

B · post

"Hamro Patrika"

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VELKOMMEN I
NORGE-NEPAL
FORENINGEN!



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NR. 3 1994

Velkommen til 10-års-jubileumsmøte i
Norge-Nepal foreningen:

15. September, 1994, kl. 19⁰⁰ i Lektorenes Hus
Wergelandsveien 15.

- Worldview International v/Arne Fjortoft
har lånt oss en videofilm om Nepal
som vi vil vise.
- Chandika Olsen forteller om sitt
skoleprosjekt i Nepal.
- Utlodning og JUBILEUMSBEVERTNING!

Kathmandu 20.8.1994

Til Norge-Nepal Foreningen
Oslo

Kjære NNF,

Greetings from Kathmandu og gratulerer med tiårs-jubileum!

I anledning jubileumsår for NNF forsøker jeg å sette ned noen ord om gamle minner som formann i NNF og til slutt en situasjonsrapport fra Nepal.

NNF - en viktig plattform for Nepal-interesserte:

NNF er en aktiv forening som har trukket og fortsetter å trekke flere Nepal interesserte i Norge i en felles plattform. Foreningen har spilt en viktig rolle for å gjøre Nepal og Nepals kultur kjent på flere nivåer. Mange interessante foredrag, lysbilder, filmer, debatter koblet med nepalesisk mat har passert foreningens plattform. I disse ti årene har flere interessante foredragsholdere både fra Nepal og Norge bidratt med deres kunnskap og erfaring til våre medlemmer og gjester.

Temaer som buddhisme, newarikultur, klatremiljøer, politiske forandringer, utviklingsprosjekter, fotturer i Nepal, menneskerettigheter, barnarbeid, arkitektur, kraftutvinning og mye mer har vært presentert gjennom foreningen. Temavalg er ganske bredt og gir et klarere bilde av forholdene i Nepal.

Mens jeg var formann på slutten av 80-tallet hadde NNF mange interessante oppgaver å ta fatt i. Medlemstallet vokste jevnt og antall deltagere på medlemsmøtene var bra. Debatten om ja eller nei til fjellklatring i Nepal med Sigmund Kvaløy og Stein P. Aasheim fra Everest-ekspedisjonen ble en stor suksess blant arrangementene NNF gjennomførte. Gjennom dette arrangementet ble foreningen bedre kjent, og foreningens lille kasse ble også styrket med noen ekstra kroner.

NNF's hefte "Fottur til Nepal" (?) ble et vel mottatt produkt. Slike aktuelle publikasjoner av enkel type ville sikkert være et fint tilbud for medlemmer og andre interesserte også i framtiden.

Hamro Patrika har spilt og spiller fortsatt en viktig rolle for å binde NNF-medlemmer sammen. En regelmessig utgivelse av Hamro Patrika er i seg selv en viktig oppgave for NNF.

Norge og Nepal på bistandområdet:

Selv om støtten fra Norge i det siste har vært merkbar på flere fronter, er behovet for støtte fortsatt stort. I denne sammenheng burde foreningen engasjere seg noe mer, ikke som en bistandsdrivende institusjon, men som pådrivende organ for å bringe Norge og Nepal nærmere også på bistandsfronten.

Situasjonsrapport:

Snart fire år er gått siden Nepal fikk sin demokrati. Eneveldig kongedømme er nå blitt proklamert som et konstitusjonelt monarki. Den nye grunnloven styrer Nepal idag. Over 20 politiske partier er blitt født. Nepali Congress fikk knapt flertall i parlamentet i det valget som gikk.

Etter ca. tre og et halvt år Congress regjering i landet har Nepal opplevd fortsatt som en politisk kaos. Det mangler visjon, nasjonal integrering, økonomisk styring og utenrikspolitisk styring. Koirala-dynastiet styrkes mer og mer og indifisering av Nepal fortsetter. Statsvide bedrifter er blitt solgt til indere for en billig penge med kommisjon til regjeringen.

Folketallet vokser stadig med ukontrollert migrasjon fra India, samtidig kjøres opplysningskampanje for familiplanlegging i Nepal. Kampanjen er selvfølgelig beregnet for vanlige nepaleser. I følge statistikken er muslimer fra Bihar Nepals sterkeste voksende befolkningsgruppe.

Kathmandu lever under sterkt befolkningspress. Ubekreftet tall over to mill, mens det formelle tallet ligger på litt over åtte hundre tusen. Mens ordføreren i Kathmandu slår på stortromma med slagord "Clean, green and healthy Kathmandu" fortsetter byen å være verdens mest skitne by.

Statsminister Girija P. Koirala gikk av for ca. 5 uker siden, under budsjettframleggning. 36 medlemmer av hans eget parti stemte imot budsjettforslaget. Han søkte da avskjed hos kongen, oppløse parlamentet, og utskrev nyvalg. Dette godkjente kongen og ba Koirala om å fungere som statsminister til valget er over. Men opposisjonen og mange fra hans eget parti aksepterte ikke dette. Det ble diskusjon om hvordan grunnloven skal tolkes. Fem parlamentsmedlemmer fra opposisjonen har anlagt sak mot regjeringen i Høyesterett med påstand om at regjeringens handlinger er grunnlovstridig. Dommen faller den 25. august.

Nå foregår forberedelser til valget som skal holdes 13. november. Det er mye som tyder på at mellompartiene kan gjøre et godt valg denne gangen. Opposisjonen organiserer demonstrasjoner og proklamerer "bandh" (generalstreik) med jevne mellomrom. Hittil har ingen menneskeliv gått tapt.

Radio og TV ser ut til å være kontrollert av Kongresspartiet, da de slipper veldig lite eller ingenting ut om disse demonstrasjonene. Avisene derimot dekker dette godt.

Ingen av de politiske partiene har erfaring med å styre landet etter et demokratisk prinsipp. Nepal går en uviss politisk framtid i møte i øyeblikket. På mange måter virker den demokratiske hverdagen i Nepal som anarki. Folk har allerede opplevd fire-fem general streiker på kort tid. Opposisjonen med kommunistene i spissen står bak streiken og forlanger at Girija må gå av også som fungerende statsminister inntil valget er over.

Dotte er den politiske situasjonen i Nepal nå.

Jeg ønsker NNP fortsatt lykke til i årene framover.

Hilsen
Hem Gurung
Hem Gurung
BACMS
GPO Box 5950
Kathmandu, Nepal

NORGE - NEPALFORENINGEN - 10 ÅR.

Det er nå 10 år siden noen mennesker samlet seg i Generalkonsul Græfsdals stue for å stifte Norge-Nepal-foreningen. Det var bl.a. Hem Gurung, Hans Bjønness og Albert Kolstad. Sistnevnte ble foreningens første formann. Senere fulgte Hem Gurung, Dag Norling, Erik Hoftun, Ane Haaland og i det siste året Marit Kleppa. Foreningens formål skulle være å fungere som et forum for folk med interesse for Nepal. Man skulle arbeide for kulturutveksling og utbre kjennskapet til Nepals kultur og tradisjoner. Foreningen skulle også arbeide for økt norsk bistand og bidra til koordinering av utviklingshjelp og forskningssamarbeide. I hvilken grad man har lyktes med å følge opp intensjonene med foreningen kan jo diskuteres. Det sier jo noe at i 1987 hadde foreningen 130 medlemmer, i 1994 har vi 190 medlemmer. Til sammenligning kan nevnes at Dansk-Nepalesisk selskab som vinteren 1994 feiret sitt 25 års-jubileum, nettopp er kommet opp i 200 medlemmer. At interessen for Nepal er stadig stigende viste også det seminaret Norsk utenrikspolitisk institutt (NUPI) holdt våren 1993. Der presenterte de ulike forskningsmiljøer i Norge sine Nepal-prosjekter. Vi fikk høre om Universitetet i Bergens sosialantropologiske studier, NTH i Trondheims byplanprosjekter og ulike prosjekter ved Landbruks-høyskolen på Ås. Her har de også den største kontingent av nepalesiske studenter i Norge. Interessen for trekkingturer i Nepal er også økende. Det kan Nepals nåværende Generalkonsul i Norge Bjørn Korsvold fortelle om. I 1.halvår i 1994 er det utstedt 237 visa. For hele år tidligere, ligger tallet på mellom 500 og 600 visa. I slutten av 70 årene arrangerte Den norske turistforening(DNT) fotturer i Nepal til Everest Base Camp og Annapurna. Selv var jeg med i 1978 og 1979. I 1980 gav de seg, blant annet fordi litt for mange ble høydesyke. Arne Ness-ekspedisjonen til Everest i 1985 gjorde også at interessen for trekking har steget. Etterhvert er det blitt meget enklere å arrangere tur på egenhånd. I 1978 fantes det få overnattingssteder og lite mat for turister i Khumbu - Everest-området. Derfor måtte man delta i store teltturer med mange bærere. Idag finner man en rekke lodger langs ruten og det er nok mat å få kjøpt. I de første årene var de fleste medlemmene av foreningen en eller annen type hjelpearbeidere - misjonærer - leger - NORAD-ansatte o.l. Etterhvert har vi fått flere og flere "ferie-turist-medlemmer".

Hamro Patrika - Vår Avis - organet for Norge-Nepalforeningen ble ikke utgitt fra starten. Først i 1986 kom det igang. I de første årene var flere styremedlemmer med på utgivelsen. Fra 1988-1993 har Dag Nordling stått for HP. Han fortjener stor honnør for sitt arbeide. I de senere år har man mest sakset artikler fra norske og utenlandske aviser og tidsskrifter om situasjonen i Nepal. Det har jo som bekjent skjedd mye, særlig er revolusjonen i 1990, valget i 1991 og problemer i forhold til India blitt belyst.

En undersøkelse blant medlemmene om HP i 1992, gav klar beskjed om at medlemmene ønsket mye stoff om Nepal. For mange er HP det eneste sted de finner stoff om Nepal. Skulle jeg komme med et jubileumsønske for HP, måtte det være at medlemmer som besøker Nepal i ulike æren, ville lage noen korte reisebrev.

En ny informasjonsbrosjyre om Nepal har vært planlagt i flere år, men er enda ikke utgitt. Den kan distribueres via Generalkonsulatet, Reisebyråer med Nepalturer og via foreningen. Brosjyren vil sikkert kunne øke interessen for vår forening.

Marit Kleppa

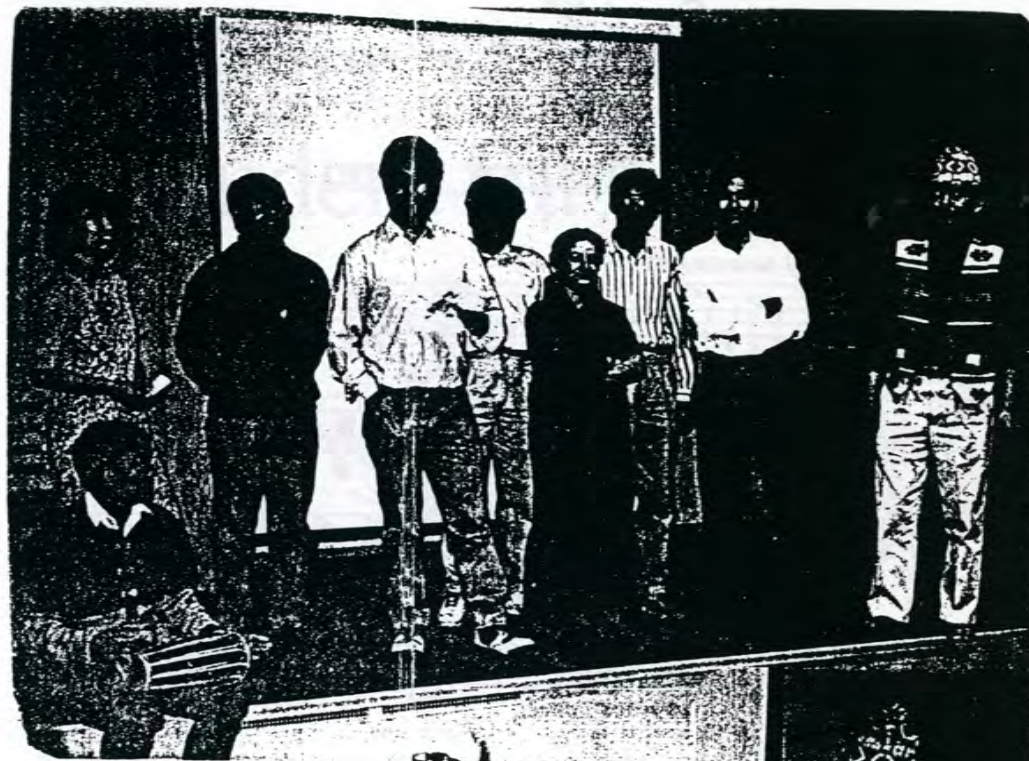
NORAD. ÅRSRAPPORT 1993

Nepal

De norske bedriftene Statkraft, ABB Energi AS og Kværner Energy har engasjert seg i vannkraftprosjektet Khimti Khola. Bedriftene er invitert til å delta som medeiere i kraftverket, som er kostnadsberegnet til ca. USD 129 mill. Søknad om lån og garantier er til behandling i NORAD.

Norske private organisasjoner har gjennom mange år hatt et omfattende engasjement i Nepal. Følgende organisasjoner fikk støtte til sitt arbeid i 1993: Den Norske Tibetmisjon, CARE Norge, Utviklingsfondet, Landsforeningen for Hjerte- og Lungesyke, Norsk Forbund for Psykisk Utviklingshemmede, Pastor Strømmes Minnestiftelse, Redd Barna, Kirkens Nødhjelp, Norges Røde Kors, Norges Blindforbund, Norsk Lærergag og Den Norske Advokatforening. Tiltakene omfattet bl.a. støtte til kraftverk, organisasjonsbygging, mor/barn-tiltak, familieplanlegging og helsetiltak, skogbruk, rettshjelp og distriktsutvikling.

► Samlet norsk bilateral bistand i 1993: NOK 50,3 mill.



Glimt fra
Festmøtet
9.5.1994



RESHAM FIRIRI

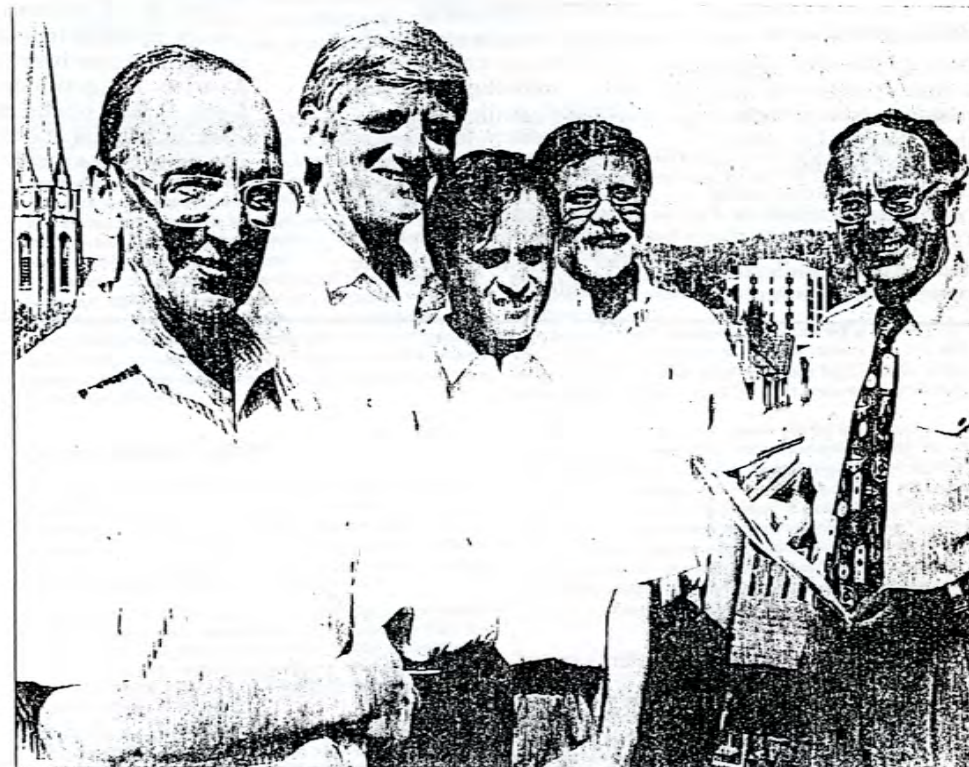


"Resham Firiri..."

"Rasham Firiri..." is very popular folk tune of Nepal. People of highest part of hills, they sing that song to make glad to tourist.

रेशम फिरीरी नेपालको प्रख्यात लोक धुन हो विदेशीहरु हिमालमा जाँदा गन्धर्वहरुले यो गीत रचेर सुनाउँदछन् ।

Bevilger 54 000 kroner til student fra Nepal



TAKKNEMLIG: Takket være Lions Club i Sandefjord kan Bidya Prasad Pant fullføre øyenlegestudiene sine. Fra venstre: Olaf Odd, Klaus Søiland, Bidya P. Pant, Terje Austrheim og Trygve Andersen.

Finansierer øyenlegestudier

Som en del av Lions verdenskampanje har Lions Club i Sandefjord bevilget 54 000 kroner til en øyenlegestudent fra Nepal. Nå studerer han i Russland, mandag kom studenten på besøk til Sandefjord.

METTE LANGEID
(TEKST OG FOTO)

Bidya Prasad Pant er 30 år gammel og kommer fra den fattigste delen av Nepal. Takket være optiker Terje Austrheim og lege Klaus Søiland og resten av Lions Club i Sandefjord kan han nå fullføre øyenlegestudiene sine i Rostov i Russland.

18 000 kroner trenger han hvert år i seks år fremover. Han har fire år igjen å studere, og han er svært takknemlig for den hjelpen han har fått.

- I Nepal er det en veldig stor prosent av befolkningen som har mistet synet på grunn av grå stær, og hvor det trengs

flere øyenleger med kunnskap om denne sykdommen, sier øyenlege Olaf Odd.

- Dette er noe av bakgrunnen for at vi nettopp valgte å hjelpe Pant, sier regionsleder Trygve Andersen i Lions Club i Sandefjord.

4 000 operasjoner

Pant og Olaf Odd jobbet en stund sammen på det norsk-nepalske øyehospitalet i Nepal. Da jobbet Pant som assistent. Her ble han etterhvert lært opp til å operere folk med grå stær.

Nå har det imidlertid kommet forbud i landet

om at ingen andre enn leger får utføre støropera-sjoner.

Dette gjorde at Pant måtte slutte å operere til han ble ordentlig utdannet. Før dette forbudet hadde han imidlertid operert 4 000 øyne!

Usedvanlig flink

- Hvordan går studiene?

- Det går fint, men det er vanskelig, spesielt språket, smiler han.

Andersen forteller at universitetet i Rostov er svært imponert over Pantes ferdigheter, og de opplyser om at han til nå har imponerende gode karakterer.

I Norge koster det tussvis av kroner å bli operert for grå stær, i Nepal koster samme operasjon rundt 20 kroner.

- Da nytter det å hjelpe, sier Andersen.

Ingen vet ennå hvorfor grå stær er så utbredt i landet.

Det er et faktum at mange nyutdannede slår seg ned i større byer «for å drive pengepraksis». Dette er ikke tilfelle med Pant, alt taler for at han vil dra tilbake og arbeide videre der han sluttet.

Hydrodollars in the Himalaya

Nepali NGOs are criticizing the large-scale, foreign-funded Arun III dam because it will stifle the local small-scale hydropower industry, add to Nepal's foreign debt and benefit mainly an urban elite. But the Nepali government and its foreign donors insist that there is "no turning back". After several postponements, the Arun scheme is scheduled to be submitted in July to the World Bank's Executive Board for funding approval.

When a World Bank team landed in Kathmandu in May 1993 to finalize the 402-megawatt (MW) Arun III hydroelectric project, it was in for a shock. The Bank had come under immense pressure to withdraw from the notorious Sardar Sarovar dam on the Narmada river in India because of the lack of local participation and inadequate provisions for resettlement¹, but felt confident that the Arun project had benefited from "unprecedented economic and environmental appraisal".

But Arun III has become the focus of Nepal's first public campaign, testing the country's fledgling democracy.² The campaign is not only about ecological devastation and the displacement of local people. It is also about economics and development ethics, and symbolizes Nepal's dilemma: will the country continue its drift into debt and dependency or will it embark on a path of self-reliance?

Nepal's White Elephant

For those seeking to develop Nepal economically, hydropower is one of the country's greatest assets. The 6,000 streams and rivers that cascade down from the Himalaya could generate an estimated 44,000 MW of power — and the advocates of hydroelectricity within Nepal are an influential lobby group. As water resources expert Dipak Gyawali explains:

"During the oil crisis of the 1970s, Nepalis began to imagine themselves as hydro-dollar sheikhs selling power to India. It was at this time that the government began to dream of large-scale hydroelectric projects, such as the gargantuan and potentially disastrous 11,000 MW Karanali dam, which is still a gleam in its eye."

Following the recommendations of a controversial study funded and published by the World Bank in 1987 and known as the "Least Cost Generation Expansion Plan" (LCGEP), the government of Nepal and its foreign donors opted for a 402 MW run-of-river scheme³ on Nepal's second largest river, the Arun. This runs down from Tibet through the remote eastern reaches of the country between Everest and Kanchenjunga, the world's highest and third-highest peaks. Their choice relied heavily on the assumption that the scheme's high cost, some \$1.2 billion, would be offset by the Upper and Lower Arun dams, which could follow in the wake of Arun III. The LCGEP did not consider seriously the potential of smaller, cheaper, locally-built projects, taking it for granted that any scheme would be built by foreign contractors.

After the 1990 popular uprising, the new government of the Nepali Congress Party reviewed the previous Panchayat government's plans and policies. Several Task Forces, set up to examine the energy sector, exposed the flaws in the LCGEP and questioned the choice of the Arun project. Riding on a wave of idealistic enthusiasm, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala threat-

ened to drop Arun and opt instead for the smaller, 100 MW Kali Gandaki scheme.

But the government's idealism and determination wilted under internal and external pressure, and in 1991, it reaffirmed Arun III as the chosen hydroelectricity project. Hydro-dollar dreams returned to the fore. In January 1992, a month before the donors' meeting which approved the scheme, the Water Resources Minister who had ventured to question the "vanity project" was sacked. Congress Party President Krishna Prasad Bhattarai recently stated that "Arun will enable Nepal to become like Singapore."

In February 1993, because of donor concern at Arun III's high costs, plans were modified to build the dam in two 201 MW stages, the first stage being dubbed "Baby Arun". A \$764 million aid package⁴ was drawn up to cover this stage and construction of an access road.

Nepal's "baby", however, would still be the largest single development investment ever undertaken in the country. At 201 MW, it is three times the size of the next largest hydro scheme, the 69 MW Marsyangdi, which feeds into a national grid with a working capacity of 278 MW. Baby Arun's estimated costs equal Nepal's total annual budget for government spending,⁵ making it one of the most expensive hydro schemes in the world per unit of power generated. In addition, the World Bank is insisting on a 50 per cent increase in the tariff charged to electricity consumers before approving the scheme.

Heavy Costs

It is the 122 kilometre access road to Arun III rather than the scheme itself which is likely to have the most severe environmental and social impacts. According to one Nepali NGO, the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC), one of only two NGOs involved in the eight-year process of drawing up plans for Arun III:

"this mountainous vertical world [of the Arun valley] contains a number of climatic zones to which plants, animals and man have adapted over the millennia, producing an amazing diversity of interdependent ecological communities and cultures. Here, the biological and cultural diversity has remained largely intact due to the basin's remoteness and rugged terrain."

The US Environmental Protection Agency has noted that "project documents apparently not reflected in the [World Bank's] Environmental Assessment Summary describe the staggering biodiversity of the area, which even so remains incompletely catalogued".

The Environmental Assessment Summary (EAS) published by the World Bank in May 1993 skates over much of the environmental impact of the project. It devotes a few lines only

to the devastating cumulative impacts of addition of the Upper and Lower Arun dams to Arun III. For example, Upper Arun would require extending Arun III's road some 47 kilometres into even more environmentally and culturally sensitive terrain.

China has recently proposed an irrigation scheme in Tibet, where about 80 per cent of the Arun river's catchment lies, which would reduce the dry season flow of the Arun by some 50 per cent and have a serious impact on Arun III's power output. Information on this project was included in a draft EAS, but omitted in the final version. Also omitted were the results of a survey⁸ which described serious problems arising through measures to acquire land and compensate inhabitants.

As to social effects, the EAS states that:

"while roads are a prerequisite for rapid economic development, they are not sufficient to cause development by themselves. There has to be some other major economic impetus to allow roads to liberate the economic potential of an area. Where this is not present, a new road does little for the welfare of the people in its vicinity, and may bring disruption to local communities and severe damage to forests and to other natural resources due to easier access from outside".

But the EAS does not describe the nature and impact of this "other economic impetus", nor does it question assumptions about the benefits and desirability of "rapid economic development".

The EAS acknowledges that "without complementary measures", the overall food situation of the 450,000 people from ten distinct ethnic groups who live in the Arun valley "will become worse than before the road" and people will lose their jobs and livelihoods. For example, some 4,000 people work full-time as porters, while thousands more do so in the agricultural low season. Most of the valley inhabitants depend on the forests for food and fertilizer. Only eight per cent of the land is cultivated in a mixed farming system where altitude influences the crops grown.

The EAS states that "without mitigation, the project will impose severe costs on the poorest people of the Arun valley, who already live on the margin of subsistence" and that it could take 20 years for many families to climb back to their current standard of living. Already 30 per cent of households surveyed for the EAS had mortgaged their land to the richer farmers of the Brahmin and Chhetri castes to meet their food needs, leading the KMTNC consultants to conclude that "9,000 families could be too poor to weather the period of economic hardship foreseen following opening of the road".

In addition, the proposed "ridge route" of the road (which would have linked a number of villages and thus gained the support of some of them) was realigned in February 1993 in favour of a "valley route", which requires extensive feeder roads and which would incur greater environmental damage, but which could be completed a year earlier. The EAS, however, considers only the "ridge route".

A government engineer recently admitted that "this is not a social sector road. It is being built as an access road to the power station and dam sites".

Skimpy Remedies

The main measure proposed in the EAS to mitigate the environmental and social effects is a Regional Action Plan (RAP), much of it based on a survey undertaken by KMTNC. The RAP sketches diverse activities such as maintaining religious sites and monuments, training in income generation and technical skills, developing ecotourism, undertaking ecological research, strengthening local institutions, monitoring nutritional levels, and setting up community forestry programmes. The US Environmental Protection Agency describes a programme to

encourage farmers to establish "multipurpose" plantings as lacking "any empirical dimension, much less any effectiveness analysis" and queries "why leasing forests for industrial forestry would 'mitigate' the effects of road construction".

The \$14.5 million budget for the RAP "band-aid" — which the government has yet to find funding for — is dismally inadequate, while KMTNC's Member Secretary Dr Chandra Gurung has pointed out that "these mitigating measures need to be started well in advance of the road construction". Yet the road is planned to be built within some three and a half years of the project going ahead. Construction of the dam itself will start before the road is finished, requiring extensive use of helicopters at an estimated cost of some \$30 million. Studies for the Arun III scheme have already cost \$25 million, provided as technical assistance funding by Germany and the World Bank.

It is very difficult for many Arun valley villagers to assess the implications of the scheme. They have little experience of development projects to draw upon, and it is doubtful whether they have been fully informed of the EAS conclusion that the scheme "will impose severe costs on the poorest people of the Arun valley," or of the World Bank's poor record at mitigating such costs.

Forging an Alternative

While negotiations for Arun III have continued largely behind closed doors, Nepali NGOs have begun to piece together information on the dam. They have questioned publicly the wisdom of Nepal embarking on such a huge project and the government's right to make a decision on it without public consultation. A small group of environmentalists, economists and hydro-engineers started the Alliance for Energy in February 1993 to publicize the Arun scheme and to persuade the government to adopt an alternative approach to hydropower development in Nepal.

They point out that the country's power needs, mainly those of urban households, industry and tourist hotels connected to the grid, are modest: even future demand, growing at about 25-30 MW per year, from these users and from the expansion of the grid to some rural areas in the south of the country could be met by smaller schemes, built at a lower cost and using Nepal's own technical and human resources. Local companies are already building schemes up to 60 MW in size at half the per kilowatt cost of the Arun scheme. Micro-hydro engineer Bikash Pandey points out that:

"what we are most concerned about is the impact Arun will have on local initiatives. The Arun project is not even approved yet, but already other initiatives are being crowded out which could lead to the collapse of the local industry altogether. A proposal for a 6.5 MW hydroscheme put forward by Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) engineers was turned down by the NEA board because there was no money in this year's budget for it".

Instead, 98 per cent of the 1993/94 national Nepali budget set aside for hydropower schemes, some \$17 million, was spent on the local costs of Baby Arun,⁹ while only \$200,000 went on micro-hydro schemes and \$100,000 for other schemes. The portfolio of power generation projects most recently agreed between the Nepali government and its donors comprise only large hydropower schemes, supplemented with diesel plants up to the year 2010. Small-scale projects are nowhere to be seen.¹⁰

Yet the donors have stated both that they would not support Arun if it were to overshadow other initiatives or suppress local capability and that Arun III will do no such thing. In addition, Baby Arun will add \$30 or so to Nepal's \$100 per capita debt; the average annual per capita income is \$160.

Arun III, connected to Kathmandu via a 500-kilometre power line, will benefit mainly the urban elite. Only 10 per cent of

Nepal's 18 million people are connected to the national grid, one million of them in the capital. Given the country's mountainous terrain, independent mini-hydro (1-5 MW) and micro-hydro (less than 1 MW) schemes would better enable the vast majority of people — 90 per cent of the population live in rural areas — to gain access to electricity. This is increasingly needed because of pressure on other energy sources, particularly fuelwood. A 12-hour round trip to gather fuelwood is typical for many families in the hills. A 50-kilowatt scheme on a stream less than a metre wide in the dry season in the Annapurnan village of Ghandruk provides enough power for all 12 local hotels and around one-fifth of the houses to cook using heat storage cookers.

Cosy Rhetoric

The scheduled date for the submission of the Arun scheme to the World Bank's Executive Board for approval of its \$175 million loan for the project has been repeatedly postponed because of the growing opposition. But although many government ministers (including the Prime Minister) are privately in favour of the alternative approach, few concessions have been made beyond bland assurances that the World Bank "shares many of the concerns raised". At the end of February 1994, the Bank stated that:

"Bank management has concluded that the project's readiness, the availability of concessionary financing to go forward and of programmes to safeguard the environment through the period of project implementation to ensure that disadvantages are minimized and the advantages are maximized, and the interests of the affected population, tip the balance in favour of the project".¹¹

The Alliance concludes that "all the cosy rhetoric delivered by the involved parties about developing the alternative approach alongside Arun is completely unsubstantiated".

Nevertheless, the movement for an alternative energy policy is still growing and more pressure groups have emerged. The Arun Concerned Group, which focuses on the equity and social aspects of the scheme, took the unprecedented step of taking the Nepali government to court in December 1993 over its failure to make information on Arun available to the public. This writ was closely followed by a petition from the Arun Sangharsha Samiti group from the Arun valley concerning the government's failure to consult local people or to release information on the cost/benefit analysis which justified the change from the "ridge route" to the "valley route".

"I Told You So"

Meanwhile, the World Bank is touting its handling of the Arun project as a model for its new, sensitive approach, encouraging wide public participation and serious consideration of social and environmental impacts. "Public participation", however, seems to mean asking two NGOs to suggest ways of mitigating a *fait accompli*, while the depth of the Bank's consideration for environmental and social impacts can be gauged by the fact that no financing has been allocated for their mitigation.

Trying to clean up its image in its 50th year of operation, the World Bank does not need another failure of the kind Arun III promises to be; as one of the five poorest countries in the world in terms of Gross National Product, Nepal certainly does not need it either. As Anil Chitrakar of the Alliance says:

"There is no satisfaction for us in throwing the project back in the Government's and the donors' faces ten years on and saying 'I told you so'. We have to carry on the fight now in the hope that somehow they will see the light".

Janet Bell

Janet Bell is a freelance environment and development journalist.

Notes and References

- On 30 March 1993, the government of India requested the World Bank to withdraw the remaining funds for the Sardar Sarovar Project. The strong grassroots resistance and international publicity was influential in this decision. See *The Ecologist*, Vol. 22, Nos. 2, 5, 6; Vol. 23, No. 3.
- In April 1990, King Birendra was forced by popular demand to abandon his single party Panchayat system and introduce a multi-party system.
- In a run-of-river scheme, the turbines are turned by the strong flowing river so that a storage dam is not needed.
- Of the \$764 million, more than 60 per cent would be met by grants from bilateral donors such as Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Sweden and Finland. The two largest donors, Germany and Japan, would supply equipment and expertise. The rest of the costs would be met by a \$175 million loan from the World Bank, making Nepal's total debt to the Bank some \$850 million.
- Seventy per cent of Nepal's national budget is foreign aid, and 30 per cent is drawn from internal revenue and taxes.
- Environmental Management and Sustainable Development in the Arun Basin*, King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation, Kathmandu, October 1991.
- Memo from US EPA, Office of International Activities to the World Bank, 3 February 1994.
- The survey was conducted by sociologists working for the Joint Venture Group, the group within the Nepal Electricity Authority responsible for preparing the Arun III project studies and financing. The environmental assessment of the Arun project was carried out by the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation as part of their brief as consultant to the World Bank.
- About 10 per cent of Baby Arun's budget is accounted for by local costs, paid for by the Nepali government and covering land compensation, the salaries of Nepali workers, and local materials such as stone and timber.
- Letter to the Alliance for Energy from Ann Hamilton, Director, Country Dept. 1, (South Asia Region), World Bank, 22 February 1994.
- Nepal Electricity Authority Investment Plan 1994-2007 in Nepal: Arun III Hydroelectric Project, ADB/IDA Appraisal Mission, Sept-Oct 1993. Memorandum of Understanding.

-CLASTONBURY- 24-25-26 JUNE 1994

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LUKKEDE

Mustang

Av Geir Jostein Horten

HISTORIKK

Mustang har en eldgammel kulturhistorie. Man finner hundrevis av huler, ja hule byer rundt omkring i det fjellrike landskapet. Et tysk forskningssteam vi møtte hadde funnet rester av pottemakeri og levninger av mennesker i de hulene de hadde undersøkt. De mente at det kunne dreie seg om noen av de eldste bosetninger i Himalaya.

Mustang er kulturelt tibetansk, og var da også en gang i tiden en del av Tibet. Opp gjennom århundrene har

mange kongedømmer reist seg og falt i dette fjellområde. I 1789 ble Mustang en del av Nepal, men nepaleserne klarer aldri å trengte inn i landet.

Selv om Mustang ble en del av Nepal, anerkjente Nepal kongen av Mustang. Landet ble et separat prinsipi og beholdt mye av sitt selvstyre.

I 1960-årene, etter at Dalai Lama hadde flyktet fra kinesernes terror i Tibet, ble Mustang hovedbase for Khampa-krigerens gerilja-krig i Tibet. På det meste opererte minst 6000 Khampa-krigere fra >Mustang.

Geriljaen fortsatte sin virksomhet fra Mustang frem til begynnelsen av 70-tallet. P.g.a. normaliseringsprosessen mellom USA og Kina, la regjeringen i USA press på Nepal for å få Khampaene til å legge ned sine våpen.

Mustang åpnet sine grenser for utlendinger i 1992, men bare 200 får slippe inn pr. år.

EN REISE GJENNOM KONGEDØMMET MUSTANG

Mustang, for de fleste et ord assosiert med raske biler og grasiøse hester. Svært få har noen gang hørt om det lille kongedømmet, med bare 8000 innbyggere (men utallige geiter), i nordhellingen av Himalaya med utsikt over de tibetanske høyslettene.

Så rart er det da heller ikke siden landet har vært totalt stengt for utlendinger inntil våren 1992. Knappt 200

fremmede hadde vært innenfor landets grenser før oss. Men for de som har vært så heldige å få se landet vil det aldri være tvil om hva som først kommer en i tankene når man hører ordet Mustang.

Langsomt leier vi hestene langs den 20 cm smale stien. Over oss rager den storslagne røde fjellveggen. Under oss skråner den løse grushellingen bratt 30 meter ned mot et flere hundre meters loddrett stup.

Plutselig høres et redselsskrik, en av hestene har rast ut og skli hjelpeløst nedover mot stupet. Tashi nøler ikke et øyeblikk. Han springer etter nedover ura og kommer seg på nedsiden av hesten. Han setter helene i grusen så småsteinen spretter for å forsøke å stanse hesten. Ti meter fra stupet stopper villmannslæren.

Vår ferd startet i elveleiet på bunnen av den enorme Kali Gandaki-kloften to uker tidligere. Kralbhende som fjellgeiter tok vi oss opp de smale stiene, høyd rett ut i fjellsiden. I flere dager klatret vi oss oppover de voldsomme og vakre fjellene. Vi slet oss over det ene fjellpasset etter det andre. Flere på over 4000 meters høyde. Men hver eneste dag ble slitt glemt da vi om kvelden kom frem til en av de mange landsbyene som lå klemt inne mellom fjellene.

Det var det samme skuespillet hver gang. En flokk med unge kom strømmende mot oss, overbegeistret over å få besøk av slike merkelige vesener. Så snart ryktene hadde spredt seg, kom de voksne inn fra åkrene for å ta oss nærmere i øyesyn de også. Overalt ble vi møtt med den samme gjestfrihet og de samme varme smil. Dette er et stolt folk, som aldri har vært beseiret av europeiske hærer, aldri blitt kuet under fremmed åk. Deres smil er uforbeholdent, ekte, ikke bittert som mange andre steder i verden.

Endelig, etter mange lange dager sto vi på toppen av det siste

LAND

Guidbrandsdalen Lillehammer Tilskuer

Lørdag 25. september 1993

passet. Under oss i det røde kveldslyset bølget teppet av små fjell og rygger seg ned mot den tibetanske høysletten. På platået rett foran oss lå målet for vår ferd, hovedstaden i Mustang, Lo Manthang! Byen lå der badet i det siste kveldslyset, omgitt av sine høye murer, majestetisk, eventyrlig.

På hele turen hadde jeg undret meg over hva som fikk de første mennesker til å trask inn i disse fjellene for å bygge sitt hjem her inne. Der i kveldsolen over Lo Manthang kunne jeg kanskje forstå det, men hvilken vilje de måtte ha hatt, hvilken tro, det var vanskelig å forestille seg.

Lo Manthang var en fantastisk opplevelse. Hele byen, bestående av ca. 150 hus, var samlet innenfor murene. Det var slett ingen umulighet å gå seg bort i den labyrinten som Lo Manthang var. De lange «gatene» snodde seg på kryss og tvers, noen ganger så smale at man knapt fikk plass når man rett som det var traff en okse eller flokk geiter på kveldsvandring rundt omkring i byen. I tillegg hadde vårløsningen forvandlet gatene til et «grøftesystem» med et solid lag med gjørmel i bunnen.

Idet solen gikk ned trakk hele byens befolkning utenfor bymurene. Anført av en lokal lama og byens munk satte så følget seg i bevegelse. Hver kveld gjentok det samme ritual, som det har blitt gjort så lenge noen kan huske. Hele byens befolkning gikk en runde rundt byens murer og bane sine bønner. Vi slo følge rundt byen, mens de siste solstrålene langsomt forsvant over de to festningene på fjelltoppene bak oss. Mens vi ruslet rundt, ble vi fortalt at neste morgen var en stor dag, da skulle nemlig kongen komme tilbake fra sitt vinteropphold i lavlandet.

Morgenen etter var hele byens befolkning samlet ved hyporten. Forventningene var høye. Med et høyt lyden av hovers som kom nærmere. Plutselig kom en rytter i full galopp inn gjennom porten. Han holdt inn hesten som gikk opp på bakken så sola skvatt. Det ble stor jubel i menneskemassen, kongens herold var ankommet.

Deretter kom først dronningen, så kongen ridende inn gjennom hyporten, akkompagnert av trompetfanfaren. Jeg følte meg hensatt til en scene fra middelalderen.

Verdig red de gjennom folke- mengden, som stille høvet seg frem og rakte tunge til dem. Respekt kan uttrykkes på de forskjellige måter.

Det var en spent gjeng som neste dag tok seg frem gjennom Lo Manthangs gater. Kongen hadde hørt at det var fremmede gjester i byen, og vi ble innvilget audiens. Jeg følte meg ikke helt vel der jeg sto foran døren til slottet iført feltstøvler som så ut som de var støpt i gjørmel. Ikke ble følelsen bedre da vi ble ført rett foran snuten på en diger mastiff-hund som så svært sulen ut.

I slottets tredje etasje ble vi ført inn i kongens audiensrom. Rommet var vakker og rikt utstyrt med skap, tepper, fat på veggene og andre møbler rundt langs veggene. Man kunne se at kongen var en av de rike menn oppe i fjellene.

Kongen selv satt på en trone dekket med tepper, med sitt bønnekjede i hendene og iført vakre fargerike klær. Ved hans side satt dronningen, vakker, markert i ansikter, nesten indisk i trekkene. En etter en ble vi kalt frem til kongen og dronningen for å få våre hvite lykkeskjerf velsignet av dem. Deretter ble vi benket langs veggene rett ovenfor regentparet og servert smørte.

Audiensen varte i 20 minutter og tiden gikk til småprat. Språkbarrieren var dessverre et problem. Alt for snart var tiden inne for oppbrudd og regentparet ønsket oss lykke på reisen tilbake til Norge.

Vi hadde tenkt å si ut igjen fra fjellene. Trygve og Baba var

en rytter i full galopp inn gjennom porten. Han holdt inn hesten som gikk opp på bakken så sola skvatt. Det ble stor jubel i menneskemassen, kongens herold var ankommet.

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habile ryttere, Nora hadde også vært borte i hester før. Personlig begrenset min erfaring seg til en muldvarp jeg var passasjer på en gang i Afrika.

Forventningsfulle samlet folket seg i Lo Manthang seg for å se på de fremmedes rytterkunnskaper. Selv er de født på hesteryggen. Jeg var ikke så rent lite nervøs der jeg lempet meg på plass i salen, men jeg forsøkte å ta på meg den mest seviske minen jeg kunne mane frem.

Jeg la merke til at Tashi, vår venn som eide hestene, hadde en fisk i hånden. «Det er tingen» – tenkte jeg, og bukkerte hestene inn under et tørt tre. Jeg reiste meg i stighøylen og tok tak i en av de tørre grenene for å skaffe meg en fisk. KNEKK! Før jeg fikk sukk for meg lå jeg flat på bakken med den ene foten fast i stighøylen. Hestene fikk full panikk. Nora klamret seg til halsen på sin hest mens den gjorde alt den kunne for å bli kvitt henne. Kaoset og rundansen sto på i en evighet før vi med meget god hjelp av Tashi fikk hestene under kontroll.

Ikke så rent lite flau kom jeg meg på beina igjen.

Lokalbefolkningen fikk omtrent krampelatter, men latteren var fullstendig fri for skadefryd. Fortsatt galskrattende hjalp et par menn meg opp i salen igjen.

Det var på tide å ta avskjed med Lo Manthang. Akkompagnert av Tashis vakre plystring red vi avgårde opp mot fjellene. Langs murene sto folk og vinket oss vel avgårde.

Langsomt, men sikkert, fikk jeg tak på ridningen. Rottet fra et par små uhell selvsagt, som da stighøylen røk og jeg gikk på hodet ned i ei steinryg, eller da jeg i et anfall av overmott satte avgårde i galopp over noen utårkede elvefar, med det resultatet at jeg føk på hodet over nakken på hesten.

Alt i alt gikk det merkelig bra med oss alle. Inntill vi kom til den løse ura.

Forskrekket hjelper vi Tashi

og hesten opp igjen på stien. Tashi på sin side er like blid: «Pyl det var da en dagligdags affære».

Vi fortsatte avgårde på småstier mellom de svinnende fjellene. På fjellpasset høyt oppe, og langt foran oss kan jeg se en hestekaravane så seg over i den kraftige vinden.

Langsomt faller jeg inn i hestens rytme. Foran meg rir Tashi, alltid leende eller plystrende på sin melodi. Snart griper jeg meg selv i å sitte å nymne på melodien jeg også. Langsomt forsvinner alle begrep om tid.

Vi passerer det 4000 m høye passet som langsomt har nærmet seg de siste timene. Snykket og bitende kalt p.g.a. høyden og vinden ligger det der. På toppen er det en stor steinvarde dekket med bønnelapp, for å beskytte menneskene som passerer her. Langt, langt nede kan jeg se hestekaravane. Det hele er tidløst. Jeg følger meg hensatt til de dager da saltkaravane kom den denne veien fra Tibet. I tusen år har karavanene tatt seg frem over disse passene. I tusen år har herfærrere og handelsmenn kommet denne veien gjennom Himalaya.

Enda har vi lang vei foran oss gjennom fjellene, der vi sitter hestene og ser utover fra passet. Men ingen av oss beklager det. For her betyr ikke avstand eller tid noe.

Tiden den kommer i rikt monn uten at vi trenger å gjøre noe for det, og avstanden blir borte når vi tar tiden til hjelp. Dessuten har vi Tashis melodi til å holde oss varme på toppen av passene.

En hest, et stykke Yak kjøtt og en melodi, mer trenger man ikke for å være lykkelig i Mustang, det gjemte kongedømmet på baksiden av Himalaya, der tiden har stått stille i hundrevis av år.



Kongen og dronningen av Mustang.



Vi klatret som fjellgeiteropp fra elveleiet.

Unlike Any Other

It Isn't Easy Growing Up to Be a Lama

Tenzin Ozel Rinpoche is a Spanish boy who likes to play with his pet rabbits and horse around with his friends — just like any other nine-year-old. But there is something about young Ozel that sets him apart from every other child his age. He is the reincarnation of a Tibetan lama and teacher named Thubten Yeshe. That is what his parents and their colleagues at the Foundation for the Preservation of Mahayana Tradition in Kopan, Nepal believe. And young Ozel was recognized as Yeshe's reincarnation by the Dalai Lama himself. Yeshe was born in 1935 and fled Tibet along with the Dalai Lama and 100,000 others after the Chinese occupation. He founded a monastery in Nepal with the special mission of spreading Buddha's teaching among Europeans

and Americans. He died in 1984 and was succeeded by Lama Zopa Rinpoche. Among those who heeded Yeshe's teachings were Ozel's parents. At the time of conception, his mother reported mysterious dreams to Lama Zopa, who recognized the boy as the reincarnation of his venerable teacher. Thus was kept alive the tradition of a teacher becoming a student by being reincarnated. Ozel may be a lama, but he is still a child. "It's not easy," says his father Paco, who is living with him now in Kopan. When asked about his destiny, the young lama displays some discomfort, twisting a rubber band

nervously. Finally, he says, "Everybody always said I'm a reincarnated lama, so I am." Then with a smile he leaps up. "Come upstairs and see my toys." ■



▲ Another reincarnated child-monk, Karmapa

Thomas Land



Nepal Heritage Society

Nestled in the lap of the scenic Himalayas, Nepal is a land of vivid landscapes and colourful festivals – a kingdom of picturesque art and architecture. The Nepal Heritage Society (NHS) was founded to help conserve and enhance this natural and cultural paradise. From the time of its inception in 1982, the Society has, through its various activities, endeavoured to raise the consciousness of the people about the important issue of preserving Nepal's rich cultural and natural resources. To accomplish this goal, NHS is striving to become a strong pressure group, think-tank, and catalyst to bring about a tangible solution to the growing problems of degradation of Nepal's natural and cultural resources. Thus, the Society has set the wheels of action in motion by bringing people's concern, advice, complaints regarding their environment, and cultural heritage to the cognizance of the appropriate authorities and ensuring that corrective steps are taken to address the grievances.

As heritage conservation is not possible without community participation, the Nepal Heritage Society has initiated processes to educate the general mass about their heritage. Teachers have been especially singled out for this purpose. On the occasion of the World Heritage Day 1992, teachers of various high schools were invited to historical sites. A detailed description of the art and history of the monuments of

Patan and ways and means of preserving them were given to the teachers. Books were also distributed for additional information.

NHS has succeeded in providing a forum for the exchange of ideas between experts and scholars. Time and again, the Society, in collaboration with other organisations, has held innumerable radio programmes, conferences, and has even produced a telefilm. An innovative and cost-effective method adopted by the NHS for creating awareness about the importance of conservation is through photo-exhibitions. In one photo-exhibition, which around 3,500 spectators had an opportunity to view, an interesting photograph collection of past and present scenes of Kathmandu and Lalitpur were displayed.

It is commendable that within a decade of its establishment the Society has been able to mobilise resources and people in attempting to obtain and fulfil its aims. Yet more needs to be done. However, given the current measure of their success, there is no doubt that the Nepal Heritage Society will be successful in contributing to the cultural heritage conservation initiatives in Nepal. □

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Drainage problem in Hetauda

Hetauda Nagar Palika has the street is dug and is left without spent a big budget in the any warning written on board. construction of drainage systems. The dead animals just lie in the Yet, we cannot overlook streets for several days. The unhygienic condition prevailing employees have not bothered to here at present. The sewage gets look after the problem. We hope blocked during the rainy season to have the problem resolved and dirty water flows down the soon. streets. Hedges have grown on both the sides of the sewage, covering it completely. At times Hetauda.

Pawan Shrestha

Environment Protection Programme

Hetauda Industrial District Pollution Control Study

THE HETAUDA INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT (HID), which was established in 1962, is the largest industrial district in Nepal covering an area of 144 ha. It is located about 3 km south of the centre of Hetauda, along the Kathmandu-Birgunj Highway. HID has 30 industrial production and processing units and 15 general support service centres. Currently, only 20 units are in operation and about 50 per cent of the total land area is occupied. Approximately 3,500 people are employed within the HID.

The types of industrial pollution caused by the industries at HID include water, land (solid waste), air, and noise. The study focused on water pollution, since it was already established that these industries directly discharged untreated wastewater into an open common sewer system and the Kharre Khola located north of HID.

Based on an analysis of raw materials, production processes, and final products, it was concluded that the wastewater discharge of HID was predominantly organic and alkaline (high pH). The main water polluting industries include Nepal Brewery, Hetauda Milk Supply Scheme, Mahashakti Soap

and Chemicals, Nepal Synthetics, Nepal Vegetable Ghee, Asian Paints - Nepal, Nepal Italian Leather, and Hetauda Textiles. The land, air, and noise pollution problems were not as significant as that of water pollution. HID does not seem to have a coordinated plan for managing solid waste. The sewers are clogged with solid waste in certain locations and several industries were littered with solid waste. Air pollutants include smoke, dust, and odour. Smoke emitted by boilers is the main source of air pollution, while dust is emitted by certain industrial processes, and odours are caused by chemicals and decaying solid waste. However, noise levels outside the industries did not exceed the norm.

In addition, there were observed to be a number of occupational health and safety hazards at a number of industries, including noise, dust, dangerous machines, and exposure to hazardous chemicals.

This study indicates that a centralised biological wastewater treatment system would be the most efficient and cost effective method for collective treatment. A few industries producing highly caustic or toxic effluents would be required to pre-treat their effluents, while pollution reduction and waste recycling techniques are being proposed to reduce the pollutant levels at a number of industries. In addition, implementation of a solid waste management system and construction of a flood bypass and surface water drainage system must be undertaken to prevent excess water from entering the treatment system.

This study is the first step in the preparation of a pollution control management plan for HID as a whole and for individual industries within

the district. Additional studies are required to further characterise and assess pollution problems, including detailed environmental audits to further understand the waste streams and prepare strategies for possible waste recycling, reuse, and waste minimisation opportunities.

A polluting industry in the Hetauda Industrial District



Local women:

the force behind trekking tourism in Nepal

Tourism Concern has often used the Annapurna Area Conservation Project as an example of good community based tourism development. In this article DIBYA GURUNG, Women's Development Officer at ACAP, describes how women's involvement in tourism in the area is fundamental to its success.

The Annapurna Himal area in Nepal is renowned for two things. One, the superstars of the second world war, the Gurkha soldiers, who rank at the top of the list of the world's all-time fierce fighting men. The other, trekking tourism, which is known as the third religion of Nepal after Hinduism and Buddhism.

The Annapurna area has a great deal to offer tourists seeking the unusual. Here tourists can actually walk through the world's deepest valley, Kali Gandaki, and the world's largest rhododendron forests. It is one of the easily accessible areas from which to view the picturesque snow-clad mountain ranges of Dhaulagiri, Annapurna and Machapuchhare, and attracts around forty thousand tourists every year.

Along with the monetary benefits, trekking tourism has negative impacts too. The once abundant forests were cut down to cook food, boil water for bathing and provide heating for the much appreciated trekkers. Traditional houses were modified and local handicrafts were modernised to meet the tourists' demands. The local people – once rigid and conservative – were willing to change for the tourists' benefit.

Starting a lodge business in the early days in this area was as easy as tying a shoelace. It meant merely letting out your

rooms and beds for the trekkers to sleep and cooking some extra food. Family members, especially women, formed the cooking, cleaning and management staff for the lodges. Slowly with more and more trekkers visiting, numbers of family-run lodges mushroomed.

Shalli Gurung from the Milan Lodge of Ghandruk village relates her experience of earlier days when there were only two or three lodges in her village: "In those days the Goras (white people) often arrived late in the afternoon to my house after walking all day. They asked for food and a place to sleep. Of course hot showers were more important than anything else – a compulsory demand. I had a huge iron drum in which I used to heat water outside my kitchen as it needed lot of fire wood. They were satisfied with just dal-batt (rice and lentil). They never complained and were happy with whatever we offered them. But today with more than seventeen lodges in my village, the Goras have become very smart. They check the rooms, beds and the hot shower facilities. Our menus have more than 15 items of Western foods. Some even want to make sure that fire wood is not used for cooking and hot showers. Times have changed."

Here in the Annapurna area women form the majority of the total population

and are fully involved in the management of domestic work as well as playing an active role in the use and conservation of natural resources. This traditional and compulsory role has helped women to move into the world's most popular industry, tourism.

The majority of the men leave the village to join the British or Indian army. Others migrate to the cities in search of wage labour to supplement their household income. The only permanent residents of the area are women, children and retired ex-army men. The retired men are the primary decision makers with respect to village development and conservation issues. Lodge management is also one of the components of these issues. They hold monthly meetings, yet have very little involvement in the actual implementation and running of the lodges. The multiple role of women makes them the main force behind trekking tourism in the Annapurna region.

The popularity of trekking is growing very quickly and so trekking has considerable negative impacts in an ecologically fragile area like the Annapurna. The area has been subjected to close scrutiny especially by conservation groups. Thus in 1986, the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) – under the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation, a leading environmental organisation – was established in Ghandruk village in Annapurna. The Project opted for a holistic approach working with local people. As Annapurna is one of the most popular trekking destinations in the country, tourism management together with natural resource management was given the top priority. A sound and sustainable programme has been developed for safeguarding the unique natural features and rich culture, while at the same time maximising the benefits of tourism in the area.

Like in many conservation projects with general impacts, women were initially not a direct focus of ACAP's original design. As usual, women's major roles in the conservation and management of both the natural resources and the household work was overlooked. As activities got underway, however, the Project staff quickly realised that the direct involvement of women was crucial to the success of the

Project. Thus in 1990, after three and a half years, ACAP introduced a separate Women's Development (WD) section as one of their main programmes. Since then, the WD section has been actively involved in integrating the local women in all development and conservation activities.

Traditionally, there were women's groups in this area, known as *Ama Toli* meaning 'Mother's Group'. Every village had one and it raised funds for the village's welfare by dancing for guests on special occasions in the village and for special requests by trekkers. They had already developed a system for cleaning the village, upgrading trails, building temples and buying utensils with funds raised. In some cases the funds were used to provide loans to the villagers in need. The women pride themselves on their clean villages with well maintained trails. Thus it was easy for the ACAP's WD section to work with the already existing women's groups. The *Ama Toli* too accepted WD's assistance, hoping to become more organised and efficient in their programme implementation.

Gurung's – the majority population of the southern Annapurna area – are not great entrepreneurs. Trekking tourism was a totally foreign occupation for the traditional sheep herders, who later adopted subsistence farming for their living. They did not have the culture of selling their farm products. Cereals were bartered, but the surplus vegetables were distributed for free



to their neighbours. Serving tea for the travellers was considered a status symbol for the local villagers. But the benefits of tourism made them adapt to the new occupation. Buddhisuba Gurung of Lwang village, which falls outside the trekking route, was very impressed by her visit to Ghandruk village in 1992. In an address to the women in Lwang she said: "Like the women from Ghandruk we too should learn to make some money. They do not feel shy to sell their surplus vegetables. If we do the same here, it will be the talk of the village."

One year after the inception of the WD section, we started with supporting the indigenous tourism related programs with the aim of creating services for the trekkers as well as some income for the local women. In January 1991, Hita Gurung inaugurated her carpet shop with a show room in the Ghandruk village, the first of its kind. She was provided with a loan from the Project. She started weaving traditional rugs of all sizes both for the villagers and the trekkers. She also asked the village women to bring their products to her showroom where she sold them. Today she has paid back the loan and made weaving her full-time occupation. Ama Carpet Shop gave rise to yet another carpet centre in the village, where five women have rented a room jointly where they weave as well as sell traditional rugs.

"Like the women from Ghandruk we too should learn to make some money. They do not feel shy to sell their surplus vegetables. If we do the same here, it will be the talk of the village."

Along with the monetary benefits, trekking tourism has created some new needs among the women here. Adult literacy classes are considered very essential, a sudden interest in acquiring skills in food processing, poultry farming and lodge management has become the latest demand. Recently they have been showing great interest in learning English as they feel that they can independently handle the business and serve the tourists better if they speak their language.

Over the last few years the people of the Annapurna area have sought to understand the impacts of trekking tourism in the area and the local committees have been campaigning towards managing sound and sustainable tourism. Women's groups have developed a remarkable ability to work together and sharing their skills and resources, to take action – the co-operative carpet shop and regular clean-up campaigns are perfect examples.

Women in this area have come a long way. Five years ago, the use of alternative forms of energy for cooking was almost nonexistent. But today one can see back boilers, low wattage cookers, liquid paraffin gas and kerosine stoves in almost all lodges. The women have become aware about the present deforestation situation and have been adopting precautions. Women have embraced a variety of enterprises which directly or indirectly support tourism. At the household level, vegetable farming, fruit tree growing, poultry and rabbit raising have become booming enterprises and training on Developing Women's Entrepreneurship in Tourism, jointly given by the International Labour Organisation and ACAP, have helped more women to be independently involved in tourism businesses. ■

With Courage and Condoms

AIDS: Nepal attempts to forestall an epidemic

STANDING AT KATMANDU AIRPORT IN her finest sari, Gita Danuwar waits eagerly for the arrival of the handsome man she hopes to marry. Gita, alas, is hallucinating: there is no such man. But the fantasy provides a momentary escape from the horror of her real life. At 18, she was sold by her cousin to a broker in the booming prostitution business on the Indian border. Like thousands of other Nepalese girls and women, she was beaten, tortured and raped by her "trainer," then forced to serve up to 30 clients a day, often without pay. After nine years, Gita came home carrying a card that only her literate friends could decipher. It read: "HIV positive." When villagers discovered what that meant, even her mother refused to touch her.

The AIDS virus has made its way high into the Himalayas. And it is threatening to become an epidemic, unless an innovative new AIDS-prevention program can halt its spread. It is probably too late to save Gita. At 31, she is now one of the 24 diagnosed AIDS cases in Nepal, and the cancerous patches of skin on her right cheek—along with her frequent hallucinations—signal the early advance of the disease. But at the Women's Rehabilitation Center (WOREC) in Katmandu, where she lives, there are



other women and girls whose futures are considerably brighter. Diverted from the brothels by social workers, they knit sweaters for export between literacy and sex-education classes. WOREC is one of 17 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) spearheading a \$1.5 million campaign sponsored by the American Foundation for AIDS Research (AmFAR). The program's aim is lofty and unprecedented: to stop an AIDS epidemic before it begins.

Disastrous outbreak: Why target Nepal? The Himalayan kingdom, with 21 million inhabitants, may just be small enough to make it possible to contain and control the disease. Nepal also faces a serious threat, largely due to the epidemic raging in neighboring India, where more than 1 million people are infected with HIV. Though Nepal has only an estimated 5,000 HIV-positive cases today, medical experts figure that there could be more than 100,000 cases within five years. An outbreak would be disastrous in Nepal, where, in rural areas, there is one doctor per 52,000 residents. "It's a national threat," says Dr. Daniel Tar-

antola, a Harvard University expert on the spread of AIDS. "A whole program of societal reconstruction is needed."

For now, AmFAR simply hopes to stitch together a social

safety net. The first threat is the flesh trade: half of the country's HIV infections are carried by prostitutes, the other half largely by clients. Since the anti-AIDS campaign began in October, workers for the 17 local NGOs have ventured into some of Nepal's most unsavory places armed with little more than condoms, courage and a conviction that education can slow the advance of AIDS. It's an enormous task. There are an estimated 5,000 prostitutes in Katmandu, and 25,000 roadside *bhatti* houses throughout Nepal—drinking establishments where the matron often supplements her meager income with prostitution. In addition, some 200,000 Nepalese prostitutes work in the brothels of India's largest cities, and 300,000 migrant workers travel back and forth to India. The specter of "johns" spreading AIDS has already hit home: two wives of upper-class businessmen recently tested HIV-positive.

The underlying problem, however, is not sexual promiscuity so much as poverty. Nepal's per capita income, \$180 a year, is one of the world's lowest. Many families sell their daughters to brokers, and village girls fortunate enough to find jobs, such as the child workers commonly employed in carpet factories, are targets for flesh-trade recruiters. To divert youngsters from prostitution, many NGOs are broadening their campaigns to include literacy training and jobs programs. In a country where sex is a conversational taboo, it's often easier to talk about such safe issues before broaching the subject of AIDS. Says WOREC director Dr. Renu Rajbhandari: "If you start by talking about AIDS, nobody in the villages will listen to you." But they may listen to Sanu. The 16-year-old girl jumped from a brothel window and was held for seven months in an Indian jail before arriving at WOREC last month. Infected with HIV, she is now taking literacy classes and will be trained as a peer counselor. Telling her story may be the only way to redeem her life—and save the lives of others.

BROOK LARMER with
PATRICIA ROBERTS in Katmandu



At risk: Young women in Nepalgunj and (below) the Rehabilitation Center in Katmandu

PHOTOS BY CHRIS BROWN—SABA

Study on Wetlands of Koshi Tappu

THE KOSHI TAPPU Wildlife Reserve is a Ramsar site situated in the terai region of the Sunsari and Saptari districts in eastern Nepal. The riverine forest of the Koshi Tappu area has been degraded by siltation. Habitat destruction by overpopulation of domestic cattle poses a serious threat to the wildlife reserve, especially to the habitat of wetland birds.

In view of the urgency to preserve and protect the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve, the National Heritage Conservation Programme of the NPC/IUCN NCS Implementation Project, in collaboration with the Asian Wetlands Bureau, initiated a study on the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve (KTWR) in January 1993.

The objectives of the study are to ascertain the extent of people's dependence on wetlands; to assess the possibility for people's participation in its conservation and use of natural resources; to conduct studies on bird and mammal diversity; to ascertain the number of livestock, their physical status, and the threats caused by them to the wildlife; to evaluate the extent of the threat to the wetlands and wildlife caused by human and cattle grazing encroachment; and to determine the approximate population of wild-water buffaloes.

The study proposes to bring out a report on the functional values of the wetlands and recommend a management plan for the Koshi Tappu Wildlife Reserve.

Flere soldater til Tibet

LONDON: Kina har sendt 30.000 flere soldater til Tibet de siste tre ukene, ifølge den tibetanske eksilregjeringen i India, opplyser det tibetanske informasjonsnettverket i London. Troppebevegelsene, de største siden unntakslovene i Tibet ble opphevet i 1990, skal særlig være konsentrert til grenseområdene mellom Tibet og India. Fra før skal det stå 50.000 kinesiske soldater i Tibet. (NTB- AFP)

SMA-
PLUKK

Chinese hydro-project threatens Tibet environment

Construction of a massive hydro-electric project on one of Tibet's largest freshwater lakes is proceeding at speed despite fears that it could lead to ecological disaster.

The Chinese authorities are building a 90 megawatt plant on the Yarlung River, 2,600 foot below the Yamdrok Tso lake, with water falling through four tunnels drilled through the Gambala mountains to power the turbines. The water will be recycled back into the lake through the reversible turbines in a system known as 'pump-storage'.

Construction of the dam began in 1985, but was suspended in 1986, apparently after protests about its ecological impact, which were supported by Tibetan spiritual leaders. Work resumed in 1989 after the death of one of its leading critics, the Panchen Lama.

The environmental effects of the project are uncertain, but likely to be serious. At the least, the delicate ecosystem of the river and lake will be devastated; at worst, the entire watershed will be drained within 50 years. Local wildlife and agriculture are likely to be badly affected, environmentalists claim.

The Washington-based International Campaign for Tibet has joined Greenpeace in calling for the project to be halted.

Independent 20 July

The Environment Digest No. 72/73



Eco-tourism "scares rhinos"

Rhinos in Nepal's Chitwan National Park are in danger of being scared off their foraging grounds by parties of tourists mounted on elephants. The elephant drivers are often encouraged by tourists or tour operators to move in very close to browsing rhinos, on occasion surrounding them.

Researchers from the University of California who have studied the area warn that the shyer rhinos are retreating into denser vegetation, away from their natural foraging grounds with the high protein grass on which they depend. The researchers conclude that this may in time result in a depleted population of effectively "domesticated" rhinos, and warn that losing the genetic input of the wilder rhinos would have a dangerous impact on the gene pool. "Any loss of genetic material in an endangered species with such a limited range and such a small population is a significant loss".



Refuse Collected from Everest Region

2,500 kg of refuse were collected by a 24-member Nepal-Spain trekking-cum-cleaning team in the Everest region in the fall. Since Namche gained popularity as a tourist site the resulting accumulation of waste has become a major problem as over 11,000 tourists visit the Khumbila region every year. Working for at least seven hours every day, in two weeks the team managed to collect 130

Phewa Furore

The government has stopped the construction of the proposed NRs 1.2 million Baidam-Pame road until an environmental impact assessment is conducted along the banks of the Phewa Lake. The environmental condition of the Phewa Lake has been deteriorating over the past few years due to tourism and rapid urbanisation compounded by human negligence. The Ministry of Tourism, the National Planning Commission, environmentalists, and institutions warn that the road would adversely affect the Lake.

Source: *The Rising Nepal*

sackfuls of garbage. Around 50 sacks weighing 630 kg of non-biodegradable waste was airlifted to Kathmandu and handed over to the Solid Waste and Resource Mobilisation Project and the rest

Cultural Calamity

The Tyagah Chapa, a 14th Century building of great cultural and historic importance in Kathmandu Valley was demolished. The members of the *guthi* of Tyagah Chapa responsible for pulling it down reported doing so because 'the roof leaked'. However, they later admitted that they needed money for the *guthi*, and had demolished the monument to

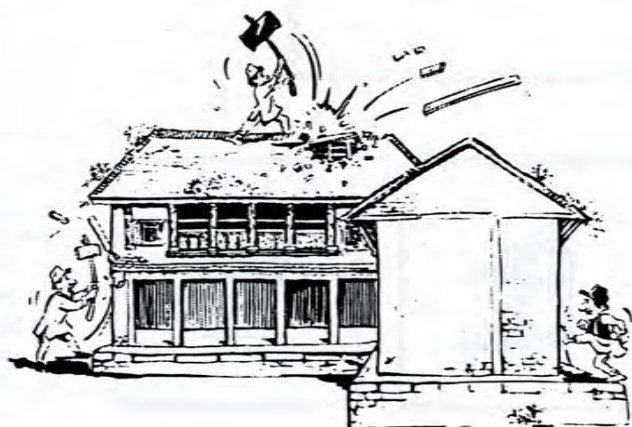
of the biodegradable waste was left at Lobuche in the Namche Village Development Committee. The team consisted of seventy Nepali porters, ten Sherpas, and four Spanish trekkers. This effort was sponsored by the Royal Nepali Consul for Barcelona, Spain, Motorola, Banco Central Hispano 20, Thai International Airlines, Indoriente Fumarel, Esic and Medica, and Ray-ban.

According to the Ministry of Tourism, at present there are over 50 metric tonnes of non-biodegradable waste lying in the Mount Everest region.

Source: *The Independent*

build shops for rent. Sadly enough, this is not an isolated incident; numerous historic buildings have been destroyed to be replaced by concrete eyesores mainly due to lack of anti-demolition legislation for private buildings and implementation and also due to a lack of cultural awareness on the part of most Nepalese.

Source: *The Rising Nepal*



Anne Buggeland (University of Bergen) Panel: General Anthropology "Intercultural Relations in a Terai Village seen from a Santhal (Satar) viewpoint and how this affects Cultural Reproduction and Economic Adaptation"

In the most eastern part of the Terai lives a tribal group called Satar or Santhal. They have migrated to this area from the Indo-Gangetic plains during the last 150 years. With the eradication of malaria and the recent resettlement programs, people belonging to various ethnic groups from the hills have over the last 25 years also migrated to this area for permanent settlement. I did seven months fieldwork in 1991/92 among the Santhals where I focussed on how they managed the coming of the hill-people and how this affected their social and cultural reproduction. This encounter led to economic and social deprivation; because of lack of education, citizenship and ability to use the political/administrative system most of the Santhals have sold/lost their own/contract land and are today working on other's land as daily labourers. Many have migrated to India, and most are known to be a tribe who have maintained a separate identity and distinct cultural features, and I was curious to see if this was the situation also in the marginal situation in Nepal. How do the Santhals work with the different cultural alternatives they confront, especially "the great tradition", Hinduism, represented by the caste people living around them.

Tordis Korvald (University of Bergen) Panel: General Anthropology "Dancing Gods of Bhaktapur"

The basis for this paper is information acquired among parts of the Newar population in Bhaktapur in the Kathmandu Valley. The focus is the *Navadurga Pyakhan* which is the annually recurring cycle of a religious dance drama. Members of different castes are involved in a formal way, fulfilling their prescribed duties for the arrangement of the dances. To mention the two most central; the male dancers are recruited from the gardener caste (*Nep: Bannala*), and the maker of their masks, is one household from the painter caste (*Nep: Chitrakar*). In addition I want to take into consideration non-professionals that are participating, that is the Newar audience in Bhaktapur and the other places visited by the *Navadurga*. The audience seem to derive different experiences from watching the dance drama, both enjoyment of its entertaining aspects as well as religious involvement. Here it is the relationship between the audience and the gods and between the audience and the dancers that I will concentrate on. In order to highlight some of these relations I shall try to analyze some exciting stories that are told about *Navadurga's* power. The stories themselves are basically about what happens when people do not behave in the proper way towards these gods during the performance of the *Navadurga* dance. The stories are considered true and are often related to actual historic events. They start with somebody showing disrespect for these gods, and continue to tell about the terrible consequences this has for the misbehaving audience. The story typically ends with disasters like fire, the vomiting of blood, and/or sudden death. These stories are told by both lay people, religious specialists as well as by the dancers themselves.

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Nepal Bhasa Academy

Background

On January 18, 1992, Nepal Bhasa Parishad organized a symposium of distinguished scholars, intellectuals and writers of Nepal Bhasa (Newar) to discuss a long felt need for an authoritative academic institution which will systematically work towards the preservation and promotion of Nepal Bhasa language, literature and the rich Newar cultural heritage. The participants in symposium unanimously endorsed the idea of an Academy, and an Ad Hoc Committee was formed to draft a constitution and devise a feasible framework of operation.

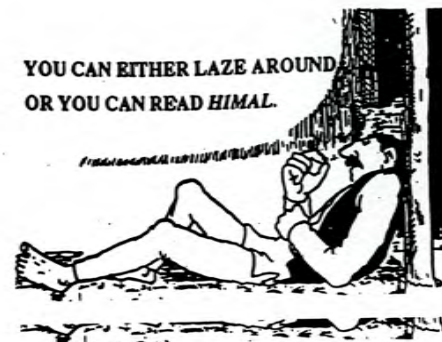
On September 5, 1992, the constitution was formally approved and adopted in a meeting of Ad Hoc Committee, and a Academic Council with a maximum of 75 members was formed.

The Nepal Bhasa Academy has thus been established as a self-governing corporate body.

Functions and Objectives:

- As mandated by its constitution, the Nepal Bhasa Academy performs the following principal functions:
 - o Preserves and promotes study and research in the field of Nepal Bhasa language, literature and culture.
 - o Establishes links with various communities and nationalities speaking different languages in the national and international arenas, and promotes cultural exchange and dissemination of information.
 - o Translates into different languages works of Nepal Bhasa language and literature and publishes them in order to popularize its literature in the international arena, and also translates world literature into Newar language in order to enrich
 - o Fosters a spirit of mutual cooperation among different individuals and groups working in the fields of Nepal Bhasa language, literature and culture.
 - o Offers due recognition and honour to both national and international scholars, and creative writers who have made significant contributions in various fields of Nepal Bhasa

- o Nurtures and encourages talents hidden in the Newar society.
- o Provides scholarships and grants for creative and research based projects on Nepal Bhasa literature, language and Newar culture.
- o Encourages publication of research works of outstanding merit.



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