

# YETI VIEWPOINTS

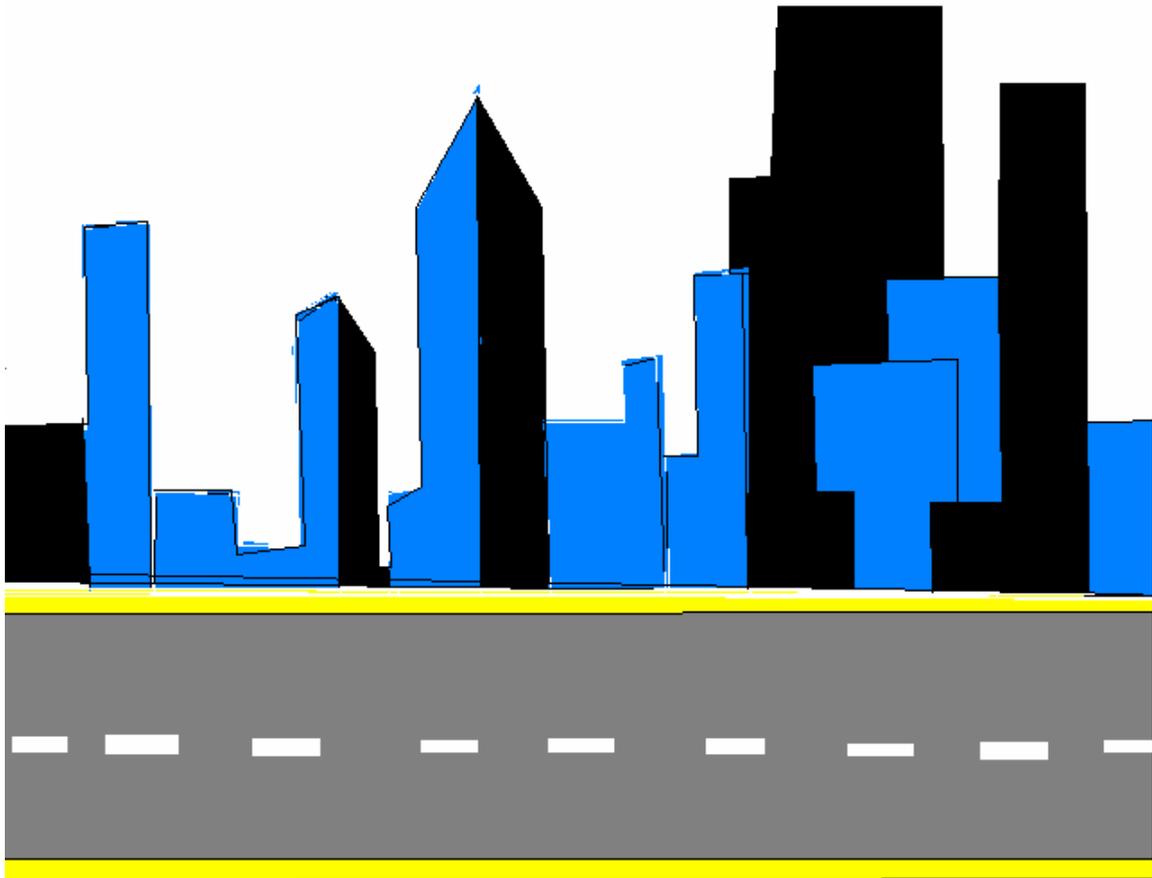


anmausa.org  
Association of Nepalese  
in Midwest America



Nepalese Association in Southeast America

ANMA-NASeA  
*Joint Convention  
Publication 2006  
Chicago, IL*



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*You dream it... we find it.*

2006 Convention : Behind the scene				
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**Chicagoland Nepali Pariwar would like to wish Grand Congratulations to all founders, current and ex-officials of ANMA on the great occasion of its Silver Jubilee Anniversary Celebration.**

**Thank you ANMA members and leaders for leading all Nepalese here in Midwest and around the world and contributing significantly to people's lives.**

**Chicagoland Nepali Pariwar**  
[www.cnpariwar.org](http://www.cnpariwar.org)

## ANMA-NASeA Yeti - Viewpoints

## Working for a better community

Date	Begin	End	Event	Location	Host
9/2/06	10:00 AM	7:00 PM	Registration	Hallway	Convention Committee
	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	Organisator Meeting	Hallway	Convention Committee
	12:00 PM	2:00 PM	Welcome Address & Opening Plenary Session	O'Hare 1 & 2	ANMA, NASeA, CNP
	1:00 PM	6:00 PM	Blood Donation	Kitty Hawk	Dr. Catherine Foster, Ms. Wendy Hall
	2:00 PM	6:30 PM	Sports Tournament		Sports Committee
	2:00 PM	4:00 PM	Current Political and Social Situation in Nepal	Midway	Mr. Girija Gautum
	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	Forum: Woman's Global Network	Kai Tak	Ms. Annapurna Deo
	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	Forum: PAC	Haneda A/B	Dr. Prahlad Pant
	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	Youth Depressions and identifying signs of it	Kai Tak	Dr. Shyam Karki
	4:00 PM	6:00 PM	Forum: Literary Session / INLS	Kennedy	Mr. Mohan Sitaula, Mr. Chetnath Ghimire, Mr. Nagendra Sharma
	5:00 PM	6:30 PM	Forum: Nepali Networking	Haneda A/B	Dr. Anita Adhikary & Mr. Sharda Thapa
	5:00 PM	6:30 PM	Social Hour	Outside O'Hare 3	Convention Committee
	6:00 PM	7:30 PM	Dinner	O'Hare 3	Convention Committee
	7:45 PM	10:00 PM	Movie Show	Midway	Convention Committee
	7:45 PM	8:00 PM	Fashion Show	O'Hare 1, 2, 3	Cultural Committee
	8:00 PM	11:00 PM	Cultural Program	O'Hare 1, 2, 3	Cultural Committee
	11:00 PM	1:00 AM	Open Dance Floor	O'Hare 1, 2, 3	DJ Gorkhali Brothers
Date	Begin	End	Event	Location	Host(s)
9/3/04	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	Pooja & Prasad	Haneda A/B	Dr. Bal K Sharma
	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	Yoga	Kai Tak	Mr. Narayan Deo
	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	Organisator Meeting	Hallway	Convention Committee
	8:00 AM	7:00 PM	Registration	Hallway	Convention Committee
	9:00 AM	6:00 PM	Sports Tournament - Finals		Sports Committee
	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	Opening Session with Keynote Speakers	O'Hare 1 & 2	ANMA, NASeA
	10:00 AM	12:30 PM	Forum: NRN / NACC	O'Hare 1 & 2	Mr. Mukesh Sing & Dr. Gaury Adhikari
	12:30 PM	1:30 PM	Lunch	O'Hare 3	Convention Committee
	12:30 PM	2:00 PM	Homeless Feeding		Dr. Ramesh Amatya
	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	ANTA Meeting / Election	Haneda A/B	Mr. Jay Mandal
	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	INLS Session	Kennedy	Mr. Mohan Sitaula, Mr. Homnath Subedi, Mr. Suman Timsina
	2:00 PM	3:30 PM	Forum: Immigration & Entrepreneurship	Kitty Hawk	Dr. Bal K Sharma, Mr. Khagendra Chettry, Mr. Saubhagya Shrestha
	3:00 PM	4:30 PM	ANMA Meeting / Election	Kennedy	Mr. Anand Tiwari & Mr. Ram Bashyal
	3:00 PM	6:00 PM	Children's Program	Haneda A/B	Mr. Suman Silwal
	3:30 PM	5:00 PM	Revelation of Traditional Nepali Culture and Technology	Midway	Dr. Narayan Rajbhandari & Dr. Janal Koirala
	4:00 PM	5:30 PM	Job Fair	Kitty Hawk	Mr. Hari Dhugana & Mr. Suman Silwal
	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	NAC Meeting	Kennedy	Dr. Jeet Joshi
	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	Social Hour / Networking	Hallway	Convention Committee
	6:00 PM	7:30 PM	Dinner	O'Hare 3	Convention Committee
	8:00 PM	8:30 PM	Award Ceremony & Closing Remarks	O'Hare 1, 2, 3	Mr. Jay Mandal, Dr. Narayan Rajbhandari, & New ANMA President
	8:30 PM	12:00 AM	CNP Cultural Program	O'Hare 1, 2, 3	Cultural Committee
	12:00 AM	2:00 AM	Open Dance Floor	O'Hare 1, 2, 3	DJ Gorkhali Brothers
Date	Begin	End	Event	Location	Host(s)
9/4/06	10:00 AM	12:00 PM	ANMA Business Meeting	Haneda A/B	ANMA
	10:00 AM	12:00 PM	NASeA Business Meeting	Kai Tak	NASeA

CHICAGO CONVENTION PROGRAM SCHEDULE : SEPTEMBER 2 - 4, 2006

*Message from ANMA President Anand Tiwari*



Dear Members and Friends:

It's my pleasure to welcome you to our 25th ANMA, and second ANMA and NASeA joint convention in Rosemont, Illinois. This convention is very special for us for many reasons. First, we are celebrating ANMA's continuous support and service to the Nepali communities in the United States. Second, many other Nepali organizations in the US have joined us in observing this moment. Third, Chicago Nepali Pariwar is hosting this historic event in the city where ANMA started 25 years ago. Finally, you are here to witness the greatest achievements of the Nepali communities around the US.

The theme of this convention, "working for a better community", has been selected to match the need of the time. Be it in Nepal, the US or anywhere in the world, we need to work together to build the community for future generations. For the last twenty-five years, ANMA has been doing exactly the same by supporting various development projects in Nepal and by helping the Nepalis and Nepal related causes in the US.

When I became the President, we were determined to make the "younger" generation interested and active in ANMA. Now, after two years, I can proudly say that we have achieved that goal. As we can see from the composition of the new executive committee, the younger generation is definitely taking the lead.

Another remarkable event at this convention is the Non-Resident Nepalis/North American Coordination Committee meeting. It is our pleasure to host such a meeting during our convention. ANMA has always supported the NRN causes and many of the ANMA advisors and current executive committee members are actively working on NRNs' rights and privileges in Nepal.

I hope you enjoy the convention and all the different forums and programs it has to offer. Thank you for being a part of this historic event.

Anand R Tiwari  
Cleveland, Ohio  
September 2006

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**ANMA VIEWPOINTS Is looking for an Editor-in-Chief to begin October 2006. Please apply soon to the current editor Dikshya Adhikari at [michigannepali@yahoo.com](mailto:michigannepali@yahoo.com) with your past credentials in any field like editing/design/writing/arts. All that is needed is some creative skills but a great deal of enthusiasm, persistence and energy to keep it up. It's a fun job! Check [anmausa.org](http://anmausa.org) for details and results.**

## **Message from NASeA President Narayan Rajbhandari**



Dear NASeA members, friends, and families,

Namaste! On behalf of the Nepalese Association in Southeast America (NASeA), I would like to welcome you all to this joint convention in Rosemont, Illinois. For the past fifteen years, NASeA has been celebrating convention with its sister organizations sharing common goals and interests towards fostering and preserving Nepalese communities in the USA, Nepal, and abroad. This is the second consecutive year that NASeA has united with Association of Nepalese in Midwest America (ANMA) to hold convention with a theme, **Working Together for a Better Community**. I would like to sincerely thank all the members, friends, and families for their wonderful support to launch this convention successfully.

This is my first year of presidency in NASeA with the following executive committee: Vice Presidents, Mr. Raja Ghale, Mr. Suman Silwal, Mr. Avi Malla, Mr. David Baral, and Mr. Gopal Shah, General Secretary, Mr. Tek Thapa, Joint Secretary, Mr. Bhanu Kharel, Treasurer, Mr. Ram Dangol, Members, Mr. Batsal Devkota, Ms. Srijana Khatiwada-Sharma, Dr. Bal Krishna Sharma, Dr. Pramod Aryal, Ms. Rupa Pandey, Mr. Sagun Shrestha, Mr. Prajwal Raj Joshi, and Mr. Nagesh Sherchan. I applaud my executive committee members for their enthusiasm, support, and sincere partaking in advancing the association's mission and activity.

Last year we established a mutual relationship with **Emory University** in Atlanta, Georgia to promote **Asian Study Program**. Under the program, a talk program on **Conflict and Political Crisis: Democratic Outlet** was jointly hosted on October 23, 2005. I congratulate my committee members and Dr. Bishwa Acharya (Former Founding President) for making this forum successful. I respectfully extend my gratitude to the staff of the university for their valuable support to our mission. Likewise, this year we are trying to expand the relationship with **North Carolina State University** in Raleigh, NC. I am thankful to Dr. Harihar P. Bhattarai, Senior Lecturer at NCSU, for his willingness to work with us to promote **Nepali language and writing skills** in the USA.

We have also extended our educational mission to potential schools in our home country, Nepal. The three life members, Dr. Ramesh Amatya, Dr. Prakash Malla, and Mr. Hari Dhungana, and their families are very generous in establishing an educational fund with us to support the following three schools in Nepal: **Paropakar School, Kakani Middle School, and Kanku Secondary School**.

Since 2002, we have sustained a successful relationship with **Asian/Pacific American Council (APAC)** of Georgia. The Life Members, Mr. Bala Panta and Dr. Bhaskar Dawadi, have contributed their valuable time and effort to strengthen the relationship. I am extremely proud and equally thankful of their enthusiasm.

This year we are advancing towards disseminating scientific values of Nepali culture and facilitating educational systems for transferring traditional Nepali technology. Therefore, a forum, **Revelation of Traditional Nepali Culture and Technology**, has been formed for this convention. You are cordially invited to attend this forum to provide your valuable opinion, comment, and concern to us to develop a roadmap for coming years.

In addition to the aforementioned forum, the convention will hold several other important forums designed for your interest. The convention committee has worked hard to organize the convention to cover social, cultural, political, and educational areas. I would like to express my sincere appreciations to their tireless effort. More specifically, I would like to deeply acknowledge Mr. Tek Thapa and Mr. Sanjay Shrestha for their devotion and patience in bring the convention to this stage. I hope you will enjoy every aspect of the convention. Thank you for your support and participation.

Sincerely Yours,

Narayan Rajbhandari, Ph.D.

3001 Cregler Drive, Apex, NC-27502



**Dr. Bal Krishna Sharma & Radha Sharma of Cary, NC wish a very happy  
25<sup>th</sup> anniversary to ANMA and its members.**



*Congratulations to ANMA and its members on it's*

*25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration*

**Nepali-American Organization of Ohio**

NAOO <http://www.naoo.org>

# Blast from the past: 25<sup>th</sup> special quiz

Picture Courtesy: Dr. Pradip Dhital



Figure out who's who: from past ANMA shows



Clues: Pragma Dhital, Prasad Dhital, Madan Rajbhandari, Shashi Dihtal, Indira Koirala, Rajan, Robin Rajbhandari, Sukti Dhital, Reena Koirala, Pragma Pant

Happy 25th Anniversary ANMA

Best wishes for the ANMA-NASeA  
Joint convention

**Pradeep & Shasi Dhital + Family, MI**



Greetings and congratulations to  
members and friends of ANMA on  
celebrating grand 25th annual  
convention in windy city, Chicago!  
A big thank you to organizers for  
making it happen!

*Gaury, Anita, Pooja , Ashok and Roshani Adhikary*

**Ann Arbor, MI**

## ANMA and my personal reflection:

*Gaury S. Adhikary  
Ann Arbor, MI*

I, Anita and our two daughters migrated to Ann Arbor, MI from New York on May of 1993. Since then we have been living in Ann Arbor. At first, moving from New York City to Ann Arbor was full of apprehension: mainly due to new adjustment that has to be made whenever there is change. An underlying sense of stress lingered on each of us. Luckily we had good friend in Ann Arbor to make our transition painless.

After we joined in our work and girls started to attend schools we pretty much settled in new place. Over the course of next few months we came in contact with few more Nepali friends and they introduced us to Nepali organization, ANMA.

What is ANMA and what is in it for me?

At the beginning I was skeptical of the organization itself and in my mind I was questioning “what is this organization?” and “what is its relevance in my life?” Was I not happy with my circle of friends already? Do I really need to join ANMA at this point of time in my life? Will it add new sets of stress for time and commitment? Such questions bogged me down in the beginning.

Later on I attended some of the ANMA executive meeting. Through these meetings I found out that mission of ANMA was to help Nepali of Midwest America region in particular and Nepali of North America through sister organizations in general. ANMA was founded by legendary community leaders of the time during snail mail and land lines era of 1982! They had the foresight of bringing Nepali under one organization in this vast land.

ANMA meetings were held in individual friend’s home over the weekend every three months or so. These meetings had a great sense of camaraderie. Decisions were taken over round table discussion. Such decisions were implemented with volunteers stepping up to the plate. Over the course of months and years, I built a sound network of friends of Nepali origin in this region (Chicago, Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland, St Paul, Indianapolis, Kentucky, Cleveland and of course Michigan). It felt like we were part of a large extended family. It helped tremendously to share the pain and pleasure of living in a far away land away from home. Anita and I both were warmly welcomed by the established members of the ANMA. Our daughters participated in ANMA activities mostly during the annual convention time. ANMA provided a common thread for our psychological well being.

During my interaction with ANMA for past 10 years I have observed that it has made steady progress in furthering its mission: to help Nepali of Midwestern region. It has encouraged sisterly organization to link up with ANMA in Columbus and Chicago. NAOO (Nepalese Association of Ohio) and CNP (Chicago Nepali Pariwar) are grass root organization with their own sets of membership. These grass root organization are now very well organized to address local Nepali community affairs effectively. Michigan

similarly has established NAM (Nepalese Association of Michigan) recently and is in the process of linking up with ANMA.

On the wider mission of helping Nepali of North Americas, ANMA has taken the lead role in formation of a national coordination body, Nepalese Americas Council (NAC< [www.nepalcouncil.org](http://www.nepalcouncil.org)>)

Whenever one gets involved with an organization managed by volunteers, one has to contribute his/her own time, money and kind for the greater good of society. Work in ANMA is no exception. ANMA does not demand but seeks out volunteers who are willing to fulfill its mission. So far it has had successful run for past 25 years and it is growing! Many new faces and younger folks with new skills have taken ANMA of snail mail pace to internet broadband era. The ANMA website <[www.anmausa.org](http://www.anmausa.org)> and the viewpoints are the testament to it.

The 25<sup>th</sup> annual convention of ANMA in Chicago hosted by CNP under the able coordination of Mr. Sanjay Shrestha is of moment of great pride to the founding member of the organization like Prof. Mohan N Shrestha. It gives a purpose and continuity to the organization.

ANMA not only provides and disseminates good work for the community good but we grow in our personal level by providing our service to the mission of ANMA. In a way it becomes a vehicle to make us live a larger than life experience. Personally, I have had great opportunity to witness and participate in Nepali collaborative effort in “Unity 2000” meeting of Atlanta where more than 1200 Nepali gathered from all across North America, Nepal and abroad representing many Nepali organizations of US and Canada under one roof for three days. The moment was electrifying and meeting was memorable for its size and content.

From year 2000, the tradition of coming together and real harmony between NASeA (Nepalese Association of South Eastern America) and ANMA was established and we are fortunate to have NASeA join in this years meeting in Chicago as co partner. Besides the organizational work, I became friends to many community leaders through ANMA and I cherish their valued counsel in my personal as well as community work. A network is built which nurtures the psychological and spiritual need for each of us.

In summary, I got much more from ANMA than I ever imagined possible. It is that kind of feeling that keeps us together and united in purpose. We, in the Midwest are fortunate to have many young and energetic mind involved with ANMA work so that the organization remains robust and viable to fulfill its mission, i.e. cater for Nepali of this region. Thanks to new blood, ANMA is kept alive and well.

My brief note here is not to catalogue the whole list of ANMA achievement but to highlight how we can fulfill our own lives while working for a not for profit organization like ANMA. It really is simple and rewarding. All of us cannot do everything that is needed in the organization but if we volunteer and specify our skills to contribute, ANMA can definitely utilize it. Until we ask, ANMA executive will not know whom to approach. So our first job is to do the right thing: get involved! So, my short advice to

new comer bystander Nepali in this region is to get involved with ANMA: be a member, offer your help. In the process of exploring and interacting with the fellow organization members you will discover yourself that you did not know existed before! The frustration and reward of working for ANMA can be a wholesome tapestry of your personal growth. I assure you that it can be most satisfying on personal level.

I sincerely am hoping to see many new and all of old faces during upcoming Chicago joint convention of ANMA, NASeA and ANTA (Association of Nepalese of Taraiian American) and coordinating body of Nepali organization, NAC.



**CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES TO ALL FRIENDS OF ANMA AND NASeA.**

**HAPPY ANMA 25TH ANIVERSARY**

Wishing the 25<sup>th</sup> convention a grand success!



**GO  
TEAM!**

From, Madan, Dharma, Rajan and Robin Rajbhandari, CHICAGO IL

## **Whistling in the dark from a comfortable chair**

Jay Mandal, Chicago

Krishna Nepali had a big dream. He pursued his dream and made it to America. He thought that he could always do well in this land of opportunity. He came as a student and finally got his dream job after graduation. His parents back home were very happy as he was doing so well. Krishna was the only son of his parents. His parents were very eager to find a bride for him. To make his parents happy and to find a life partner, he went to Nepal and got married. Life was going well and 2 children came into their lives. Krishna became so busy in his work and his wife was very busy taking care of their children. Due to having one income, he had to put in extra hours of work in order to save enough money to send his children to college.

Krishna was so busy with his daily rituals that he almost became a working machine. He was a very good father and husband and did all the necessary family tasks. One night, when he was only 39 years old, he had a stroke. Before he arrived at the hospital, Krishna passed away. After that, his wife, Geeta, had no idea what to do. After a while, life has to move on. Geeta discovered that she could not use her husband's bank account because Krishna Nepal did not have a written will. Geeta has had to go through so much suffering because her husband had not written a will. (A will is a document that directs how a person's assets are to be distributed after his/her death and who should be the guardian for minor children.)

I am not a lawyer but please contact your lawyer to write your will! Let's not whistle in the dark from our comfortable chair.

Here is the bottom line. We love to live and work here in the land of opportunity. Let's know how to protect what we have earned. If you have not written your will, then be sure you and your husband

or wife have your own wills. Your parents should have wills. I have heard so many stories about people dying without wills like Krishna Nepali. This creates so much trouble for those family members left behind.

When we die without a will in the USA, it being the land of law and democracy, each state writes its own "will" for us. In the state of Illinois, according to the state will, half of the deceased person's possessions go to the surviving spouse and half go to the children. It does not matter if the children are 48 years old or 4 years old. They may end up owning half of all the wealth—bank accounts, house, car stocks and bonds etc.

The court may even appoint an administrator to make sure that the children's share of the assets are "properly managed" for them. The surviving spouse may have to get court approval to write a check or even sell the deceased person's car. The resulting legal expenses could end up being very high. Probate (the court's overseeing of the estate) will probably last over six months and could cost thousands of dollars.

Some of us may have parents who don't even want to talk about the subject of wills. It is not only enough for you to live in America, let's be aware of the law here. Find an attorney and talk to him and write your will according to your wishes. This little step can save your family thousands of dollars.

I was one of those who had no clue about wills. One of my friends, who is a lawyer, asked me this question, "Have you written your will"? My answer was, "Will, what will? I am not a lawyer." Please consult your lawyer and write your will. Do not put this off. Call your lawyer, make an appointment and follow up. Tell your friends and other family members about the need for a will.

Sometimes we love to just sit on a comfortable chair whistling in the dark.

Best wishes for the ANMA-NASeA  
Joint convention

From Chicago: Mahesh K. Gurung, Ph.D.,  
Mina, and sons, Ursus and Unas Gurung

& Anonymous

## Quotes of the Day: Liberty

"It is seldom that liberty of any kind is lost all at once." - *David Hume*

"Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and success of liberty." - *John F. Kennedy*

ANMA has been our home for so many years.  
On the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ANMA,  
we thank all our friends in the Midwest and  
all over America,  
who gave us this home.

Prahlad, Bindu and Pragya Pant, Cincinnati, OH



## Be Fit in the USA

*Catherine Taylor Foster, Ph.D., R.N.*

*CNP Executive Committee*

*Peace Corps, Volunteer Nepal 1996-98*

Have you noticed that after you arrived in the US, you gained weight and when you go back to Nepal for a visit, you lose weight? Why does this happen? In Nepal, the eating habits and foods are quite different from those in the US. For example, Nepalis eat twice a day, eat very little meat, very few sweets, very few snacks and get lots of exercise walking everywhere.

In the US, we have refrigeration and supermarkets so food is always available in large quantities and variety. Also the US custom is to eat 3 times a day often with snacks in between meals and/or at bedtime. Newcomers tend to become overwhelmed with the available supply and kinds of food, are besieged with advertisements regarding foods to eat and often make food choices which they think will integrate them with the American culture but which may not be the most healthy for them. This phenomenon called "dietary assimilation" occurs with many immigrant groups when they come to America. (A study of "dietary assimilation" by Dr. Ilana Redstone Akresh, a sociologist at the University of Illinois, was described in a "Chicago Tribune" page 1 article on June 26, 2006.)

When you are buying foods to cook, it is very important to look at a list of the nutrients in the food. Pay particular attention to the calories, carbohydrates, saturated fat and sodium amounts contained in each food. Also, note the listed serving size. A package of cookies might list the calories as 140 but that is for a serving size of 1 cookie not the whole package.

***Here is a comparison of some of the nutrients in a typical Nepali meal and a common American fast food meal. The Nepali meal of 1/2cup lentils (dhal), 1cup rice (bhat), 1/2cup cauliflower (kauli) and 1/2cup spinach (saag) would contain 449 calories, 90.7 grams of carbohydrates, a trace of saturated fat, and 144 milligrams of sodium (salt). Compare that with the common McDonalds lunch of a Big Mac, small French fries and a medium Coca Cola which contains 1020 calories, 135 grams of carbohydrates, 12.5 grams of saturated fat, and 1165 milligrams of sodium.***

Between meal snacks are very common in America. A Hershey candy bar with almonds (1.45 ounces) contains 230 calories, 22 grams of carbohydrates, 6 grams of saturated fat and 30 milligrams of sodium. Three Oreo cookies contain 160 calories, 25 grams of carbohydrates, 2 grams of saturated fat and 190 milligrams of sodium. Better snack choices would be raisins (1 1/2 ounces) which contain 130 calories, 33 grams of carbohydrates, 0 grams of saturated fat and 10 milligrams of sodium or an apple which contains 81 calories, 21.1 grams of carbohydrates, a trace of saturated fat and 1 milligram of sodium.

A calorie is a measurement of energy in food and energy that the body uses. One gram of carbohydrate yields 4 calories and 1 gram of fat yields 9 calories. In order for your body

weight to remain constant, you need to consume approximately the same number of calories that you expend in your daily exercise. If you consume more calories than you expend, you will gain weight. Conversely, if you consume fewer calories than you expend, you will lose weight. It takes a deficit of 3500 calories to lose 1 pound of weight.

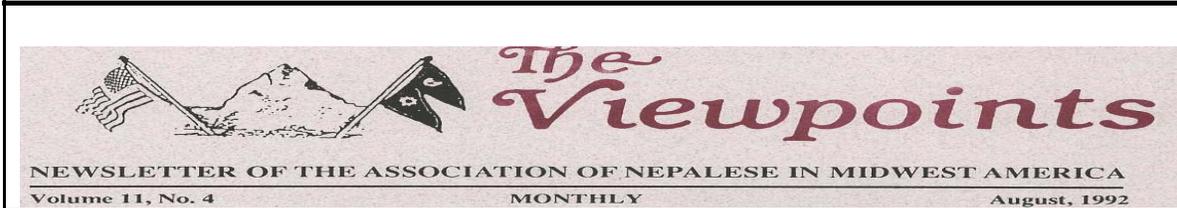
In addition to monitoring your calorie intake, it is important for good health to not take in excessive amounts of carbohydrates (yields excess calories), saturated fats (which can form obstructions in your blood vessels and lead to strokes), and sodium (promotes fluid retention in the body and increases the blood pressure). In order for you to maintain your health, it is important for you to balance your food intake with your exercise. Walking is the best exercise: you don't need to join a gym, you don't need special equipment and walking to your destination might even save you some money instead of taking a bus or taxi. Walking is easier on your hips and knees than running or jogging. You don't need to walk for long periods of time in order to reap its benefits. Walking for 10 to 20 minutes twice a day is very good for everyone's general health.

Continuing to include some very nutritious Nepali foods and making careful choices of American foods in your diet combined with walking or other exercise will keep you healthy and fit and able to enjoy your life and work in the United States of America.

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**Congratulations to the members for attending this convention on the special occasion of ANMA's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary!**

**Dr. Narayan & Nirmala Rajbhandari  
Apex, NC**



Volume 11, No. 4

MON

**EDITOR'S MESSAGE:  
A NEW AND IMPROVED NEWSLETTER**

Dear Readers,

Over the years, *The Viewpoints* has been serving its readers by providing local news and news from Nepal. Initially, it was a quarterly newsletter and four years ago, it became bimonthly. It is unquestionably a major link that binds us with the Nepali community in the United States. Keeping this in mind, Dr. Prahlad Pant, the former president of ANMA, proposed to publish the newsletter on a monthly basis. After careful consideration, the ANMA Executive Committee and Editorial Board accepted Dr. Pant's proposal, and now *The Viewpoints* has become the first monthly Nepalese newsletter in the United States.

A piece of ANMA History: ANMA's newsletter 'The Viewpoints'

All the best to the Convention &  
Happy 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary to ANMA!  
Best wishes, from:



Mukesh & Sarala Singh



Sanjay Shrestha



Saubhagya & Ganga  
Shrestha



Yagna Pant

## दागबत्ति



भगबत्ति न्यौपाने  
Raleigh, North Carolina

प्रसब पिडाले  
म छट्पटाइ रहेको थिए  
छोरी तिम्रै आभावमा  
थप्रे मिले आर्शिवादहरु  
पत्रनै होस भनि म मा ।

किनकि  
यो समाज चाहान्थ्यो पत्रनै  
सस्कारमा कगाल लागेको छ  
मरेपछि छोरीले होईन  
छोरालेनै दागबत्ति दिन छ ।

तर  
यसको बिरुद्धमा  
कालो दाग लागेपनि लागोस  
यद्धनै लड्न परेपनि परोस  
नरकनै जानपरे पनि परोस ।

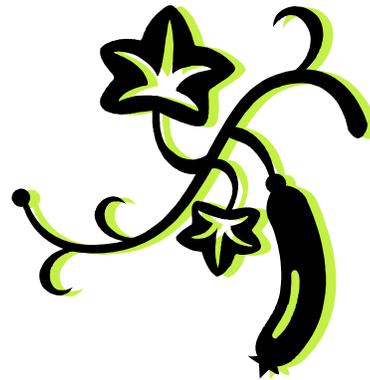
मैले  
यो सस्कारलाई परिवर्तन गर्न छ  
पापमा डबेकाहरुलाई उद्धार गर्न छ  
अन्धविश्वासमा प्रकास फैलाउन छ  
छोरा र छोरीमा केही फरक छैन  
त्यहिनै देखाउन छ ।

Welcome to the Convention!  
Hope you have a great time in  
Chicago!

With compliments,



Ishwar & Kamala  
Devkota



Dr. Bal Krishna &  
Radha Sharma



Hari and  
RebeccaDhungana



Suman and Marlane  
Silwal

**A FRIEND'S LIGHT**

**Suyasha Pradhan**

Davis Drive Middle School, Grade 7  
Raleigh-Wake Reading Council, NC

I didn't ever think it mattered how I felt.  
I really didn't care.  
It didn't bother me when I was wronged.  
Even when I knew it wasn't fair.

Then my friend said I should speak;  
And say how I felt inside.  
She said when I want to say something;  
It's not something I should hide.

Before that I was going crazy in my own little world;  
Where I just ignored the things that happened.  
I never thought that I could stop them;  
So I'd just wait and hope they'd end.

Then my friend taught me that  
Things don't go away overnight.  
And if I'm pushed to do something I don't want to do;  
I should stand up and put up a fight.

I sometimes felt I was on my own,  
And no one was there for me.  
A person with nothing to say  
Is what I thought I'd be.

Then my friend reminded me  
That she was always there.  
And no matter how bad things got  
Friends would always care.

My friend was the light in dark  
When I was afraid of the night.  
And when I didn't know what to do;  
I'd look for her helping light.

This friend of mine was my guiding light  
Who lit the way for me.  
And without her influence,  
I just know how I'd be.



***NASeA wishes  
you a grand  
25<sup>th</sup>  
convention!***



**North Carolina  
Nepalese Community  
extends their  
support to this  
ANMA-NASeA joint  
effort.**

# 'Sarva dharma sambhava', not 'Secularism.'

Tilak B. Shrestha, Ph.D.

TilakBS@hotmail.com

*Nepal should proclaim 'Sarva dharma sambhava', not 'secularism.' 'There are many spiritual ways' is our ancient ethos. The 'Secularism' is an irrelevant copying of the European political technique. Thus, when we proudly proclaim Nepal a Hindu nation, it means we are proud of our heritage and culture, nothing more. And when we declare Nepal a 'secular' state, it means we want to dissociate from our very root, nothing less.*

Please allow me to present a few thoughts on the issue of 'religion' in our 'New Constitution of Nepal.' I am for democracy and also for our proud heritage. In this light let me express my opinion that to make Nepal a secular state away from our roots is a mistake and regressive to our national identity.

1. The new constitution gets its mandate from people's revolutions of 1950, 1979, 1990, and especially of 2006. The revolutions basically dealt with the issues like – a. source of political power, b. human rights, c. democracy, d. corruption, and e. economic stagnation. Therefore the new constitution should reflect revolutionary ideals in these issues. In other issues the constitution gets mandate only through the democratic process.

Religion was never an issue in Nepal. We do not have any history of religious persecution or discrimination. When the revolutions (1950, 1979, 1990, 2006) took place the issue of the religion was not even raised. Therefore such drastic step of changing from a Hindu state to a secular state need – a. reason\justification and b. people's mandate.

Definition of democracy is the 'majority ruling, with minority's right protected.' I am for protecting any minority's right unconditionally. I am also for democratic process to be applied for such major and sensitive change. I am born and raised in the only Hindu country, and quite proud of it. A constitution, which changes such status without some kind of democratic processes, either through referendum, or through elected representative; is not acceptable to me. I believe neither does overwhelming majority of Nepalese citizens. If need be, the proper steps of change would be to start with the existing state. Then let the issue be brought to the public for deliberations. If there are any dissatisfactions and grievances, let them be public. Let democratic process take its course. I believe Nepalese people are mature and tolerant enough to see all points of view, and make decision for good of every one.

2. The Nepalese Constitution of 1990 is very clear about non-discrimination on the basis of religion. Let me quote the "Article 11: Fundamental Rights."

(2) No discrimination shall be made against any citizen in the application of general laws on grounds of religion, race, sex, caste, tribe or ideological conviction or any of these.

(3) The State shall not discriminate among citizens on grounds of religion, race, sex, caste, tribe, or ideological conviction or any of these.

(4) No person shall, on the basis of caste, be discriminated against as untouchable, be denied access to any public place, or be deprived of the use of public utilities. Any contravention of this provision shall be punishable by law.

Is not the article on the 'Fundamental right' clear? Are there any land laws, which discriminate on the basis of religion? The Nepalese parliamentary constitution is more or less based on the Indian constitution, which it self is based on the British constitution. The recent criticism of the 1990 constitution is about the residual power of the King, not non-secularism.

3. A theocratic or non-secular state will have the characteristics of – a. religion affecting governance, b. source of constitution being religious scripture, c. clergy allowed to assume political power, d. discrimination on the basis of religion, and e. source of political power being faith. Nepalese constitution of 1990 does not have any of these characteristics. Is there any Hindu scriptures quoted or considered in the constitution? So where is the role of religion in the Nepalese constitution?

Traditionally, Hindus have King or 'Panchas' to make laws. Scriptures or clergy do not make laws. We do not have clergy. The traditional 'Panchayat', not to be confused with King Mahendra's, is the proto-democracy in action. In the modern time, the elected representatives supersede the King. It is a natural political evolution independent of the 'Dharma.' When 1990 constitution declares Nepal to be a 'Hindu' state, it merely underlines our culture and tradition. It does not make Nepal a theocratic state.

The concept of 'secularism' applies only to the Semitic religions not to the 'Hinduism.' Hinduism is a collection of 'Dharmas', not a religion. Semitic religions are about enforcing an exclusive believe system and an exclusive way of life, attempts at social engineering, and dividing humanity into believers and infidels\heathens. These religions are not about seeking truth or methods of spiritual practices, but about social discipline and aggressive conversions to the given ideologies. Each of the sects claims to know the only truth, and others to be evil. It invariably leads to interference of faith in politics and governance. It has led to long list of religious persecution\inquisition, and struggle for freedom from religious bigotry. It has led Europe and Muslim world to centuries of internal strife, between Christian and Muslim countries; and against every one else. Thus, the post-renaissance European intelligentsia came with the ingenuous political tool of the 'Secularism' or the 'separation of the Church and the State.' Secularism is basically a ceasefire between warring religious parties, not the tolerance or the end of hostility. European secularism is able to keep the religious strife in hold and evolve Europe along the rational behavior. Since Islamic societies have not gone through the renaissance, the religion is still a major factor there.

The political problem attributed to 'Hinduism' is mainly due to the confusion in even the basic definitions. 'Sanatana' is the 'inquiry into the universal truths (Satya)' and 'ways of spiritual advancements (Yoga).' Truth may be sought in three paradigms – a. scientific (objective), b. empirical (objective and subjective), and c. theistic (faith, revelation). There are basic four groups of ways of spirituality (Yoga) – a. way of love and devotion (Bhakti), b. way of knowledge (Gnan), c. way of unattached duty (Karma), and d. way of meditation and self-realization (Raj). Sanatana is the universal principles not limited by history, geography or culture. 'Dharma' is a given sub-set of Sanatana practiced by an individual or a group. One particular Dharma may employ certain means of truth seeking and emphasize on certain Yoga practices. 'Hinduism' is a collection of Dharmas evolved in the Indian sub-continent including Tibet. It is a geographical definition. It is all of the philosophies, spiritual developments in the sub-continent including Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Vaisnavism, Shaivism etc. and Atheism as well. It also includes the religiosity of diverse ethnic groups of Nepal. For example, 'Kirati' people pioneered the 'Adwaita' philosophy, and have Lord Shiva as the guiding deity. Dharma of an individual or a group is not static rather dynamic phenomenon. On the path of spirituality many new articles are incorporated and many misconceptions are discarded. It is not like going to a church and being



**Best wishes for the joint convention of NASA and ANMA, from **Khagendra G. Chhetry, Esq.**, Chhetry and Associates, P.C. 363 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 1500 New York, NY 10001**

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told what to believe, think and how to behave. It is rather like going to a college and learning as per your interests. We all go to so many temples, or not at all, as per our individual wishes. It is a matter of individual freedom, and naturally gave rise to many Dharmas. Dharmic differences are merely degrees of influence of different philosophies or practices. They are not different religions. Followers of a Dharmic tradition neither see followers of next tradition as of different religion, nor are hostile to them. Do not we all Nepalese celebrate 'Dasain'. 'Tihar', 'Buddha Jayanti', 'Shiva Ratri?' Do not we all Nepalese go to 'Swoyambhu', 'Pashupati' or any other temples? Our religious tolerance is not a learned or a legal phenomenon. It is inherent to us. Hinduism recognizes, as a matter principle, the many spiritual ways. 'There are many spiritual ways (Sarva dharma sambhava)' is our ancient ethos.

Dharma deals only with the spiritual, not legal, aspect of the life. Dharma neither prescribes nor enforces a specific code of conduct. It only adds moral or spiritual dimension to our lives. Varied social mores are defined as traditions 'Parampara.' One Parampara is not hostile to another Paramapara. Matter of fact followers of different traditions live in harmony occupying different social niches. You might have heard of Crusade and Jehad. But have you heard of devotees of Krishna attacking devotees of Hanuman? Have you heard of 'Bhakti' yogis attacking 'Gnan' yogis? It is as bizarre as students of Physics attacking students of Geology, in the name of science. Where is religious war and need to declare ceasefire? The 'Secularism' is an irrelevant

copying of the European political technique. Let us look into our own tradition and proclaim proudly – ‘Sarva dharma sambhava.’

4. Apparently some foreigners have come to Nepal and trying to teach us the virtue of being secular. Let us take a quick survey of today’s world. Presently there is not a single Hindu country in the world.

Christianity is the state religion of 19 countries including Britain, Greece, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Malta, Monaco, Norway, Vatican, Haiti, Colombia, Panama, and Paraguay.

British queen or king has to take oath of defending Christianity. Costa Rica is legally secular but state supports churches. USA is legally secular, but both country and government has Christian characteristics. All the leaders including President and Chief justices take oath on the bible, not on secular constitution. Some of the American states have mandated to teach the bible in the public schools. Churches are quite active both in politics and education; and foreign evangelism. USA though preaches secularism supports Israel, a declared Jewish state. When South Vietnam was under US control, it always supported Vietnamese Christians at the expense of Vietnamese Buddhist, which makes almost 85% of the population. The martyrdom of many Buddhist monks for the justice is a well-documented history.

Israel is created solely in the basis of religion of Judaism.

Islam is the state religion of 25 countries including Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Brunei, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Tunisia.

Pakistan is created solely in the basis of Islam. By constitution, a non-Muslim cannot be the President or the Prime minister of Pakistan. A religious sect called ‘Ahmedia’ is officially prosecuted. Bangladesh was a secular country when created in 1971. But became an Islamic country in 1982 although about 20% of the population is non-Muslim. In Maldives only Muslims can be citizen.

In Syria only a Muslim can be president. Indonesia is legally secular, but state supports Islam. In Malaysia non-Muslims are officially second-class citizens. In Iran persecutions of non-Muslims, especially a sect called ‘Bahai’, are well documented. In Saudi Arabia, non-Muslims cannot take any of their personal religious objects like a bible.

Buddhism is the state religion of 5 countries including Bhutan, Cambodia, and Thailand.

There are 12 secular countries in the world including Nepal, India, Japan, USA, Australia, Romania, France, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Though Hindus make over a billion people, there is not even one Hindu country in the world.

5. What makes a union of people a nation? What glues individuals to make a civilization? We must look into our society and consider these issues. In Nepal, Hinduism is not a set of dogmatic believes. It is the way of life, rooted in our ancient past. Essentially, our Dharma defines our

character. This is our culture and identity. Answer to questions like, why Nepal need to stay a Hindu state, or why even we need Nepal, is that we are proud of and love our country and our root. Every country has her uniqueness, characteristic and spirit. Ours is Dharma. Sages have recognized - 'Dharma protected, will protect.'

Thus, when we proudly proclaim Nepal a Hindu nation, it only means we are proud of our heritage and culture, nothing more. And when we declare Nepal a secular state, it means we want to dissociate from our very root, nothing less.

6. In any society there are problems and ours is not an exception. However, we must carefully identify the causes and innovate correct solution. Wrong analyses will lead to barking up a wrong tree and missing out on proper solutions. Most of our social problems are due to stagnation in social evolution, non-power sharing by the dominant class, and underdevelopments in education and economy. It is not Dharma. Matter of fact, the lack of Dharma is the problem. For example, the present day political corruption is directly due to erosion of our values or Dharma. The societal problem must be addressed in political and social level, but not by merely accusing Dharma. Such misdiagnosis is the result of the intellectual laziness and hostility due to perceived exploitation and marginalization. Such misdiagnosis only caters to a few petty leaders with big axes to grind and divisive forces in Nepalese society. It does not help the marginalized groups to progress. Our social problems must be addressed through the following 'development strategy': a. education, b. political power sharing, c. economic mobility, and d. social leaderships. We must also understand Dharma, rather than being told about it. Let us briefly address the two of the often quoted and misunderstood issues – caste and political domination.

Hindu caste system is not a religious but a social phenomenon. Have you heard of any body preaching the 'caste system' leading to heaven? People talk about caste system as tradition 'Parampara', not Dharma. Have you heard of 'Bahuns' attacking 'Chhetris', or 'Tamrakars' attacking 'Malakars?' Caste is basically a natural social coalescence of human behaviors into subgroups. Hindus believe in freedom and will not have a single enforced social mores. Thus we have literally hundreds of caste, each having its own traditions and values. There are both vertical and horizontal caste divisions. The vertical division is mainly based on ethics. Though there are many cases when politically dominant group have misused it.

In the earlier societies the need for protection, law and order gave rise to aristocracy. That is Chhetri in Nepal, as Knights in Europe and Samurais in Japan. Hindu society went further and created Bahun group to up keep the knowledge base in oral form. We can see such developments in other societies also. For example, even in a tribal setting, there will be a 'witch doctor' besides the chief. Hindu society traditionally give them security and livelihood, but not luxury. In earlier days an individual has to be brought up in a martial or academic culture to be a warrior or a priest. Thus you have Chhetri or Bahun castes. It is the genius of Hindu society that Bahun group is considered higher than Chhetri group, though Chhetris hold military power. Compare that with Europe or Japan, where the aristocracy or the samurai class were the absolute ruler over others. However, in the modern time the caste system has become social leg iron, if at all it was a crutch. The problem is not having different life styles. It is a matter of freedom. But it is the immobility of individuals between groups. That is defining individual not by interests and activities but by birth. Buddha succinctly stated, 'Caste is by deed, not by birth.' The factor of family cultural background, no matter how strong, cannot always supersede other social or individual factors. Especially with the modern education system such social classes and attendant cultures have become irrelevant. Here we must point out the weakness of our intelligentsia in general and the disingenuousness of the medieval 'Bahun' group in particular. It fossilized our society in many field including academia, science and technology, arts and military. Today the caste system has

degenerated to communalism. Thus we should be debating the transition of society, not blaming Dharma.

We must keep in mind that the caste system is neither prescriptive nor normative, but a natural evolution. The often quoted phrase 'Bahuns are head, Chhetris are hand, etc.' are merely anthropomorphic description of the existing society. Just because it is described in Sanskrit language it does not become religion. Thus the problem can be and must be addressed through the above mentioned 'development strategy.' Merely accusing 'Hinduism' for caste system is mistake in four counts: a. understanding Dharma, b. understanding the mechanism of caste system and Hindu society, c. evaluating caste system in terms of both good and bad, and d. identifying correct solutions.

The real problem is the grievances of politically dominated groups against the dominant groups. The so-called hill Chhetris and Bahuns being the dominant groups and other groups especially the tribal Nepalese being the dominated groups. It is strictly a political not a religious phenomenon. Actually it has, as stated before, become a communal problem. The solutions are again the above mentioned development strategy. Suppose there is a high caste individual who does not want to marry a low caste spouse. How is that a problem? Marriage is a personal issue. Matter of fact, limiting spousal choice is a self-defeating strategy. In the old days of arranged marriages such limitation is adopted towards matching the backgrounds of spouses. Suppose an individual has a high caste superiority complex. Why is that a problem to others? I have not heard of Koreans and Brazilians bothered by it. Matter of fact, it is a psychological disorder, a negative attribute. On the other hand, it is a problem only to another so-called low caste individual with an equally inferiority complex. Suppose a person discriminates others in employment and education based on caste. Then it is a problem, if the person is in the position of authority. Thus, we must demand from our political and social leadership the equal education and economic opportunities for all. It will make the communalism of the caste system redundant. However, social changes are already happening. For example, whom do you think an educated girl will choose to marry between an educated and employed Chhetri and an uneducated and unemployed Bahun today? Have you done 'Dhoga' and given 'Daxina' to your Bahun friends lately? Have you practiced any meditation and reflected upon 'Gnan' yoga? Have you practiced even elementary Buddhism? Have you seen any 'Bahun' looking down upon rich American or Japanese tourists, because of their caste? What caste? India has declared herself secular nation almost 60 years ago. Did that solve the caste problem? Let us do objective, not emotional, analysis of the problems and innovate solutions.

On the other hand, let us imagine a real 'Bahun', not by birth, practicing an austere life of vegetarianism, non-violence; and devoting oneself to the spirituality. We must appreciate such Bahuns or Bhantes or Monks, regardless of the surname, and protect them. When we debate our changing society, we also must address how to protect our eroding such spiritual cultures. Any culture or nation, which does not protect first its spiritual heritage and then the knowledge base, will not be able to compete and simply become extinct. The world history is witness to that.

7. Some ill-informed and antisocial elements apparently have brought the issue that Hinduism and Buddhism are two separate religions. As such declaring Nepal a Hindu state means some how Buddhists are no longer welcome. Nothing can be further from the truth. Only way to separate 'Hindu' and 'Buddhist' in Nepal will be to cut every body into two halves. In fact traditionally the living guardian goddess of our country 'Kumari' comes from the Buddhist sect. Only group of Nepalese Buddhists who are not exposed to the other parts of Hinduism are the Nepalese of Tibetan origin. It is because of geography, not because of any religious doctrines. After all they are the spiritual children of Nepalese princess and Tibetan queen 'Bhrikuti', who introduced Buddhism into Tibet. There never was problem between Bhrikuti, a Buddhist scholar and her

father King Amshuvarma, a Shaiva. Again, when China extended her political influence in Tibet, many Tibetan came to Nepal and settled. We are proud to have them. Was there any persecution of Nepalese of Tibetan origin? Answer is no. In Tibet? Ask the refugees. We should understand that Hinduism is not Brahmanism (read Upanishads), and Buddhism is not ritual (read Tripitak). A perfect example of coexistence between and interaction between three principal religious sects in Nepal, namely Buddhism (Buddha), Shiava (Nilkantha), and Vaishnav (Narayana) is the temple in the north corner of Kathmandu valley, which we lovingly call 'Budha Nilkantha Narayan.'

It is really embarrassing to note that there are many individuals who claim to be Buddhists, but not Hindus. These pseudo-intellectuals can neither define Hinduism nor know the Dharma taught by Gautam Buddha. They use the words 'Hinduism' and 'Buddhism' merely as a political weapon. This is precisely what Buddhism is not about. Buddha's genius accomplished a major break through within the long traditions of Hinduism. Basically, up to the time of Buddha it was assumed that an individual could not achieve salvation working within human faculty. An individual may practice different 'Yogas' to advance, but ultimately has to rely on the faith in the divinity. The divinity is expressed through the scriptures. Thus relying on scriptures is a must for any spiritual practices. Dwaita (Vaishnav), Adwaita (Shaiva) and other philosophies depend upon the scriptures or 'Vedas.' Only group of people who do not agree with the thesis are the materialists (Charvak). Materialists use scientific or objective study only. Thus, they question the very existence of the divinity and the use of scriptures.

Buddha Dharma teaches that an individual could achieve salvation by working within the human faculty or empirical means, without depending on the faith or the revelation. Another teacher, Mahabir of Jainism, also taught similar thesis. Thus, Buddhism is independent of Vedas. It is like an educationist claiming that a person can learn without going to a school. A yogi does not have to make the assumption of the divinity and thus the Buddhist method is more rigorous. Let us take the case of Buddhist analysis of the suffering or 'Dukkha' given as the four noble truths. The suffering is ubiquitous, because it originates from the very nature of the mind. The reason of the suffering is the attachments due to the ego. Thus the solution of the problem is getting rid of attachments. It can be achieved by personal effort. Here Buddha is making an analysis of a problem and coming with a solution strictly within human faculty without relying on any supra-humanity. Let us put Buddha's teaching in the proper perspective. He was advocating the newfound way, which led him to the enlightenment. He is not denying other ways. Though his way was independent of Veda, he was not negating it. His denial of the 'Soul' (Anahata) is within human faculty, but not in the purview of the universal reality (Bodhi, Brahma). Buddhist practices of morality, meditation; reflections etc. are simply the existing Yoga practices. He was not creating a social or a political group of people or a nation called 'Buddhist.' Buddha's method is experiential and does not use faith, divinity or revelation. He is merely asking to analyze our own mind objectively. Thus, it can be practiced by Chinese, Nigerians, Black, White, Jews, Christians, Vaishnavs, Atheists, Chemists, Meteorologists, Women, Children, Soccer players, Poets, Soldiers, Tourists, Communists and every body in between. To make Buddhists as a separate political group is ignorance, to say the least. Similarly, Hinduism is also not about creating a social or a political group. Hinduism means whole spectrum of spiritual practices and views in the sub-continent including that of materialism, empiricism, and revelations in scriptures. Let Buddhism speak for itself about its root. The universal reality (Bodhi, Brahma) is symbolized by the sound 'OM' in Veda. The most repeated Buddhist Sutra proclaims that 'goodness comes out of goodness (may not be evident)', that is 'there is a jewel in the lotus (though not visible), or in Tibetan 'OM, mani padme hum.'

Let us not forget that there are always some irritants and problems in any society, which can be addressed amicably and in democratic way. It will be really a sad mistake to blow any problem out of proportion and create division among brothers and sisters. As an old Hindi saying ‘bhai bhutey ganwar lootey’ puts, if we engage in such non-existing problem between so called ‘Hindus’ and ‘Buddhists’, very soon there would not be any Hindus or Buddhists left to quarrel with.

8. According to both our spiritual and democratic norm, we believe in protection and equal rights of minorities. In Nepalese context, it is about Muslim and Christian Nepalese. Before Muslims and Christians came to Nepal, for that matter even before Islam or Christianity was born we had our custom. When Muslims and Christians people came to Nepal they lived within the existing system. They are free practice any of their religious believes without hampering existing practices. Matter of fact the only restriction they had was not to eat beef. Dr. Muhammad Mohsin, Nepalese ex-minister and a prominent Muslim leader states, ‘As a proud Muslim I do not eat pork, and as a proud Nepali I do not eat beef.’ After all Nepalese Muslims and Christians makes only about 5% of the population. It is also a historical record that Nepalese kings provided land and other assistance to build mosques and churches in Nepal. It is also a proud historical record that Muslims or Christians settled in Nepal were never persecuted or discriminated. Even today Nepalese government provides adequate foreign exchange for Nepalese Muslims to go to ‘Haj’ or pilgrimage. In Nepal, it is the duty of every citizen to live as a Nepali.

9. The key problem regarding religion for us is the foreign challenge of ‘Conversion.’ People seem to underestimate the gravity of the problem. Conversion is not about economic exploitation or political arms twisting, but it is about attacking our very root, our culture and identity. The main problem for the black Americans today is not the slavery or racism but the effects of erasing their cultural heritage and forced implanting of European culture onto them.

We must differentiate between a noble ideal of ‘freedom of religion’, which we always practice; and foreign aggression of conversion, which is victimization of our people in our own country using our backwardness as the weapon. I respect all the religions unconditionally. I am for religious tolerance and freedom in true sense. There should be mutual respect and exchange of views so that different religious groups in a society can peacefully coexist, learn from and understand each other. However, we must address the arrival of the hardened foreign religious zealots with a single mind of conversion. They do not know mutual respect. They would not even entertain our viewpoint. They come with the proposition that we are evil heathens, and the only solution is to convert to their religion.

10. Once upon a time, Hinduism was spread from Ukraine in west to Indonesia in east. We had one small and impoverished Nepal left as a Hindu country. Even that is no more.

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**TRIVIA:** WHERE WAS THE FIRST JOINT CONVENTION OF ANMA- NASEA HELD? WHAT WAS THE YEAR? Find hints in page 51.

### ACCOLADES

We want to notify to you and the NASeA family about our daughter Sudesna Baral that she has won the Presidential Award from President Bush and South Carolina Governor's Award from Governor Mark Sanford for being a topmost student from Pontiac Elementary School, Pontiac, SC 29045.

Sudesna Baral scored highest score not only in her 5th grade academic progress report but also in the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT). She is one of the gifted and talented student identified in South Carolina. Her special talents are in verbal, analytical, and quantitative abilities. She surprises people by her creative arts such as computer graphic arts.

Parents, Dr. Ram C. Baral and Mrs. Kusum Baral

### Down South in Dublin, Georgia Arun Malla Glastonbury, Connecticut, U.S.A.

On the way down south to Dublin, GA, the clouds cover our plane like a blanket. The ground far below us is a quilt, showing us the way. We recognize the familiar buildings and know that we are close. As the plane lands, we identify the familiar landscape and know that we have landed in Atlanta, Ga. After three hours of driving from Atlanta, we are in Dublin.

Down south in Dublin, I am a stuntman. The trampoline is my stadium; my two cousins are my partners. Bouncing up and down we flip, we soar, and we land. The ground is our enemy, as we laugh at gravity. My cousins and I have contests to see who can jump the highest. I win. I lose.

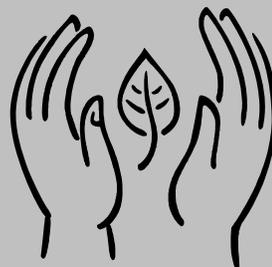
Down south in Dublin, I am a soldier. I use my cap gun to drive my cousin back. He is the enemy, the house is our battlefield. Our cap guns boom. We battle and skirmish, attack and retreat. Upstairs, downstairs, attacking, and fleeing.

Down south in Dublin, I am a professional bowler. My two cousins, my uncle, my dad, and I are all playing, just wanting to have fun. I am fourth up - my two cousins and my uncle are before me, my dad is behind me. Now it is my turn. Time stands still as I roll the ball towards the pins. It moves closer and closer, and then.....STRIKE!!!

And then, it is time to leave. I am a banker with no money; I am a sailor with no ship. As I say good bye to my cousins, we look at each other so we will remember one another. As I leave, I take one last glance at the house I will remember so fondly. Now, as I write, I can still remember the faces of my cousins and the house down south in Dublin.

*[Note from the author: This story is dedicated to my uncle and family in Dublin, GA; Uncle-Prakash Malla Aunt-Anju Malla, Cousins- Prerana and Adarsha Malla]*

**(Arun Malla is a 6<sup>th</sup> grader and 11 years old. He wrote this article when he was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. He lives in Glastonbury, Connecticut, U.S.A.)**

**BEST WISHES FOR THE JOINT CONVENTION 2006 &****GREETINGS OF VIJAYA DASHAMI & DIPAWALI**

Ram C Parajuli	Kanak Limbu	Chandra Thapa
Duryo Dhan Utsuk	Mohan Bahadur Bista	Girwan Pandey
Bishnu Dongol	Yogesh Karki	Lekha Nath Ghimire
Tanka Khapung	Kamal Pariyar	Umesh Upadhaya
Kiran shrestha	Tej Bahadur Khatri	Krishna Parajuli
Pranaya Lama	Shyam Bhattarai	Dhan Pati Timilsina
Laxman Parajuli	Mohan Kumar Bista	Ram Dongol
Ramesh Paudel	Dhundi ghimire	Kapil Wagle
Mahendra Thapa	Hom Thapa	Dipendra Rajbhandari
Chitra Thapa	Manu Pahari	David Baral
Raju Thapa	Bhanu Kharel	Raju Kharel
Deepak Pahari	Chandra Thapa	Govinda Bastakoti
BhaskarThapa	Hari Krishna Paudel	Asutosh Shah
Nagesh Sherchan	Binod Thapa	Ana Spainhour
Ajaya Bhandari	Purusottam Bastola	Tek Thapa
Kamal Bhattarai	Devi Subedi	Umesh Upadhaya
Mohan Timilsina	Basudev Bhattarai	Birendra Prasad Gupta
Keshav Tripathi	Raja Ghale	Bijaya Shah
Prem Kunwar	Laxman Parajuli	Nirmal Prasad Gupta
Keshav Sharma	Pritam Gurung	&
Bhabindra Basnet	Ram Dongol	CK Parajuli
Radheshyam Duwadi	Terri Subedi	Nepali Youth Association
Hari Bhandari	Umesh Upadhaya	Atlanta, GA

# Revelation of Nepali Culture and Institutional Development

**Dr. Narayan Rajbhandari**

Nepal is better known and respected throughout the world for its cultural heritage and institution. The unique structural design like Pagoda, Stupa, Shikhara, Chariots, Wood Carving, Painting, and Sculpture have dominated the scenic view, whereas the seasonal festivals, music, foods, and costumes have enriched the cultural significance of the country. The historical evolution of cultural heritages signifies human technology in action that involves the generation of knowledge and processes to develop social systems to solve social problems and to extend social capabilities. Today, vanishing of the technology that embedded in Nepali culture is very alarming. There are three reasons for this cause. First, we are ignorant of the scientific values of our culture; second, we do not understand the history of our technology; third, we do not pass on our technology from generation to generation. Below, I have assessed Gahiri Dhara (Deep Fountain) as a structural design and Haku Patasi (Black Saree) as a costume for examples. My assessment is based on my observation and experience during my visits to my birthplace, Patan, Nepal.

## Cultural Significance of Gahiri Dhara (Deep Fountain)

Many Nepalese who have reached the age of 40 today would not have missed the opportunity to experience the fabulous charm by taking bath, drinking water, or washing clothes in the sunken stone faucet of Katmandu Valley in Nepal. The faucet is commonly known as Gah Hiti (Deep Fountain) or Ivahahiti (Stone fountain) in Newah language and Dhungey Dhara (Stone fountain) or Gahiri Dhara (Deep Fountain) in Nepali language.

The faucet represents an architectural- history dating back to the Lichhavi period. The earliest reference to the construction of the faucets dates back to the 250 A.D., when King Mandev's grandson established a fountain in Hadigaon in Patan. One of the last built water faucet was in 1829 A.D. in Kathmandu and is popularly known as "Sundhara."

The Dhara represents Nepali culture from historical point of view and center of Nepalese life from its continued water sources, especially where Government supplied water taps are insufficient. There are still numerous locals for whom the Dhara is crucial for their daily water use.

The picture portrays the Gahiri Dhara, also known as Manga Hiti in Newari, at Patan Durbar Square in Nepal dated back to the 570 AD. I used to go to the Dhara for drinking water during my 45 minutes intermission when I was admitted at the sixth grade in Tri-chandra Vidhyashrum. The school was located at the left side of the Dhara. I was amazed to see students still visiting the Dhara to drink water during their intermission period. Drinking water in the Dhara has been a part of students' culture.



The Gahiri Dhara is the largest public use fountain in Patan. It has three big waterspouts with the most magnificently carved crocodile taps. In Sanskrit language, crocodile is named as "Makara" and is considered vehicle of Varun, the lord of water world. It is, therefore, believed that the water that flows from the crocodile tap represents holy water and thereby purifies human body. Because of the belief, we find varieties of decorative architectural waterspouts including that of crocodile or Makara in Newah culture.

These days, condition of Gahiri Dhara is very pathetic due to lack of proper maintenance in Kathmandu valley. Ground water and subsurface flow are the continued and main sources of water supply for the

Dhara. These sources are gradually vanishing due to rapid deterioration of watersheds in Nepal. As the result, many of the traditional Dhara are dying back.

Moreover, drainage problems are common in the Gahiri Dhara where continuity of water exists. The problem is worse during rainfall season. These days, community use of the Dhara is very rare. If you are fortunate enough, you will see a few local people taking bath, washing clothes, or collecting water for their daily water use.

### Haku Patasi As A Sign of Institutional Development

Haku Patasi is a traditional costume that is composed of the typical home-spun black saree with one inch red border. Weaving Haku Patasi is the oldest technology in Newah farm family at Kathmandu valley in Nepal. Traditionally, a farm-woman dyes the cotton threads and lamb's wools with black and red colors for saree and border respectively. They then weave the cotton threads and the lamb's wools to produce skirt like black cotton saree.



I did not realize the importance of the Haku Patasi for our institutional development until I happened to see a fashion show performed by a group of student in Birmingham, AL, on August 31, 2003. The show was organized for a cultural program hosted by the Nepalese Association in Southeast America (NASeA). In the show, everybody screamed with excitement when a group of women clad in modern outfits (wrapping skirt, pants and top, and Kurtha Suruwal) that were composed of the typical Newah home-spun Haku Patasi (Black saree) with one inch red border walked with melodious Newah music on the three feet tall wooden stage. Throughout the show, the crowd of spectators clapped and whistled to cheer the classical performances of the fashion show. Every corner of the hall echoed with "Once more.... Once more," at the very end of the show. Like myself, many viewers left the audience with hungry eyes, hoping to watch the show again and again.

The fashion show in Newah costume brought a new revolution in the development of a Nepali cultural institution. The show represented the model and revealed that wearing of the Haku Patasi is a primary means of communicating and representing ethnicity, individuality, and cultural persuasion. Presentation of Haku Patasi in different styles, such as wrapping skirt, pants and top, and Kurtha Suruwal, shows the renewal formation of traditional Patasi into a modern costume designed for adaptability and marketing.

As I dismally remember, knowledge of weaving Haku Patasi was a prerequisite for getting a husband for a farm-woman about forty years ago in Patan. Nowadays, such prerequisite is not apparent. Moreover, acceptance of Haku Patasi among the youngster even in the traditional Newah farm family in Patan is rare. If you are fortunate enough, you will see one or two young Newah women clad in Haku Patasi nowadays. The reluctance of accepting the Haku Patasi in the modern Newah family (like in Patan) is due to lack of institutional development. The fashion show clearly explicits the pressing need of institutional development for preservation and propagation of Nepali arts and technology.

Besides the Gahiri Dhara and Haku Patasi, there are numerous other examples we can find in the history of Nepali culture and institutional development. Rudraksha (*Elaeocarpus ganitrus*) can be taken as another important entity for cultural and institutional development in Nepal. During my tenure as a President of NASeA, I am planning to facilitate research in finding symbiotic relationship between Nepali culture and institutional development. However, success of this mission depends upon your participation and support. If you are interested in this mission, please email me at [narayan\\_rajbhandari@yahoo.com](mailto:narayan_rajbhandari@yahoo.com). Thank you for your interest.

## ***Improving Healthcare in Nepal The America Nepal Medical Foundation***

### ***Improving Healthcare in Nepal The America Nepal Medical Foundation***

Situated among the beautiful Himalayas, Nepal's subtropical climate makes it a Shangrila. But this beautiful country suffers from two major ailments: 1. perpetual political instability and 2. poverty. Both of these factors have led the people of this country to suffer from various preventable diseases.

Nepal has a high rate of infant mortality. Every very year, 7 out of every 100 children born die before seeing their first birthdays, mostly from malnutrition, diarrheal diseases and respiratory illnesses. The high infant mortality rate and the relatively short life span of Nepalis are mostly related to preventable causes such as poor water quality and food hygiene, low vaccination rates, and poor access to medical treatment. These factors have been compounded by internal wars in the past decade causing mass transitions, overcrowding in cities, and destruction of the country's infrastructure.

Amidst all this bad news and darkness, there is always a light of hope - a hope of having the restoration of peace and happiness; a hope that this country will also be prosperous and healthy someday. But wishful thinking alone is not sufficient; somebody has to do something to make this happen. This thought process has brought a large group of like-minded people together - a group consisting of physicians, public health specialists, nurses, pharmacists, mathematicians, engineers, housewives, lawyers, and students from various walks of life with the same goal - to help uplift the health of Nepalis.

Established in 1997, the America Nepal Medical Foundation (ANMF) is a tax exempt organization based in the USA with a sister organization in Nepal, and now also in Canada. This Foundation has helped Nepali healthcare community, hospitals, and medical schools in various manners over the years. ANMF has helped medical libraries by sending books, journals and software. ANMF has sent teachers and experts to Nepal to help start a medical school, to train physicians and other healthcare workers, and to establish medical specialty units. ANMF has sponsored programs to provide speech training to local trainers so that they can teach children to talk after their cleft lip and palate surgery. ANMF has also sponsored programs to correct uterine prolapse of rural Nepali women who hardly have any access to medical care. In addition, ANMF has donated instruments, generators, ventilators, and computer servers to Nepali medical institutions that have limited resources. Annually, ANMF has organized continuing medical education programs with the Society of Internal Medicine of Nepal from which hundreds of physicians benefit by getting up-to-date medical knowledge. Most important of all, the ANMF members with greatly needed expertise have visited Nepal from time to time providing their valuable voluntary services to the country.

ANMF just held its 10th Annual Conference in Newark, New Jersey in June 2006 with this year's theme of serving rural Nepal. With the current ceasefire and ongoing negotiations between various political parties in Nepal, we all hope that peace will prevail in Nepal. This is the right time to make a difference. This is the time when Nepal and Nepalis are in real need of help and guidance. This is when the Nepali diaspora and North American friends of Nepal can make a difference. Let us all join, hand in hand, and not only wish but also work hard to make Nepal a better place to live than ever before.

For more details on ANMF and its activities, please visit: [/www.anmf.net/](http://www.anmf.net/)  
Janak Koirala, MD MPH FACP  
Chair, ANMF Board of Directors  
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Southern Illinois University School of Medicine  
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**LEGENDS: (in pictures) continued on next page**

**Picture 1: A child receiving speech therapy after cleft lip and palate repair****Picture 2: Healthcare volunteers and rural women after successful completion of Uterine Prolapse Camp in Dolakha**

## NEWS

### *From Oxford, Mississippi:*

Anuj Aryal, son of Usha and Shakti Aryal received the Doctor of Medicine degree at a graduation ceremony held at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson, Mississippi on May 26, 2006. He will start his four-year residency in Anesthesiology at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson from July 1, 2006. He also worked in Nepal for his elective rotation in April 2006.

Prashanti Aryal, MD daughter of Usha and Shakti Aryal and their son-in-law Ashok Cattamanchi, MD did their OBGYN and Internal Medicine medical residency respectively for a month in Nepal. During their residency in Nepal, they worked at the Maiti Nepal in Kathmandu and a private hospital in Illam. Prashanti delivered five babies and performed three C-section at the hospital in Illam. Prashanti is in her third year residency at the University of Washington, Seattle and will complete her residency next year. Ashok completed his residency in Internal Medicine with specialization in Infectious Disease. He will start his Fellowship at the University of Washington, Seattle in July 2006.

Happy to celebrate the 25th – remembering the founding with fond memories.

Wendy and Sharda Thapa, Chicago, IL

## **Nepal's Ultimate Transition: Inherent Uncertainties and Opportunities**

***By Dr. Pramod K. Kantha and Mukesh Kumar Singh***

### **The Emerging Nepali State:**

The ongoing cooperation between the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) and the Maoists marks a likely political breakthrough in the long stalemated political situation in Nepal. If successful, the Nepalese leaders will set a unique example in the annals of conflict resolution in the global arena. Nepalese leaders deserve all the support and prayers in this endeavor. The playing field for the popular leaders, however, appears loaded with many constraints as well as opportunities. Nepal has had very limited experience with democratic politics, especially so in terms of building successful democratic institutions and regularizing accountability and the rule of law. Hence, foundations of democratic polity in Nepal will have to be built brick by brick over the next months and years. Unfortunately, the conduct of politicians and political parties during the latest experiment with democracy (1990-2002) was far from reassuring in terms of their commitment to building enduring democratic practices by balancing the imperatives of good governance against their partisan and individual interests. However, Nepal's experience in this context was not atypical of many other fledgling democracies. On the contrary, the turnaround by the political forces in Nepal has been extraordinary as demonstrated by the success of Jan Andolan II in restoring a democratic political regime and popular sovereignty.

### **Expectation for a Good Government:**

In a departure from the haunting past experience, the Nepalese people are hungry for a good government. According to Levi, "good governments are those that are (1) representative and accountable to the population they are meant to serve, and (2) effective—that is, capable of protecting the population from violence, ensuring security of property rights, and supplying other public goods that the populace needs and desires."<sup>1</sup> Obviously, Nepal had not had that kind of a government for a long time. The hope is high that one may be within reach but no one can be certain of its coming or the time frame that it will take.

### **Nepal's Disadvantaged Groups, the Madhesi Issue:**

All of us have heard and read debates over the shape and form of Nepal that could emerge out of the current stage of transition. The demand for greater accommodation and representation by disadvantaged and discriminated groups in Nepal is going to be one of the major issues on Nepal's political agenda. With greater consciousness of their marginality and freedom of expression and organization, Nepal's ethnic and regional groups will get increasingly more engaged in articulating and asserting their group specific aspirations and demands. We are going to start here with a quotation from the Kantipuronline as a rough starting point:

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<sup>1</sup> Levi, Margaret. 2006. "Why We Need a New Theory of Government," *Perspectives on Politics*. 4: 5

“The insurgency in Nepal is gradually taking an ethnic line. India wants the Maoist insurgency to be confined within Nepal. It does not want its tentacles spreading across the several Indian states. So some Indian leaders of bordering states may not hesitate to back the Madhesi Tigers. And other ethnic communities from different regions of Nepal may follow suit. A few years ago, the Maoist insurgency was just taking its root but today politicians like Gupta have begun to talk on ethnic line. The ethnic communities ‘Rai, Limbu and Gurung’ have stopped celebrating Nepali festivals and are identifying themselves as a different race. Nepal is heading towards a long protracted war, which is likely to be an ethnic war.”<sup>2</sup>

The above quotation underlines the urgency of the demands of various marginalized groups in Nepal. In Nepalese media and debates one notices mention of several such groups including the Janajatis, Dalits, Madhesis etc. According to census 2001, indigenous people, also known as indigenous nationalities constitute 37.2% (8.4 million) of Nepal’s total population. Census reports that the largest indigenous groups are the following: *Magar* (7.1%), *Tharu* (6.7 %), *Tamang* (5.6%), *Newar* (5.5%), *Rai* (2.8%), *Gurung* (2.4%) and *Limbu* (1.6%).<sup>3</sup> The percentage of people from the plains, according to the census, was 28.5%. This calculation leaves out groups like Muslims, Tharus, Marwaris and others who also live largely in the plains. Among the people living in the plains the distribution between the Madhesis and Pahadis is 70-30% respectively.

The current state of interethnic relations in Nepal is a reflection of the past political practices. The autocratic regimes of the past did double jeopardy by precluding participation and embracing and empowering some groups at the cost of others. The objective of Shah as well as Rana rulers was state building not nation-building. A report by the Asian Development Bank Resident Mission in Nepal divides Nepali history into three different phases for the purpose of understanding interethnic relations. The first phase (1768-1950) has been characterized as *Hierarchical Plural Society*. During this period, the state imposed parbatiyas homogenous culture (Nepali language and Hindu religion/tradition) on other groups through a rent seeking state.<sup>4</sup> The second phase (1951-1990) is named *Non-Hierarchical Mono-cultural society*. Assimilation around national standard was the main feature of this era. Any assertion of ethnic or cultural diversity during this period was seen as a threat to national unity. During this period, Nepali language became passport to power and those who lacked proficiency in this language were marginalized. The third phase (post-1990) is labeled *Non-Hierarchical Plural Society*. The 1990 constitution

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<sup>2</sup> Puran P. Bista, “Gupta and his autonomy,” Kantipuronline, 17 Januray 2005.  
<<http://www.kantipuronline.com/kolnews.php?&nid=29233>>

<sup>3</sup> <[http://hdr.undp.org/docs/reports/national/NEP\\_Nepal/Nepal\\_2004\\_en.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/docs/reports/national/NEP_Nepal/Nepal_2004_en.pdf)>

<sup>4</sup> Rajendra Pradhan and Ava Shrestha. *Ethnic and Caste Diversity: Implications for Development*. Working Paper Series No. 4  
< <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Papers/NRM/wp4.pdf>>

declared Nepal a multiethnic and multilingual Hindu constitutional monarchical kingdom and granted equal rights to all citizens before law. In a departure from earlier norm, it recognized the languages of different communities as national languages. However, once again a great divide persisted between legal assertions and realities on the ground.<sup>5</sup> Of course, in the post Janandolan II phase the fate of monarchy and Hindu state remains uncertain.

As is evident, Madhesis are not the only group that suffered deprivation and disadvantage during the non-democratic systems. But this discussion focuses on the Madhesis and their perception of their place in Nepali state and the likely scenarios that may unfold amidst the fast changing political situation in Nepal. The observations here are macro level and by nature broad. The observations are based on our personal experience as a Madhesis, on sharing part of the collective experience of the Madhesis community and as a student and teacher of political science with interests in the process of nation-building, ethnic conflict and democratization.

For the people living in the plains of Nepal, the generic term used is Madhesis. Teraibasis is another term but that one is much broader as I will discuss below. Like any other ethnic labels, the term Madhesis is not easy to define with precision. Having said that there are ways to get there without getting bogged down. I am using the two generally used criteria here to approach this problem: *territoriality and language*. Madhesis are the people whose original place of inhabitation in Nepal has been Nepal's plain region or Madhes. Madhesis live predominantly in the Terai region that ranges from Mechi to Mahakali.

Language combined with territoriality gives a greater grasp. People whose first language or mother tongue is one of the major languages spoken in the plains: Maithili, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Hindi, Tharu and their variations. For this purpose language is one of the central dimensions defining Madhesis of Nepal. We say of Nepal because these languages are also spoken across the border in India.

### Are you a Madhesis? The litmus test:

A puzzle that is often raised when discussing the problem of Madhesis is about the large number of people from the hills who either speak Nepali or other language of Janajatis or even the languages of the Terai live in Terai. Should they be considered Madhesis too? In order to clarify this, we propose this litmus test to determine who is a Madhesi. This test measures self-perception rather than one's territorial location.

Let's look at some of the core elements that make up the self perception of a Madhesis.

- First and foremost, being a Madhesis in Nepal has been being an "outsider." For Madhesis it means not being able to fully identify with the Nepali state and its manifestations i.e., domestic administrative set up (palace/non-palace) bureaucracy, police, military and foreign policy bureaucracy. In this sense, Madhesis main complaint is directed at the state's exclusionary policies.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

- Being Madhesis also meant being looked down by others and being suspect on account of one's language, appearance, and family and ethnic connections with India. In general Madhesis are generally presumed to be Indians and the onus is always on them to prove that that is not the case. This is a societal as well as political problem and there needs to be concerted effort to change this perception
- Being Madhesis meant being "deprived" of opportunity, being "second class citizens" who if in positions of any power had to go extra miles to prove one's worth and loyalty. As Ram Deal Rakesh points out, "Madhesi were not allowed to express their identity and when they did so, Pahadis accused them of being communal."<sup>6</sup>
- Being Madhesi also meant having to learn other's history and finding nothing much in school or college curriculum about one's own history or traditions. This arose from downgrading or completely ignoring local history and culture and superimposing so called "national history and culture."
- Being Madhesis also meant being less of a leader and more of a follower; in feudal language being raiti rather than the zamindar. In relation to the Nepali state, the best analogy for depicting the Madhesis experience is probably that of an alien in the United States dealing with the INS.
- Being Madhesis also meant being outraged at being subjected to outright discrimination by the state. Mindful of the disproportionate contribution to Nepali economy, Madhesis are also resentful of their extraordinarily marginal role in the decision making process in the nation.
- Being a successful Madhesi does not remove the encumbrances altogether, both psychological and structural. More than anything else, it often means being burdened with extra precaution in order not to lose the position and search for more enduring ties or ways to defend one's position.
- If you are a Madhesia either living inside or outside Nepal, you are likely to frequently encounter situations that will reinforce the above elements of self perception. Most Madhesis have stories and anecdotes about how their identity was suspected or challenged both in Nepal and abroad often by their own countrymen.

It is important to note here that every one who lives in the Terai is not a Madhesis for the purpose of this discussion. A distinction must be made here between those people who are the long time residents of Terai and either citizens or have qualifications to acquire citizenship and those who are just seasonal or temporary migrants from India or refugees. But for many who have lived in Terai for many generations, citizenship is still a

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<sup>6</sup> <[http://www.himalassociation.org/baha/day%20\\_tarai%20conference.htm](http://www.himalassociation.org/baha/day%20_tarai%20conference.htm)>

Appendix 3

## INTEGRATED NATIONAL CASTE/ ETHNIC INDEX OF GOVERNANCE, 1999

High level officials in:	Bahun / Chhetri	Newar	Hill Ethnic groups	Madhise	Dalit	Others	Total
Judiciary	190 80.85%	33 14.04%	3 1.28%	9 3.30%	0 0	0 0	235
Constitutional Body and Commission	181 77.02%	32 13.62%	4 1.70%	18 7.66%	0 0	0 0	235
Council of Ministers	14 56%	6 24%	2 8%	3 12%	0 0	0 0	25
Public Administration	20 62.50%	3 9.38%	4 12.50%	5 15.63%	0 0	0 0	32
Legislature	159 60%	20 7.55%	36 13.58%	46 17.36%	4* 1.51%	0 0	265
Political Parties	97 58.79%	18 10.91%	25 15.15%	26 15.76%	0 0	0 0	165
DDC President, Municipality Mayor, Vice-Mayor	106 55.50%	30 15.71%	23 12.04%	31 16.23%	0 0	0 0	191
Industry and Trade Sector	7 16.67%	20 47.62	0 0	15 35.71%	0 0	0 0	42
Education Sector	75 77.32%	11 11.34%	2 2.06%	7 7.22%	1 1.03%	1 1.03%	97
Cultural Sector	85 75.22%	22 19.47%	6 5.31%	0 0	0 0	0 0	113
Science and Technology	36 58.06%	18 29.03%	2 3.23%	6 18.75%	0 0	0 0	62
Civil Society Sector	41 66.13%	18 29.03%	1 1.61%	4 6.45%	0 0	0 0	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>1011</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1520</b>
%	66.5	15.2	7.1	11.2	0.3	0	100
% of Nepal's Population	31.6	5.6	22.2 <sup>a</sup>	30.9	8.7 <sup>a</sup>	0.1	100
Difference (%)	+34.9	+9.6	-15.1	-19.7	-8.4	-1.0	

Source: G. Neupane, *Nepalko Jatiya Samasya. Samajik Banot ra sajhedariko sambhavana.* (Caste/ethnic problems in Nepal. Social Structure and the possibility of Cooperation) (Centre for Development Studies, Kathmandu 2000) cited in J. Gurung, Promotion of Sociocultural, Economic and Political Participation of Dalits and Other Disadvantaged Groups: A Strategic Approach (Draft). (Submitted to the Enabling State Programme (ESP), Kathmandu, 2002).

Note: \*Nominated members of the Upper House;  
<sup>a</sup>Not inclusive of all Janjatis <sup>b</sup>Includes hill Dalits only;

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dream. According to reports, there are around three to four million people in Terai who meet eligibility for citizenship but are not citizens.<sup>7</sup>

### Confronting the challenge:

As is evident from the tables<sup>8</sup> that follow, the performance of the Madhesis people is critically low in terms of integrated national caste/ethnic index of governance. Their underrepresentation is across the board in all areas. In terms of Human Development Index too, they score low in terms of literacy, income than most groups.

<sup>7</sup> . "Madhesis demand immediate citizenship," *nepalnews.com*. 8 June 2006  
 <<http://www.nepalnews.com/archive/2006/jun/jun08/news05.php>>

<sup>8</sup> Pradhan and Shrestha, p. 21-22.  
 < <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Papers/NRM/wp4.pdf>>

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Is it too late to transform the self perception of Madhesis and integrate them better into the Nepali state and society? Here one needs to note that the Madhesis' backwardness can not be entirely blamed on the failure of the state. Nepal is a poor country with around 38% of the population living below the poverty line and poverty is thus endemic. Generic social features of Terai like local culture, the feudal system of economic relationships, caste system must share part of the blame and in that sense the situation of Madhesis is not that unique. However, evident deliberate discrimination on the part of the state is unique in that and more alarming in relations to Madhesis since even the more educated and well to do members of the Madhesi community feel marginalized. Yet, it might not be too late to ameliorate the situation. It is fairly clear that the discriminatory practices resulted from a closed political system that had narrowly defined participation to suit the vested interests of a few ruling elites and their bhardars. The dawn of democracy in that sense has made a difference. Democracy and the promotion of the interests of the Madhesis appear inextricably tied. There are several reasons that come to mind that still leave considerable room for remedial policies to stem alienation and sense of deprivation among the Madhesis.

- The people of Terai still have to wake up from years of subjugation and their aspirations and expectations are still very moderate. Movement or leaders who favor confrontation over reconciliation have not gained visible popularity yet.
- Madhesi identity is fairly complex in view of the multiple cleavages of caste, economic status, urban-rural divide, education and so on. The divide along backward/forward lines, an issue of great political salience in India, will also result in conflicting perceptions of Madhesis interests in Nepal. The demographic impact of resettlement of a large number of hills people in Terai will could also be a positive countervailing factor.
- Nepal's Terai region is economically dominant not marginal. The Madhesi community has many successful professionals, businessmen and community leaders. Even if alienated from the state, members of the Madhesi community have enough shared social and economic and political stakes to favor a peaceful approach to resolving the Madhesi problem.
- The new era of relationship between India and Nepal may also hold certain degree of hope for diffusing the underlying tension between the people of the plains and the hills. A lot, of course, will depend upon the success in bringing the Maoists to the mainstream. The critical contribution of the Indian government and political leaders in facilitating Nepal's democratic transition may lead to a greater level of confidence on the part of Nepali politicians, especially those on the left, in their dealings with India and reduced fears of what is often labeled "Indian hegemony." Political and military elites in Nepal have long harbored fears, not often expressed, that the people of Terai may use the leverage of their ethnic and relational closeness to India to oppose the discriminatory practices of the

Nepali state. While part of this fear could be understood in terms of the psychology of small state's fear of vulnerabilities vis-à-vis larger neighbors, part of it must also be explained in terms of the use of anti-Indian feelings by the leadership in the country both in the government and outside to advance their own interests.

- This new confidence may translate into stronger “political will” on the part of Nepali political leaders to address the genuine grievances of the Madhesis. On the other hand, the Nepalese leaders may also perceive Indian support to as evidence of lack of India's concern with the discriminatory practices toward the Madhesis and thus lacking any external urgency to place the issue high on their agenda.

Is there urgency to the challenge? The State must take both proactive and Reactive policies to address the grievances of the Madhes people. The ADB report, cited above, emphasizes the urgent need to promote programs, policies and projects that appreciates and recognizes issues relating to ethnicity, caste and gender. The urgency to tackle the Madhesis problem, as discussed earlier, may not appear urgent in the absence of effective mobilization. However, the urgency lies in the fact that with realization that sovereignty lies with the people and that in open democratic system people need to stand up for their rights and once they do they can better their lot is very powerful. The ethnicity based mobilization and movements are caused more by the indifference of authorities and societies to reassure the disadvantaged groups that the policy makers recognize the problem and are doing their best to alter the situation. One needs to pay heed to the observation of Phadnis and Ganguly based on the study of ethnicity in South Asia that mobilization and manipulation of group identity occurs to support the groups demand for “greater concessions and share in power and authority” and that the success of building a nation as an “an amalgam of ethnic pluralities and yet to be composite as well as secular in its totality,” depends on increasing the “material and emotional stakes” of an ethnic group.<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, the disadvantaged groups should not be regarded as too encumbered with their cleavages to build up steam. The leaders of the political parties in Nepal should learn from their own experience of leading a successful movement despite all the cleavages. Unlikely coalitions materialize when they realize that they have no option but to confront a common enemy collectively or be marginalized and oppressed separately. Any group of people has the potential to rebel if pushed to the brink and there is no reason to doubt it will not be the case with the people of the plains. Relationship of the plains people with India is multifaceted and hence a confrontational strategy by popular leaders of Madhesi community can have profound and unsettling implications for India-Nepal relations. One has to just recall the East Pakistan's rebirth as Bangladesh and the lingering national crisis in Sri Lanka to learn that national unity can not be used as theme to indefinitely perpetuate such policies.

Political Stability and Democratic Order, the Ultimate Factor:

<sup>9</sup> Phadnis, Urmila and Rajat Ganguly. 2000. *Ethnicity and Nation-building in South Asia*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, p. 14

None of the reforms and policies discussed above will be possible unless there is an effective government capable of institutionalizing the basic contours of a democratic system and the rule of law. Speedy resolution of the current political uncertainties through constituent assembly elections, broadly agreed constitution followed by democratic elections is in the primary interest of all Nepalese and the Nepali state. Failure to achieve this contains a serious risk of Nepal turning into a failed state with prolonged conflicts and greater foreign meddling in its affairs.

Today, plurality is deeply embedded in Nepal's demography, political ideologies, religion and culture. A democratic framework offers social cleavages and divergence of interests a great deal of room to articulate, deliberate and possibly reach a compromise in peaceful political fashion. The reason why we are talking about the Madhesis problem in Nepal and outside is because of the dawn of democratic era has shifted power to the people and the people are empowered to express what their grievances were. The 1990 constitution for the first time recognized Nepal as a multilingual, multiethnic nation and pledged to end all discrimination on the basis of ethnicity and region and also allowed greater expression to local languages and cultures. The establishment and stability of a democratic framework thus will be continue to have a positive contribution to achieve greater national integration.

The role of political leaders in paving the way forward will be critical. The Nepali leaders have a great opportunity while they are engaged in the process of shaping a new constitutional order to demonstrate their commitment to undo the past disadvantage. Below are some of the steps that could be taken during the transition and afterwards:

- Recognition of the systematic discrimination and an apology, just like President Clinton did to the Slaves and their descendants. That will have a positive impact on changing national outlook toward the Madhesis.
- Decentralization: According to Human Development Report Nepal 2004, the role of local people in decision making is still extremely limited.<sup>10</sup> Decentralization must move beyond its rhetorical stage and the local people must be allowed real role in local and regional governance. If pursued honestly, this could be an alternative to ethno-federation that entails the risk of extreme segmentation of Nepal. As David Gellner points out "any system which depended on defining all members of the population as belonging either to one or other ethnic group would cause even more problems than it solved given both considerations about hybridity, and the fact that all populations in Nepal inhabit highly mixed areas. Nepal has no ethnically pure enclaves."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Nepal Human Development Report 2004, Empowerment and Poverty Reduction. p. 20  
<[http://hdr.undp.org/docs/reports/national/NEP\\_Nepal/Nepal\\_2004\\_en.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/docs/reports/national/NEP_Nepal/Nepal_2004_en.pdf)>

<sup>11</sup> David L. Gellner, "Public Order, Inclusion and Hybridity: Some preconditions for Democracy in Nepal," p. 12  
<<http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/midea/pdf/darticle1.pdf>>

- Representation must be based on the basis of population. Allowing ten thousand and one hundred thousand people the same amount of representation is unfair. The principle of adult franchise is compromised by territorial representation
- Effective governmental initiatives to allow certain degree of positive discrimination to bring about a balance in bureaucracy, military and police. It is very important to have ethnic balance in the security forces in order for the underrepresented groups not to see them as oppressors rather than defenders.
- Reconfiguration of public policies and new emphasis on the nature of the challenge will be necessary to bring about a perceptual change among the members of the targeted groups as well as mutual perception that members of different groups have of each other. This process may create a new political culture that is more sensitive to Nepal's diversity. The task is, of course, a gigantic one and will require both resolve and patience. In the United States the Civil Rights Act and Affirmative Action Policies created greater awareness of the historical injustices and barriers confronted by the black people in America and created new institutional norms and rules to accommodate their interests. India's more vigorous and ever expanding but controversial reservation policies for the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and now the OBCs are another example. Neither India nor the United States have abolished either the problems or controversies over their approaches but both have democratic systems to allow the debates over policies and practices to continue.

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## A Success Story: The American Dream

### *Sanjay Shrestha, Chicago, IL*

An American Dream with a Nepali twist, that's what Ramakant Kharel had when he landed here in Chicago on December 1991 with only \$500 in pocket. He wanted to achieve a higher education degree in Business Management, work hard and save money so that he could help the family back home.

Mr. Kharel's journey to the land of opportunity began when he was studying and working in Kathmandu. Back then, he thought of building a career in the Tourism and Hospitality industries in Nepal. Soon after beginning working, he learned that to be somebody in Nepal, without having any higher officials among family or friends, was next to impossible. As many frustrated youths of Nepal that choose to leave the country for better education or careers, he decided to go to the United States.

Since the very beginning of his stay in America, he had to give up the dream of an educational achievement. Soon after, he learned that his father was suffering with Alzheimer's disease back in Nepal. His father's treatment came first on his priority list. Unfortunately, given the financial constraints, he was forced to make a difficult choice: either pay for tuition or his father's treatment. As any good son, he chose to go with his father's treatment.

For the first 5 years in America, he worked 2 jobs simultaneously to maximize earnings. Until the late 90s, he worked at 9 to 10 different places, most of which were restaurants. And with time, he began to master the operations of a restaurant business. Given his drive to succeed, he wanted to try other profession as well. So he joined a car dealer as a salesperson. This ended shortly after a year, as the car sales profession really didn't appeal to him. He had always planned to start his own business. He felt this was the time to venture out on his own. His first undertaking was a car wash and detailing shop. However, he had no experience, and as such, the business suffered in the early days. Eventually Mr. Kharel mastered the business, and managed it smoothly for about a year.

But deep down inside, he knew that wasn't the business he wanted in the long run. He began to look for something different, like a Cigar and Tobacco shop. But his wife, Shanti, disagreed as she was concerned with cigarette's disastrous affect on smokers. She encouraged him to venture out on a business he was already immersed in, and would serve more than a satisfying experience.

While others saw a job as only a source of income, Mr. Kharel on the other hand, saw it as a great opportunity to gain first hand experience. It was rather an educational experience on the practical side of life. This real life experience compensated for his missed Business Management degree. Eventually the patience, hard work, and positive attitude lead him to establish a restaurant that he longed for. *[Mr Kharel inset below]*



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In February 2000, Mt. Everest Restaurant was inaugurated in Evanston, IL (a northern Chicago suburb). The restaurant offered fine Indian food, infused with Nepali hospitality and Himalayan flavors. Mr. Kharel's understood what the clients wanted. He offered them just that: a healthy & mild south-Asian cuisine topped by a personal service, the Nepali way. In a short time span, the restaurant became very popular among the local residents, and Northwestern University students, faculty, and staff. Since then, the restaurant has received more than 20 positive reviews by renowned Chicago newspapers, radio, and TV shows. Couple years later, Mr. Kharel opened a second restaurant in Toronto, Canada. He plans to expand his business and diversify his portfolio.

Mr. Kharel says his success is due to the grace and blessing of the almighty God. He is also quick to acknowledge his wife as the primary source of encouragement and motivation. Without her constant and pure support, he wouldn't be in this position where he is today. He is fortunate to have a group of loyal friends, honest and hardworking staff, and a supportive Nepali community. He mentions that his success is a direct reflection of a hardworking team. He firmly believes that with a combination of family support and encouragement, teamwork, perseverance, and hard work, that we all can achieve our dream in America.

I recently had an opportunity to interview Mr. Kharel on his story that spans his difficult years to his recent success:

**14 years ago when you came to the United States, did you ever imagine that one day you would be a successful entrepreneur?**

That was the whole reason why I chose to come to USA. I knew if I had stayed in Nepal it would be rather more difficult for me to be successful entrepreneur.

**If you were not in the restaurant business today, what would be your ideal choice of work/business?**

If not restaurant, then may be higher job career in either hospitality or tourism business.

**What difficulties/hurdles did you face during the early phase of your current venture (restaurant)?**

The very first difficult decision was to decide the location for the business. Prime location rent costs more and also I had to make sure that the location I choose would be diverse in population. I spent almost year and half doing research just on location and other logistics. Also finding proper workers, pay them without even opening the business was also one of the difficulties. I underestimate the project by more than half of the cost; it was very big planning mistake.

**Did success come to you from the very beginning, prior to the restaurant venture?**

I had gone through many difficult situations since I arrived to US till 1999. I learned

many valuable lessons during that time. It made me stronger mentally. I also learned that life without challenges have no meaning and charm.

**What have you learned all these years now that you've seen success, not just from a business point of view, but taking the life into account (family, social, work, etc)?**

Be strong regardless of the situation, be truthful and work hard. I have very wise wife that supports me, understands me. I am very grateful to have a wonderful group of friends and two beautiful children. I love the nature of the work I do.

**What are your future plans?**

I already have good family and social life. Simultaneously I love to help needy people in Nepal. So my most important object is to be able to help Nepal, to my possible extend without disturbing family life.

**How do you relate your experiences of your life in the U.S. to your kids?**

I think our life in US is big different than in Nepal. The culture, school and society everything in here is more demanding and materialistic. I think the best toy you can give to your children is your time and attention. And they can learn more about their parents, their original culture and they can be the best generation for the future.

**If a fellow Nepali wants to pursue a business venture, what advice(s) can you offer to the person?**

Plan and research. I love to share my experience with any fellow Nepali. I would love to contribute my business knowledge.

**They say "there is more to life than work," do you agree with this statement?**

Yes! Absolutely agree.

**You've been very involved with the Nepali community in the Chicago & Midwest area for several years. People admire your leadership and dedication to the community. Do you have a vision for the Nepalese community in the Midwest / Chicago area?**

My vision is not only limited to the Chicago/Midwest area but is for all nepali worldwide. We should be united, strong and help Nepal as much as possible. It is our motherland and it's very backward in all areas. If we implement just about 10% of what we learned here, our country would be in a better shape. If we communicate well among ourselves we can build Nepal like a model country.

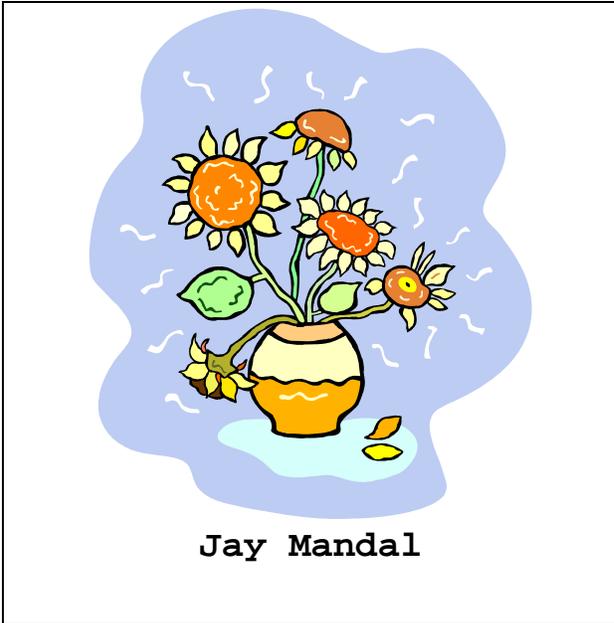
**Besides your business ambitions, do you have any future plans on the social side?**

Like I have mentioned above, I would love to be part of the community that helps Nepali and its people.

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***HINTS** For the trivia question in Page 53: Where is CNN News Headquarters? What was the year year ending that rhymes with mix?*

**Best wishes for the success of  
the joint convention and  
Hope you enjoyed  
the get together!**



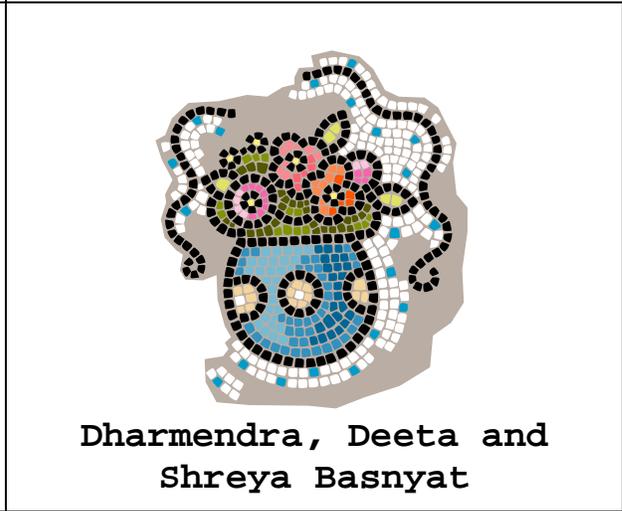
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