

Apost

"Hamro Patrika"

Norge-Nepal foreningen

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NORGE-NEPAL
FORENINGEN!



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MEDELSKONTINGENTEN.

Program for møtet torsdag 14. september 1995:

- * Lysbildeforedrag om tharuene i Vest-Nepal. Foredragsholderne, Tove Cecilie Kittelsen og Sigrun Eide Ødegård, er hovedfagsstudenter i sosialantropologi og har drevet feltarbeid blant tharuene.
- * Sigrun Eide Ødegård forteller om den politiske situasjonen i Nepal.
- * Kaffe/te, kaker og utlodning.

Neste gang vi samles er på årsmøtet torsdag 9. november. Journalist, forfatter og Everest-klatrer, Jon Gangdal, holder da foredrag om sherpaer i Nepal.



Nr. 4, august 1995

**Velkommen til møte
i Norge-Nepal foreningen
14. september 1995, kl. 19.00**

**i Lektorenes hus,
Wergelandsveien 15, Oslo.**

**Lysbildeforedrag:
"Glimt fra feltarbeid blant
tharuene i Vest-Nepal".**

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Det er for tiden ingen fast redaktør av Hamro Patrika.
Redaktør for dette nummeret: **Kirsten I. Greiner.**

Referat fra medlemsmøtet 10. mai 1995.

Christine Engen, freelance reiseleder, fortalte om problemer, gleder og praktiske oppgaver i forbindelse med å lede gruppeturer til Nepal. Etter avtale med reisebyråer påtar Christine seg å guide turistgrupper. Flybiletter, annen transport, hotellbestillinger, visa osv. skal ordnes før turistene reiser avgårde mot hovedattraksjonen: eksotisk krydret ferie med klar himmel og høye dramatiske fjell. Ikke sjelden er imidlertid fjellene gjemt bak skyer og dis og de eksotiske opplevelsene er annerledes enn forventet. Reisebyråene bør gi bedre informasjon om kultur og sosiale forhold og om hva de ulike årstidene byr på.

Det kan virke som om turismen i Nepal er i ferd med å stagnere m.h.t. antall besøkende. Som mulige årsaker nevner Christine luftforurensningen i Kathmandu, strømsparingene flere timer hver uke og at en kommunistisk regjering kan virke skremmende.

De fleste turistene velger et opphold der både Kathmandu og trekking fra Pokhara inngår. Enkelte regner seg som veltrente inntil de begynner å gå i nepalsk terreng. Problemer med flyavganger er ikke uvanlig, men reiselederens største utfordring er å takle kulturkollisjoner som oppstår underveis; å gjøre oppholdet bekvemt for gruppen og samtidig opptre som formidler av Nepals kultur. Noen klager på standarden, andre takler fattigdommen dårlig og enkelte går lett sommerkledd med kameraet pekende mot det nepalesere definerer som privatlivets fred. Reiselederens oppgave blir å informere om Nepals folk, tradisjoner, oppførsel, religioner, økologi, politiske forhold osv., samt å forklare hvorfor det er slik. Christine informeres ofte av en lokal guide samtidig som hun guider turistgruppen. Hun trekker også veksler på personer som driver trekking med økologisk tilsnitt, der man legger vekt på å verdsette, lære om og beskytte naturen og miljøet man reiser i.

Christine deler turistene i tre hovedgrupper: de som ser landet gjennom et kamera, de som er ignorante i forhold til kunnskap og de som er interesserte i å lære om landet. Som reiseleder må man være klar over turistenes ulike holdninger. Christines hovedbudskap er uansett å formidle at få ting i Nepal er "dårlige" og "fåle": de er isteden "annerledes" enn man forventer og forestiller seg. Og annerledes kan bli til "spennende", "interessante" og "fine" ved nærmere bekjentskap.

NY ADRESSE NORGE-NEPAL FORENINGEN:

Kirkevn. 77
1364 Hvalstad

Nepals hjemmeside.

Det er nå opprettet egen hjemmeside for Nepal på Internet.
Adressen er:

<http://www.cen.uiuc.edu/~rshresth/Nepal.html>

(For kun tekstversjonen benyttes samme adresse, men med liten n i Nepal)

Hjemmesiden er ved Rajendra Shrestha og omfatter nyheter, generell informasjon, reisetips osv.

Shrestha's nye e-mail adresse er: rshresth@uiuc.edu

SISTE NYTT FRA NEPAL.

(Nyhetene er basert på informasjon hentet fra "soc.culture.nepal" på Internet. Materialet er fritt oversatt og bearbeidet av Kirsten I. Greiner.)

Nytt valg i Nepal.

Kathmandu juni/juli. Fredag 9. juni kunngjorde statsminister Man Mohan Adhikari (fra de regjerende Unified Marxist-Leninists, UML) beslutningen om å anbefale Kong Birendra å oppløse parlamentet og fastsette nyvalg i november. Adhikari hevdet at opposisjonen hindret regjeringen i å utføre sine oppgaver. Dato for valget, det tredje på under fem år, er satt til 23. november.

UML var en mindretallsregjering som søkte støtte fra opposisjonen for å bevare regjeringsmakten. Opposisjonen har hevdet at regjeringens kommunistiske politikk fører landet til økonomisk ruin. Etter seks måneders UML-styre, truet opposisjonen med å trekke tilbake sin støtte og sette fram mistillitsforslag. Ryktene sier nå at Adhikari ba om nyvalg for å unngå et sannsynlig tap ved mistillitsvotum.

Studenter protesterer mot nyvalg.

Kathmandu 19 juni (Reuter). Butikker og skoler i Kathmandudalen var stengt og private kjøretøyer holdt seg borte fra gatene 19. juni. Årsaken var studentgrupper som protesterte mot den kommunistiske regjeringens beslutning om å holde valg i Nepal i november.

Slagord-ropende demonstranter marsjerte i Kathmandus gater, noe som tvang butikkene til å stenge. Politiet bemannet strategiske samlingspunkter i dalen for å beskytte busser som transporterte folk til arbeid. I følge politiet hadde steinkastende demonstranter skadet seks kjøretøyer. Studentledere hevdet at 500 demonstranter ble arrestert, men politiet satte tallet til nærmere 40.

Det planlagte valget er ikke i landets interesse, sa studentledere til Reuter. "Studentene har ansvar for å vise solidaritet med folket ved å protestere mot regjeringens handling." Studentunionen, som er studentfløyen av opposisjonspartiet Nepali Congress, vil presse regjeringen til å oppgradere Nepals universitetssystem.

Streik mot oppløsning av parlamentet.

Kathmandu 1. august (Reuter).

1. august ble Nepal lammet av en landsomfattende streik i protest mot det planlagte valget i november. Transporten opphørte, butikker stengte og det var fare for sammenstøt mellom studentdemonstrantene og sikkerhetsstyrkene. Streike-

oppfordringen kom fra Nepal Student Union, en fløy i opposisjonspartiet. Omtrent 350 demonstranter ble pågrepet i Kathmandu.

Kathmandu 1. august (AFP).

Kathmandu, Lalitpur og Bhaktapur var preget av en såkalt pro-demokrati demonstrasjonen 1. august. Demonstrantene steinet kjøretøyer under den landsomfattende streiken i protest mot oppløsningen av parlamentet 13. juni. Tjenestemenn bekrefter 90 arrestasjoner og skade på tolv kjøretøyer.

Demonstrantene tilhører Nepal Vidharthi Sangh (Nepal Student's Union). Studentunionen innledet streiken som en fordømmelse av at statsminister Man Mohan Adhikari rådet Kong Birendra til å oppløse parlamentet. Adhikari hevdet at opposisjonspartiene hindret regjeringen i å utføre sine normale funksjoner. Nyvalg er satt til 23. november. Studentene beskriver handlingen som udemokratisk.

Etter oppfordring fra studentene var de fleste butikker i Kathmandu stengt og kun enkelte ambulanser og tjenestebiler med turister kunne observeres i gatene. Demonstranter steinet fem nattbusser i Morang, Rupandeki og Kapilbastu. Minst to passasjerer og en buss-sjåfør ble påført hodeskader i Kapilbastu i Vest-Nepal. Åtte personer ble såret da demonstrantene og pro-kommunist studenter støtte sammen under rivaliserende demonstrasjoner i Dolakha, øst for Kathmandu.

Opposisjonen med Nepali Congress, høyrepartiet Rastriya Prajatantra Party og disses studentvinger støttet streiken.

Studenter holder masse møte.

Kathmandu 19. august (Xinhua General News Service). Nepalske studenter var samlet til møte 19. august for å protestere mot dårlig politisk disiplin og manglende solidaritet. Møtet var organisert av All Nepali National Free Student's Union (ANNFSU). Studentene paraderte i byen før de samlet seg til masse møte i friluftsteateret i sentrum.

Oppløsning av parlamentet til høyesterett.

Kathmandu 20. juli-4. august. Nepals høyesterett vurderer nå om statsminister Adhikari handlet grunnlovsstridig da han anbefalte Kong Birendra å oppløse parlamentet og utkalle til nyvalg.

Kommunistene kritiseres sterkt for sin handling. I alt er det tatt ut sju stevninger i saken. Opposisjonspartiene, som står bak en stevning, protesterer mot oppløsningen av parlamentet og krever regjeringen gjeninnsett. Hovedinnvendingen er at opposisjonspartiene var rede til å forme en koalisjonsregjering da Adhikari ba kongen om oppløsning og nyvalg.

I slutten av juli måned har Nepals høyesterett undersøkt saken og holdt høringer for å avgjøre om handlingen er konstitusjonelt akseptabel. Da retten ba Adhikari om å rettfærdiggjøre sin handling, forsøkte Adhikari å "trekke

tilbake" sin tidligere uttalelse der han sa han hadde gitt kongen råd. Pressen, som hevder å ha uttalelsen på bånd, raser mot Adhikari.

Nepals høyesterett avsluttet høringene 1. august og sa de vil offentliggjøre avgjørelsen 28. august. Uavhengig av dommen synes det klart at nytt valg holdes i Nepal.

Minister avskjediget.

Kathmandu 15. juli (Reuter). Statsminister Adhikari har avskjediget Chandra Prakash Mainali fra posten som minister for "local development and supplies". En talsmann for UML uttalte at Mainali, som representerer en minoritetsfraksjon, stadig kritiserte beslutninger gjort av Adhikaris kabinett.

Flere partier i Nepal.

15. juli (Xinhua). Totalt 97 politiske partier er registrert hos Election Commission (EC) innen fristens utløp 13. juli. Før fjorårets valg søkte 69 partier om registrering, hvilket vil si at 28 nye partier er opprettet det siste året. I følge grunnloven fra 1990 består Nepal av 205 valgkretser.

Flere stemmeberettigede i kommende valg.

Kathmandu 11. juli. I Nepals kommende valg vil antall stemmeberettigede ha økt med 10% fra fjorårets valg. Mer enn 12,1 millioner kunne stemme sist gang, en økning på nesten 13% fra valget i 1991. I år vil de som ble atten år innen midten av april 1995 være stemmeberettigede, mens fjorårets valg inkluderte bare de som var atten år innen midten av april 1993. Fjorårets valg gjorde kommunistpartiet, Unified Marxist-Leninists (UML), til landets største parti i parlamentet og det ble formet en mindretallsregjering.

Verdensbanken sier nei til Arun 3.

Verdensbanken har besluttet å kansellere et lån på 175 mill. US dollar til konstruksjon av Arun 3. Tilsynelatende har press fra miljøgrupper spilt inn i Verdensbankens vurdering av det 750-800 mill. US dollar dyre vannkraftprosjektet. Miljøgrupper og andre NGOer har i flere år kritisert Verdensbanken for engasjement i prosjekter som kan skade miljøet i u-land. Sannsynligheten er nå stor for at også industriland som skulle bidra til finansieringen av prosjektet, trekker seg ut. Nepals statsminister uttrykte sjokk over at Verdensbanken trakk seg fra Arun 3. Adhikari sa at regjeringen står ved prosjektet og har øremerket over 20 mill. US dollar i budsjettet for skatteåret 1995-96.

Til tross for Nepals strømbehov som i perioder er 244 MW, produseres det bare ca. 200 MW elektrisitet i dag. Landets

vannkraftpotensiale er over 83.000 MW, men kun 10% av befolkningen har tilgang til elektrisitet. Arun-dammen var ment å skape et reservoar for to mill. tonn vann i de øvre delene av Arun-elven i Øst-Nepal. Prosjektet var beregnet å generere minst 200 MW. En dam, to tunneler, fire broer og 122 km. vei sto i byggeplanen. Flere av Arun-dalens 450.000 innbyggere, tilhørende 24 etniske grupper, måtte flyttes. Prosjektet skulle hovedsakelig finansieres av Verdensbanken og industriland, men nepalske myndigheter skulle sørge for 100 mill. US dollar. Nepal ønsket 180 mill. US dollar fra Verdensbanken og ba Asian Development Bank om 130 millioner.

Det var beregnet at Nepal Electricity Authority måtte øke strømprisene med 83% for å betale lånene til Arun 3. Prosjektkostnadene tilsvarer det dobbelte av Nepals nasjonalbudsjett. Miljøgrupper og andre NGOer fryktet at Nepals finansielle investeringer og gjeldsbyrder var for store å bære, at vannkraftprosjektet ville gi uopprettelig skade på Arun-dalens biodiversitet og at dammen kunne bryte sammen hvis en nærliggende glasial innsjø smeltet. I tillegg kom at for mange av dalens innbyggere måtte flyttes og at deres kultur ville ødelegges av 50.000 indiske arbeidere som skulle jobbe fjorten år i Arun. Etter mye kritikk nedsatte Verdensbanken for første gang et panel som skulle vurdere mulige miljøkonsekvenser. Panelets konklusjoner samsvarte i hovedtrekk med miljøgruppens syn.

For å hindre ryktespredning om hvorfor lånet ble kansellert, uttalte Verdensbanken at beslutningen ikke var politisk motivert. James D. Wolfensohn, Verdensbankens nye president, sa at Nepal er for fattig til at Arun-prosjektet kunne lykkes. Verdensbankens talsmann i London utdypet årsakene. Økende krav til sosiale-, tekniske- og miljømessige standarder høynet prosjektets total kostnader som Verdensbanken antok de andre partnerne og Nepals myndigheter dermed ikke kunne dekke. Etter nærmere kjennskap til ulike aspekter, indikerte flere partnere at de ikke kunne møte oppgavene som trengtes for å gjennomføre prosjektet.

Verdensbanken vurderer nå å opprette et fond som kan finansiere mindre kraftprosjekter i Nepal. Håpet er å utvikle Arun-dalen, men uten overbelastning av økonomien eller miljøet. Verdensbankens visepresident, James Wood, har hatt samtaler om dette under et tre dagers besøk i Nepal. En ny delegasjon fra Verdensbanken er ventet til Nepal i september for å diskutere og vurdere alternativer.

UML-regjeringen ga vaklende støtte til Arun 3 og prøvde å forhandle med Verdensbanken for å redusere prosjektkostnadene. Opposisjonspartiet, Nepali Congress, beskyldte regjeringen for ikke å handle tilstrekkelig raskt til å få Arun 3 godkjent. Nepali Congress vil antakelig søke å innkassere politisk gevinst ved å hevde at UML-regjeringen ikke har legitimitet i den vestlige verden og at manglende bistand vil hindre utviklingen i Nepal.

(Informasjonen er hentet via Internet fra BBC, The Daily Yomiuri og andre kilder i perioden 3-19. august.)

Ny satsing på små vannkraftprosjekter.

Kathmandu 14. august (Xinhua News Agency). Nepals regjering har besluttet å produsere over 270 MW elektrisitet innen 2000 for å møte landets økende behov. I følge ministeren for vannressurser har regjeringen identifisert ulike små prosjekter, uten at disse betraktes som alternativer til Arun 3.

Ny giv til Khimti-prosjektet.

(Independent, 5. juli.) Under møter i Manila er Asian Development Bank (ADB) og dens sponsorer blitt enige med Nepals myndigheter og Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) om nye betingelser for Khimti 1 Hydropower Project. Dette gir prosjektet ny tillit og aktiviteten gjenopptas. Man forventer at prosjektet vil gi strøm til NEA's National Electricity Grid før 1999.

Khimti 1 Hydropower Project eies av Himal Power Limited (HPL), et nepalsk selskap registrert i 1993. Sponsorer i Khimti-prosjektet er de norske selskapene Statkraft SF, ABB energy og Kvarner Energy, samt Butwal Power Company Ltd. som representerer Nepals interesser.

HPL vil arbeide nært med de finansierende partene: ADB, the International Finance Corporation (Verdensbankens avdeling for privat sektor), NORAD/Norwegian Export Finance, NEA og nepalske myndigheter. Khimti-prosjektet skal hovedsakelig finansieres med lån på ca. 100 mill. US dollar fra ADB, International Finance Corporation og NORAD/Norwegian Export Finance.

Khimti 1 er et av Nepals mest utviklede vannkraftprosjekter i liten til middels stor skala. Prosjektet ligger i Khimti Khola, ca. 100 km. øst for Kathmandu, og vil produsere omtrent 60 MW. Installasjoner bygges i Janakpur mellom distriktene Dolakha og Ramechhap. Reguleringsanlegget legges der Palati Khola og Khimti Khola løper sammen, mens kraftstasjonen lokaliseres til Kirue Besi i Dolakha. En vei (Nayapul Kirne Road) konstrueres og mye må gjøres på ledningsnettet.

Foreløpig har det ikke fremkommet opplysninger som tyder på at Khimti 1 vil ha alvorlige negative miljøkonsekvenser.

Nepal deporterer tibetanske flyktninger.

27. juli (TIN News Update). Nepal fortsetter tvungen tilbakesendelse av tibetanske asylsøkere, til tross for protester fra FN og USA. Siden april 1995 har Nepal hjemsendt minst 200 tibetanere som krysset Himalaya for å søke asyl og i juli måned ble minst ti personer deportert etter å ha søkt asyl. USA, Australia og FN's høykommissær for flyktninger (UNHCR) protesterer mot 'repatrieringen'.

Til april måned tillot nepalske myndigheter tibetanske asylsøkere å bli vurdert av UNHCR's representanter i Kathmandu, før tibetanerne reiste videre til India hvor asyl innvilges.

Omtrent 2500 tibetanere er hjulpet slik hvert år siden 1990. Deportasjonene begynte i april i år, noen dager før statsminister Adhikari's første offisielle besøk i Beijing. Nepalske myndigheter nekter for at de nå har endret sin politikk, men diplomatiske kilder sier at innen 19. juni hadde nepalsk politikk gitt minst fjorten flyktningegrupper (ca. 210 personer) til kinesiske myndigheter i grensebyen Dram. Kilder forteller også at ti tibetanere som søkte asyl hos distriktsmyndighetene i Solo Khumbu-regionen, ble drevet tilbake over grensen og gitt til kinesisk politikk i juli måned.

Sikkerhetspatroljeringen er intensivert rundt Salleri 70 km. fra grensa og ved andre landsbyer i Solo Khumbu-området. Politiet leter etter flyktninger som har krysset Nangpa-La passet. Amerikanske myndigheter har troverdige rapporter om at nepalske tjenestemenn nekter flyktninger adgang til UNHCR og isteden returnerer dem til kinesiske grensemyndigheter. USA har bedt Nepal om å håndtere disse sakene i overensstemmelse med internasjonale prosedyrer. Det er også antydning at Nepals opptreden kan få følger for amerikansk bistand til Nepal.

I juni foretok politiet i Kathmandu en razzia mot bokhandlere i Thamel og beslagla klistremerker med slagord som "Free Tibet". Minst en bokhandler ble tatt i varetekt.

Kinesisk besøk i Nepal.

3. august (New China news agency). Nepal og Kina har hatt samtaler om grensesikkerhet og "lignende saker". Samtalene fant sted da en kinesisk delegasjon var på tre dagers Nepal-visitt etter invitasjon fra nepalske myndigheter.

Transport mellom Kathmandu og Lhasa.

Kathmandu 23. mai (Kyodo). Nepal og kinesiske myndigheter vil fra juni 1995 tilby veitransport mellom Kathmandu og Lhasa. Den endelig beslutningen om åpning av tjenestene ble tatt under offisielle samtaler mellom Kina og Nepal i midten av mai. Fra nepalsk side vil det statseide Sajha Corp. sørge for transport med busser og lastebiler de to første årene. I følge en talsmann for Nepalese Works and Transport Ministry, forventes transporten å diversifisere Nepals handel. Med kinesisk assistanse bygget Nepal i 1966 en 114 km. vei som forbinder Kathmandu med Koodari ved grensa mellom Nepal og Tibet.

Bistandsmidler fra Japan.

Kathmandu 16. august (Xinhua General Overseas News Service). Japan har lovet å gi 3,77 mill. US dollar i bistand til Nepal. Pengene skal brukes til veier nær Kathmandu og til bygging av grunnskoler.

Lån til veier.

Asian Development Bank gir Nepal et lån på 40 mill. US dollar som skal brukes til utbedring av veier. Prosjektet starter tidlig i 1996 og vil skape omtrent 10.000 årsverk.

Lavprisbutikker etableres.

Kathmandu 21. juli. Nepals regjering planlegger å åpne nesten 5000 lavprisbutikker. Tiltaket er et forsøk på å avhjelpe nøden som følge av økte priser. Butikkene skal inneholde dagligvarer som kornprodukter, salt, sukker, te, matolje, barnemat, grønnsaker, frukt, kjøtt, medisin, klær, byggevarer osv. Prosjektet startes i Kathmandu, for etterhvert å utvides til distriktene.

Flom og jordras.

Kathmandu 11. juli. I Vest-Nepal er fire personer drept i et jordras forårsaket av kraftig regnvær. Jordraset feide bort 46 hus, 42 buskapshytter og 19 dyr, samt ga betraktelig skade på avlinger i en landsby i Syangja-distriktet. Vedvarende nedbør har utløst jordras og flom i ulike distrikter siden monsunen startet i juni. Det rapporteres at nesten 100 personer skal være drept.

Kathmandu 13. august (United Press International). Kraftig regn i Sør-Nepal 13. august førte til flom som ødela flere hus og en bro nær Dhalkebar, 85 km. sørøst for Kathmandu. Flommen førte til stopp i trafikken på Mahendra Highway. Det er ikke meldt om skadde. Nåværende monsunperiode har gitt de fleste steder i Nepal det kraftigste regn på 23 år.

Buss kollidert.

Kathmandu 16. juli. En passasjerbuss kolliderte med en lastebil på en motorveibro i de østlige delene av Saptari. Buss-sjåføren og hans assistent ble drept, mens åtte av passasjerene pådro seg mindre skader. Bussen var på vei fra Kathmandu til den østlige byen Kakarvitta.

Epidemi i Vest-Nepal.

Kathmandu 16. juli. Mer enn 100 personer er døde av gastroenteritt (mave-tarmkatarr) i Vest-Nepal siden epidemien begynte å spre seg. Det er registrert 25 dødsfall i landsbyer i Doti-distriktet og 75 i nabodistriktet Achham. Helsepersonell er nå i området med

nødvendig medisin for å begrense epidemien. Urent vann og mangel på helsetjenester antas å være årsaker til utbruddet.

12. august (Radio Nepal).

125 personer er døde av gastroenteritt i Achham-distriktet så langt i 1995.

Uran konfiskert i Nepal.

Kathmandu 1. august. Nepalsk politi har konfiskert 700 gram uran oppdaget i huset til to personer i Bhadrapur i Øst-Nepal. I følge det lokale politiet, ble de to arrestert for ulovlig besittelse av en farlig substans. Saken er nå under etterforskning.

Elefanter jaktes.

Kathmandu 9. august. Nepalsk politi jakter nå på sju ville elefanter i Øst-Nepal. Elefantene drepte tre personer i Panchakanya i Sunsari-distriktet og ødela avlinger og ni hus i nabodistriktet Morang.

Gullsmuglere pågrepet.

Beijing 10. august (Xinhua news agency domestic service). Tollvesenet har avslørt gullsmugling på grensa mellom Tibet og Nepal. Tollerne konfiskerte nesten 90 kilo gull fra en bil som var i ferd med å forlate Tibet.

Nepals statsminister i helikopterulykke.

14. august (All-India Radio). Statsminister M.M. Adhikari unnslopp med mindre skader i en helikopterulykke nær Nepalganj i Vest-Nepal 14. august. Adhikari var på vei tilbake til Kathmandu etter inspeksjon av flomområdene i vest, da helikopteret fikk tekniske problemer kort tid etter avgang og måtte nødlande. Statsministeren brakk høyre kravebein og ble fraktet til Nepalganj for behandling på sykehus. Det er opprettet et utvalg som skal granske ulykken.

5 millioner barnearbeidere i Nepal.

Kathmandu 10. august. I følge en studie gjort av "child workers in Nepal concerned center" (cwin) er over fem mill. barn i Nepal direkte eller indirekte engasjert i ulike typer arbeid. Fattigdom, manglende utdanning og migrasjon til byer har bidratt til betydelig økning i antall barnearbeidere.

Nepalske prostituerte i India.

Washington 16. juli og New Dehli 17. juli (Reuter). Minst 200.000 nepalske jenter arbeider på bordeller i India og hvert år rekrutteres 5-7000 nye. I Bombay utgjør nepalske jenter halvparten av de 100.000 prostituerte. På 80-tallet var jentene 14-16 år, mens alderen hadde sunket til 10-14 i 1994. Dette opplyses i rapporten "Rape for Profit" utgitt av Human Rights Watch/Asia.

Den USA-baserte menneskerettighetsgruppen kritiserer at nepalske jenter lures av løfter om godt arbeid og ektemenn, for deretter å selges via mellom-ledd til indiske bordelleiere som betaler 500-1.330 US dollar for nykommere. Prisen, inkludert renter, blir gjelda jentene må arbeide for å betale tilbake. Hverdagen består av vold, slaving, voldtekt, AIDS og tilfeldig fengsling. Bordelleierne bestikker politi og lokale tjenestemenn for å kausjonere ut arresterte jenter og hindre rassia.

Misbruket av de nepalske jentene er brudd på internasjonalt anerkjente menneskerettigheter og forbudt under både Nepals og Indias nasjonale lover. Menneskerettighetsgrupper i Nepal har rapportert om trafikken og personer knyttet til den, men det har gitt få arrester eller andre følger.

Nepals befolkningsvekst absorbert.

Kathmandu 11. juni. En talsmann for FN sier at den raske befolkningsveksten i Nepal i stor grad er absorbert av landets økonomiske utvikling. Dette ble uttalt i forbindelse med offentliggjøringen av The World Population Report fra UN Population Fund. Den raske befolkningsveksten bidrar til økonomisk forverring gjennom kultivering av marginale landområder og overhøsting av skogsressurser til brensel. Levestandarden til selvbergende bønder er ikke tilstrekkelig forbedret.

Nepals befolkning ble nesten doblet fra 9,5 mill. i 1961, til 18,5 mill. i 1991. Siste beregning viser over 20 mill., gitt dagens befolkningsvekst på ca. 2%.

Nepal rangerer lavere på FNs utviklingsindeks.

Kathmandu 18. august (United Press International 1995). I følge en nylig utført FN rangering er livet blitt litt verre for Nepals tyve millioner innbyggere. Nepal er nå rangert som nr. 151 av 174 land på FNs Human Development Index, mot nr. 149 i 1994. Kanada topper indeksen, fulgt av USA og Japan.

Forventet levealder, som i 1960 lå på 30,4 år, var i 1992 steget til 53,5 år. Dette har sammenheng med bl.a. lavere spedbarnsdødelighet. På slutten av 70-tallet hadde 8% av befolkningen tilgang til rent drikkevann, mens det tilsvarende tallet for 1988-93 var 42%. Den lese- og skrivekyndige del av den voksne befolkningen utgjorde 13% i 1970 og 26% i 1992.

Av de sju medlemmene i South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), falt kun Nepal og Sri Lanka nedover FNs rangering.

Nepals økonomiske situasjon.

Kathmandu 11. juli.

Sterk reduksjon i Nepals eksport av håndvevne tepper har presset handelsunderskuddet opp 50%, til 646 mill. US dollar de første ni månedene av skatteåret 1994-95, i forhold til samme periode i skatteåret 1993-94. Tepper og klær utgjør en stor del av Nepals eksport til land utenom India. Teppe-eksporten, landets største kilde til utenlandsk valuta, falt 19% (til 130 mill. US dollar) de siste ni månedene, etter at vestlige land begrenset importen i protest mot barnearbeid. Også kleseksporten minket etter at USA, den største enkeltimportør av Nepals klær, innførte kvoterestriksjoner.

I forhold til samme periode i skatteåret 1993-94, minket Nepals totale eksport 7,4%, mens importen økte 27%. Importen er verdt i overkant av 3.3 ganger så mye som eksporten. Eksporten til India, som utgjør ca. 33% av Nepals handel, økte 34% til 50,3 mill. US dollar, mens importen økte 18% til 297,2 mill. US dollar.

Nepals nest største kilde til utenlands valuta er turisme. Denne økte 11,2% (326.000 besøkende i 1994). Industrien genererte verdier tilsvarende 88,1 mill. US dollar, opp 33% fra 1993.

Kathmandu 19. august (Xinhua General News Service).

Beregninger for skatteåret 1994-95 viser en vekst i Nepals brutto nasjonalprodukt på 4,1%. Jordbruksproduksjonen minket 0,3% grunnet dårlig vær, men resultatene fra økonomien utenom jordbrukssektoren viste en oppgang på 7,5%. Skatteunderskuddet økte 2,7% til 109 mill. US dollar. De totale utenlandske valutareservene utgjør 806 mill. US dollar (økning på 1%).

Kathmandu 12. juli 1995.

Totalt 1.048,45 mill. US dollar har kommet inn for skatteåret 1995-96. Dette ble opplyst da finansministeren nylig redegjorde for budsjettet.

Utgiftene i budsjettet er økt med 22,5%. Av de totale utgiftene er 442,87 mill. US dollar øremerket regulære utgifter, hvorav 135,76 er fordelt til gjeldsnedbetaling, 115,78 til sosiale tjenester, 48,28 til administrasjon og 42,77 til forsvaret. Av de totale utgiftene er 605,58 mill. US dollar øremerket utviklingsformål: 114,18 til elektrisitet, 83,44 til transport, 76,75 til lokal utvikling og 62,52 til irrigasjon.

Utenlandske gaver og lån vil fortsatt spille en viktig rolle som finansieringskilde. Bilaterale og multilaterale gaver beregnes å bli 107,24 mill US dollar og lån 263,63 millioner. Det nye budsjettet vil ha et underskudd på 311,22 mill. US dollar. Utenlandske lån skal brukes for å dekke noe, mens det

resterende underskuddet dekkes via innenrikslån.

Regjeringens budsjettberegninger og inntektsforslag for kommende skatteår er kunngjort av kongen fordi parlamentet ble oppløst i juni.

Satsing på Nepals eksport til India.

8. juli 1995. (Press Trust of India news agency, New Dehli.) En felles arbeidsgruppe fra Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industri (FNCCI) og Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) skal gjennomføre en studie for å øke Nepals eksport til India og øke de indiske investeringene i Nepal. Verdien av Nepals eksport til India er adskillig mindre enn verdien av importen, og forskjellen øker med 45% hvert år.

Nepal fikk nei fra Verdensbanken

Nationen
8. aug. -95

Kathmandu: Nepalerne er i sjokk etter at Verdensbanken i forrige uke overraskende bestemte seg for å trekke seg ut av vannkraftprosjektet Arun.

Kraftstasjonen som skulle gitt 201 megawatt elektrisitet vil aldri bli bygget. Prosjektet har vært planlagt i 10 år og det finnes ikke noe ferdigbehandlet alternativ.

Selv hovedstaden Kathmandu plagges av stadige strømkutt. Nå frykter alle en mørk, kald vinter. Verst er det for optimistene som allerede har satset penger på Arun-dammen.

Distriktets håp om jobber og en økonomisk boom har forsvunnet med dam-planene.

Nepalerne er ikke overrasket over at Verdensbanken trekker seg ut. Arun-prosjektet har alltid vært omstridt. Men de er overrasket over at banken trekker seg ut i siste øyeblikk, etter ti år med planlegging.

Selv motstandere av dammen er rasende på Verdensbanken. De mener organisasjonen for lenge siden burde tvunget Nepal til å finne alternative vannkraft-prosjekt.

Så lenge regjeringen i Kathmandu har satset på Arun har de ikke lagt andre planer.

(IPS)



Please contact at earliest:

Sanjib Rajbhandary, Electric Vehicle Development Group
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An enthusiastic and committed person to work on developing electric vehicles for Kathmandu. Preferably an engineer with zeal and commitment to clean up the Valley environment.

«Tvunget» til å styre Nepal

Den marxistiske regjeringa har innført grunnleggende lover for arbeidere og kvinner

Av PETER M. JOHANSEN

DEN marxistiske regjeringa i Nepal jobber under vanskelige forhold. For mange av lovforslagene trengs det to tredels flertall. Det har ikke regjeringa; den er ikke engang i flertall i parlamentet. Men regjeringa satser på å bygge ut landsbygda, både økonomiske og som sin politiske base.

AKP's leder Solveig Aamdal har nylig vært i Nepal og gått blant partikamerater i regjering- og partikorriderene. Bak CPN-UML (Communist Party of Nepal - United Marxists and Leninists) står det en konstellasjon av kjente partier på venstresida. Men UML, som fronten kalles for letthets skyld, er klar på ett felt: Det skal ikke forekomme noen form for sammenblanding av partiets og regjeringas økonomi. Korrupsjonen var institusjonalisert under det gudgitte hindumonarkiet; Kongresspartiet gjorde ingen ting med korrupsjonen under sin regjeringstid. Nå står kommunistene til prøve i folkets ømdømme. Partiet har fremdeles bare to gamle biler til disposisjon for å dekke et land som er knapt halvparten så stort som Norge, men som har en infrastruktur som selv finmarkeringer ville betakke seg for.

Nepali Congress satte seg som mål å avsette regjeringa ved budsjettbehandlingene i juli. Det er nesten det eneste som holder Kongresspartiet sammen. CPN-UML har 88 mandater etter valget 15. november; Kongresspartiet har 83 mandater, men har muligheter til å alliere seg med monarkistene som fikk tjuve av de 205 plassene i parlamentet. UML får de fire stemmene til et annet marxist-leninistisk parti med base i Vest-Nepal og i Bhaktapur, en by på rundt 50.000 innbyggere like øst for hovedstaden Kathmandu. Venstresida i Kongresspartiet, som felte sin egen statsminister Girija Prasad Koirala i fjor sommer, er imidlertid redd for å miste oppslutning dersom partiet går mot populære tiltak fra regjeringa. Kongresspartiet har hittil kunnet støtte seg på landsbygda. Nå går UML inn og utfordrer Kongresspartiet på egen mark.

Rundt 85 prosent bor på landsbygda som bønder eller landsarbeidere. Arbeiderklassen i Nepal er liten, og den er sterkt knyttet til landsbygda. UML er bevisst om at folk må ha mer makt for å kunne gjennomføre grunnleggende endringer, sosialisme. Og det kan ikke bare skje gjennom valg.

En tredel av de statslige inntektene kommer gjennom bistand utenfra. Det gjør Nepal til et av de mest bistandsavhengige og dermed sårbare landene i verden; på linje med den langt større naboen «nede i dalen», Bangladesh.

Landsbygda

Regjeringa og UML satser på en grunnleggende utvikling av landsbygda. Kameratene prioriterer kampen mot feydalismen. Det fins omlag to millioner uten land og hus; til nå har 10.000 fått jord og hus av regjeringa, jord som de sjøl driver. På Terai-sletta på grensa til India i øst eksisterte det reelt slaveri så seint som for tjuve år siden. Nå er slaveriet indirekte; landløse må låne penger av jordeierne og blir dermed bokstavelig talt lønsslaver. Regjeringa har nå satt ned en landreformkomite.

Men framfor alt har UML fått inn nye marxist-leninister som ikke har vært gjennom de gamle parti- og fraksjonsstridene. Mange har sin bakgrunn i fagbevegelsen Gefont og i kvinneforbundet All Nepal Women's Association (ANWA) som i dag har 400.000 medlemmer i et land med tjuve millioner innbyggere.

UML mener at fagbevegelsen og masseorganisasjonene skal være frie og uavhengige. UML har en utfordring i å endre tankegangen til byråkratiet som henger igjen fra det gamle systemet når kongen var eneveldig. Byråkratiet skal tjene folket; det er en vanskelig oppgave, sier Aamdal med et kulturrevolusjonært understatement.

Det var derfor nøye diskusjoner om hvorvidt partiet skulle ta regjeringamakta. Men massene ville stått uten ledere dersom ikke UML hadde gjort det, sier AKP's leder.

Medlemmer i ke

CPN-UML har 50.000 medlemmer, men det står 200.000 kandidatmedlemmer i kø. Kandidatdatta er to år. I UML fins det både revisjonister og maoister av den «gamle» skolen. Sattminister Man Mohan Adhikari er fra det tidligere Moskva-partiet; visestatsminister Madhav Kumar Nepal har maoistisk bakgrunn. Statsministeren sier til Kathmandu Post (4.des 94) at han er fullt klar over det tidligere Sovjetunionens feil.

UML ser på Kina som et sosialistisk land. Men den fysiske kommunikasjonen mellom de to landene er dårlig. Det går bare én vei over til Tibet, og den er svært dårlig. Dessuten er Tibet selv en fattig region, sier Aamdal.

«Mens kommunismen ser ut til å være mer eller mindre utryddet ellers i verden, blomstrer den i Nepal», skrev den engelskspråklige Kathmandu-avisa The Independent. Kommunismen har fått sin politiske «belønning» for kampen mot det kongelige eneveldet – og de mange løftebruddene fra Kongresspartiet som til og med ble beskyldt for å være et quasligneparti i Kathmandu Post.

Nasjonal sjølrådighet og hånd om egne ressurser er en stor årsak til oppslutninga om UML. Utenriksminister Madhav Kumar Nepal var raskt ute med å love å sett Nepal i sentrum for regjeringas politikk, blant annet ved å revidere avtalen med India som gir indere rett til eiendom i fjellstadiene (Kathmandu Post, 7.des. 94). Indere har et solid grep om forretningsforbindelsene mellom Nepal og India.

CPN-UML har sola som sitt partisymbol. Det blir stadig flere solmerker å se på husene i Nepal; slagordet er «Sola, for hvem er den? Sola er for folket!».

«Nepal er som en nøtt mellom to kampesteiner», heter det gjerne blant nepaleserne. Nepal kan ikke unngå å bli påvirket av sine mektige naboer; Kina i nord, India i sør. India har lenge oppfattet Nepal som sitt, akkurat som Sikkim og til dels Bhutan. India insisterer på avtalen mellom de to landene fra 1950, ikke skal røres, noe den nye regjeringa i Kathmandu vil. India taper Nepals vannressurser. 95 prosent av vannkrafta går til India, 98 prosent av irrigasjonsvannet. India truer stadig vekst med handelsblokade og vil ha det lojale Kongressparti-

et tilbake i regjeringsposisjon. Når det gjelder nasjonale interesser har UML mer støtte i monarkistpartiet Rastriya Prajantantra Party (RPP) og hos kong Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev som besteg tronen i 1972.

Pakash Chandra Lohani fra monarkistpartiet opposisjonspartiet NDP, sa i et intervju i Rising Nepal (3.des. 1994) at regjeringens levetid er avhengig av dens evne til å få støtte i de store nasjonale spørsmålene; om vannressurser, utenrikspolitikk og økonomi.

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TIRSDAG 9. MAI 1995

KLASSEKAMPEN

CRISIS IN THE HIMALAYAS

"The roof of the world" is in urgent need of repair.
By Don Hinrichsen

In the rugged, ochre-coloured foothills of the Himalayas, 70 kilometres east of Kathmandu, the village of Chautara clings to the side of a mountain like a giant centipede. Steep slopes on both sides of the village have been carved into elaborate terraces for growing corn and wheat. There is one badly pot-holed road but for approximately half the year it's impassable due to monsoon rains and mud slides.

Like many villages in Nepal, Chautara is a ramshackle collection of two- and three-storey buildings made from wood, brick and mud. Most have earthen floors. None has running water or toilets. An open latrine, filled with household slops, animal waste and human faeces, festers along the main street. Flies buzz incessantly.

It's early morning, but the May heat is already oppressive. Shanti Basnet, the former health motivator for Chautara and nearby villages, wrinkles her nose as she steps over the latrine. Despite the stench, she smiles as she looks down the street. "In a few days the latrine will be covered over," she says. A new pipeline is bringing clean water into Chautara from higher up the mountain watershed. The village women no longer have to carry home water from contaminated wells or muddy streams.

Diarrhoea, dysentery and typhoid, aggravated by a poor diet, used to kill scores of infants and young children. Today, these are some of many maladies being

brought under control. The environmental destruction that has plagued the region is also beginning to be reversed. Groves of pine trees march down once-barren slopes, while better terracing techniques have reduced the risk of mud slides. Around 30,000 fodder trees, such as *Ipil ipil*, have been planted around fields, and fenced-off areas protect grasses from the mouths of hungry goats.

For Basnet, sanitary latrines and clean water are the culmination of two decades of development work carried out by the Boudha Bahunepati Family Welfare Project, sponsored by the Family Planning Association of Nepal, World Neighbours and Oxfam. Basnet, now the women's development officer for the project, has been a catalyst for change.

Because of her efforts, literacy has increased, child health care has improved, and 33% of all families in Chautara practise family planning – double the national average. The village is climbing out of the rock-bottom poverty that had consigned its citizens to lives of desperation for as long as anyone can remember.

Unfortunately, Chautara is a rare exception in this mountainous country of 22m people. The average Nepalese family of eight earns barely \$170 a year from its tiny farm-plot. Most of the country's forests have been hacked down to provide building material, fuel or space for agriculture. With tree cover gone, storms quickly strip exposed soils, destroying terraces and sending avalanches of mud and rock into valleys. Entire villages have been buried. Hillsides, slit from top to bottom with massive erosion scars, bleed soil into rivers.

Scientists estimate that 264m tons of topsoil are torn out of the hills every year. With it go the livelihoods of thousands of farmers. One Nepalese official in Kathmandu jokes that, "Our biggest export to India is now soil."

Nepal's woes are not unique. Throughout much of the Himalaya's 3.4m square kilometres, resources are being degraded or lost as populations grow. According to United Nations' demographers, around 120m people now live in the Himalayas, the largest mountain range in the world, which extends from Pakistan, across India, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and China.

The population is now growing by 2.4% a year, enough to make it double in size in 29 years. At the same time, the size of farms is decreasing dramatically. In Pakistan, India, Nepal and China, sons receive equal shares of land as their inheritance. As families grow, the average size of farms shrinks.

Landless farmers but to go higher have no choice up the watershed

In India and Nepal, for example, the size of upland farms is down to less than 0.50 hectares, barely enough for a family with six children to live on.

The "roof of the world", as the Himalayas are known, contains the highest peaks on Earth – Everest soars to 8,848 metres. However, the Himalayas also constitute the world's youngest mountain range (30m years old) and, in a region

known for extremes, its ecosystems are incredibly fragile. "We are victims of our own geography," says Sam Bhattarai of the Nepalese Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation. "Our bottom lands, along the border with India, are so overcrowded that landless farmers have no choice but to go higher up the watershed."

The result of this rush to the hills has been devastating. Over the past 40 years, 40% of the Himalaya's forests have been lost. Nepal has cut down nearly half its trees since the conquest of Everest in 1953 and in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, over two-thirds of the hill forests have been felled by timber merchants and subsistence farmers.

Today, the average hill farmer in India, Nepal and Pakistan can only grow enough food to feed his family for eight months of the year. The United Nations has found that, in some Himalayan areas, 60% of the children suffer from malnutrition.

The other part of the Himalayan problem lies in the flood plains of the Indian subcontinent. With increasing amounts of soil being gouged out of the Himalayas every year, river beds are being raised by over 15 centimetres annually. As the rains rush off barren slopes into shallower river channels, there is an increased risk of flooding.

When the Himalayas were covered in evergreen forests, Bangladesh only averaged one devastating flood every 50 years. By the seventies, they were occurring every four years. One flood in 1988 inundated half the country. Similarly, India's flood-risk area more than doubled in size – from 25m hectares in the late sixties to 59m hectares by 1990.

Deforestation has had another malign effect: regular water supplies in some of the richest farming areas are drying up. Forests act like gigantic sponges, soaking up water and releasing it slowly into

the water table. With forest cover gone, water rushes off the land too rapidly for it to soak into the soil. In the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, for example, the number of villages suffering from water shortages has risen from 17,000 to 70,000 in 20 years.

One bright spot in this bleak landscape is the tiny mountain kingdom of Bhutan, wedged between India and China. When Geoffrey Lean, a British environmental writer, visited Bhutan in the early eighties, he found it to be "the last green patch left in the Himalayas. Here, the hills are still cloaked with magnificent forests and the rivers run clear even in the rainy season."

Lean attributed the country's conservation success to six main factors: its long period of isolation from the rest of the world; its government's strong conservation policies, which culminated in a 1974 decree that 60% of the country should remain forested for ever; a 1979 law which stopped private contractors from cutting down timber; a countrywide tree-planting programme; the banishment of goats from forests; and, finally, the handing over of forest management to local mountain communities. "This last provision is one of the most effective ways to preserve forests," says Lean. "If villagers own the trees they usually manage them well to sustain the benefits for the future."

It is an example other Himalayan countries need to follow. Most trees are still controlled by the government, so timber poaching and clearances are rife.

One community-based conservation project launched in Nepal offers hope as a model for the future. It is located near the city of Pokhara, nestled under the brow of the mighty Annapurna, one of the country's most popular tourist destinations.

The project is funded by the Finnish International Develop-

ment Agency and is based at the Phewa Tal Watershed surrounding

If villagers own the trees they usually manage them well

Phewa Lake. The area covers 116 square kilometres and is home to 36,000 people.

Here, there were three main goals: to restore soil productivity by erosion control and afforestation (thereby halting sedimentation of the lake), to improve utilization of resources such as firewood and fodder and to organize and involve local people in maintaining the watershed.

After a shaky start, the project began to bear fruit in the late eighties. To help sell the concepts to villagers, income-generating ideas were emphasized: bee-keeping and mushroom-growing were launched along with the construction of drains for water collection and the creation of aquaculture ponds and kitchen gardens.

Bhattarai says, "Since the villagers are controlling their own resources, they decide which projects to support and how to implement them. They are agents of their own development." The approach has the backing of community workers such as Basnet. She says: "Our experience shows that once people have a stake in their own future, anything is possible."

DON HINRICHSEN is a London-based writer and U.N. consultant. He is author of *Our Common Seas: Coasts in Crisis* and the *WWF Atlas of the Environment*.

SCANORAMA July / August 1995

The Origin of the Tharu

by Kurt W. Meyer

The extraction of the Tharu is veiled in the haze of undocumented history. It is true that life is not permanent and history is not destiny, but it is nevertheless useful to ask, Who are the Tharu?

Once upon a time in the remote past when the king of these parts was defeated by the forces of an invader, the women of the royal palace, rather than fall into the hands of foe, fled into the jungles with the Saises and Chamars belonging to the palace. From these sprang the Tharus.

R.H. Neville, 1904.

This is the real story of the Tharu: "...four sons and five daughters of King Okamukha of Banares left the kingdom in a huff and moved to Kapil's Ashram. Kapil allowed them to clear the land and settle there on the condition that the new state be named after him, 'Kapilvastu'. The Tharu are their descendants and have spread over the entire length of the Tarai."

Ramanand Prasad Singh, 1982.

People everywhere have an insatiable desire to identify their roots, and the Tharu are no exceptions. They, too, want to know about their tribe's past travails and triumphs. In response, many theories have come up to shed light on the early history of Tharus. It has, however, been a difficult task, for semi-nomadic peoples leave few tracks behind: maybe some coins, some pottery shards.

When studying the history of great civilisations, we can fall back upon written texts and contemporary writings. Unfortunately, it is not so with the Tharu, in whose case we have had to remain content with analysing tidbits of information located at random. Archaeologists have a hard time looking for clues: thatch-covered

bamboo and mud structures leave no trace when abandoned. They literally revert back to earth.

Some of the theories that are put forth are based on word-of-mouth recitals by old tribesmen, a type of oral history which certainly cannot be overlooked and needs to find its proper place in search of Tharu history. Other sources can be found in the early writings, often by British explorers or civil servants. Some are of recent origin, based on more current evaluations by scholars.

Jungle Halt

Besides R.H. Neville and Ramanand Prasad Singh, many more legends can be found in references by others. In the *Census of India* (1961), R.C. Sharma quotes Tharus in the village of Rajderwa (northeast of Lucknow, just by the Nepal border) claiming to be Rajputs who had migrated from Dang, "but their features are Mongoloid". Writes Sharma, "The Tharu are a jungle tribe. According to some, the word Tharu is derived from the Hindi word 'Thahrey', halted, because they are said to have halted after the alleged flight into the forest... The origin is also traced to the Hindi word 'tarhua', wet, an allusion to the swampy land they live in... Some say the name simply means 'resident of the tarai'".

J.C. Nesfield wrote in the *Calcutta Review* (1885): "The origin is the word 'thar', which in the lowest colloquial language (but not in books) signifies 'a man of the forest', a name which correctly describes

the status of the tribe, considering the name as sprung from the language of the tribe itself, which is now for the most part obsolete. An aboriginal name derived from Sanskrit is the fit appellation of an aboriginal, casteless, un-Brahmanized tribe whose customs have been only slightly modified by contact with those of the Aryan invaders."

Nesfield continues, "Another tradition is that after the fall of the Buddhist dynasty of Kannauj, the Tharu descended from the hills and occupied Ayodhya (only to be driven out by Raja Sri Chandra from Srinagar)."

In his book *Eastern India*, Buchnan refuted the often-heard claim that Tharus are descendants of Rajputs who were evicted from Rajasthan by Moslem invaders. "No Moslem historian has made the slightest allusion to the Tharus in connection with these events (expulsion by Moslems). The fiction of having migrated from Rajputana into the Tarai, therefore, must have been invented by some of the clans merely to raise themselves in their own and their neighbour's estimation."

An analysis, titled "The Tharus and Their Blood Group", is found in the *Journal of*

the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal (1942). The writer, D.N. Majumdar, found that the Tharu are definitely a Mongoloid tribe. "They cannot be placed in any other constellation of tribes and castes of the Province, Indo-Aryan or Australoid. Also the Rajput origin is not supported on the basis of serology. Thus it is concluded, on the basis of the evidence, that the Tharus are a Mongoloid people, or predominantly so, who have successfully assimilated non-Mongoloid physical features as well."

As we wish, therefore, we can accept that the Tharu are a Mongoloid tribe which has assimilated non-Mongoloid features—or that they are of Aryan background and have incorporated Mongoloid features. Incidentally, Majumdar is the only researcher who begins to use scientific tools to answer our question, tools available in 1942. Today, far more advanced techniques are available, such as research based on comparative DNA studies.

Push and Pull

Having travelled the Nepal tarai east to west, from the banks of the Mechi to those of the Mahakali, over the last two years, visiting



Jungle to Concrete

The Tharu appear to have had a very mobile past, which is also evident in population movements of recent times. Fatehnagar in Bako district is one such example. In 1972, an entire village left the inner tarai valley of Dang to settle under better conditions in the tarai plains. Others moved westward to Kanchanpur, Kailali and Bardiya. There are also movements within the same region, such as in Deukhuri, where a whole village decided that it could only escape from under the yoke of a heavy-handed landlord by moving to virgin territory and rebuilding their village.

Over the course of the last two generations, many Tharu from Saptari moved to Sunsari, Morang and Udayapur. And lately, there has been a mass movement to Kathmandu in response to overpopulation, underemployment in the farm, and economic opportunities in the Valley, particularly in construction. Over the last five years, Tharus have replaced hill people and Indians in 12 of the major construction sites, making up to 50 percent of the workforce in these sites. They are highly valued by supervisors for their diligence and ability to work with their hands.

One more example of mobility in pursuit of a better life—these peoples of the Tarai forests found in Kathmandu's jungle of concrete, cement and brick.

-KWM

about 150 Tharu villages, this writer was impressed not only with the richness of Tharu culture, but the extraordinary diversity found amongst all these people who are called 'Tharu'. Indeed, it is a whole lot easier to see the differences between the various Tharu cultures than it is to find similarities.

This, then, immediately begs the question: are they really one tribe or are they several tribes brought together over a thousands years or more by common fate? Let us set free our memory and let it roam through history and recall in our mind's eye Tharus as we have encountered them and postulate these thoughts:

The 'Forest People' are comprised of more than one tribe and they may well have come from many regions at different times, thus contributing to the diversity of culture, facial features and customs found in today's population; the environment then moulded them over a very long period of time into a special group of people, the Tharu, a people who, therefore, not surprisingly, are comprised of many sub-groups, such as the Rana, Dangaura, Kochila and others.

And suddenly it all comes together... There are many events in the history of human behaviour which help us understand this set of circumstances. Most indigenous people around the world, when faced with similar circumstances, when in a similar environment, develop parallel lifestyles and cultures. Thus, when the ancestors of the Tharu moved into the forests of the tarai region at different times, coming from different places, this adjustment process began to take place.

Forest dwellers all around the world become skilled hunters and gatherers, and build houses out of available materials such as trees, branches, grass. When living conditions change for the worse, people move to new locations, and when settled in the new environment, they often also adopt some of the ways of their new neighbours,

for the sake of social acceptance as well as to add new spiritual powers to their own lives. These new deities just might prevent a repetition of the tragedies that made them migrate in the first place. To assure good karma, they also keep alive many of the mythologies and beliefs that they grew up with, the beliefs of their parents and grand-parents, and of their guthiar clansmen.

This, then, is a straightforward explanation for the differences found in the belief systems and practices among the Tharu across the Nepal tarai. And why did various groups move into the forest in the first place? History the world over shows that people pull up the stakes for many different reasons: the search for fresh fertile land; to escape violence, destruction and war; a prolonged drought; overpopulation... In response to these push and pull factors, some people migrate voluntarily, others involuntarily.

The Dark People

After the Aryan invasion destroyed the Indus civilisation, one verse in the *Rig Veda* states, "Through fear of you the dark people went away, not giving battle, leaving behind their possessions, when, O Vaisvanara, burning brightly for Puru, and destroying the cities, you did shine." And in another context it is written, "The people to whom these ruined sites, lacking posts, formerly belonged, these many settlements widely distributed, they, O Vaisvanara, having been expelled by thee, have migrated to

another land."

Did Ashoka's empire-building affect the composition of the people of the tarai, and did it lead to shifting of populations? How much damage did the Huna warlords do when they terrorised western India, and was there a flight towards the east and north? What was the status of the indigenous population of the tarai during the rule of the Guptas in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal, circa 400 AD? Likewise, how many Tibetans and the Han moved into Nepal around 700 AD? Did Mongolian tribes indeed enter the tarai around 1200 AD, coming along the southern Himalayan foothills all the way from Assam? And how about the Sultanate of Delhi and Babur, and did they have a role in

changing the population mix of the faraway tarai region? What, indeed, of the Dravidians?

So many questions, so much uncertainty, so few records, so many possibilities.

The 'Forest People' came from many regions at different times to seek the peace and shelter of the jungle; the environment then moulded them, over a very long period of time, into groups of special people, all of them called the Tharu.

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K.W. Meyer, an architect in Los Angeles for the better part of his life, has devoted his "second lifetime" to the study and recording of the physical culture of Tharus.

Did you see the Kathmandu Post item on Yeti successfully climbing Mount Everest on 11 May?

Friday in 1st round for Cup Volleyball tournament
Ossetian team seen Yeti's footprints
KATHMANDU (PR) - Leader of the Seven-member North Ossetian Expedition (Russia) claimed to have seen footprints of the Yeti, which successfully climbed Mt Everest on May 11.

YETI SEES OSSETIAN TEAM FOOTPRINTS

BARUN (PR) - Abomi Nable, the recluse of the Upper Barun, claimed yesterday to have seen footprints of the seven-member North Ossetian Expedition (Russia), which successfully climbed Mount Everest a few minutes after she came across their tracks on 11 May. Ms. Nable said the seven had done the First Step on the Northeast Ridge and were negotiating the Norton Couloir when her path crossed theirs. She helped carry some stragglers

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over the Second Step and shooed them on to the summit, she said.

Asked whether she was not worried that her legendary reclusiveness might be put in jeopardy by this act of good samaritanism at 8000-plus metres, Ms. Nable replied, "No, at this height memory plays tricks on humans and more go back down saying they did not see me when they did than those who go back saying they saw me when they didn't. So I do not have to worry about those who say they saw me. Most of them will not have."

Asked about her views on the advent of democracy in Nepal, Ms. Nable replied that she wished that this form of social organisation, including the healthy process of voting representatives to power through the ballot box, would be incorporated in the order of things for those "both up and down the evolutionary ladder."

THE DECISION TO open up the Manaslu tourist area along with other areas in 1991 was driven by the desire to diversify opportunities for adventure trekkers and cultural tourists. Realising that these areas lacked the facilities offered by established trekking areas such as Annapurna-Manang-Jomsom and the Everest region, the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation requested the NPC/IUCN National Conservation Strategy (NCS) Implementation Project to conduct a reconnaissance survey of the Manaslu region. The following suggested strategies are based on the findings of the survey team's 25 days' circuit of the Manaslu Himal in 1993.

Physical Infrastructure

The Manaslu tourist area is virtually devoid of all the physical infrastructure necessary for facilitating tourism. The main trails require repair and upgrading in many areas. Side treks for adventure tourism need to be improved and some sites need to be rebuilt as mule trails. All suspension bridges and wooden bridges need to be repaired, and new bridges are required at several points.

As only three locations within the Manaslu trek area provide communications' facilities, wireless sets need to be provided in various places. Air services to Sama or Prok in northern Gorkha are necessary to enhance tourist access to the Manaslu region. As an interim measure, several helicopter pads in northern Gorkha should be constructed.

Although a few campsites have recently been developed, campsites with drinking water and waste disposal facilities are needed at many points in lower and upper Gorkha. Lodges and tourism utilities are nonexistent in the main Manaslu region of upper Gorkha. The few lodges that exist in lower Gorkha are not up to tourist standards. It is important to encourage the private sector, including village entrepreneurs, to establish lodges and restaurants along the trail. Management committees should be formed to set standards and regulate facilities.

Health and Sanitation

The few health posts existing in the Manaslu tourist area should be upgraded. The high absenteeism rate on the part of health assistants should be

Facilitating Tourism

Suggested Strategies for the Manaslu Region

reduced. Several settlements en route (e.g., Prok, Lho, and Samagaon) require new health facilities.

Sanitation programmes should also be implemented to improve health conditions. They should include toilet construction, proper waste disposal facilities along the trail, non-formal health education and awareness campaigns, and use of smokeless stoves.

Education and Tourism Awareness

Although most children in the Manaslu tourist area have relatively easy access to primary education, the general level of education is very low. Around 28 per cent of the school age children under 16 years of age are enrolled in school, but only 30-40 per cent attend school regularly. Teacher absenteeism is very high. Appropriate measures need to be taken to increase school enrollment and to motivate children to attend schools regularly. Primary school children should be taught in their native tongue, preferably by native teachers, who should be regular. Functional literacy classes can be organized for parents so that they have a better understanding of the value of education for themselves and for their children.

Tourism awareness and training should be provided to enterprising people in upper Gorkha. General awareness of household and village sanitation, hygiene, and other facets of successful tourism management are required. Practical training on lodge and restaurant establishment and management and campsite development and operation should be provided to these village entrepreneurs.

Energy

At present, firewood is the primary source of energy available for cooking purposes. Trekking groups

carry kerosene with them to cook food for tourists, but porters depend on local firewood for their own cooking. Local people are finding it increasingly difficult to collect firewood to meet their daily needs. It is, therefore, an urgent necessity to find ways of saving energy and to find alternative sources of energy. Local people should be encouraged to plant fast-growing tree species. Kerosene depots should be established on the trekking route to reduce the demand for firewood. Smokeless stoves should also be introduced into the area to reduce the consumption of firewood as well as to decrease air pollution inside the house. The establishment of biogas plants should be encouraged in the lower Gorkha settlements. Finally, the micro-hydro potential of the many streams and waterfalls on the trails should be investigated.

Household Economic Activities

The Manaslu trekking region offers an opportunity for a number of household economic activities. The local people should be encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities so as to improve their own economic status and to offer much-needed facilities to tourists. The people in the lower Gorkha region should be encouraged to grow vegetables and subtropical fruit crops to sell in local markets. They should be given assistance in using advanced technology and improving irrigation systems to increase their production. The people in upper Gorkha should be helped in sheep-raising and in cheese and butter production and should also receive incentives for horticulture. Local weavers and village women should be given practical training to produce handicrafts for tourists from local raw materials such as thin bamboo, wood, and wool.

Conservation of Cultural Heritage

The religious heritage in upper Gorkha, particularly in the *gompas*, is a potential tourist attraction. However, most of these cultural properties require maintenance. Preparation of a management plan for the conservation and development of religio-cultural resources in the Manaslu region with the participation of the Department of Archaeology, the *gompa* authorities, and the local communities is recommended.

Conservation of Natural Resources

The concerned HMG line agencies and local communities should pay attention to the protection of special sites of touristic value in the Manaslu region. These sites include the upper Buri Gandaki valley between Prok and Namrung with its tracts of undisturbed forest, the Sringi Gompa area, the Dudh Khola valley with its splendid forest of rhododendrons, and the larch forest in the Lho area.

The collection and sale of wildlife species and wildlife products should be strictly curbed. The large variety of crops and livestock available in the Manaslu area should be safeguarded from loss.

Conservation and Development Planning

It is obvious that a comprehensive plan will have to be adopted for the sustainable development of tourism in the Manaslu region. The planning team should work in close consultation with the Department of Tourism, and it should be supported by a technical committee that should be comprised of all the concerned line agencies. When required, it should also have the support of a political committee comprised of MPs, the DDC chairman, *Ilaka* representatives, and VDC personnel.

In order to implement tourism related action programmes, NGO should be established and strengthened by providing technical advice and training. INGOs such as IUCN - The World Conservation Union could provide technical assistance during the early phase of planning and implementation of some selected improvement activities and programmes in close collaboration with the Department of Tourism. ■

Dr. Badri Dev Pande

NCS Nepal No. 1, 1995



Prospects for Tourism in Manaslu:
A Reconnaissance Survey
J. McEachern, S.G. Shah, T.B. Shrestha,
B.D. Pande and N.P. Bhusal. IUCN Nepal,
Kathmandu

Findings and recommendations based on the reconnaissance survey and pre-planning report have been incorporated into this publication. Accordingly, the publication is divided into four chapters dealing with: an overview of the Manaslu area; the Manaslu region's biophysical and sociocultural aspects from the point of view of tourism; opportunities and limitations for tourism development; and recommendations.

Mountaineering Museum

The Nepal Mountaineering Association has recently taken steps to implement its decade-long project for establishing a sophisticated, international mountaineering museum in Pokhara. The museum is believed to be unique, as a museum on the Himalayas does not exist at present. The Association is to host a meeting of (international mountaineering body) (UIAA) permanent committee members after December and hopes to get international assistance for the

museum's construction. It is proposed to set up the museum in Pokhara. It is meant to boost cultural heritage, preserve items of historical importance, provide material and geographical descriptions, and reveal the lifestyles of locals. It also aims to highlight the history of mountaineers, and develop a library and archives in order to develop the museum as an international centre for cultural exchange.

Source: Kathmandu Post

Making Criminals of Climbers

by Deepak Thapa

There are thousands of above-5,000m peaks in Nepal, of which only 142 are open for climbing after permission has been received from the concerned authorities. Anyone who climbs one of these 142 without a permit or climbs any of the other remaining of 'un-opened' peaks will be doing so illegally. And climb illegally is precisely what hundreds of visitors do every mountaineering season in Nepal.

These are facts known to everyone associated with the climbing trade in Nepal. The Ministry of Tourism (MoT) does not deny it, nor does the Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA). Yet, clandestine climbing continues unchecked.

Tourism Act

Climbing permits for Nepali summits are issued at two different places. The NMA has jurisdiction over 18 peaks and is concerned with only these so-called 'trekking' or non-expedition peaks. The rest are dealt

be entitled to climb any Himalayan-Peaks without permission under this Act." Failure to comply can result in various penalties on which, too, the Act is clear. But enforcement is another matter altogether.

The MoT relies on external sources for information on climbs that take place in contravention to the rules. There was just one complaint the Ministry received in all of 1994 and even that was not acted upon on the grounds that further information requested was not forthcoming. The NMA is equally hapless. Having no legal authority, the Association cannot take any action against clandestine climbers without the involvement of Ministries of Tourism and Home, neither of which seem to have the interest or manpower.

To go back to the Tourism Act provisions, it seems important to define the term "Himalayan peak": does it include high spurs of the Mahabharat range, are high and distinctive ridge-tops such as Lhotse Shar to be considered independent summits

lesser peaks which are not on the permitted list. Unfortunately for one of them, International Trekkers of Kathmandu, the furore that followed the Pisang accident of last November forced the authorities to engage in a closer reading of the Act and follow it up with a penalty. The agency has been barred from any mountaineering activity for a period of two years, an action that some industry analysts believe is unfair given that "everybody does it". Meanwhile, the ban on International Trekkers does not seem to have made an impression on its peer agencies, whose itineraries still feature such peaks to be climbed without permission while on trek.

It is not only 'closed' peaks that are being climbed on the sly. The 6183-metre-high Imja Tse (Island Peak) in the Khumbu is one such peak that sees over 15 groups every season attempting it without permission. There are known attempts even on the higher peaks, such as Cho Oyu (8201m), whose "tourist route", up from Nangpa La has been known to attract itinerant climbers. Even on Chomolungma, there have been reports of lone alpinists piggy-backing on fixed ropes of large expeditions and bivouacking on well-stocked camps up the mountain. However, there are no reports of successful climbs of Sagarmatha by such illegal climbers.

Aesthetics vs. Morality

Why does illegal climbing take place after all? One reason is the savings in fees and on the bureaucratic hassles involved. The royalties charged—for example, the US\$ 150 to US\$ 300 charged by the NMA—may seem a pittance to an organised trekking group, but could be a hefty sum for a backpacking alpine-style climber. The free spirit that is the genuine mountaineer obviously dislikes the shackles placed on his ability to climb a peak, and he may deliberately set about evading the regulations. From a purely aesthetic (not moral) standpoint, whether a Himalayan peak is climbed with permission or without does not make that much of a difference.

Most illegal climbing in Nepal takes place along the popular trekking routes, viz., the Annapurna circuit, the Langtang and Khumbu valleys. It is easy to go about one's business quietly in these areas amidst the hundreds of trekkers swarming the trails. It is possible to reach an impromptu

decision to climb in Khumbu, for Namche Bazaar's climbing bazaar offers climbing gear of the same range and quality found at any outfitters in Chamonix. Lending a helping hand are mountain guides and trek operators without whose complicity it would be quite difficult to climb a Himalayan peak, however small.

The interest in enforcing the regulation is mainly that of the host country, for the lost income that clandestine climbing represents. It is therefore in Nepal's interest that illegal climbing be checked. The NMA alone, it is estimated, loses more than NRs 5 million annually from unauthorised climbing of the peaks at its command. By the same reckoning, the central exchequer is losing many more millions of rupees from all the peaks that are being climbed without permission.

In this perspective, one would assume that serious steps would be taken to prevent illegal climbs. Predictably enough, this is not the case. No one even knows where to begin.

Question of Virginity

Another issue thrown up by illegal climbing—which almost by definition is undocumented—is whether or not to believe that the "virgin peaks" are really untrodden. Given the hundreds of peaks available in Nepal, and the inability of the authorities to check what the adventurous climbers do once they are in the High Himal and beyond the range of the base camp-based liaison officers, it is quite likely that many more "virgin peaks" have been climbed than even the climbing world knows of.

Those who climb a virgin peak are not likely to turn up at the NMA or MoT to register their feat. Those who would want to come again to the Nepal Himalaya might not even own up to their triumphs in one of the world's many mountaineering journals. Besides, the Nepali authorities certainly do not have the ability nor the interest in perusing the world's these journals to maintain an updated list of illegally climbed peaks. The problem here is not only that of the Nepali Government: climbers in years will obviously attempt newly-opened peaks believed to be unclimbed, whereas the summits might already have been violated.

The different organisations concerned with climbing in Nepal do not seem to view the matter seriously apart from pointing fingers at each other. The MoT places blame on unscrupulous trekking agents; the established agencies see small-time operators and individual tour leaders as the culprits; the NMA perceives both trekking companies and the MoT responsible—the Ministry for not setting out clearly-defined

rules and trekking companies for looking at the regulations in ways that best suit their interests.

However, as the theoretical protector of Nepal's mountaineering trade, NMA cannot shirk its responsibility so easily, especially because it and the Trekking Agents Association of Nepal (TAAN) share a close, almost incestuous, relationship. The NMA should, at the very least, be able to keep a check on what itineraries are being sold by trekking agents. Amid all this passing of the buck, the main issue of how to stop unauthorised climbing is being forgotten.

The NMA did make an attempt at monitoring back in 1991 by placing a representative each in Manang and Namche Bazaar but the operation floundered within a year. It proved impossible to confirm that a climb had taken place once the climbers had descended. The Association is once again said to be thinking of a similar operation, this time with two person teams which can act as a roving patrol.

There are other methods that have been suggested to check illegal climbing. One is to mobilise the local administrative bodies such as village development committees with the incentive that they receive part of the fine realised from those caught climbing without permission. Another is that national

park personnel be utilised, since many peaks fall within the boundaries of one park or the other. Meanwhile, trekkers entering the country need to be notified about Nepal's mountaineering regulations, for many might forgo illegal climbs if only they knew what their agencies were putting them up to. Permits can also be issued, say at Namche Bazaar, Kyanjin Gompa, Manang and Jomosom, albeit at a higher rate than what they cost in Kathmandu, so that those who get the climbing bug while on a trek will have a way out rather than having to make an illegal bid.

Stricter rules and serious enforcement of them are also being advocated. Sardars could forfeit their NMA registration if found taking part in illegal climbs. Trekking companies could lose their licence altogether instead of only having to suffer temporary suspensions. However, rules will not solve the problem if they are impractical. Many trekkers climb peaks illegally just because they involve mere side trips from the main trail and can be done with equipment on hand.

Making permits unnecessary for peaks such as Thorung Ri on the Annapurna trek, which is being climbed all the time anyway, should not be much to Nepal's loss. After all why make criminals of climbers if it can be helped?

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with by the MoT, which does not have resources or the manpower necessary to keep a thorough check on what goes on high up in the mountains.

Legislation to address climbing without permission does exist in Nepal and despite the erroneous language it uses, manages to convey the message. The Tourism Act, 2035, states unequivocally: "No any mountaineering expedition team shall

or appendages of the main peak? The Act obviously refers to the snow mountains that range the northern part of Nepal, but the fact that the regulations do not state explicitly what constitutes a Himalchuli creates a problem for climbers and allows flexibility to those agencies who do not mind cutting corners.

The grey definition also makes it possible for trekking agencies in Kathmandu and their partners abroad to sell climbs to

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Scandinavian Scandal

Over the month of February and March, a media storm shook Norway regarding a climbing expedition to Nepal's Rolwaling region. The fight was between Norwegian social scientists, philosophers and environmentalists who feel a special affinity for Rolwaling, and mountaineers who had targeted Dragnag Ri (6801m), a previously unclimbed peak in the area which was opened for expeditions a year ago.

The controversy managed to get three of Norway's biggest newspapers and two television stations involved, and dragged in Prime Minister Gro Harlem 'Our Common Future' Brundtland and many others. Much ink and air time was used up, but Kathmandu never even felt a ripple of the waves emanating in Oslo.

The opposition's charge was led by Arne Naess, an 82-year-old philosopher who developed his well-known "deep ecology" thesis two decades ago based on his study of man-and-nature relationships in Rolwaling. Pitted against him was his nephew, also named Arne Naess, a flamboyant mountaineer who makes his name and living through well-

publicised blitzkrieg assaults on unsuspecting mountain peaks.

After his first request for permission to climb Dragnag Ri was refused by Kathmandu's Ministry of Tourism (when the peak was still out-of-bound), Arne Naess the climber approached Prime Minister Brundtland for help. She wrote a letter to then-Nepali Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, stating that the expedition application was "a matter that is potentially of great interest to the people of both countries".

Those who opposed the expedition read this as a not-so-subtle threat by a powerful Northern donor country against an aid-receiving Southern one. (Kathmandu receives a little under 50 million kroner, or NRs 200 million, in foreign aid from Oslo annually.) The expedition leader even claimed on television that he had told Brundtland to use the issue of Norwegian aid to get permission for the peak.

Eco-filosof Sigmund Kyloy, has long-standing links to Rolwaling. According to Kyloy,

Rolwaling is one of the beyuls (areas of refuge) blessed 1200 years ago by Guru Rimpoché (Padmasambhava) as "a place to seek refuge from war, violence, competition, selfishness, to live in harmony with people and nature." He adds, "Even among the beyul valleys of Himalaya, Rolwaling is special, since one of its mountains is Tseringma (Gauri Shankar), the abode of the universal mother earth spirit, revered throughout the the entire Tibeto-Himalayan Buddhist region." The opposition believed that a Norwegian expedition had no role in disturbing the peace of Rolwaling in such a manner that the region would become a magnet to mass tourism, like adjoining Khumbu.

The battle lines were drawn, and a free-for-all ensued in the tabloids and on television. In response to the Norwegian Nature Conservancy's demand that she withdraw support from the expedition, Brundtland issued a press release stating that "there has been no information available that Dragnag Ri is holy or on the special nature of the area", and that "requests

about the Nepali mountains should be directed to the Nepali authorities."

In Nepal, reported one Oslo tabloid, the entire controversy was being viewed as a storm in a teacup. "The opinion that the mountain is holy is incorrect," was how one paper quoted Gunnor Heiene, the Norwegian Consul General in Kathmandu. Arne Naess maintains that all mountains are holy to Himalayan Buddhists, and that while some might be extra holy Dragnag Ri is not one of them. "The Nepali authorities would never have given permission if Dragnag Ri was considered holy," he added.

Says Stein Malkenes, President of the Nature Conservancy, "The basic feeling is that Norwegians should not be doing these kinds of yuppie activities. It is very embarrassing and people at the grassroots here react to it mentally."

Norwegians should not rush into pristine areas ". He added, "We must hold ourselves to a higher standard." Artikkelen er noe forkortet. Red.

Nordmenn til topps uten Naess

Etter mye slitt klatre Naess-ekspedisjonen sist søndag å karre seg helt til topps på det 6801 meter høye fjellet Dragnag-Ri i Nepal. Arne Naess kom imidlertid ikke opp. Han befant seg i et klatrerlag som lå lenger bak, da han fikk melding om at fem medlemmer av klatre-ekspedisjonen hadde nådd toppen. Dette var absolutt siste mulighet til å nå målet, etter at ekspedisjonen gikk tom for mat og utstyr samme dag. Blant de fem som nådde toppen, var nordmennene Bjørn Myhren-Lund og Ralph Høibakk.

Torsdag 4. mai 1995

To meter fra Drangnag Ri

Ralph Høibakk og Bjørn Myhren-Lund ble hindret av lynnedslag fra å nå toppen av Drangnag Ri først.

SVERRE DALLAND

De to nordmennene var på vei mot den 6801 meter høye fjelltoppen sammen med engelskmannen Chris Bonington og to sherpaer. Uvær og stadige lynned-

slag gjorde at de ikke ville risikere å forsere de siste to meterne til toppen og dermed kanskje bli truffet av lyn. Derfor ble det engelskmannen Bonington som ble den første i verden til å bestige Drangnag Ri.

Klatring skal være spennende, men det er ikke verdt å risikere livet sitt for to fattede meter, forklarer Ralph Høibakk og legger til: - Jeg er glad for å være tilbake på norsk jord igjen. Fjellet var mer utilgjengelig og lenger vekk fra sivilisasjonen enn

Mount Everest.

Høibakk forteller også at turen ble mer dramatisk enn noen hadde ønsket. I 5500 meters høyde fikk Vegard Ulvang nyrebekkenbetennelse og 41 graders feber. Den medbragte trykkposen, samt behandlingen fra ekspedisjonens lege Kjell Torgeir Stokke, reddet trolig den populære skiløperens liv.

Selv om vi nok undervurderte fjellets vanskelighetsgrad, var vi svært godt forberedt, sier ekspedisjonens leder, Arne Naess,

som selv var forhindret fra å nå helt til topps på grunn av belastningsskader i ryggen, kraftig hodepine og forkjølelse. Engelskmannen som ble førstemann til toppen, sa etterpå at Drangnag Ri var tøffere enn sydvestveggen på Mount Everest og sydvengen på Annapurna - klatreruter som regnes som noen av de tøffeste i verden.

Aftenposten

Freitag 26. mai 1995

UNNSKYLD!

Arne Naess beklager å ha brukt Gro

AV ESPEN OLSEN

Fjellklatrer, skipsreder og nordmannen Arne Naess har omsider sendt Gro Harlem Brundtland en unnskyldning - på engelsk, for sikkerhets skyld.

29. aug. -95

VG

Det var etter Naess' uttalelser om Drangnag-Ri-ekspedisjonen til Nepal på Dagsrevyen 11. februar i år at mange-millionær og Diana Ross' ektemannen kom i trøbbel. Da refererte han til en angivelig samtale han hadde hatt med statsministeren: "Jeg spurte henne: Hvor mye gir vi til Nepal i året? Og det var 40 millioner kroner. Og så spurte jeg: Hva får vi igjen? Og så svarte hun: Ingenting. Og så sa jeg: La oss få et fjell. Og det var hun helt med på. Uten henne hadde det ikke gått," sa Naess.

Måtte dementere

Den noe merkelige uttalelsen førte til at Gros statssekretær Morten Wetland måtte rykke ut med et dementi. Han opplyste at Gro aldri hadde snakket med Naess om ekspedisjonen.

Naess måtte medgi at uttalelsen var ment som en «munterhet» han angret på i ettertid.

Men først et snaut halvår et-

ter at Naess ble tatt med bukse- ne nede, mener han liden er inne til å sende en skriftlig unnskyldning til statsministeren.

"Dette var en heller blandet opplevelse. Før vi reiste, ble vi nødt til å jobbe med den negative PR'en som min uheldige TV-opptreden medførte. I tillegg var det en miks av rare motiver og årsaker som var vanskelig å motarbeide, selv om de var direkte gale. Jeg tror vi begge hadde det vondt i den perioden," heter det i det opprinnelige engelskspråklige brevet til statsministeren.

Nådde ikke målet

Selv om medlemmer av ekspedisjonen nådde målet, ble Naess' personlige ambisjoner «bare delvis tilfredsstillt da jeg selv ikke nådde målet». Avslut-

ningsvis skriver Naess ydmykt følgende: «Jeg takker igjen for hjelpen og samarbeidet, og er oppriktig lei meg for hodepinen denne ekspedisjonen helt sikkert påførte deg.»

26

Ekspedisjon i Nepal 2

Arne Naess, Brundtland og NRK

Næss vil klatre som planlagt

Norges konsul i Nepal:

- Fjellet er ikke hellig

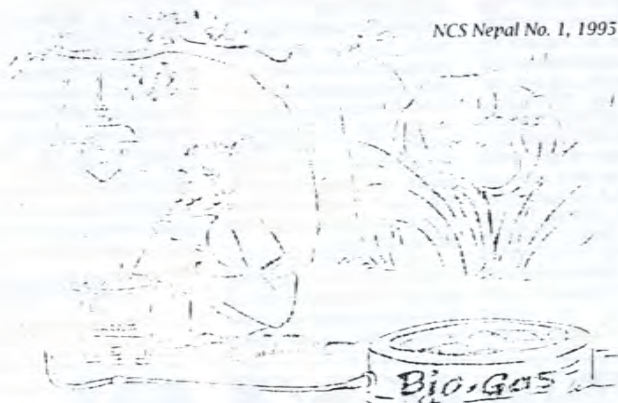
Religiøse grupper i Nepal avviser over-

pa-buddhister og tibetanske lama-buddhister

25

BIOGAS

NCS Nepal No. 1, 1995



Alternative Source of Energy

CHITWAN, A BEAUTIFUL VALLEY in the mid-terai, is no exception in the context of the deteriorating environment. It has attracted a number of people from the nearby hills and other parts of the country. Chitwan is also renowned for its lush conservation area, the Royal Chitwan National Park (RCNP), spread over 932 sq. km. In 1963, the area south of Rapti River was demarcated as a rhinoceros sanctuary. A decade later it was turned into the first national park of the country.

RCNP, however, is facing a number of problems, including encroachment, poaching, illegal grazing, and clearing of the jungle by nearby residents. The punitive measures adopted by Park authorities, rather than solving these problems, have incurred bad feelings from the neighbouring locals.

The most prominent problem was that the local residents had no alternatives other than entering the restricted jungle area to look for fuelwood and fodder. The people and Park officials treated each other as enemies and there seemed to be no solution in sight.

IRDC's Initiative

An NGO, the Integrated Rural Community Development Center (IRDC), came up with the innovative concept of providing alternative energy sources to villagers living around the Park area. IRDC began by introducing biogas plants as an alternative, pollution-free, and affordable source of energy for the local population.

IRDC started its activities in Chitwan in 1993. It has so far constructed seven biogas plants for seven families of the Kathar, Kumroj, and Gunjnagar VDCs. It aims to expand its services to Pateni, Jagatpur, and Bachhyauli VDCs in future.

IRDC is constructing the plants from a research point of view. It has attempted to develop low-cost, long-life plants rather than use the plants developed by Nepal Gobar Gas and Agricultural Tools (Pvt.) Ltd. and other agencies. It has given preference to using local construction materials available in the villages. At present, the average cost per plant is Rs 13,000 in addition to overhead costs, out of which about

Rs 7,000 is subsidised by IUCN and Rs 3,000 is allotted as a loan.

IRDC also plans to construct community biogas plants for the Tharu community residing near the Park. "There is a growing demand for our plants", says Mukund P. Bhattarai, chairman of IRDC. The Center emphasises integrated programmes such as community forestry, nursery development, use of low-cost toilets, improved stoves, and other health and nutrition programmes.

IRDC also encourages the community to select the farmers at whose houses the plants are to be installed. It has also trained local people in plant construction and maintenance and repair. "We plan to introduce a community seed money programme for sustainable use of the biogas plants," states Bhattarai.

The plants have been of immense use to the villagers. They no longer have to enter the protected parks risking legal and other punishments. They use the resulting spare time for other income-generating activities. Their houses are smoke-free and their children can read and write until late at night in the light. They grow vegetables, making use of the slurry produced from the plants, and sell them in the nearby market.

The pioneering efforts of IRDC have greatly reduced illegal grazing and clearing of forests inside the Park area. Nowadays, Park officials and villagers occasionally sit together - at the initiative of the Center - to sort out the problems between them. It appears that conservation no longer works against local development.

Before introducing the alternative energy programme in Chitwan, IRDC had set up a school in the remote Syang VDC of Mustang District with the help of a Japanese national. It had also set up a community forestry programme by mobilising local resources in Thini VDC near Jomsom in the same district. Its innovative efforts towards sustainable development will continue in the future with an emphasis on conserving natural resources. □

High-altitude cleaning efforts in the Khumbu region of Nepal have made trekking more pleasurable now, reports *Himal*. The Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee (SPCC) is supervising a programme that

ensures that garbage is not dumped at campsites and along the trek route. The SPCC is preparing rubbish pits, providing tourist information and training lodge owners.

December 15, 1994 Down To Earth

Ny Lama

NEW DELHI (NTB-Reuter): Tibets åndelige leder Dalai Lama har utpekt en seks år gammel gutt som reinkarnasjonen av Panchen Lama, Tibets nest viktigste religiøse leder, som døde i 1989.

Tibetanske buddhister tror sjelen til en avdød åndelig leder tar bolig i et nyfødt barn.

Gutten blir dermed den 11. Panchen Lama.

May/June 1995 HIMAL

As the column goes to press, the Dalai Lama has named the new Panchen Lama, and he is six-year-old Tenzing Gedhun Yeshe Thrinley Phuntsog Pal Saggio from Lhari district in Nagchu province. The previous incarnation passed away in January 1989. The good news is that the reincarnation has been located firmly within Tibet and not in some new age family in Seattle or Madrid. Now comes the part where one bites one's nails and nervously wonders, "What will the Chinese say?" For his part, the Dalai Lama says, "It is my hope that the Chinese government will extend its understanding, cooperation and assistance to the Tashi Lhunpo monastery in enabling Rinpoche to receive proper religious training and to assume his spiritual responsibilities."

Endangered Fern in Begnas Lake Area

Begnas Lake in Pokhara is now found to be the habitat of a rare and endangered species of tree fern known as *Cyathea spinulosa*. Local



people call it "chhatre unyu" which means an "umbrella fern", as the fern resembles an umbrella. The trunk or stem grows up to 5 m and is crowned with a number of long and arching leaves. Each of the leaves is 1.5-2 m long, with small leaflets arranged on side branches of the main rachis (leaf-stalks). The basal portion of the leaf-stalk is armed with spines, hence the name *spinulosa*.

Tree ferns are remnants of the Dinosaur Era. They are found in humid tropical pockets of Nepal such as the Begnas Lake area.

Damodar Joshi and
Yogendra Man Singh Raut

NCS Nepal No. 4, 1994

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- India Today, 15 March 1994

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- Expeditions, March 1994

CAN YOU AFFORD NOT TO READ HIMAL?

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Mountains, Himalaya
You bound the oceans from
east to west
A northern yardstick
To measure the Earth*

- Kalidasa (Kumara Sambhava)

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An invitation to OUTSTANDING NEPALI EXPATRIATE PROFESSIONALS

Wherever you may be working or living at the moment, I would like to invite you, on behalf of UNDP Nepal, to be a part of our unique programme known as "TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE THROUGH EXPATRIATE NATIONALS" (TOKTEN). A brain-child of UNDP, TOKTEN seeks to mitigate the adverse impact of the brain-drain syndrome which is depriving many developing countries of the expertise they so crucially need for their socio-economic development.

In Nepal, the TOKTEN programme was launched in February 1991. The programme urges outstanding Nepali professional expatriates living and working abroad to volunteer their services for well-prepared consultancy missions, for a period of three weeks to three months, in their home country. UNDP pays for the travel and living expenses. Besides having wider international experience, Nepali expatriate professionals have the added advantage of speaking the local language and sharing the same cultural values with personnel in the recipient local institutions, thus facilitating communication, mutual understanding and ease in the work environment.

So far twenty-seven Nepali expatriate experts have served under the TOKTEN programme in various fields, such as, among others, Environmental Planning, Urban Policy and Planning, Biotechnology, Plastic Reconstructive Surgery, Psychiatry, Anaesthesiology, Animal Science and Genetics, Health Services Delivery Planning, and Financial Management. Some of them, to name only a few, are Mr. Naresh Amatya (USA), Prof. Tara K. N. Baidya (Brazil), Dr. Chuda B. Karki (UK), Dr. Sambhu Nath (Zambia), Prof. Uttam Rajbhandary (USA), Dr. Ram Manohar Shrestha (Thailand), Dr. Tara Upreti (USA), and Dr. Ramesh Vaidya (USA). Many more are in a roster which is made available to prospective host institutions.

To qualify for inclusion in our roster, you should have at least a Master's degree from an internationally recognised educational institution and at least eight years of full-time work experience, at least five years of which has been in a senior position with an organization outside of Nepal. You should also have the willingness and commitment to offer your services for the betterment of Nepal. If you think you fit the description, please write to us at UNDP, P.O. Box 107 Kathmandu, Nepal, or better yet send us a fax at (977-1) 523991 or 523986, enclosing your curriculum vitae and a brief statement on the problems/institutions in Nepal where you feel your expertise could be of use. Nepali women professionals are encouraged to apply.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Carroll Long
Resident Representative
UNDP Nepal