other contiguous borders remains porous. In a write-up published in a journal in 1994, Japanese scholar Kyoko Inoue took note of the prevailing Nepali perception that provision for reciprocity "might result in serious constraints on national integration and national economy-building under its difficult geo-political condition, while no such constraints were being felt in India." Nepal's northern border is a regulated one, despite the fact that China's Tibet region is a very sparsely populated area - of about only 6 million inhabitants.

That India in 1950 imposed an unequal treaty on Nepal is a widespread perception, and popular reaction to this imposition surface often, and particularly during parliamentary elections. Leaders of even known pro-Indian political parties find it expedient to promise that, if elected, they would seek the abrogation of the treaty. This trend has been evident in all three elections since the democratic restoration of 1990. The pact is construed as an instrument that, it is felt, undermines Nepal's status as a sovereign and independent country.

Foreign policy analysts agree that in the camouflage of an innocuous accord, the Indian government inserted clauses to constrict Nepal's future policies on immigration, flood control, utilization of river water, defense systems, trade and transit. "Operative clauses of the treaty make it clear that it was designed to corner Nepal from every conceivable direction," says Madhab Prasad Khanal, an analyst who once served in the ministry of foreign affairs. "That Maoist rebels can carry on their anti-Nepal activities from Indian soil is distinct proof of New Delhi's desire to develop friendship with Nepal!" Khanal adds sarcastically.

The attitude in New Delhi has become something that some Indians themselves find hard to digest. "India became free in 1947, but could not free itself from the British mindset," concedes K V Rajan, former Indian ambassador to Nepal, in the recently-released anthology "External Affairs: Cross-Border Relations". Accepting that the 1950 treaty is a major "psychological irritant" for Nepal, Rajan,

whose tenure in Kathmandu was from 1995 to 2000, urges India to come forward with positive proposals of its own.

C Raja Mohan is another Indian author to identify "contradictions between India's global policy and its regional approach." In his new book *Crossing the Rubicon: The Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy*, Mohan makes the following observation, "At the international level, India rejected the notions of balance of power and exclusive spheres of influence; within the region it clung to them."

"New Delhi needs to shed its untenable expectations that the world can be kept out of Nepal and that the problems in Kathmandu can be resolved purely in a bilateral framework with India," Mohan, strategic affairs editor of *The Hindu* newspaper, said in a separate article published earlier this year.

Avatar Singh Bhasin, editor of books comprising documents on Nepal-India relations, describes the treaty-bound relationship as "feudal" and suggests that New Delhi to modernize it. "The sooner it [treaty] is replaced, revised or abandoned the better ...", he writes.

The contentious treaty has often been compared with the accord that the former Soviet Union imposed on neighboring Finland in 1948.

Nevertheless, the official Indian contention has been that the treaty imposed certain security obligations on Nepal in exchange for important economic benefits. Nepal, on the other hand, argues that it would not be "asking for things which India does not want to provide".

Everything said and done, admit intelligentsia on both sides of the border, the 1950 treaty has been implemented more in the breach than in observance. For example, article 2 requires both sides to inform each other should any friction or misunderstanding occur with any neighboring state. India went to war with Pakistan and China, but it never officially informed Nepal. Similarly, while Indian nationals enjoy unrestricted entry into Nepal and movement within the kingdom, Nepali nationals visiting India are not allowed to enter most of its northeastern states without prior permits. Likewise, Nepal has enacted laws that prevent foreigners, including Indian nationals, from buying landed property in this country.

What then is the use of retaining a treaty that fails to meet the needs of the 21st century? Since the accord does not provide any room for changes, amendments or revisions, Nepal could, though, initiate steps for its annulment. The last article (article 10) provides a solution: "This treaty shall remain in force until it is terminated by either party by giving one year's notice." But is Nepal prepared to invoke this article when it knows well that the other party is still living under an illusion that it can retain the "unique" relationship on the strength [or weakness] of this document? The alternative is to wait until the day that India realizes that it is being subjected to further ridicule for not being in tune with changing times.

But what if India quickly agreed to get rid of the treaty? How would Nepal adjust to the new situation? While traditionalists sound apprehensive about such a possibility, others are not worried. Keshav Raj Jha, president of the Nepal Council of World Affairs, is one of them. "Nepal can go for one of the two available options: sign a treaty similar to the one it concluded with China in 1960, or begin conducting bilateral relations without any treaty, like Bangladesh," Jha said.

Jha's reference is to the 1960 treaty with China, signed by premiers Chou Enlai and B P Koirala in Beijing, which was based on the principles of equality and mutual benefit. The second allusion is to the friendship treaty that India and Bangladesh initialed in 1972 which was allowed to lapse after 25 years. Similarly, India's 20-year pact with the then Soviet Union remained a one-time deal.

"No treaty, howsoever good and well-meaning it may be, can achieve its goal if its articles are not allowed to remain relevant to the issues at hand," comments Badri Bahadur Karki, a seasoned lawyer who once had a stint as Nepal's attorney-general.

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"Reflections from a decade back" - From TND 10 years ago

By Madhav Bhatta

Compiled By Pramod Pandey

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

Our Past Our Present

Corruption & Abuse of Power by Girija and Koirala Family

In the popular movement of 1990 hundreds of people sacrificed their lives to bring about democracy in Nepal. And we thought we got democracy, but the last three years of Koirala rule has been the primal example of abuse of power. Nepali people had great expectations, and we had every reason to do so. After all we brought the democracy, we deserve a break from hundreds of years of autocratic despotism. Alas, we were wrong! It seems Girija thinks he and his family alone brought about the change of 1990, so they deserve every post and privileges. Why didn't we think of this before? May be we would have peacefully persuaded the Shah family to share power with the Koirala family, rather than sacrificing the lives of ordinary Nepalis' to restore so called democracy.

Here is the list of some of the Koirala appointees, an example of his understanding of democracy.

Sushil Koirala (Brother)- M.P.(Banke District), Personal Advisor & Member Central Committee(NC)

Nona Koirala (Sister-in-law)- Member Central Committee(NC)

Jyoti Koirala (Nephew)- Advisor, Karmachari Pajani Bibhag(Sorry couldn't find an appropriate translation)

Prakash Koirala (Nephew)- M.P. (Sunsari District)

Nitya Raj Koirala (Nephew)- G.M.(Bhaktapur Brick & Tile Factory)

Dirgha Raj Koirala (Uncle)- Advisor

Madan Koirala (Nephew)- GM (Lumbini Sugar Factory)

Bijay Koirala (Nephew)- Chief(Arun Barun Makalu Project)

Ashok Koirala (Brother)- Mayor(Biratnagar Nagar Palika)

Sasank Koirala(Nephew)- Chief(B.P. Koirala Cancer Institute)

Shekhar Koirala(Nephew)- Chief(B.P. Medical College)

Sushil Koirala (Nephew)- Special Advisor(Radio Nepal)

Pradip Koirala (Nephew)- Chief(Tea Development Board)

Sriharsha Koirala(Nephew)- Chief(B.P. Planetoriumm)

Dharmanath Koirala (relative)- G.M.(Krishi Samagri Sasthan)

Sujata Koirala (Daughter)- Chief(Sushma Trust)

Niranjan Koirala(Nephew)- Advisor

Shiva Kumar Koirala(Nephew)- Chief(Kosi Dam)

Minachi Nepal (Niece)- Secretary(Purbanchal University)

Lila Koirala (daughter-in-law)- M.P.(Dhanusa District), President(Greater Janakpurdhan Development Program)

Literature: Poem "I see Gods"

By Bhuvan Thapaliya

When I gave some food
To the poor old beggar
I saw God in his eyes
As he gleamed with delight

When I healed the wound
Of the deserted street dog
I saw God in his tongue
As he licked my hands with love

When I saved a young virgin
From being raped by the culprits
I saw God in her sentiments

As she gestured me thank you

When I watered the plants
In the scorched wasteland
I saw God in the leaves
As they rejuvenated with life

When I gave hope
To the hopeless
I saw God in their resolution
As they marched with sanguine heart

When I ignited the spirit of compassion
In the consciousness of the humankind
I saw God in their neutrality
As they annihilated the domicile of disparity

When I freed the prisoners
From their own prison of delusion
I saw God in their freedom
As they appreciated the realism

When I estranged the egoism from me
And dedicated my life to serve the humanity
I saw God in my revelation
As I realized the necessity of the global unity

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Announcement: Call for INLS Bhudhathoki Best On-line Writer Award Nomination

International Nepali Literary Society (INLS), Washington D.C. has established "Bhudhathoki Best On-line Writer Award" on the sponsorship of INLS Vice-President Kamala Sarup and Chiranjibi Bhudhathoki. The award will be given to an author who has made outstanding contribution to Nepali literature by publishing on the internet. The award consists of \$100.00 cash prize and a certificate. The award will be given every two year.

INLS would like to request you to nominate articles in Nepali or English about Nepali Language and/or Literature on the Internet. It qualifies such articles, poems, fictions and other writings published in a website, e-zines, and e-newsletters. In order to qualify a publication as an on-line publication, it has to be first published on the Internet. It also has to be published after Jan. 1, 2001 and prior to July 1, 2003.

Nominations should be e-mailed to INLS Award Committee at literature@inls.org with "Submission for Best On-line Writer Award" as its subject. Nominations should be accompanied by a copy of the publication, publication's on-line address, date of publication, author's bio-data and a passport size photograph.

Nominations should reach literature@inls.org by September 30, 2003 and results will be announced by October 15, 2003. An award ceremony will be held on October 26, 2003 during Devkota Jayanti celebration program at George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia.

If you are interested in other INLS Awards, please visit INLS award site at <http://www.inls.org/awards.html> .

INLS Award Committee
<http://www.inls.org>
info@inls.org

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Entertainment: Bollywood: Frequently Questioned Answers

By Richard Corliss

(Richard Corliss gets an education in Indian cinema from his readers and shares it with the same. This article is originally published in Time. See the URL provided below for the complete article)

Let's recap the 10 FAQs:

1. Why are Indian movies so long?

Mehboob Khan's "Aan" was one of the few Indian films of the 50s to get a released in English theaters. This Eastman Color swashbuckler, with Dilip Kumar (in his smiling, not soulful mode) as a Hindi Douglas Fairbanks, is a relatively brisk, buoyant affair. Yet a London reviewer couldn't resist sniding, "It goes aan and aan and aan."

I don't think Indian films are boring, but there's no question they run 30 to 60 (to 90!) mins. longer than the average movie from America, France, Mexico, Hong Kong or Burkina Faso. The simple answer, I

suppose, is that they are longer by the amount of song material. But there must be something in the Indian entertainment appetite that wants a full evening's masala.

In my column, I wondered, jocularly, whether Indians were "length freaks." The acerbic Mr. Gang replied by asking, "By whose standard? Hollywood's? Maybe its the other way — maybe it is Americans who have a limited attention span. Without the obligatory sex scene every 15 min, Hollywood movies would be hard pressed to go over 60 min." Well, I'd say Hollywood films have too much smirking and too little sex, but that's for another discussion.

2. Why don't the characters kiss on the mouth?

The short answers are: (a) Sometimes they do. "In 1983 in Sunny Deol's debut film 'Betaab,'" recalls Rajul Mehta, "kissing scenes reappeared. In the 1990s many Hindi movies had lip-kissing scenes, particularly Aamir Khan's movies (e.g. 'Ishq'). In fact he is supposed to have kissed the maximum number of his co-stars."

...and (b): Mostly, Indians don't. As Arvind Kumar of the Indic Journalists Association International, "You won't see public display of affection in public in India even off-screen."

3. Why do the characters have to sing and dance?

"Subtlety is not one of the strengths of Indian commercial cinema," Indu of Asian STAR TV. "If a person is happy, just a grinning face or even ecstatic dialogues don't seem to be enough to express the happiness. So, we resort to songs that make the message loud and clear that, yes, we are thrilled about something. Same logic for confused, mad, sad or love. Maybe it's not real — after all, who breaks out in synchronised dances with 40 extras when one is happy? But it's a characteristic of Indian cinema."

I've written elsewhere that movies give audiences what they don't have. In the U.S., an economically comfortable nation, films often deal with life on the edge: danger and deprivation are glamorous to those who have everything. The same, upside down, applies in India: it's a poor country, so the movie image is of the middle, upper-middle and fabulously-rich classes. As Abhishek Pandey e-loquizes: "More than 999 million of India's one billion people live a life that is completely opposite of what we all see on the screen. Hardly any will marry for true love or have a chance to frolic on the beaches of their own country, let alone a Caribbean or a European country. So, Bollywood gives them what they can't rationally have — dancing, singing, and beautiful women included."

4. Why don't the actors sing?

"Because they can't," is the curt response of e-mailer Sribuddaraju. "Actresses are mainly used as props for glamour in the male-dominated film industry." Another point is that India has a wonderful tradition of vocalists; movies would be nuts not to use them as playback singers.

I was wrong in writing that all-time playback diva Lata Mangeshkar had recorded "something between 30,000 and 50,000 songs," Satish Kalra e-mails: "It has been catalogued that she sang no more than 5,067 Hindi songs between the years of 1945 to 1989. Add about 20% songs in other regional languages, and the total could be a little over 6,000. ... Her sister, Asha Bhosle, has sung more songs than Lata, and her total from all languages may be around 10,000." The info, as Bhagwant Sagoo and others pointed out, is from the exhaustive reference work "Hindi Film Geet Kosh" by Harmandir Singh, aka Hamraaz — a multivolume study I plan to buy as soon as I win the Powerball Lottery.

5. Why can't they dance?

I acknowledged that I may be ignorant of the codes underlying Indian dance. And Sunny Singh agrees with me: "You are right — you do miss out on the cultural codes of bhangra, laavni and various other folk dances that are incorporated into the dance numbers in Bollywood. The 'Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham' number 'Shava Shava' echoes the bhangra dancing you would see at many family parties in northern India. That's why it's so popular: it's the way we dance anyway, just glamorized for screen! So it may seem unsophisticated to you, but it works just fine to us." And Arun Kumar, who has translated Gulzar's lyrics for the A.R. Rahman songs from "Dil Se," indicates that "The gestures and movements to the lyrics of the songs are often not translated literally. When the girl says, 'Don't come near me,' she will often make a dismissive gesture, which if the song is not translated properly can be confusing."

Some readers distinguished between male and female actor-dancers. "Many of the original Indian movie actresses came from a background of professional dance and 'dance-drama'," says Ajay

Divakaran of Cambridge, Mass. "Even the acting was visibly influenced by the expressions developed in Indian Classical Dance. Even today Indian actresses are often trained dancers. Most dance teachers in India are male, but they are seen as some kind of aberration. So Indian actors are typically untrained and it shows in their dancing. The Indian classical dance purists are of course horrified by Indian film dances. They see them as bastard products."

Some great terpers: the Tamil stars Prabhu Deva and Kamal Hassan (trained as a dancer), Hindi hunk Hrithik Roshan (and yes, Sri Jan, I have seen "Kaho Naa Pyar Hai" — he move fine). "I think Travolta was terrible compared to Shah rukh Khan," assertive Adnan Khan maintains, "and in 'Mudjse Dosti Korage' Hrithik Roshan does a moonwalk that no white Western musical dancer could dream of doing! Hey, Mexicans aren't the only browned-skinned people with rhythm!"

6. Why are the actors usually light-skinned, even in films from Southern India?

The hot-button issue, with most of my correspondents on the same side. Some readers, often Tamil residents or fans of Tamil and Telugu films (in southern India), listed several stars of darker hue. Sourabh Gupta points out: "Though fair actors might be favored by the producers of the movies, the masses seem to care less. Ajay Devgan ... Manoj Bajpa ... Suniel [Sunil] Shetty, Rajnikanth, and even Mithuh Chakarvathy were all stars. even if they weren't fair skinned. The elitist in India might have the conception that fair is beautiful, but I think masses will love anyone who can act or represents them."

But the majority agreed that the stars on the screen are lighter-skinned than most of the people watching them. It's not just a movie preoccupation. "You'll find every girl in India trying to make herself more fair-skinned than she is by every cream possible," observes Arun Mani. "Hence all the skin care products in India are designed to match the mindset by advertising to give a lighter skin. I am pretty sure most people in India don't know what the word 'tanning' means Mothers don't let their daughters out the sun, lest they will get dark skins. And guys in India always think the basic requirement for a girl to be beautiful is that she should be fair! So white-skinned people in India think they are good-looking. If you look at south Indian movies, the actor might be dark-skinned; but the actress will be light-skinned." Often they are imported, as Madras' ace auteur Mani Rathnam did with the Nepali actress Manisha Koirala.

The prejudice could be a vestige of the caste system: "In general, the lighter the skin color of an Indian, the higher social class that person is perceived to have," says Risha Patel. "It is thought that the darker individuals must have been through multiple hardships — e.g., works in the sun — which causes them to have a darker complexion." Or it could be a hangover from the Raj and earlier colonizers of the subcontinent. "There are plenty of dark skinned actors and actresses, especially in South Indian movies," observes Sribuddaraju, "but they are made up to look fairer than usual due to the age long discrimination against dark skin in favor of light-skinned 'superior' races that invaded and settled down in India throughout the ages."

Beauty is power, power beauty. Is light considered right because it is the color of the dominant class or caste? Or do the powerful simply get to decide what's attractive? Here's a sad generalization: In Europe, the U.S. and Africa, as well as India, the light-skinned Northerners are the bosses of the dark-skinned Southerners. "Shade-ism," prejudice based on skin gradients, exists everywhere, as attested to by this poignant tale from Tammy, an adoptive mother in the U.S.:

"Having two beautiful Indian daughters, one with medium skin and one with dark, I can tell you that there is prejudice based on skin gradients in India, including southern India where my girls are from. I saw it when I was there in 1994 to pick up my lighter-skinned daughter. "You are so lucky to be getting her" they told me, as the caregivers ignored my companion's darker- skinned child. Mallika was spoiled in the orphanage. They would rarely put her down. They were so loving to her that they didn't really let me be with her until we left for Madras.

"A few years later we adopted Maya from the same orphanage. She came to us with all the signs of neglect. She had no expression and no muscle-tone in her legs. She swayed to pass the time and even though she was the same age upon her arrival as Mallika, couldn't talk or walk. A few weeks after her arrival she began to thrive because she actually had someone to cuddle her and love her now. We have her in special education programs to make up for the 16 months of little brain development. (The first two years of brain development are crucial to the intellect of the person.) I don't know if we will ever get her to the point that she could have been at had we gotten her right away. Interestingly, we have not found this type of prejudice in our country. Many more people remark on how beautiful Maya is. We have even been approached by a catalog photographer who wanted to photograph her.

"When I was in Kerala I photographed a scene of dark-skinned Indians in line in front of a movie billboard depicting all light-skinned actors. As a social studies teacher I talk to my students about it. I love India but there is a little piece of me that will always hold them responsible for any future problems that Maya might have."

7. What's with those kooky credits?

"All credits start off with the image of a god / goddess and a prayer," proclaims the all-knowledgeable Sribuddaraju. "Raj Kapoors films start off with [his father] Prithviraj Kapoor praying to Shiva before the shot takes one to RK Studios' emblem, that of Raj Kapoor holding Nargis" in the famous attitude (and poster) from "Barsaat." Sribuddaraju avers that star billing is determined by a mixture of seniority and popularity. But I'll stick by my story that, in the 50s at least, age often came before beauty (Prithviraj was top-billed above Nargis and Raj Kapoor in "Awara"), and female before male (Mala Sinha, Meena Kumari and Waheeda Rehman all were listed above Guru Dutt in the films Dutt directed and starred in). Raj Kapoor exercised an ostentatious modesty, taking his actor billing in "Jagte Raho" below a few dozens stars and bit players — exactly as Orson Welles did in the credits for "Citizen Kane."

But why are the credits in the colonial language? "English credits are not a surprise," instructs Mukul Bakshi of San Francisco, who disputes my claim (taken off an internet chat site, so it must be true!) that only two to three percent of Indians read English. "If you visit, you will notice that most shop-fronts, road signs, bus routes, etc. are in English. So too, are film credits, posters, etc. When I lived in New Delhi, and was creative director at J. Walter Thompson, all the advertising I created was in English. There are 14 English daily newspapers in that city (there is only one in San Francisco). About 55% of the population is literate. Of that, about 80% went to what in India are called English Medium schools, where all subjects are taught in English, starting from first standard. That means over 400 million people read and write English, and that makes India the world's largest English-speaking country."

8. What's the Hindi word for "plagiarism"?

The standard Indian film review will tell you which U.S. movies the new Indian was "inspired by." Critiques of "Koi... Mil Gaya," the Rakesh and Hrithik Roshan sci-fi thriller that opened around the world last week, noted the film's similarity to "E.T.," "Forrest Gump," "Big" and "Close Encounters of the Third Kind." With Bollywood movies now getting the occasional reviews in U.S. newspapers, Indian producers have to worry that they'll catch unwanted attention from Hollywood lawyers. They've already caught hell at home. In May the Indian Supreme Court banned the 260-episode TV drama "Karishma: The Miracles of Destiny" (starring Karishma Kapoor) because it was too close to U.S. novelist Barbara Taylor Bradford's "A Woman of Substance" trilogy.

Opines Ashok Talwar: "I have never heard 'The Magnificent Seven' being labeled plagiarism." True, that remake of "The Seven Samurai" took no official notice of Akira Kurosawa's original. Neither did "A Fistful of Dollars," a remake of Kurosawa's "Yojimbo." In the 30s, Hollywood remade European hits — "Intermezzo," "Pepe le Moko" (as Casbah) —and in 1994 four U.S. pictures ("True Lies," "Intersection," "Mixed Nuts" and "My Father, the Hero") were, bizarrely, remakes of French movies, as was last year's "Unfaithful." But all these were acknowledged, paid for.

I am sure there is some difference that I don't understand. One factor to consider is that Indian film industry is exposed to Hollywood but there is little exposure in the other direction. When people see something they like they tend to adapt it. I see a lot of copying of fashion and influence on popular music from India in the U.S., but it is seldom acknowledged. Even the Indians don't make any issue out of it.

Bharath Chari blames it on the creative bosses: "The script writers in India do have original ideas but most of time are browbeaten by the producers or filmmakers into lifting entire plots word for word from popular movie in the U.S. They are even given instructions as to which movie to choose." OK, but how do they usually get away with their purloining? As e-mailer Manyam wryly explains, "that's homage to our copyright system: we have none."

Then there's the piquant proposition that intellectual property is theft. "While [the uncredited remake of another film] is crass and proof of lack of creativity, using the word 'thieving' in this context is wrong," argues Arvind Kumar. "It is those who use violence and cage those who imitate others using Government resources who hate the idea of liberty. The so called intellectual property rights (patents as well as copyrights) are a violation of one's intellectual liberty." Those of you who have been

downloading "Finding Nemo" and bootlegging Eminem CDs: remember that argument when your case comes to trial. It might work.

Well, if there's anything original about Indian films, it has to be the music. Think otherwise. Suresh Ramasubramanian asserts that it's "not just the movies but a lot of Indian film songs are knockoffs of anything from Classical and Opera to Rock and Pop." He recommends, as I do, a site on "inspired" Indian films songs. Though, honestly, at least one of A.R. Rahman's songs must have come out of his own head, not an obscure CD that these musicologists have tracked down.

9. Tell me about non-Bombay Indian cinema.

Lots of mail here, mostly about the blooming (not, apparently, withering, as I indicated) southern Indian film centers. "May be u havent stepped in to the tamil movies any further than AR rahman's music," shorthands Vivek, "because u have missed the tamil movies biggest star Rajnikanth (and if u dig deeper u get more)." Vivek was one of seven Bollywood e-ducators who spoke highly of Rajnikanth. It happens that my Tamil film scholarship is pretty much limited to Rahman's music and Rathnam's films; Mani's "Dalapathi" starred Rajnikanth, and I was impressed — though, not knowing Tamil, I may have missed a few dialogue subtleties. By the way, as Prabu Parthasarathy (and several other readers) informed me, "Tamil moviedom is dubbed Kollywood because most of the studios, labs, etc. are in a suburb of Madras called Kodambakkam."

It's a big movie world out there, requiring much dedication. "I would recommend you give yourself a few years to checking out the pre-80s Tamil and Malayalam films," my voluble, valued correspondent Nithin advises. "Of course, you want to have a special reason to welcome anything new and different in your mind and heart, and Tamil and Malayalam culture very bountifully provide you with that. Their film creations are borne out of non-aggressive, light-hearted values, a democratic and open-minded approach and, most of all, a classy creative abandon that Hollywood can definitely imbibe to its own utter delight."

Sign me up, Nithin. And find me a place in New York City where I can find lots of old, subtitled Tamil films.

10. Where can you get DVDs?

All the places we mentioned last time, plus some distributors' websites, such as Baba Digital (for a good selection of classics) and the more comprehensive Eros Entertainment (classics, moderns and song compilations). If you're near a theater showing Bollywood product — there are more than you'd think — you can get advance tickets at Sulekha.com, "the #1 Indian online community." For other Dilwale dish, try the news-'n-gossip site indiafm.com, which currently has this morsel: "Rumours are that Aamir Khan might be featured on the cover of TIME Magazine." (If it were true, wouldn't I tell you?)

But Bollywood fever can be stoked any place: where you see movies, where you shop, where you eat. We take testimony from Ohio's Jennie Sexena, a film preservationist for the Library of Congress and, she confesses, "an unapologetic film geek since about the age of 11. So, in July of 1999, when I visited an Indian restaurant/market that also had Bollywood DVDs available, I bit. My first film was 'Bombay,' my second 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai,' and I was a goner. I also took the opportunity to infect my fellow co-workers at the preservation lab. One is now enthusiastic about Hrithik Roshan and another is absolutely bonkers over Shahrukh. ... There is something almost intoxicating about movies that are so emotional and unashamed of it.

"Two years after my initial exposure I was on a plane to visit India. That trip was life altering. ... And now, four years later, I am married to an Indian man and about to give birth any minute (Please!) to a half-Desi little girl. And in true Indian fashion, my husband's parents are living with us right now, although I'm sad to say they will be returning home to India in a couple of months. So I'm an American bahu in a joint family! I often tell my husband that depending on how he feels about his life at any given moment, all praise or curses must be laid on Bollywood!"

So you see how a case of Bollywood fever can lead to wedding bells, and leave the victim with the warm shivers of shaadi-freude.

(Source duly acknowledged:

<http://www.time.com/time/columnist/corliss/article/0,9565,475407,00.html>)
