

# CELEBRATE WITH JOHNNIE WALKER HAPPY DASHAIN

# ECS NEPAL

THE NEPALI WAY

pg. 28 **THE  
TASTE OF  
DASHAIN**

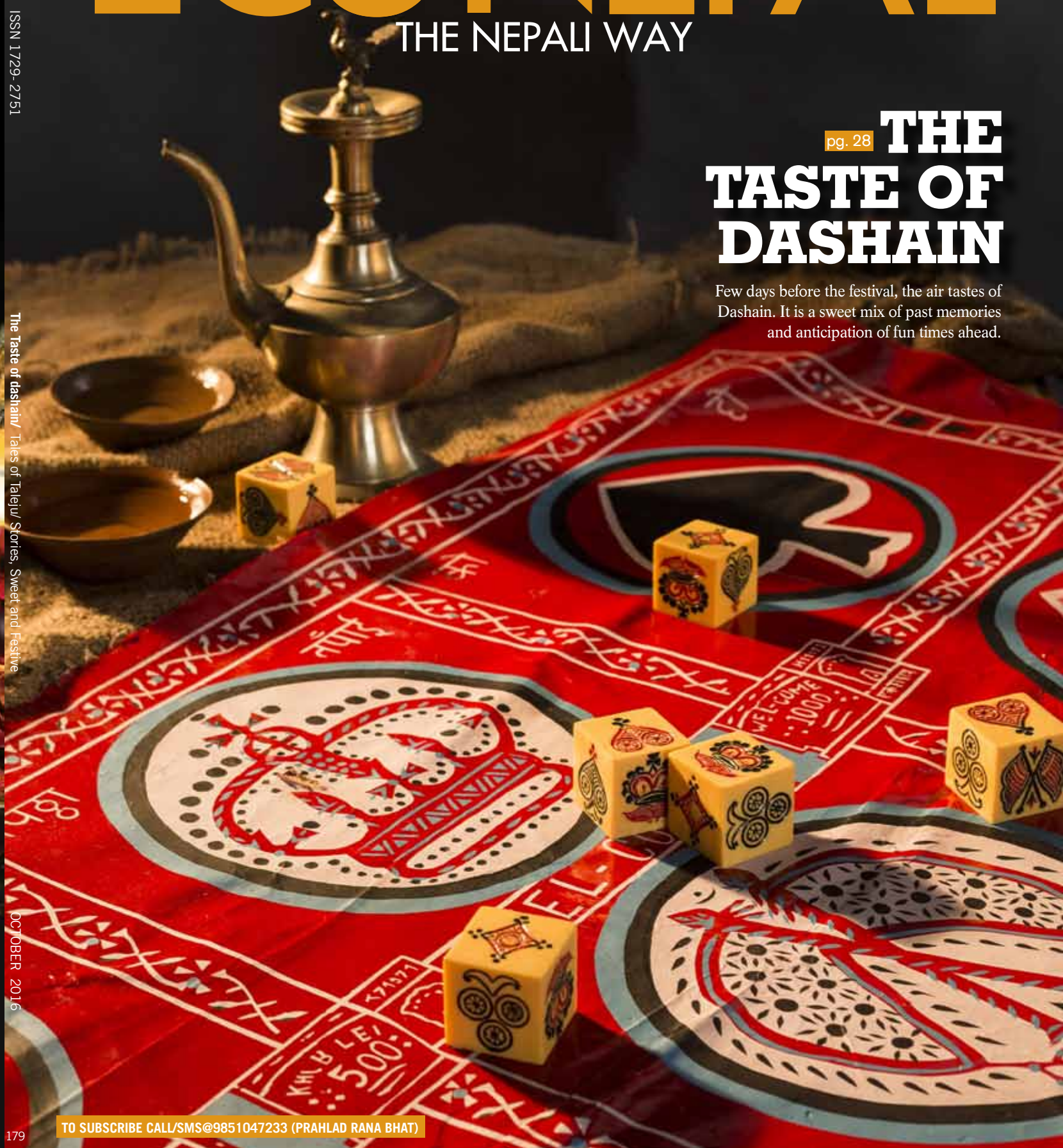
Few days before the festival, the air tastes of Dashain. It is a sweet mix of past memories and anticipation of fun times ahead.

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The Taste of dashain/ Tales of Taleju/ Stories, Sweet and Festive

OCTOBER 2016

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THE NEPALI WAY

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# Editorial

OCTOBER 2016 • Issue 179



## Mood swings with Dashain

My fervor for Dashain always starts peeking a month early, even before Indra Jatra arrives. The Dashain induced nostalgia is ever present when the ten day long festival is slowly nearing, the overwhelming smell of guavas, the refreshing spring breeze, the flight of kites in the sky, families chit-chatting, old songs, idle warm afternoons. My mood starts to lighten up and gradually gets intoxicated with Dashain excitement. It makes me feel 'happy go lucky.'

But it's not just me who keeps the count; there is my dad spending long hours figuring out what new delicacy should he cook this time; my mom, who is always worried about her perfection in making khasi ko masu (goat meat), "What if the meat gets hard," and way ahead of time, she starts practicing her forte. While my elder sister becomes overtly particular on Dashain for cleaning her car and her room. It's a time when she comes up with all the crazy and wonderful ideas to decorate the house.

Meanwhile, my list of things to do for Dashain grows wilder with each passing day.

Here at ECS, Dashain has come early for the team. Work has been calous, with the strange mix of ambitions

to finish everything before Dashain celebrations and the indolence that unwittingly creeps in, when you know something as delightful as this festival is waiting round the corner; our hunt for stories despite this has left us in a state of half misery, half revelry. All in a good way.

In this issue, we have put together this essence of Dashain, stories of the most colloquial connotations of Dashain, of festive nostalgia and longing. Stories about Dashain Tika, the taste of Dashain, of the heavy feast and sweets, of adventure holiday plans.

I hope this package of 'Bada Dashain' entertains you.

Happy Dashain!

Lastly, I will end with recommending you this lovely song that I cannot stop humming to:

*Dashain nai hoki yo mero Dasha farki  
aaayeko!*

*Dashain nai hoki yo mero Dasha farki  
aaayeko!*

*Pasal lai Picche mero kina tauko  
khayeko!*

*Dashain aayeko! Dashain Aayeko!*

**Srizu Bajracharya**  
Sub-editor



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21

### Living In Nepal

**Five things to do in Nepal**  
**Culture** Blissful tika from the Living Goddess  
**People** Bits, Pieces, and Life with Kabi Raj Lama  
**Movie festival** Rich Characters and a Meaningful  
**Culture** The Taste of Dashain

89

### Craft

**Events** The Maker Faire Comes to Town  
**People** Bags with Purpose  
A Story Worth Hearing

95

### Travel

**Escape** Luxury with Nature

117

### Adventure

**On Going** The Valley on a Vespa  
**Destination** Free Fallin' Amidst the Mountains  
**Food** Going Vegan for a Day!  
**Experience** Soaring Down the Slopes



A Plate full of Festivities

Feature

72

### Photo katmandu



We endorse the recycling of our magazine and would encourage you to pass it on to others to read when you have finished with it.

### Feature

## 52 Stories, Sweet and Festive

Apart from the deep blue skies and bright sunny days, there are a number of other sweet things happening during the months that follow the end of monsoon. Bada-Dashain and Tihar are major highlights.

Juniper Berries  
from Macedonia

Coriander Seeds  
from Bulgaria

Lemon Peel  
from Spain

Angelica Root  
from Belgium

Liquorice  
from Nepal

Bitter Almond  
from Greece

Orris Root  
from Italy

Cinnamon  
from Seychelles



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# ECS NEPAL THE NEPALI WAY Contents

OCTOBER 2016 • Issue 179



## 98 Photo story

Tetang- Chusang, Under the Great Mustang umbrella.



### ON THE COVER

Langur Buija: a traditional popular game that has overtime been deemed illegal because of the gambling vice it tends to promote. But if played with a light hearted spirit of Dashain the game is endearing and fun for any festive get-together.

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THE NEPALI WAY

[ OCTOBER 2016 ]

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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

**What:** Changa Chait  
**When:** 1st October 11am-4pm  
**Where:** Pilot baba Ashram

**What:** Unlimited Dashain Shopping with Sattva  
**When:** October 1-2nd  
**Where:** Imago Dei

**What:** The Pump anniversary  
**When:** October 1st 1:15 - 8:15 pm  
**Where:** The Pump, Gyanmandala, Jhamsikhel

**What:** National youth business models workshop by RSTCA  
**When:** October 8  
**Where:** Mega party palace

**What:** Together for hope, Walkathon Vol III  
**When:** October 22 8:30-3pm  
**Where:** Mangal Bazaar "Together For Hope - VOL III" is a yearly event by Rose Foundation Nepal to spread awareness about breast cancer and promote Breast Self Examination in Nepal. The Event will begin From Patan Durbar Square and end at Jawalakhel Ground where there will be a live performance by 1974 A.D., food stalls, and many other attractions.

**Newari Voyé**  
**Where:** Durbar square  
**When:** IndraJatra  
**What's Happening:** Social Tours is organizing a Newari bhoj on the occasion of Yenya. The Voyé is set to take place right amidst all the Jatra action, along the path where the rath is going to be escorted along.

**What: Jazzmandu**  
**When: 20-26th October**  
**Where: Various**  
 The 14th Kathmandu jazz festival, is taking place from 20th to 26th October in places around the valley. Kathmandu's leading jazz event, It promises to be the biggest jazz event in the himalayas again, featuring artists from Nepal and abroad. Music unity for peace and compassion.

**What :** Open Air Flea Market , BAC Mela  
**When:** 29th October, Saturday. 1pm-10pm  
**Where:** BAC Art Cafe, Pulchowk  
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# Living In Nepal

THINGS TO DO • FOOD • FESTIVAL WATCH • CULTURE



## 5 things to do in Nepal

Make this time with your family and friends even more special by doing one or all of the following things.



**JERRY SWARI AND AILA AND CHYANG**

Forget for a moment that jerry swari is usually a breakfast item. Pretend for another that aila and chyang are not just served at bhwe. What we will have is a lip-smacking combination that will blow away your mind (maybe literally). Pair up this sweet confectionary with the traditional bad-asses and report if it's not any better. But don't worry if you're not too keen about this one, for the pairing of jerry with swari alone is amazing. You know all about aile and chyang.

**SWINGS**

Dashain is not just for nostalgic time with your near and dear ones. This is in fact a great occasion to relive your most beautiful memories. After you're done with the rituals and meals, take some time to look for swings which made your childhood perfect, instead of simply talking about them. And you might probably want to do that a little quickly - those lines of children (and adults) are never going to end and you know it!

**PLAYING CARDS**

The stakes have never been higher. That one cousin who always sends you those meme to torment you has to be brought down and what better opportunity to shut their mouth than to beat them mercilessly in this wonderful weapon of vengeance. You better polish your card tricks and strategies so that you can make that beautiful loot yours: Know your queens and kings, your spades and clubs like the back of your hand. But above all, enjoy this Dashain-exclusive pleasure!



### **FLYING KITES**

Aside from upholding the traditions, what else can you gain from flying kites during this great festival? Let's not forget that traffic is not as wretched as it gets on normal days so there's less pollution. Less pollution means (almost) fresh air. And it is for this that flying kites in the autumn air is so tantalizing. If it doesn't tempt you, then you can be nice and cheer the captain-in-chief and tease the losers.

### HONE YOUR HOBBIES

Series of days with food, family, and fun, and there you will be, with more time than you thought you would get. So what can you do with it? Sharpen your photography skills, or knitting techniques, practice keyboard, or nail that dance move that you've been meaning to. If you are really up for utilizing the holiday to its maximum, what better than this time to do it? Shock your colleagues into thinking that you are the undisputed queen/king, once you come back from holidays.





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# Blissful tika from the Living Goddess

Culture

The festival of Dashain is associated with the tika that is put on the tenth and final day of the festival. This is the story of the divine tika.

ABHAS DHARANANDA RAJOPADHYAYA



Ever since my childhood, the red tika on the forehead had always been a fascination for me. One of the greatest festivals for Hindus, Dashain, would unfailingly be an occasion when the red tika would show the festive mood on my and all my family's faces.

Putting on a tika is also a part of adornment in the 16 classical steps, also called *sodasa srigāra*. Most therefore would usually link it as a feminine thing; but this is equally enchanting for both males and females alike. On festive occasions, it has a deeper significance.

A handful of red vermillion powder along with grains of rice mixed with curd, and often lawa to stick the tika together makes the tika ready at home. The red is an auspicious color for all cel-

ebrations and it is at the center of the forehead that most people prefer to put on this tika. While this is so common almost on all occasions, many at hill areas smear the tika on whole forehead with long recitations of blessings.

For birthdays or some domestic celebrations or festive occasions, the red tika is always used. Yellow tika and even that mixed with rice and curd is used in commemoration of the dead. White tika is commonly a welcome sign among different Himalayan tribes in Nepal.

A tika is always put on by ones' elder and is always accompanied by blessings from the elders – by age or social position. Receiving tika from elder relatives or even a pundit or guru is a sign of auspiciousness: receiving it from a divine

figure is simply attaining closeness to divinity. And so we go to the Living Goddess Kumari.

While I associate the tika more with Hindus and their festivals as of now, I do not forget that Buddhists too do it. Examples are plenty and equivalent to almost any Hindus in the Kathmandu valley. The royal Living Goddess Kumari herself is from a Buddhist family, and is revered by all religions alike.

While Buddhists regard Kumari in forms of Vasundhara or Vajradevi, Hindus too have special reverence to the goddess in the form of Durga Bhawani. The Durga form is primarily worshipped during Dashain – an important Hindu festival venerating mother-goddesses in the Shakta cult. Local lore associates Kumari with another patron deity – the Taleju, venerable both for Hindus and Buddhists Newars and even in esoteric form. Goddess Kumari is believed to be the living form of the tutelary deity of medieval Malla kings.

The history of royal Kumari tradition may be traced only to middle of 18th century during the rule of Jay Prakash Malla, the last Malla king of Kathmandu before the 1768 Shah conquest. It was during his time that the royal patronage was offered to a Buddhist girl in the form of the living goddess. But this does not mean there was no such Kumari tradition before this. Still some areas host girls to take the position of the living goddess Kumari at a local/city level – of course without that royal status. Examples of such are found at Makhan Jyapu Kumari, Kilagal Kumari in Kathmandu, Pimbahal Jyapu Kumari

at Patan or city's chief Kumari at Hakhabahal in Patan, Ekanta Kumari at Bhaktapur, Sankhu, Bungamati, Kirtipur, Chabahil and so on.

For a Newar household however, every girl child is a Kumari. Most traditional families too therefore equally celebrate birth of a girl-child almost equally as that of a male child. Every girl child is revered as Kumari during the Maha-Navami puja (ninth day worship) of Dashain festival.

Among many others, Dashain is also characterized by tika and jamara. Tradition has it that the tika is received from the elders, and is always followed by blessings. Elderly ones still recite few or full of the following lines as a part of blessing –

*āyudroṇasute, śriyam daśarathe, śatrukmayam rāghave | aiśvaryam nahuse, gatiśca pavane, mānañca duryodhane || śauryamsāntanave, balamhaladhare, satyañca kuntisute | vijñyāna vidure, bhavantu bhavatām, kīrtiśca nārāyane || 1 ||*

**This translates as –** [May you] have years as that of the son of Ācārya/guru Drona [i.e. Aśvatthāmā, one of the eight immortals from Mahabharata epic], riches as that of King Dasarath of Ayodhyā [from the epic of Ramayana], may your enemy gets destroyed as that of Raghava [Lord Rama], may you have richness of purānic King Na-



husa, speed of wind-God Pavana, dignity as that of Duryodhana, valor as that of King Sāntanu, strength as that of plough-bearer Lord Balarāma, truthfulness as that of son of Kuntī [Yuddhisthira], knowledge of the wise Bidura, fame as that of Lord Nārāyana.

#### Inciting the Aagya-Chakra

The philosophy of yoga divides the human body into seven chakras. These seven chakras are part of non-physical, spiritual body overlaying the physical one, and locate major energy centers within a human body. Many Vedic literatures on yogic exercises, including those falling into the tantric genre mention of these chakras. These amazingly correspond to the seven

main nerves emanating from the spinal cord of human body.

This philosophy is in practice not just in Hinduism or tantric tradition, but also in Vajrayana Buddhism, Bon religion, Qigong practices, Malay-Indonesian practices etc.

The forehead is where the Aagya chakra lies and putting on a tika at the center of forehead is linked with inciting this very chakra. Scientifically, the chakra is closely linked with pineal gland producing melatonin, regulating sleep and waking hours. The blessing along with tika is also then interpreted to attain strength to balance one's higher and lower selves, and one's intuition.

The following table will help understand these concepts in a simple way

Name	Location	Symbol	Color	Related to	Remarks
<b>Muladhara</b>	Base of spine	Lotus with four petals	Red	Instinct, security and survival	Kundalini rests here
<b>Svadhishthana</b>	Sacrum	Lotus with crescent moon, six petals	White lotus, Vermillion or orange petals	Relationship, violence, addictions, pleasure	
<b>Manipura</b>	Navel	Downward pointing triangle with ten petals	Yellow	Power, fear, opinion-formation	
<b>Anahata</b>	Heart	Two intersecting triangles	Green/Pink	Emotions, compassion, unconditional love, well-being	
<b>Visuddha</b>	Throat	Crescent within a circle with 16 petals	Silver crescent White circle Light blue/ turquoise petals	Communication, independence	
<b>Aagya</b>	Third-eye, forehead	Lotus with two petals	Violet/indigo/ deep blue or white	Balancing higher and lower selves, intuition	
<b>Sahasrara</b>	Crown	Lotus with thousand petals	White or Multi-colored	Inner wisdom, death of body	Pure consciousness

# The Taste of Dashain

 SACHI MULMI    ILLUSTRATION: ASHMIN MAHARJAN

**F**ew days before the festival, the air tastes of Dashain. It is a sweet mix of past memories and anticipation of fun times ahead.

There's something about the air when it carries the sweet smell of guavas. Though we feel the neighbors eyeing the tantalizing guavas from August, it is when the veil of clouds clear away to reveal blue sky that the truth of the approaching festival actually hits you. With this realization comes a sort of nostalgia and expectation to match and challenge it.

For some reason, I can sense a change in the air when September comes. A series of festivals in the months of Shrawan and Bhadra is nothing more than teasers to the grand ten-day affair that is Dashain. And why not? Streets are bustling with shoppers vying for food, clothes, essentials, etc. Houses are cleaned up (probably the only time every nooks and corners are covered). There's enough food and drinks to set the party mood. But the real work has barely started.

Having been born in a household that believes in rituals, everyone's main concern is the kitchen. Shopping for enough food items alone takes days to manage. So many ingredients demand to be used and seen. Have you seen a bunch of mothers

discussing the cups, manas, and grams of peas, chickpeas, lentils, meat, etc. that needs to be bought? It is beyond lively. This conference of the dashain demented devis is the main attraction and entertainment of the kamchor choris like me, who are only too happy witnessing the pandemonium from afar. After all, I'll be dragged in anyway, whether I like it or not.

Mother is only too keen to listen to the latest bhajans. My hip mom who plays Zen Koi and Plants Vs. Zombies in her spare time feverishly looks for bhajans of the appropriate Gods and Goddesses. On Monday, it is Mahadev. On Tuesday, I can hear her playing a song about the mysterious trumpet of Lord Ganesha. So naturally, on Dashain, with more resources at her disposal, she'll shuffle between Mangal dhun and Malashree dhun.

A few years ago when I listened to the radio religiously, I remember being excited when the jingles in between consisted of Malashree dhun. For me, that signified the approaching Dashain, meaning holidays and a break from school. That paired with the sweet smell of guavas alone was enough to send me into a state of elation. With Dashain right around the corner, I find that this bit has not changed. I hope it doesn't.



People

# Bits, Pieces, and Life with Kabi Raj Lama

Sometimes, the most dreadful memories becomes our inspiration, woes become our friends like bitterness strengthens our abilities. Like the saying goes, “What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger.”

MAIYA BAJRACHARYA



**A**t Siddhartha Art Gallery, I am astounded again to observe Kabi Raj Lama’s new collection of lithography that he worked in Steindruck Munchen in Munich, Germany and Guanlan Printmaking forum as an Artist in Residence. His prints delivered the numb feelings that our lives are still freshly entwined with; the confusing turmoil we were in after the earthquake; the surviving notes we wrote to ourselves; the need of the hour to find hope in little things; the

disfigured alignment of our lives. These vague fragments of our lives hung themselves on the wall as stained memories. And, the feeling was overwhelming, after all, it’s a truth we cannot turn ourselves from, and the exhibition gave me good goose bumps.

**What has been your inspiration this time?**

The reiterating, recurring feeling of panic every time the ground below us shakes; the feeling is unpleasant. It’s an indelible memory that will take time to fade away. My work revolves

around those feelings—our distorted faith, the looming fear, the sudden evanesce, the feelings that we are not easy to come to terms with, the fragments that made meaning for itself, the encrypted symbols that we missed out on. I have also printed the hurdled dream of a child who shared his earthquake story when I went to give art workshops to some schools as art therapy.

If you look closely at ‘My Home a Ray of Hope’ you will see a motherly figure holding her child. A student I met during the workshop had shared with me that he felt safe when his mother hugged him tightly during the quake. And that is what I have printed.

**Is there a recurring metaphor that you have used in these prints?**

You may realize that I am an emotional person, and I think very deeply about the meanings of our lives, fears, and inhibitions. As a metaphor in these prints, you will see that I have used a lot of boats, some stable, some turned upside down, some on the background. Boats are my metaphors. I don’t know how to swim, and I am really scared of water, sea, and river. Having a boat makes me feel safe, it gives me a way out of my fears. And that’s why they embedded in these prints.

---

## Lithography takes a lot of patience and hard work. I am insane when I am working, I don't realize the passing time.

### Were these ideas spontaneous?

Not entirely, I had to make proposals to apply for artist in residency in Munich, only the best ideas would get the opportunity. And hence, I took my time preparing for it. Coming together with ideas isn't easy, it's more difficult than putting your mind on paper instinctively.

However, these ideas changed when I was working with the stone, after all, art is impulsive. Ideas flow like river when it gets its space. About 50% of my idea changed while making these prints.

### How has the journey been?

Lithography takes a lot of patience and hard work. I am insane when I am working, I don't realize the passing time. And, I would say I was lucky to be chosen for such an opportunity. I didn't want to take things for granted. The university facilitated my stay with the most valuable tools that I can't even imagine; I could use them to my utmost sense of creativity, without being hesitant about

the related cost. I threw myself to draw freely in the big heavy stones. Became a lunatic when something went wrong. Scrubbed wildly to make a clean slate for my prints. It's been tiring, but gratefully very joyful. I explored myself as an artist thoroughly.

### These prints seem like fragments of your lives. Your achievement, what does it feel like now?

Happy. There is no other word for it. 'Ramailo!' (Fun!) When hard work pays off, you are motivated to do more. Nepalis still are stereotyped and demeaned in a lot of working spaces in foreign countries. They look at you with distasteful eyes, delineating 'Can a Nepali truly do something?' I believe I have done a little to change those judgments. Our Nepalis are hardworking, and if given a chance, they really will give away everything to prove their skills. Interest and perseverance wins over everything.



# Rich Characters Movie Review and a Meaningful Plot

If you're interested in Nepali cinema that pushes the boundaries a little bit, then this is the one to check out: **Masaan**.

 EVANGELINE NEVE

**M**asaan, a movie by Nepali filmmaker Nir Shah, is quite unlike most Nepali films being made these days. Not to be confused with a Hindi movie of the same name that came out last year, it is serious and at times a little dark, amazingly well acted and touches on some interesting and meaningful points that don't often get raised in such an insightful way. Recently I had the pleasure of watching it on the big screen; it was the closing film screened at this year's Nepal Africa Film Festival 2016, which was held between 7-9 September at the

Russian Cultural Centre here in Kathmandu, and organized by the College of Journalism and Mass Communication.

The movie Masaan is based on a short story by the late Gopal Prasad Rimal, the noted poet and playwright, and his brother, Hari Prasad Rimal, introduces the movie.

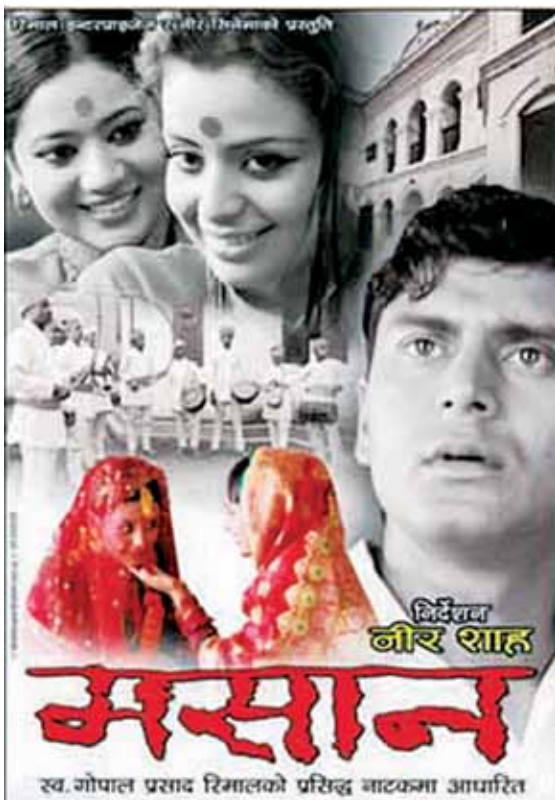
Masaan—a word literally meaning cremation ground—tells the story of Helen (Keki Adhikari) and Krishna (Raj Bal-lav Koirala), a married couple who are unable to have children. They love each other very much, but as the years go by Helen becomes more and more obsessed with the desire for a son, and finally, despite her husband's misgivings, arranges a second marriage for him, to the young and innocent Dulahi (Neeta Dhungana). As you watch the movie it's easy to see that this is where things will begin to go downhill, though to its credit the film avoids the usual clichés and the twists the plot takes as it moves along came as a surprise to me. Krishna, despite his love for his wife, has made some very stupid and selfish decisions, the consequences of which return to haunt him—and not just him, but both of his wives as well. Neeta Dhungana won Best Actress at the National Film Awards for her role as Dulahi, Krishna's second wife in the film, but I was equally if not more impressed with Keki Adhikari's performance. It was an unusual role in which she could have just been shown up negatively, but instead she gave

a nuanced, human performance; even if you do not agree with all her choices, it's hard not to sympathize with her and the situation she inadvertently finds herself in. And it makes the wrong done to her by her supposedly loving husband even harder to swallow.

With Nepali movies so often following the much used song-and-dance routines, interspersed with wild action sequences, it is a pleasure to watch something so insightful. As I said, you may not agree with all of the characters' actions here, but there is a humanity and realism in this film that make it an out of the ordinary viewing experience. The female characters are strong and intelligent, and in many ways outshine the men, which I believe was the filmmaker's intention.

Kudos also to the supporting cast of the film—I truly enjoyed the performance by Subadhra Adhikari, the actress who played the character of Bagmati; in addition to her expressive face and keen nature that often saw more than those around her realized, she and Thule provided a little bit of comic relief as well. Good acting also came from Dinesh D.C., who portrays Krishna's wise and longsuffering friend.

There's a lot of human nature in here, good and bad, as well as topics that will make you think and wonder, and perhaps view life and those around you a little differently. If you're interested in Nepali cinema that pushes the boundaries a little bit, then this is one to check out.





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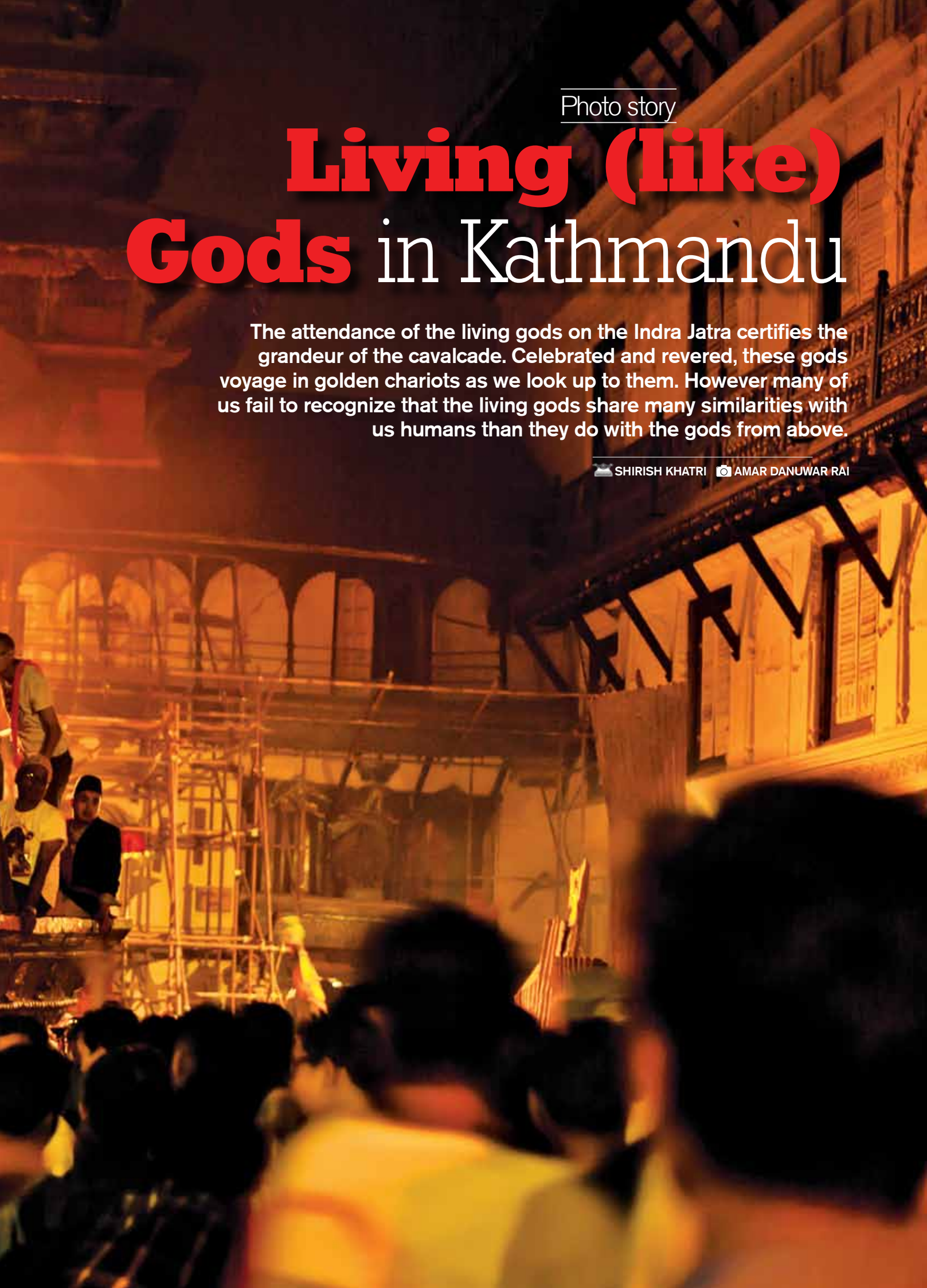


Photo story

# Living (like) Gods in Kathmandu

The attendance of the living gods on the Indra Jatra certifies the grandeur of the cavalcade. Celebrated and revered, these gods voyage in golden chariots as we look up to them. However many of us fail to recognize that the living gods share many similarities with us humans than they do with the gods from above.

SHIRISH KHATRI AMAR DANUWAR RAI













**E**very Nepali festival has vibrancy in abundance. Indra Jatra is no exception, an eccentric amalgam of culture, tradition and religion, which has stood the test of time. Indra Jatra locally known as *Yenyā* is the biggest religious street festival in Nepal. An umbrella name for many processions taking place over time in Kathmandu, such as Kumari Jatra, Mata Biye, Dagin and Bau Mata, Indra Jatra is the true display of Nepali sophistication in even what seems like a one sided celebration. The centuries old ritual ends at the climax of the festival of Dashain. The Jatra has many aspects commanding our awe, one in particular are the Living gods.

All iterations of Indra Jatra are well known among everyone in the local community. The most popular one put into practice is the re-enactment of Dangini frantically searching for her son King of the gods and the god of rain, Indra (disguised as a farmer), arrested in Maru Tole for stealing Parijat flowers, those which his mother asked him to get. After the locals find out the captive is lord Indra, the city decide to release him to the promise of rain and the city erupts in pandemonium, this very celebration has continued year after year. The locals also invite their three living deities Ganesh, Kumari and Bhairav to witness the celebration, and thus the grandeur of the Jatra, continues to date. Even today, and for many tomorrows to come, The

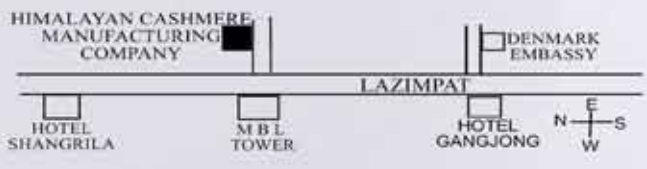
Ganesh, Bhairav and Kumari's are real people, transformed by sacred rituals to living deities. Selected to hold the title of a living god or goddess are the young people, sworn to oaths, they live by the purity a god must maintain. Kumari's need to have 32 distinct pure qualities upon them to even be selected as a Kumari, while Bhairav and Ganesh have their own selection processes. They may not be as popular as Kumari, but Bhairav and Ganesh are also young boys with busy lives. However being a "part time god" is never that monotonous. They attend school, study among classmates have their own dose of fun but on big processions are bowed to by even their grandparents. They do their homework, they like to draw pictures and like to dance, and they have hobbies like any other children. However unlike other children they don't wear colorful clothes but have clothes made for them for different occasions, they don't have to wear school uniform either.

After the Newari priests proclaim Ganesh the god of good fortune, Kumari the incarnation of Taleju and Bhairav the fierce manifestation of lord shiva, to vacate the bodies of the young normal children. They take part in large cavalcades like Indra Jatra itself. They live extra ordinary lives, playing the role of a living deity till they are big enough to fit in a chariot pulled by men, after which they must return back to real life. Would be quite amazing to have, "was once a living god" on their resumé wouldn't it?



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# A Plate full of Festivities Feature

**The 'F' in festivals, stands for food. Not just any food, but the kind which starts a small celebration in your mouth. While Dashain is ubiquitously celebrated by most communities in Nepal, slight differences in their festive food habits make the occasion all the more exciting.**

 SWOSTI KAYASTHA

**C**ome Ashwin (September-October in the English calendar), the air all over Nepal is filled with festivity. It is the month of the biggest and longest festival. Celebrated for ten days, when Goddess Durga took the form of Mahirasurmardini defeating and beheading Mahishasura, the buffalo demon to save the world from evil. Being the biggest festival of Nepal, Dasain is a time for celebration, merrymaking, festivity, receiving and giving blessings, plenty of good food and drinks! Most people living away from their families, go back to their ancestral or parents home to observe this festival. In many ways, it is a festival that revives the family bonding. It's a time when we all go lax on our dietary plans and indulge in scrumptious food the festivity offers irrespective of the different communities we belong to. Even our religious texts highlight the importance of good food-

'When nourishment is pure, reflection and higher understanding are pure, memory becomes strong. When memory becomes strong, there is release from all the knots of the heart.' -Chandogya Upanishad

The next best thing to eating food, is talking about it, and here writing about it! And who doesn't like good food? So, let me take you through a Dasain culinary tour of some of the Nepali communities from the south to the north, to savour the festive relishes. This Dasain, you must indulge in the variety of food the festival offers!

Dasain being the most sought after festival of Nepal, sets out with the sowing of the jau or barley seeds for the special jamara, a tender grass offered to Goddess Durga on the first day called the Ghatasthapan. The people of the central terai region, the Maithili kshetra revere the Shakti, and believe that without the bless-

ings of the shakti, nothing can proceed forward, and so Dasain is celebrated as a prime festival after Chhat. The eighth day or ashtami, is the day of offerings, large quantities of laddu and pedas are offered from early morning after which the temple is cleansed and pancha bali (offering of five different animals) is offered to the Rajdevi temple at Janankpur. This temple is one of the places with the largest number of animal offerings made by families during Dasain. After which non-vegetarian food is introduced to the festivity. Before that the food is strictly vegetarian, uncontaminated (chokho) for those observing the navratra fast.

Non vegetarian food in the form of fried meat and gravy are prepared. Cadi-badi, a variety of spiced curd with dumplings, taruwa or pan fried pakodas, lentil stuffed puris made from rice as well as wheat flour, kheer, laddu, pedas, gujiyas, malpuwa, are consumed in large amounts, shared with friends, relatives and specially married daughters and their families. The festive food is observed for the next three days, ashtami through Dashami - the main day of Dasain.

Moving north from the terai region is the hilly region, dominated by the Brahmins, Newars and to an extent by the Gurung community. Each one celebrates Dasain with a different fanfare. Brahmins traditionally form the priestly class and observe Dasain by celebrating Navaratri, nine days dedicated to the worship of the goddess Durga. Their celebration focus more on the ritual. Like other communities they offer the bhog or animal sacrifice of a ram on the night of the eighth day or ashtami called the kaalratri after the moon is clear in the night sky. The male head of the family or the performer of the rituals and women folk observe a fast for nine days eating only a pure vegetarian diet. Non-vegetarian food is introduced only on the ninth



day, and the family relishes a wholesome variety of fried and curried meat, fresh vegetables, puri, kheer, malpuwa a variety of freshly made as well as preserved pickles or raddish, potatoes, cucumber served with selroti with their family and friends. Traditionally the Brahmins and the Maithili communities abstain from alcohol.

The Gurungs, originally lived in the Lamjung area of western Nepal and are specially known for their service in the army. Although a mixed community of Hindus and Buddhists, spread mostly in the hilly regions presently, they celebrate Dasain as their biggest festival. Besides worshipping the supreme Goddess Durga, they also worship the ancestral deities on nawami or the ninth day. Either a ram, cock, buffalo is traditionally offered in the Kot, a worship place specially established by the army. The offering is made by the mukhiya or the head of the village. Nowadays, offerings are made at temples and the meat is relished in the fried and curried form. The intestines are another delicacy relished as snacks with selroti and the jhilinge a speciality of the Gurungs. Preserved cucumber pickles, seasonal vegetables and meat is savoured with rice and millet whiskey. The tenth day is a big feast with mar-



## Brahmin Families relishes a wholesome variety of fried and curried meat, fresh vegetables, puri, kheer, malpuwa, selroti.

ried daughters and all younger ones in the family visiting the elders for blessings and receiving the tika. The Gurung tika is distinctively white in color and not the typical red. A mixture of rice grains and yogurt, because the red simrik powder was unavailable in the hilly regions where they lived earlier.

The Newars, who claim to be the original dwellers of the Kathmandu valley call Dasain, 'Mohini' after the black tika

made of soot which is worn by member of the same clan on the day of dasami. Similar to the other communities, Dasain starts with planting the jamara. However unlike other communities, they abstain from eating rice from the seventh day, considering it contaminated or impure. The Newar community is popularly known to spoil themselves with a rich variety of food, drinks and merrymaking, to the extent that they were unable to counter when Prithivi Narayan Shah attacked Kathmandu in 1768 on the night of festivity during Indra Jatra. They offer the cock, duck, ram, buffalo to Goddess Durga on the eighth and ninth day at various Shakti peethas and at temple of their tutelary diety. From the seventh day, they perform strict rituals and consume the samaya baji or an assortment of syabaji, chura, meat, fish, ginger and garlic, black soya, egg, wo, these are supposed to represent the five elements of nature. The evening meal on the eighth day is called Kuchi bhwyee or a feast with two manas (portion) of chuiraa. The night meals are literal feasts: meat is prepared in more than 6-7 variet-





ies accompanied with chiura, a variety of seasonal cooked vegetables, pulses, fresh pickles, a choice of locally brewed wine, beer or whiskey, pau (a sour juice made from lapsi), yogurt culminating the meal with fresh fruits and vegetables. The order of the serving is strictly followed to observe a scientific path facilitating digestion of the heavy meal. Traditionally the feasts before the tenth day, is shared only with family members. After the tenth day friend and other relatives are all invited to receive blessings and partake in the festivity.

The mountainous region of Nepal is dominated by the Sherpa and the Thakali community. The Thakalis traditionally lived in the Thak Khola, the high valley of the Kali-Gandaki River in western Nepal. Although they claim their prime religion to be Bon-po a form of shamanism, they are currently a mixed community of Buddhists, Hindus, and Shamanists. The Thakalis are known to be excellent business and tradesmen, thus migrating and assimilating local culture as part of their lifestyle. Like other Nepalese they celebrate Dasain, as an important festivals planting the jamara to commence the festival. Because they traditionally belonged to the mountainous region, they focus more on preserved pickles, especially made of cucumber called khalpi, and lapsi, selroti, varieties of meat, fried intestines and locally made sausages all served with fried chiura or furandana. The sausage has two varieties one stuffed with buckwheat flour called dhung and another with a mixture of spiced blood and flour called kathug. Fresh vegetables do not take the centre stage in Thakali festive food besides szechwan spiced fried potatoes. Locally made alcohol and beer is an important part of the festivity. Similar to other communities, relatives, friends are all a part of the festivity and merrymaking.

Everybody in Nepal, from a young child to the elderly keenly look forward towards Dasain. Earlier, it was also a form of entertainment besides the festivity, now days when other sources of entertainment are galore, Dasain is still held sacredly as a time to relax, bond with family and make merry accompanied with lots of tasty food. Nepal, although a small country physically, is home to a large number of communities since it was the migrating ground form the north and south since ancient days. Hence there are approximately 125 different communities, living and celebrating various festivals through their respective cultures based on the availability of local resources.





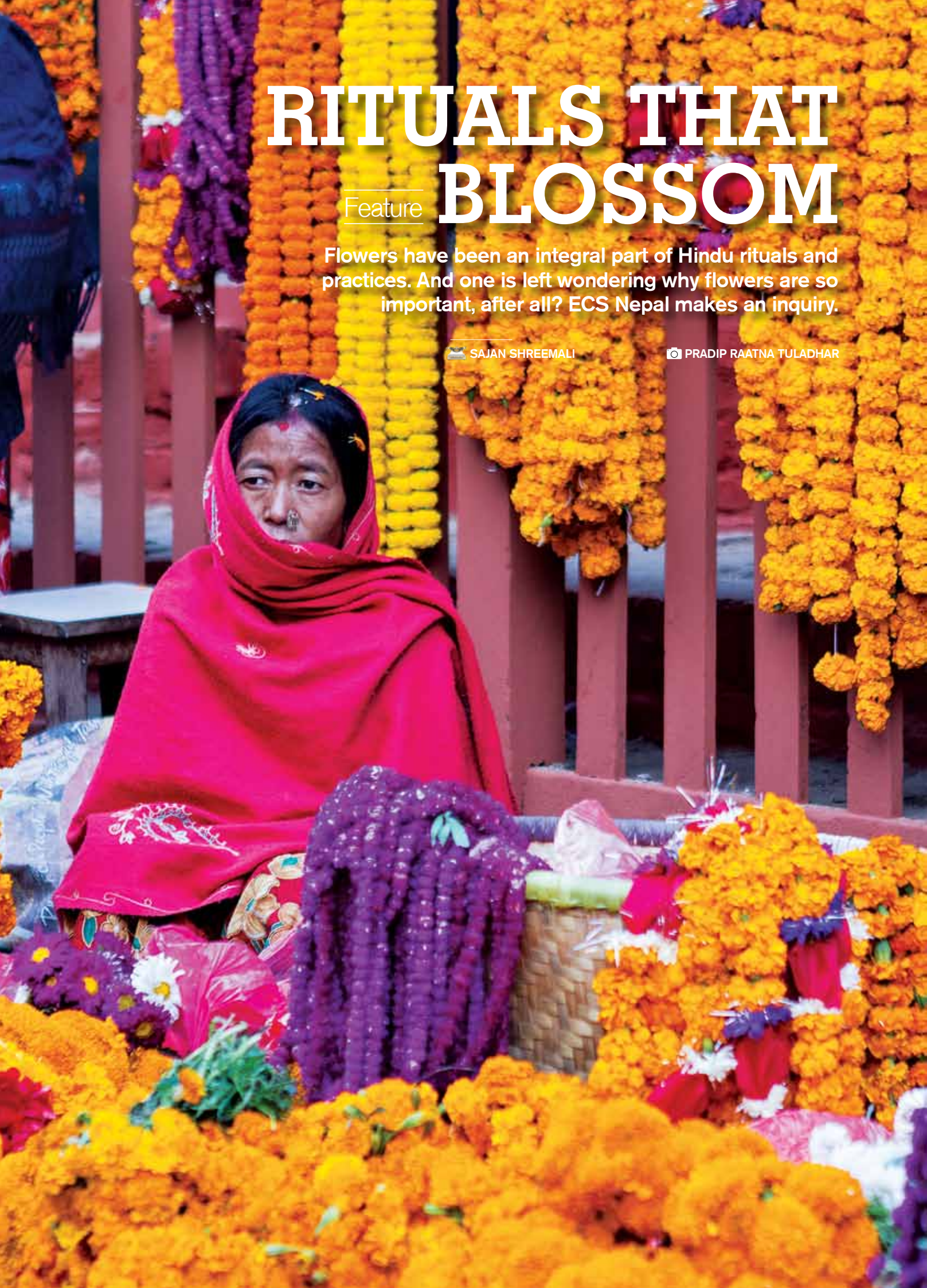
# RITUALS THAT BLOSSOM

Feature

Flowers have been an integral part of Hindu rituals and practices. And one is left wondering why flowers are so important, after all? ECS Nepal makes an inquiry.

SAJAN SHREEMALI

PRADIP RAATNA TULADHAR





**T**he harbinger of fortune, the carnival of colors, lights, flowers is heading its way towards Nepalese residing around the globe brining along with it joy, happiness and festivities. Every child's much awaited time of the year and the one which brightens up our houses and lives is the festival Tihar. Also known as Deepawali, this is one of the prominent festivals of Hindus, celebrated under the Nepali month of Kartik.

In Hindu culture, people believe in performing rituals using different mediums. Tihar is enjoyed with a variety of food, display of light-works, colors of blessings and flowers like marigold (Sayapatri) and globe amaranth (Makhamali). Everything that comes from nature is supposed to have some significance towards human life. As it says, nothing happens without reason, use of these nature gifted flowers are braced under this principle. So, let us find out how these flowers

emerge as a symbol of cultural value in the long run.

Sayapatri (marigold) is believed to have existed from the territory of southern Europe. Its tall, erect stems, long hairy leaves with margins and aromatic flavor make its own identity. Sayapatri are born to cope with moist soils and that's the reason they are considered as the most versatile flowers. Marigold or more commonly *Calendula* has been used medicinally for centuries. From the primary days, this flower has been used to treat conjunctivitis, eczema, and gastritis, minor burns including sunburns, warts, cramps, coughs, and snake bites as well. Marigold contains a chemical enriched with anti-oxidants to protect body cells from damage caused by a chemical process called oxidation. Oxidation produces oxygen free radicals, and these free radicals cause in damage of human cells.

Globe amaranth (Makhamali) is native of South America and Inner Asia that grows up to 24 inches in height with multiple

colors such as purple, red, white, and pink. The flower includes ingredients used to make tea and can help recover human from normal illness to useful for the patients suffering from heart diseases. This flower has a specialty that it does not wilt for a long time even after it has been plucked from the main plant, even that it is kept away from sunlight. It is also medically proven that it contains medical properties like their seeds are found containing high fiber and low saturated fats.

In Hindu Culture, Makhamali and Sayapatri carry their own significance especially in Tihar. It is used to make garland for Brother's Day (Bhai Tika). The fifth and last day of Tihar is called Bhai Tika before Kaag Tihar, Kukur Tihar, Laxmi Puja and Govardan Puja and is observed by sisters applying tika to the foreheads of their brothers to ensure long life and thank them for the protection they provide in return. According to the Hindu myth, the god of death, Yamraaj once went to meet

## It is also said that marigolds symbolize cruelty, grief and jealousy to show strong passion, being associated with the legendary brave and courageous lion.

his sister Yamuna. At that moment, Yamuna, overwhelming with Joy and Happiness invited her brother with lots of decorations, healthy dishes, the garland of makhamali and sayapatri flowers and blessed tika on his forehead. Yamraaj, also offered his precious time to meet his lovely sister. Being so much overjoyed, Yamraaj gifted Yamuna a boon that whoever puts the tika and garland of flowers for that day will be surpassing death for that day. Since then, these flowers became an immense part of hindu culture. This flower is also used for decoration and medicinal purpose. Makhamali has a great storage property so it can be stored for even a year.

On the other hand, Sayapatri is a very beautiful and valuable flower. Garlands of Sayapatri is used to decorate houses in Tihar, automobile decoration and also worn in Special occasion. The flower is used to worship Hindu deities especially Goddess Laxmi, the god of Wealth and Prosperity on the occasion of Deepawali. This flower is also

used to make footprints of Goddess as a symbol of bless inside houses. Not only in Bhai Tika, Sayapatri is used in each day of Tihar for decoration purpose.

Not only on the ground of Hindu Culture, have these precious flowers had their own significance across the world in different civilizations. The Marigold is said to have derived its name from “Mary’s Gold”, taken from the fact that early Christians placed flowers instead of coins on Mary’s altar as an offering. This flower is often used in festivities honoring Mary.

The marigold is likewise associated with the sun - being vibrant yellow and gold in color. The flowers are open when the sun is out. The marigold is also called the “herb of the sun”, representing passion and even creativity. It is also said that marigolds symbolize cruelty, grief and jealousy to show strong passion, being associated with the legendary brave and courageous lion. Its Victorian meaning, desire for riches, is probably consequent to the legends of the

flower being Mary’s gold, depicting coins.

While, this distinctive feature of Makhamali portrays a myth that just like the longevity of its endurance, the brothers of females who have been offered Makhamali, will have a long life.

Talking about the market, apart from locale, there are many Nepalese residing in foreign countries. Every Year the demand of garland of Makhamali and Sayapatri is increasing rapidly but because of the low production, the demands are then fulfilled by importing from other countries in huge price. Local people cannot reach customers and customers are left with no choice but to purchase from third party in soaring price. As the importance of these flowers can be seen not only in our culture, a perspective view should be put forth about the cultivation procedure, investment, cost and profit of Sayapatri and Makhamali. It is better to uplift our values and norms what bind us and other essentials what bind our culture.





# Stories, Sweet and Festive Feature

**Apart from the deep blue skies and bright sunny days, there are a number of other sweet things happening during the months that follow the end of monsoon. Bada-Dashain and Tihar are major highlights.**

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 SAMIP DHUNGEL

**S**ince my childhood I have associated the long list of festivals with the food that is prepared on that day. I have always found it more appealing to follow kitchen rituals over the ones done in puja kotha. Janai purnima is for Quati, an assortment of over nine types of beans pressure cooked to taste like salty heaven. Mid-Asaar is the good old beaten rice and curd. Maghe Sankranti is teel ko laddu and chaaku. Buddha purnima and Sawan- sankranti are for a nice bowl of rice pudding.

Dashain for a lot of Nepali means above the average consumption of mutton. Despite being a non-vegetarian, Dashain has never been a meat fest for me. My family practices what I call organized vegetarianism.

If we think about it, almost all Nepali festivals have a specialty dish that comes attached. For me the personal truth is, the yearly cycle of sweet delicacies comes with accompanying festivals. A necessary condition for any day to be classified as a celebration would be a spike in blood sugar level. Even the highlight of the Nepali festival Teej, a day where women try to imitate a part of Parvati's tapasya, is ironically the darr. Darr is an exhaustive eating ordeal that goes on for days preceding the fast-day. Hindu women observe an extravagant eating ceremony that might go deep into the dark hours on the immediate day before the fast, and men might join in, but only for the food not the subsequent fast. One might be forced to consider if the teej-day fasting has evolved into a cleansing ritual after all the eating that led up to that day. It would be an accurate assessment to say food is to festival what a chain is to a bicycle.

Nepali festivals are a sugar parade. All we are looking for is an excuse to consume more sugar. During Dashain and Tihar we see a variety of sweets. Sweet

influence from across the continent can be found served upon a Nepali kitchen table, sometimes as offering to the many gods worshiped during the days. Sweets are a part of the main course and not only reserved for dessert. Sel roti and Haluwa are two examples.

Every year before the eighth day of Dashain, Mother ritualistically sits down to prepare sel-roti. She does not tire from explaining how it's a challenge to strike the right balance between sugar and rice flour in the sel roti mix. She says- "In the end, everyone wants sweet sel rotis. And, you want to put as much sugar as possible into the mix, but with more sugar it might be difficult to achieve the chewy texture as sugar, upon frying, will contribute towards the stiffness of the roti." I must say mother takes sel roti rather seriously. To add to that, drawing a circle in boiling oil with a viscous ink of flour and sugar is not child's play. My hands have not inherited the rhythm my mom's hands have. I have always failed at the basic task of connecting the ends.

My grandmother, who lives in Terai, prefers making Patre over Sel rotis. Patre literally translates to 'layered'. Made of all-purpose flour, patre is a long strip of flattened dough that is folded multiple times before it is deep fried. Later, it is smeared with thick sugar syrup, chasni. Patre is a popular among diabetic people as well. Chasni smearing can be skipped. Of course, it won't taste the same. But it's a dry simile.

The foodie in me prefers Tihar over Dashain, Tihar is more sugar centric. Most communities in the country have come up with one or more substrate to lick the sugar from. During Tihar, the wonderful Newari Lakhamari, though not prepared at my home, will most certainly be selected for the assortment offered to me during Bhai Tika. I must admit it's something I have always looked forward to during Bhai Tika.







After Bhai Tika, when the tika rituals are done with, dry fruits will find small plastic boxes, and these boxes will find corners to hide in cupboards and under beds. Then commences an unofficial game of treasure hunt. My sister and I are in a constant pursuit of finding where the other one has stored, read hidden, their masala. The most prized treasure during the treasure hunt is the Anarsha. Not to be confused with Arsha. Anarsha, the disc shaped mithai, is as rare to spot as a flying saucer is.

Any story about Mithais would not be complete without talking about Rasbari. At home, Rasbari is a staple offering for mata Laxmi during Laxmi Puja. I am a huge Rasbari fan. Rasbari has travelled a long distance to be an indispensable part of Nepali sweet diet. The dedicated Bengali claim over Rasbari resembles the Nepali claim over Buddha. Legend has it that Rasbari was originally prepared by temple chefs as a special prasad for Mahalaxmi in Jagannathpuri Mandir, this was over seven hundred years ago. Milk was turned to chena, then to spongy dumplings drowned in chasni. It was probably an attempt at reducing milk wastage in times of good milk production. However, the temple is situated in Orissa, not West Bengal. I wonder if Oriyans



sport t-shirts that say 'Rasbari was born in Orissa'.

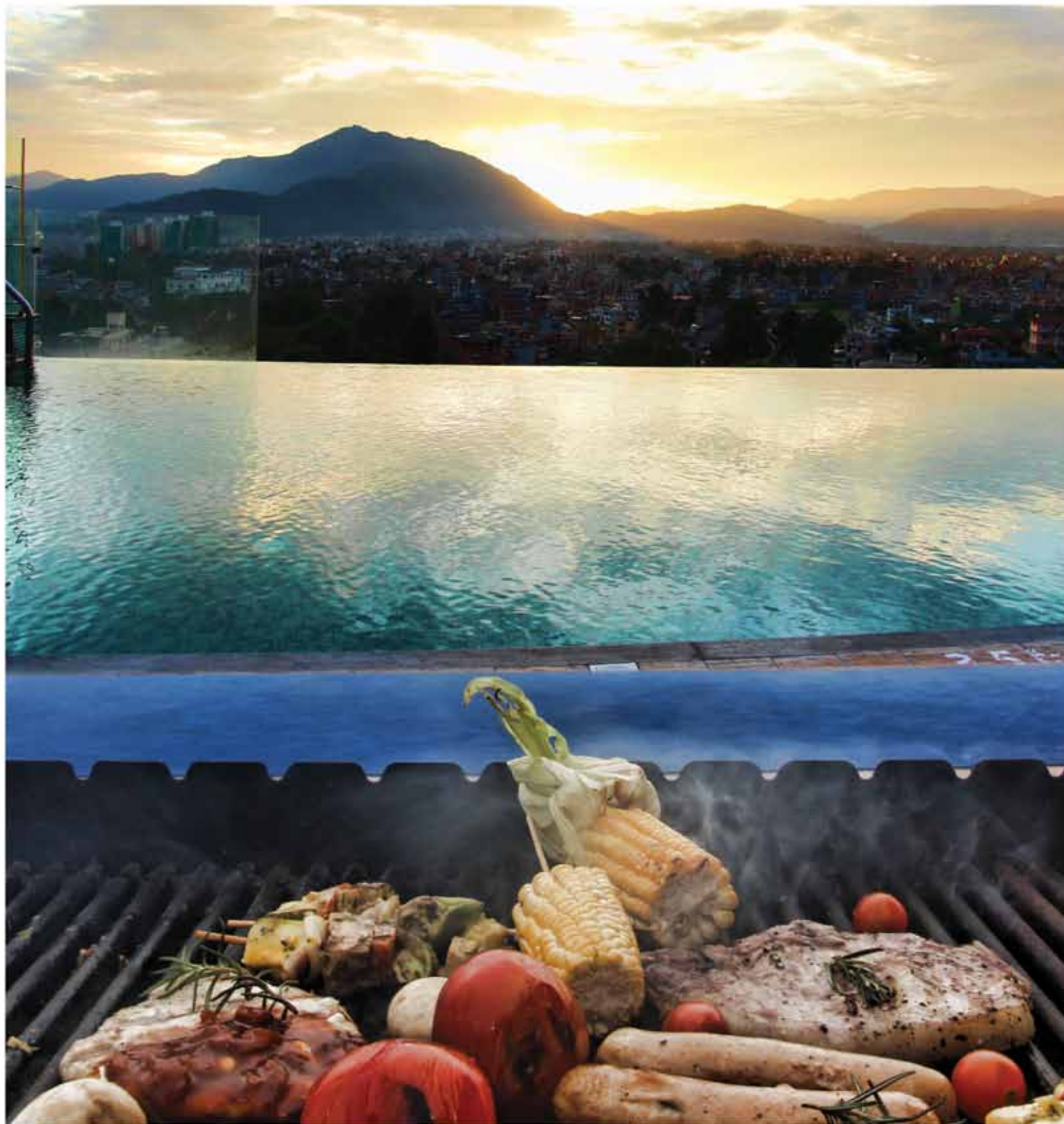
From the southern plain, where my mother's family lives, we annually receive a jar of a Koseli called the Baadshahi. I have never seen Baadshahi being sold outside Rautahat district. Baadshahi looks a little like Rasbari but is not entirely made of cheena. I guess it is rather made of khuwa mixed with some rice flour. This sugar saturated dumpling, much harder than both rasbari or gulab jamun, sounds very Mughal. I am unsure about its origins. But it is firm at hands and coarse at tongue. Since it's rare, we cherish it over its commercially successful cousins.

Apart from spherical sugar bombs, the consumer culture has had influences of its own. The Marwadi community in

Kathmandu have brought along and introduced a range of sweet Rajasthani offerings to Nepali festivals through the major mithai pasals they operate. Kaju Barfi and Motichur Laddus are my major favorites. Recently, I had a chance encounter with chocolate Rasbari in one of these outlets. I have mixed opinions about chocolate rasbari. Proper chocolate bars too have become unavoidable gift items. On TV Amitabh Bachchan convincingly displays an assortment of candies packaged in cuboid paper boxes, painted with firework graphics. We have dutifully obeyed and made it a flashy side kick to the Dakshina we present to our sisters upon receiving their blessing.

In the coming years, sweet celebration stories will take it's natural course of evolution. Sel rotis can now be purchased at grocery stores. I will not be surprised if I spot Patre wrapped in plastic and labeled with an expiration date. Today, chocolate bars are found floating among Anarshas and Barfis. Someday, chocolate bars will make their way into puja kothas, and will be distributed as prasad. Perhaps, Krishna janma-astami, is a suitable occasion for making a debut, the sweet and the lord allied by virtue of their dark appearance. Whatever the story is, behind a festival, sweets make sure the celebrations aren't just on the outside and that they resonate deep into our blood vessels.





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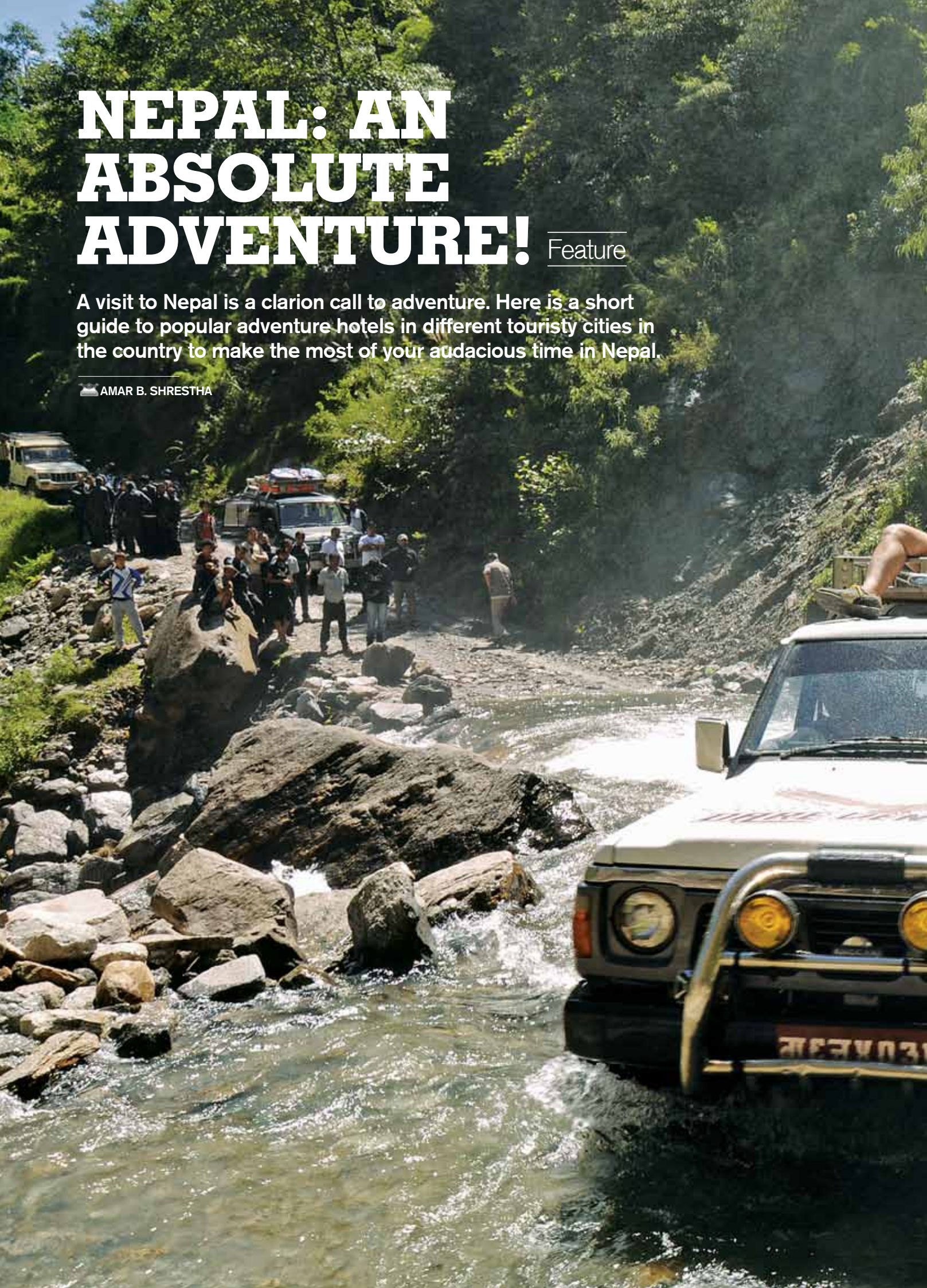


# NEPAL: AN ABSOLUTE ADVENTURE!

Feature

A visit to Nepal is a clarion call to adventure. Here is a short guide to popular adventure hotels in different touristy cities in the country to make the most of your audacious time in Nepal.

 AMAR B. SHRESTHA







**P**aragliding in Nepal is a fulfilling experience, and one that will take you over some of the best scenery on earth. The flying season is from November through February. The favorite take-off point in Nepal is Sarangkot (1,592 m) in Pokhara. To give you an idea of what to expect, here's how one enthusiast describes his experience: "The height made me really nervous...I tried to hold my fear, but my pilot could smell it and was smiling the whole time." Indeed, paragliding is a sport that sets the adrenaline rushing even before you actually take the leap into thin air. "Finally, it was time to take off," continues our enthusiast. "I closed my eyes and could literally feel my heart pounding...I was so scared at take-off that I didn't even realize we had taken off! My pilot urged me to open my eyes. I let out a very loud and elated scream. I was actually flying!"

Sounds pretty thrilling, wouldn't you agree? Well, if you do, you must put this in your must-do list when visiting Nepal. You'll be happy to know that most good hotels in Pokhara can arrange a paragliding outing for you, all you have to do is ask. They can also organize treks, ultra flights, bike tours, and so on and so forth. A visit to Pokhara is a clarion call to adventure. Among the scores of excellent hotels, one stands out in particular, since it is quite iconic, and staying in it itself is somewhat of an adventure. That's Fish Tail Lodge, we're talking about.

#### **The Last Resort**

Suspended on a high cliff-top gorge above the Bhote Kosi River, and set amidst sprawling terraced slopes,

The Last Resort is situated on top of a river gorge close to the Tibetan border. Extensive use of local stone, wood, and slate give a uniquely ethnic look to the resort. Luxurious, well-facilitated, safari tents set up sparsely in the gardens provide comfortable accommodations, while the spa and wood sauna provide great relief to tired bones and muscles.

The resort offers exhilarating adventures, including the world-famous bungee jump from a 160-ft-high bridge. Other adventure activities include white water rafting, kayaking, canyoning, trekking, rock climbing, Canyon Swing, Tandem Swing, and High Ropes. The Canyon Swing is claimed to be the world's highest giant swing. Canyoning is a challenging experience that includes abseiling, jumping, and sliding down steep canyon walls and waterfalls.

High Ropes, where participants make their way across a network of ladders, bridges, walkways, cargo nets, abseils, and zip lines, encourages teamwork and builds individual confidence. The thundering Bhote Kosi River is a thrilling setting for exciting white water rafting and kayaking. The resort also offers customized professional development and team building exercises for schools and organizations.

#### **Location:**

Naya Pul, near Tatopani (Ward no. 5, Listikot VDC), Sindhupalchok

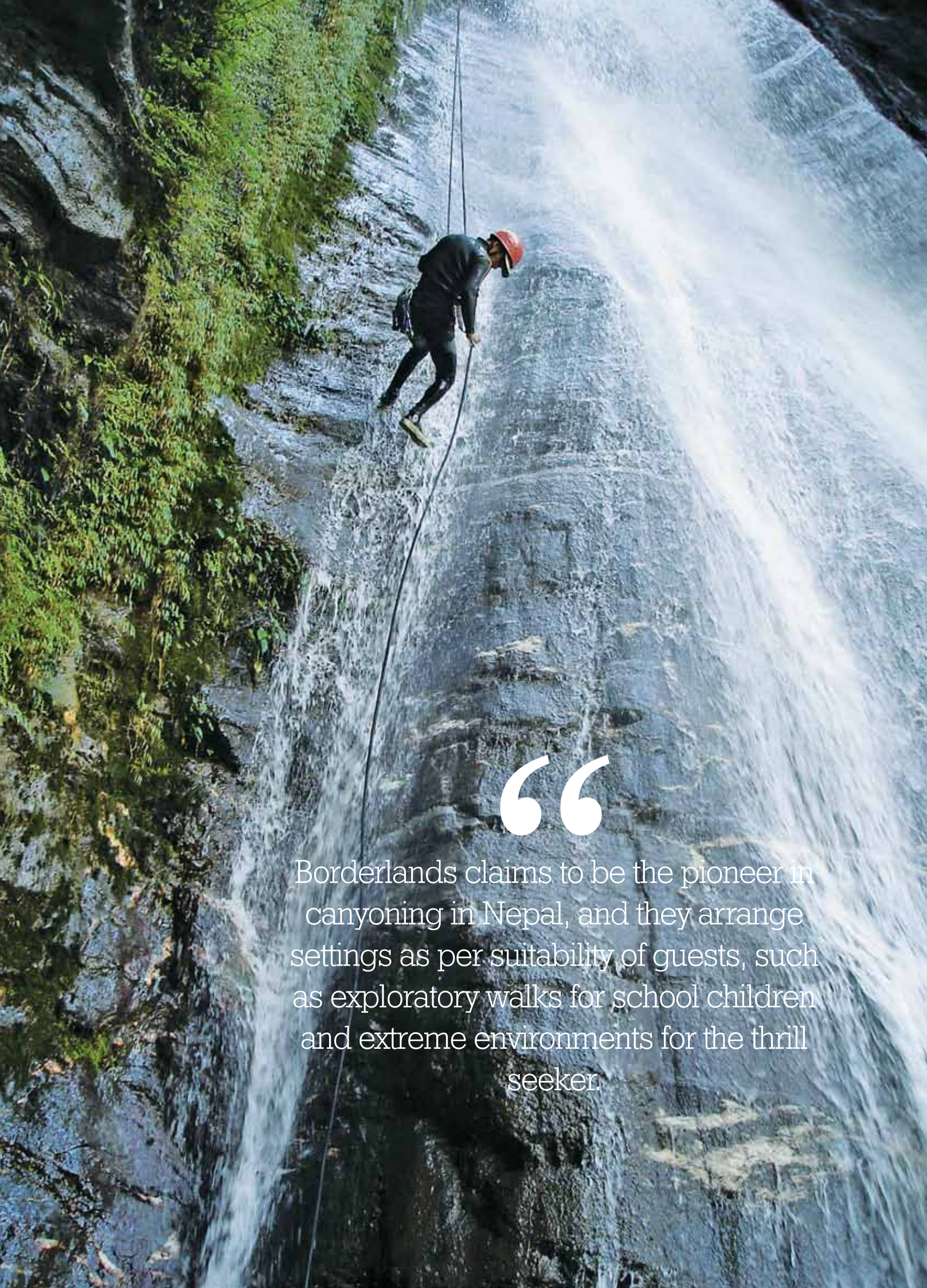
#### **Kathmandu office:**

Mandala Street inside Sagarmatha Bazaar, Thamel, Kathmandu

info@thelastresort.com.np

**Tel:** +977-1-4700525, 4701247 (Sales office)





“

Borderlands claims to be the pioneer in canyoning in Nepal, and they arrange settings as per suitability of guests, such as exploratory walks for school children and extreme environments for the thrill seeker.



### Borderlands Eco Adventure Nepal

The Borderlands Eco Adventure Resort is built on scenic sculpted terraces alongside the Bhote Kosi River. Accommodations are in large and comfortable thatched safari-style tents. The resort's goal is to satisfy the spirit of adventure of its guests, and this it does by organizing adventurous pursuits like canyon descents, treks, including 'an off-the-beaten trek to a hidden monastery', mountain biking to the Tibet border, rafting and kayaking on the wild Bhote Kosi, and so on and so forth.

This resort claims to be the pioneer in canyoning in Nepal, and they arrange settings as per suitability of guests, such as exploratory walks for school children and extreme environments for the thrill seeker. As for rafting, exclusive access to the highest raft put-in point guarantees more whitewater, and an exciting rafting and kayaking environment. Treks are arranged to simple rural mountain villages, offering the opportunity to interact with locals and get to know their culture and lifestyle. The resort also provides mountain biking tours on the old trade route, passing through ancient cities like Bhaktapur, Nala, and Dhulikhel.  
264 Khusibu, Nayabazar, Kathmandu, Nepal

**Tel:** +977-1-4381214 / 4381425 / 4701295

**Email:** [info@borderlandresorts.com](mailto:info@borderlandresorts.com)

### Fish Tail Lodge

Established in the late 1960s, with unique circular cottages set amidst a verdant garden, and located on a peninsula across Fewa Tal, guests reach this scenic resort via shuttle-floats or boats. The facilities are, as expected, outstanding. It has a choice of 3 Heritage rooms, 12 Palm Court Deluxe rooms, and 45 Garden Terrace rooms. The Heritage rooms have played host to dignitaries like Crown Prince Naruhito of Japan, HRH Prince of Wales, and former U.S. president Jimmy Carter, besides other celebrities.

The resort can arrange a range of adventure activities for its guests, including boating, paragliding, zip line/bungee: zip, rafting, kayaking, hiking, cycling, ultra flight, etc. Boating on the serene Fewa Tal is a most leisurely affair, one where you feel yourself ensconced in nature, what with lush greenery all around you, and the magnificent Macchhapuchre (Fish Tail) Peak towering nearby. Hiking and cycling around Pokhara to surrounding villages is also very refreshing, as is rafting and kayaking on the Seti River.



Paragliding from Sarangkot is, of course, thrilling to the extreme. The ultra-light flight gives you fantastic views of the Annapurna range, as well as Dhaulagiri and Macchhapuchre, and the charming valley below. The resort also has a special golf package at the pro-championship-designed 18-hole golf course located about 7 km from the city center in a beautiful amphitheater with a panoramic view of the Annapurna range.

Lakeside, Pokhara, Nepal

**Tel:** +977 61 465071/460248/460258

**E-mail:** info@fishtail-lodge.com / info@fishtail-lodge.com.np

Chitwan National Park in Chitwan district, about 120 km from the capital, is one of Nepal's 10 World Heritage Sites. This sprawling park is home to numerous wildlife, including the endangered one-horned rhino, Royal Bengal tiger, and the snout-nosed gharial, cousin to the alligator. There are plenty of exciting resorts and hotels all around the park. Till some years ago, there were seven resorts ('camps') inside the park, but new laws required them to close down and move outside the park perimeter. One such resort, certainly the most famous, is Tiger Tops, which was established in 1964.

### **Tiger Tops**

The Tiger Tops concept is built on conservation and a commitment to local communities; thus, it

deserves the accolade of 'pioneer in eco-tourism'. Presently it has three properties, namely, Tharu Lodge and Elephant Camp in Chitwan, and Karnali Lodge in Bardiya (on the Bardiya National Park periphery). Built in local architectural style using local materials, Tharu Lodge is nestled beside lush forest overlooking Terai landscapes. It has a garden side pool and tennis court, and offers a range of interesting activities, such as jungle walk, bird watching (about 300 bird species have been recorded in the park), visit to surrounding villages on foot or bullock cart (experience the rural life), and a ride on a dug-out canoe down the Narayani River (you may spot some marsh muggers and gharials on the banks).

The lodge organizes regular jeep safaris into the jungle; chances are high that you will see the one-horned rhino, but the Royal Bengal tiger is very, very, elusive. At the Elephant Camp, live close to elephants living chain-free in spacious, natural corrals, and be involved for a day or two in their lives. Here's how it goes: get up early and go with the elephants to the grass-lands, where the mahouts collect fodder. Learn the art of cutting grass and binding.

After breakfast back in the lodge, hang around the elephant corrals; you'll absorb a lot of elephant knowledge from just watching them, and from chats with the mahouts. Take a jungle walk in the late afternoon with the elephants and mahouts.





You can also follow the elephants to the river in the afternoon to watch them being scrubbed while they play around in the water.

156/23 Tangal Road, Kathmandu, Nepal  
+977 (01) 4411 225

**Email:** [info@tigertops.com](mailto:info@tigertops.com)

Some 100 km from Kathmandu on the road to Tibet, there are two establishments—The Last Resort and Borderlands Eco Adventure Resort—that are adventure resorts in the fullest sense of the term. They offer an array of exciting adventure activities that attract not only international tourists, but also an increasing number of Nepali thrill seekers.

#### **When the Jungle Calls!**

Aside from some truly international names like Tiger Tops, Gaiinda Wildlife, and Machan at the Chitwan National Park, there are numerous other resorts that offer international standard services and facilities, in addition to remarkable sights and sounds. The Jungle Villa Resort is one such resort. One of the most popular luxury wildlife resorts. This resort is located in the northern fringe of Chitwan National Park. Covering four hectares of lush green forest land and beautifully designed garden, the resort is situated on the bank of the Rapti River, an ideal habitat of many species of aquatic animals. The nearest airport is Bharatpur Airport which is just a half an hour drive to get to the resort.

Accommodation consists of a cluster of two-dozen cottages with well-furnished air-conditioned rooms equipped with modern amenities, including attached lavatories. Setting all its excellent amenities to one side, one must say that best part of the resort is its scenic view of the Rapti River and adjoining park from the private balconies attached with the rooms. Naturally, the resort organizes various activities, such as elephant safari, nature walk, bird watching, canoeing, Tharu/Darai village tour, ox cart ride, gharial conservation project tour, bathing with elephants, indigenous cultural dance and song performances, and so on, accompanied by experienced naturalists and tour guides.

You won't be complaining about food when at the resort; its restaurant serves delicious Nepali, Chinese, Indian, and Continental cuisine, using organic vegetables and dairy products produced by local farmers.

Jungle Villa Resort Pvt. Ltd.

Bharatpur-27, Patihani, Chitwan, Nepal

**Tel** +977 56 411011, 411010, 411012

**Email** [info@junglevillaresort.com](mailto:info@junglevillaresort.com)

#### **Corporate office:**

Kathmandu, Nepal

**Tel** +977 01 4415070/4415080

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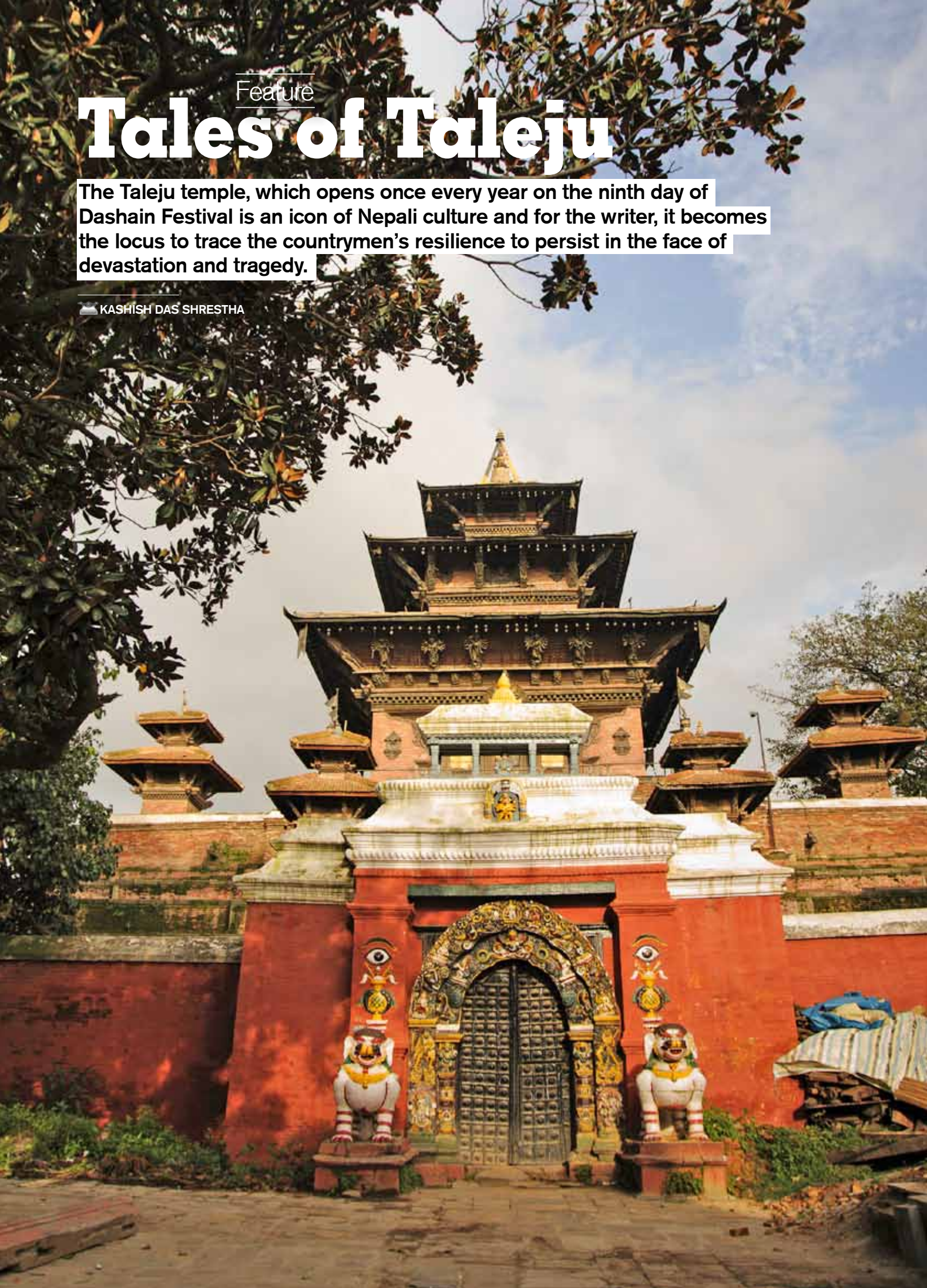
“Flying kites is one of the most pleasant things in life. During my teenage days, I remember sneaking out of this very shop to fly kites with my tol friends. I ran to collect the kites broken at their threads; I chased after my friends; I jumped over them to hold the kite and grin like I had saved the world. My father used to scold me for not helping him out in the shop, but who thinks righteously at that tender age, and especially when the kite has been cut down from the sky? It felt dutiful. It was instinctive. I just had to run through these streets to hold the kite in my hands,” laughs Deepak Ranjit, enjoying the nostalgic air of Dashain at his popular kite shop in Chikamuga. (You can get the best kites here. Ranjit also makes Nepali kites every year; you might want to send a letter to Indra this time the Nepali way.)

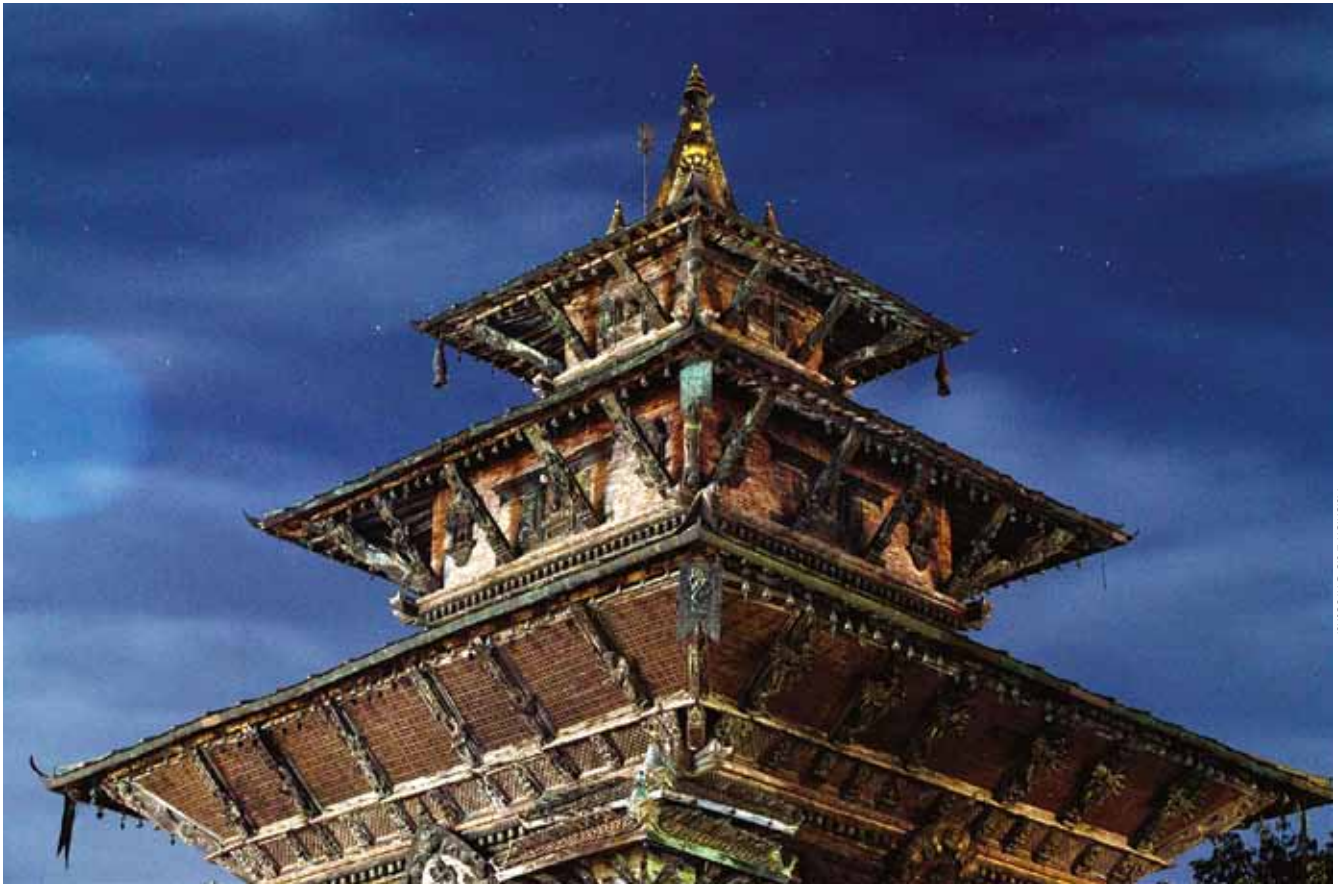
Feature

# Tales of Taleju

The Taleju temple, which opens once every year on the ninth day of Dashain Festival is an icon of Nepali culture and for the writer, it becomes the locus to trace the countrymen's resilience to persist in the face of devastation and tragedy.

KASHISH DAS SHRESTHA





Kashish Das Shrestha

**U**nder the deep blue sky still dotted with stars, ritualistic flames danced in the breeze, smoke from seemingly infinite wickers and incense spiraled upward. Ensembles with percussions and cymbals, performed steadily and endlessly as one moved on and another emerged. Melodies of flutes blended them all. As the long line of devotees who had arrived here patiently moved a few inches at a time, loud temple bells of stone rung out every few seconds, the metal ones echoed more constantly, along with the murmurs of prayers, hushed conversations, and hymns. Above, the birds were starting their day too, their calls adding to the magnificent chorus. Volunteers, a mix of pre-teens to elders, worked to keep everything in order and warned against photography. The Taleju Temple, in Basantapur Durbar Square, lived up to its mythical reputation. To be there at dawn on that cool Nawami morning in 2009, was to be washed in a powerful and

moving energy one rarely feels anymore in this ancient valley of mythical proportions.

As I got up at 2:30AM, and brewed a French press of coffee on Nawami 2015, I wondered how the Taleju temple would feel, or how many would show up to worship. The quake had taken a severe toll on one of Kathmandu's most dominating structures. Memories of being in Basantapur as structures were still falling apart and victims being rescued from under its rubbles on April 25, 2015, as the earthquake reverberated beneath our feet was all too fresh. Still, we had witnessed a defiant celebration of Nepali spirit and cultural heritage through Indrajatra that year. And the festivities in the 8 days leading up to Nawami had been perhaps even more vibrant than the last few years many of us remembered. Perhaps in a year of devastation of historical scale, we had found strength and reassurance in our "living heritage", the traditions and rituals that have for centuries given value

to our temples, monuments, the "built heritage."

Cycling through Jyatha and entering Ason, street dogs barking echoed periodically. As Indrachowk approached, groups of women lit up against a motorcycle passing by. Others, in small groups, headed towards temples carrying offerings. At 3:30AM, a line had already formed out Taleju's gate, and volunteers assured those present that we would be allowed in soon.

The sky got lighter, the stars disappeared steadily, cell phone screens continued to light up faces below. Before I knew it, I had been live tweeting the morning for almost four hours. Dozens of ethnic Newar ensembles and hundreds of devotees had lined up around the temple and made their way out. Countless "we will take your cellphone away" warnings had been launched, often to no avail. Surely, great many selfies and we-fies of worship at Taleju populated social media platforms that day. As did portraits of the Taleju temple.

The Taleju temple is open to public for worship only once a year: on Nawami, which falls on October 10th this year. Here, the magnificent structure, built in 1500s by Mahendra Malla, stands tall against a starry night in the city on November 2, 2012.

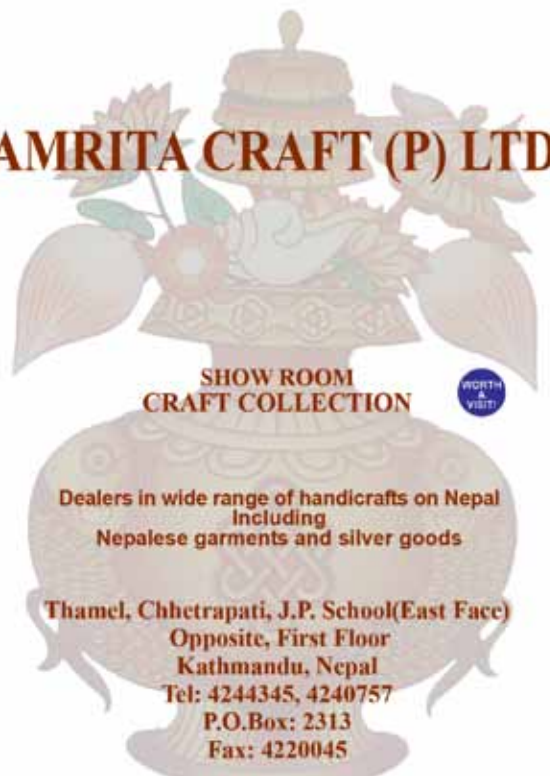


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# FLASHBACK

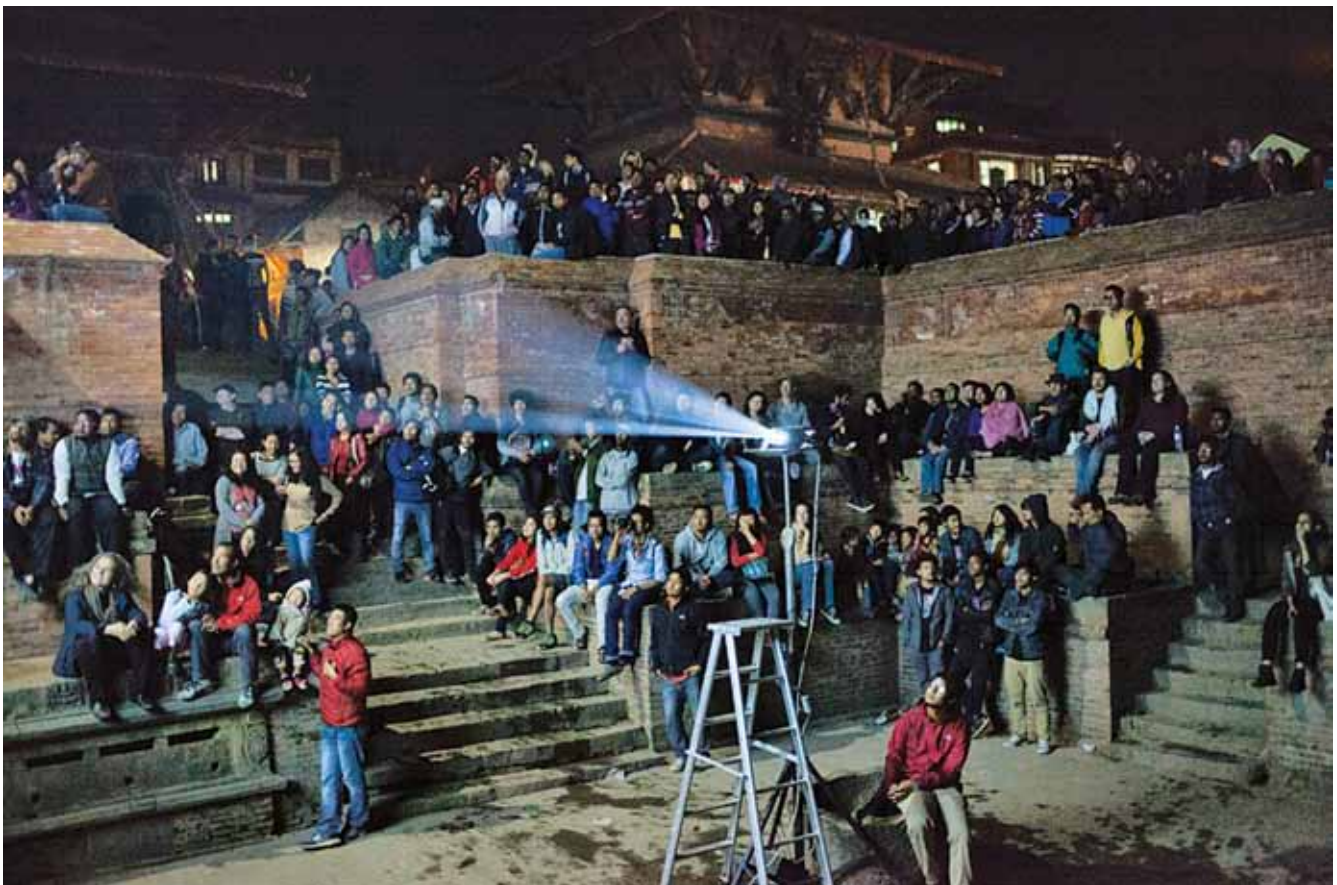
## PHOTO KATHMANDU 2015



The Sumitra Manandhar Gurung Collection of the Nepal Picture Library takes its focus in the life and times of its collector—Sumitra Manandhar Gurung. The collection was exhibited in ZYU, Swotha.



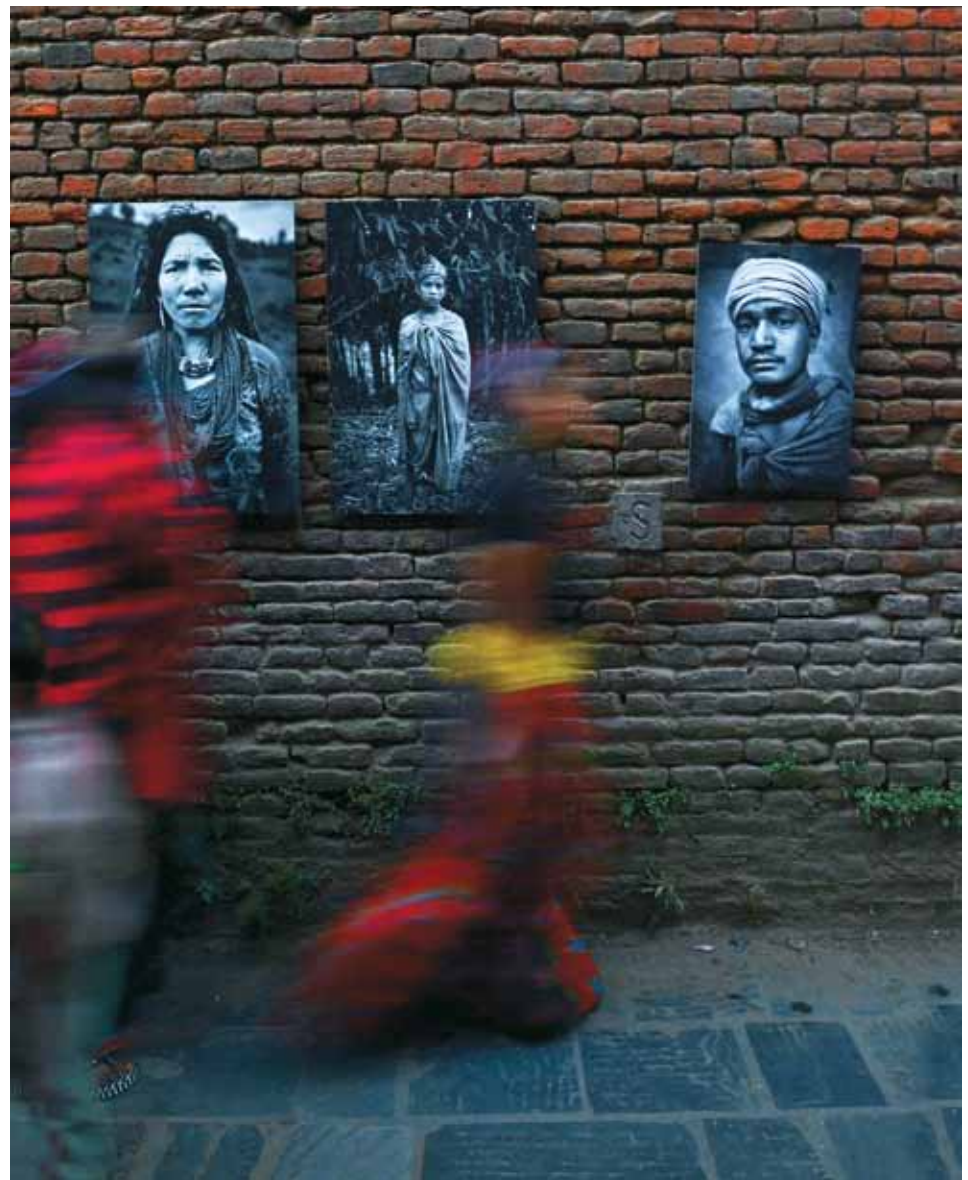
'Hope for Tomorrow' told the story of a community through old photographs of the inhabitants and others connected to the Swotha Square, including those who either resided in or were a part of the daily happenings of the square in one way or other.



Memories are worth sharing, be they good or bad. Once these memories become stories through photographs they become priceless. Storytelling through photographs, thus, is sometimes more powerful than words. Last year Photo.Circle's celebrative photography festival: Photo Kathmandu revived the charm of Photography and brought together collections of photo stories that traced our history in photography.

The festival also exhibited important documentations like: The 90s: A Democratic Awakening by Bikash Rauniar, Living in the Mist- the Last Nomads of Nepal by Kishor Sharma, Juju Bhai Dhakhwa: the Keeper of memories and Change of Course by Prasiit Sthapit.

Photo Kathmandu was cheered on for days, even after the exhibitions had closed down, people were still talking about it. "Memories never fail to recreate emotion," said a Hajurma who enjoyed



Photographer Kishor Sharma illuminates the last 140 Nepali hunter-gatherers Rautes in the western mid-hills by using the power of black and white color tones in his exhibition, 'Living in the Mist-the Last Nomads of Nepal'.



Bikash Rauniar's 'The 90s: A Democratic Awakening' in Dhaugal's east wall.



going through Juju Bhai Dhakwa's photographs in Nagbahal last year. She further added, "I like going through photographs, after all memories are what I have made so far."

The nostalgic mood that Photo Kathmandu had set down last year hasn't yet drifted away,

and the valley is now excitedly waiting again for Photo Kathmandu 2016, for the reveling photo stories that will bring together friends and families to talk about their own memories. So, here is to the celebrative photography: memories of the big show last year.

# LOSING YOUR WAY IN MEMORIES

That was Photo Kathmandu 2015 – the coming together of memories, the collision of yesterdays that created a mosaic for what tomorrow holds.

PRATEEBHA TULADHAR



In the dim, cool, ground floor of the Dhakhwa House in Patan, I spot a photograph of an awkward teenager. She's clad in a shin-length dress. Her hair is pasted to one side of her forehead with a pin. She stares at the photographer in part nervousness, part curiosity, as if trying to force a smile.

I break into peals of laughter at the sight of the photo. It's my mother's youngest sister, the person I feared most growing up – she would twist my ears for even the slightest misbehavior. In the next photograph is another of my mother's sisters, stuffing food into her mouth and laughing widely, sitting on a sukul at some whitewashed sattal in Gujeshwari. In the photo next to it, a group of men stand outside the Gujeshwari temple, a strip of the Bagmati river flowing in the background. One of the men in the photograph is my mother's uncle.

The next one is of my mother's sister-in-law, turning her face away from the camera, staring at a branch she's holding, as though looking for cover from an embarrassing moment. In her floral sari and her boy-short hair, my aunt looks like she could have been a character from the movies. It is when I see

her that it finally strikes me how the photos came to be there. My aunt's maiden name was Dhakhwa. The author of these pictures, Jujubhai Dhakhwa, was possibly a relative.

In the courtyard of the Dhakhwa House, there are groups of youngsters looking at photos, giggling at men in Elvis Presley haircuts and bellbottom pants. I pass them as I approach an elderly woman. The way she is wearing her shawl, wrapped around her waist, its end thrown over her shoulder is typical of the Patan women I have seen on my mother's side of the family. She pauses at every photo and spends some time craning her head studying them. I strike up a conversation and in her long drawn-out Newari, which is again typical to Patan residents, she tells me that she was on her way to the market when she happened across the photos and stopped. I ask her if she's seen the other exhibits and she says it's the first time she's seen something like this. There's something of a lost-yet-fascinated child in her expression as she goes from photo to photo. In my mind, I conjure a picture of an ageing housewife, with children, perhaps grandchildren, who is transported briefly to a different yet familiar world as she steps from one

photo to another. One world into another; each picture being a world unto itself.

That's the kind of joy, release and relief the photos at the Photo Kathmandu festival seemed to bring to every individual who paused to breathe them in. I think of this woman as the perfect visitor. She was all by herself and had set her task aside for the time being, just so that she could live from photo to photo. The thought was a little overwhelming. And if you have ever experienced those brief getaways into little things that bring you respite, you know what I'm talking about. It could be a short walk into the night, a breeze, a drizzle, a few moments with a puppy, these brief, stolen moments add up to what life is a summation of.

The 2015 Photo Kathmandu festival, the first of its kind hosted in Nepal, was successful, largely because of people like this lady I ran into. There were mothers bringing their toddlers home from school who stopped for a quarter of an hour; there were teenagers returning from school who meandered off; there were shopkeepers who took time off from waiting for customers. The festival transformed the city of Patan into an intriguing labyrinth. There were alleyways with worn-out walls that now demanded an audience because a set of press photos by Bikas Rauniar had gone up on them. I spotted group photographs of women journalists I looked up to – Ramyata Limbu, Sangeeta Thapa, Hemlata Rai.

The alleyways, after leading everywhere into one another, also led to the Yalamaya Kendra, where the photographers came together to discuss their work. While listening to colleagues Narendra Shrestha and Niranjana Shrestha talk about the tragedy of documenting a tragedy, for the first time since the April 25 earthquake, I felt like I was finally able to connect

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**I break into peals of laughter at the sight of the photo. It's my mother's youngest sister, the person I feared most growing up.**

with the disaster more as an individual and not a journalist. I had tears in my eyes – as did many others who were there – as photographs that documented suffering flashed before us.

Sessions like these were in sharp contrast to those of Kevin Bubriski, whose characters stare into your soul through the photos. They speak to you in a way that demands you throw more than a cursory look at an individual, regardless of where they come from. They demand a conversation.

Then, there was the work of Sohrab Hura, who did not have an exhibition up but presented his work in artist talks. It is a stark reality he records in his photos and the darkness is beautiful because it is real and because it speaks to the scared child inside you. Photos of the mess that homes tend to be – they are photos of the soul because the soul is torn with a love of longing and tangled in what the heart wants to untangle.

That was Photo Kathmandu 2015 – the coming together of memories, the collision of yesterdays that created a mosaic for what tomorrow holds.



“...the exhibition venue is a museum where the photographs will be displayed. There is a certain kind of ironic and poetic justice in it as it is the place where kings and queens used to live and we are using this place to exhibit the lives of Dalit.”

# DALIT: A QUEST FOR DIGNITY

PRABIN MAHARJAN

The usage of the term Dalit is relatively new in Nepal. The word comes from Dalitpur, India after the social movement for caste equality that started there. The Dalit identity has a specific history, one of a prolonged struggle against caste oppression and discrimination in the South Asian subcontinent. The newly construed modern identity, supported with this terminology, challenges the systemic subjugation of an entire group earlier connoted as ‘untouchables’ and ‘shudras’. An archive formed by collecting

photographs and images through Nepal Picture Library, Dalit: A Quest for Dignity explores this renewal and claim for agency by the Nepali Dalits in photographic form. An interview with Diwash K.C., the curator of the exhibition.

## Tell us something about Dalit: A Quest for Dignity.

It is an exhibition about the history of Dalit in Nepal and the experience of being one. There is a kind of stereotypical representation of Dalit on the base of how deprived and poor they are, that’s their image. We want this exhibition to focus more on how Dalits are carrying forward to write their history. Obviously we have included the issues that are keeping them down while we also tried to look at how Dalits engaged with those history of disadvantages and how they tried to work with that situation to create something for themselves. New identity, new ways of representation and the sense of pride on how they can look back which is the history of oppression and exploitation and then finding something new looking at that history. That’s what this exhibition highlights.

## Why do you think engaging with Dalit identity is relevant for Nepal today? How do photographs address this relevance?

Nepal Picture Library has the goal of documenting the history of the nation. But the national history that has been written in the books is not enough at this

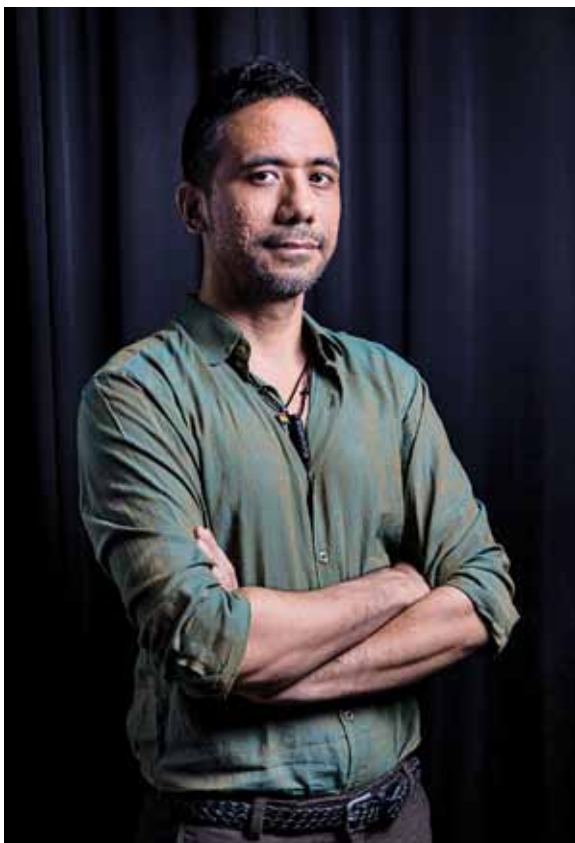
time. We have new conversations which are emerging and they highlight how not just politics, but also history also needs to be inclusive. How do we write a new history that’s inclusive of all such groups, historically marginalized like Women, Dalit, LGBTT and such. That’s what the movement is about.

This in a way is the first attempt to do a series of similar kind of projects. This particular project was necessary to begin with both because of the urgency after the context placed by constitution last year as well as it is also deeply embedded in our cultural history. We could, therefore, find enough material for the exhibition.

## What ideas were you seeking to express or challenge when you curated this archive?

In this period of Nepal’s history, we all understand how certain groups of people have been marginalized in a lot of awful ways in the past. But we want the exhibition to be some sort of a call for people against complicity regarding progress and development in Nepal. In a way, it’s about how a legacy of disadvantage still continues in this society. It is not simply a thing of past.

Further, even more important is the question of inclusion which is at the same time, not so straight forward. We want to suggest that inclusion is a very difficult thing and possibly costly as well. We have to think about serious social, economic and





political renovation. Changes that are crucial for an inclusive society. We are dealing with very serious issues, not just simplified ideas of being nice and tolerant towards each other.

**Have not these social issues been addressed already, or perhaps will be addressed eventually, now that we have a new constitution?**

We are not at a place where we can congratulate ourselves that we dealt with a problematic part of history. The whole point of the exhibition is to show that maybe our mindsets have changed for the better but the legacy of that history is so deep that it affects us in profound ways still. We cannot possibly think that caste discrimination was a thing of past and we can let it off. That would be a mistake. We have exhibits that show the history of exploitation continues to mark the present for many Dalits, also how the non-Dalits continue to benefit at the present being the privileged class.

**But isn't Dalit participation in caste based hierarchy equally rampant in our society?**

Because of the power relationship, the people not in power tend to internalize the things or practices established through such skewed power relations. Dalits here are the people that have been historically exploited. It seems natural for them to believe that that's the place or state where they belong to, after being systematically marginal-

ized for years. It, thus, makes it even more challenging for the Dalit activist.

**How is this exhibition ensuring that the representation of Dalits is done justice? That is, to what extent are Dalit groups themselves involved in the making of this exhibition?**

The Dalit organizations are involved from the early phase in this project. We've been relying mainly on Dalit organizations in Kathmandu to learn about the issues that matter in contemporary Nepal around issues of caste. In a way this project wouldn't have been possible without their input. But I think Dalit people who have been experiencing this issues already know what is at stake and the urgency of issues that matter. It's really us, non-Dalits who need to understand the complexity of the situation. We cannot continue being ignorant and believing that these things do not matter to us anymore.

**What kind of challenges were posed because of this peculiar difference in your position as a non-Dalit curating narratives of Dalit History?**

We had a rough start because the team was non-Dalit. The first issue we had to deal with was the cost of doing a project like this which represents Dalits. A group of non-Dalits, attempting to represent the Dalits is a problematic in itself. We struggled with that initially, but went ahead anyway.

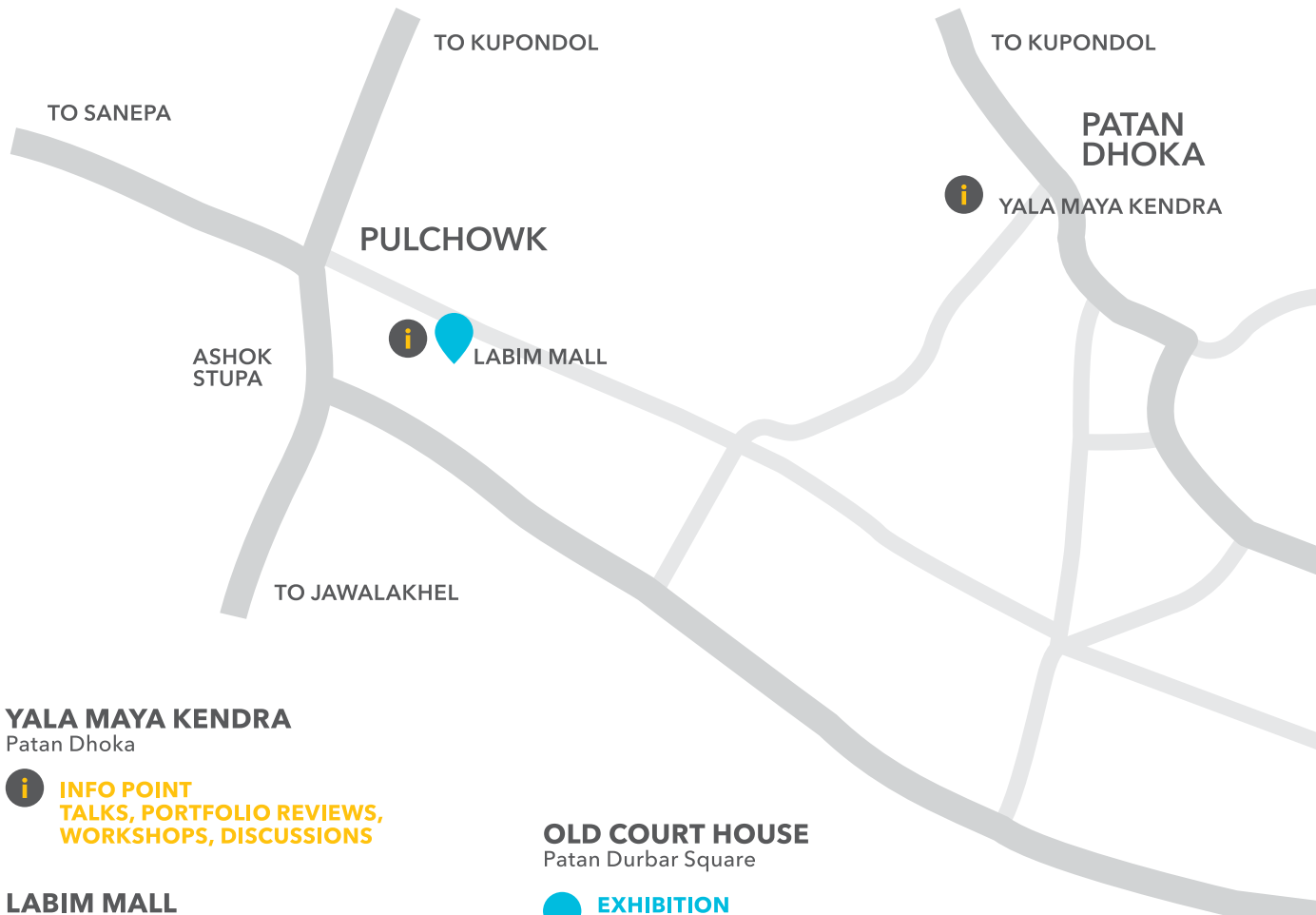
It was really difficult especially in the beginning just reaching out and finding photographs. The hunt for the photograph was quite challenging and continues to be so. We are still looking for photographs as this project will go in as a part of a book that's coming out soon. We want to cover the decades from 1950 to 2010 in a sound way. But the pictures of peripheries of some decades haven't yet come out. The challenge and the vision of NPL is that the documentation (visual and through other forms) of history of the country is very poor. We still need to work a lot on it.

**Coming back to Dalit: A Question for Dignity, tell us about the exhibition date and venue?**

The exhibition will take place from 27th September to 11th October at Patan Museum and then will be exhibited during Photo Kathmandu. We are happy that it's a museum where it will be exhibited. There is a certain kind of ironic and poetic justice in it as it is the place where kings and queens used to live and we are using this place to exhibit the lives of Dalit.

**Would you like to add on anything about the exhibition in the end?**

I think we left a part remaining. NPL and Photo Circle are the organizations engaging with photography. They, in a way are trying to suggest how art needs to engage with social issues. We have been careful to select the images, although we have not been hard and fast about anything. In addition to what I've said about the issues about Dalits earlier, I'd like to stress that Art is something that needs to think about these issues because the medium is a real and essential one. Also to provide the sense of alternative, how we can get out of this society which can be exploitative and oppressive. I'd like to stress the responsibility that falls on artists in the field of art.



### YALA MAYA KENDRA

Patan Dhoka

**i** **INFO POINT**  
TALKS, PORTFOLIO REVIEWS,  
WORKSHOPS, DISCUSSIONS

### LABIM MALL

Pulchowk

**i** **INFO POINT**

**EXHIBITION**  
*Close Distance*  
Jannatul Mawa (Bangladesh)

### NAGBAHAL

**EXHIBITION**  
*Saudi Tales of Love*  
Tasneem Al-Sultan (Saudi Arabia)

### SWOTHA

**i** **INFO POINT**

### MANIMANDAP

Patan Durbar Square

**EXHIBITION**  
*Broken Rules*  
Arantxa Cedillo (Spain)

### PATAN MUSEUM

Patan Durbar Square

**EXHIBITION**  
*Dalit: A Quest for Dignity*  
Nepal Picture Library (Nepal)

### BHAIDEGA

Patan Durbar Square

**EXHIBITION**  
*The Other Side of Annapurna*  
Shikhar Bhattarai (Nepal)

### OLD COURT HOUSE

Patan Durbar Square

**EXHIBITION**  
A collection of work from  
Nepal, India, Sri Lanka

### EBABAHI

Tangal

**EXHIBITION**  
*Alive*  
Kim Hak (Cambodia)

### TABAHA

Tangal

**EXHIBITION**  
*Rato Machindranath*  
Bruce Owens (USA)

### SAUGAHITI

Saugal

**EXHIBITION**  
*The Vanishing: Altered Landscapes and  
Displaced Lives on the Yangtze River*  
Ian Teh (UK/Malaysia)

### SAUGAL SQUARE

Saugal

**EXHIBITION**  
*Afghan Dream*  
Sandra Calligaro (France)

### CHYASAL MANKA KHALA HALL

Chyasal

**EXHIBITION**  
*By An Eye-Witness*  
Azadeh Akhlaghi (Iran)

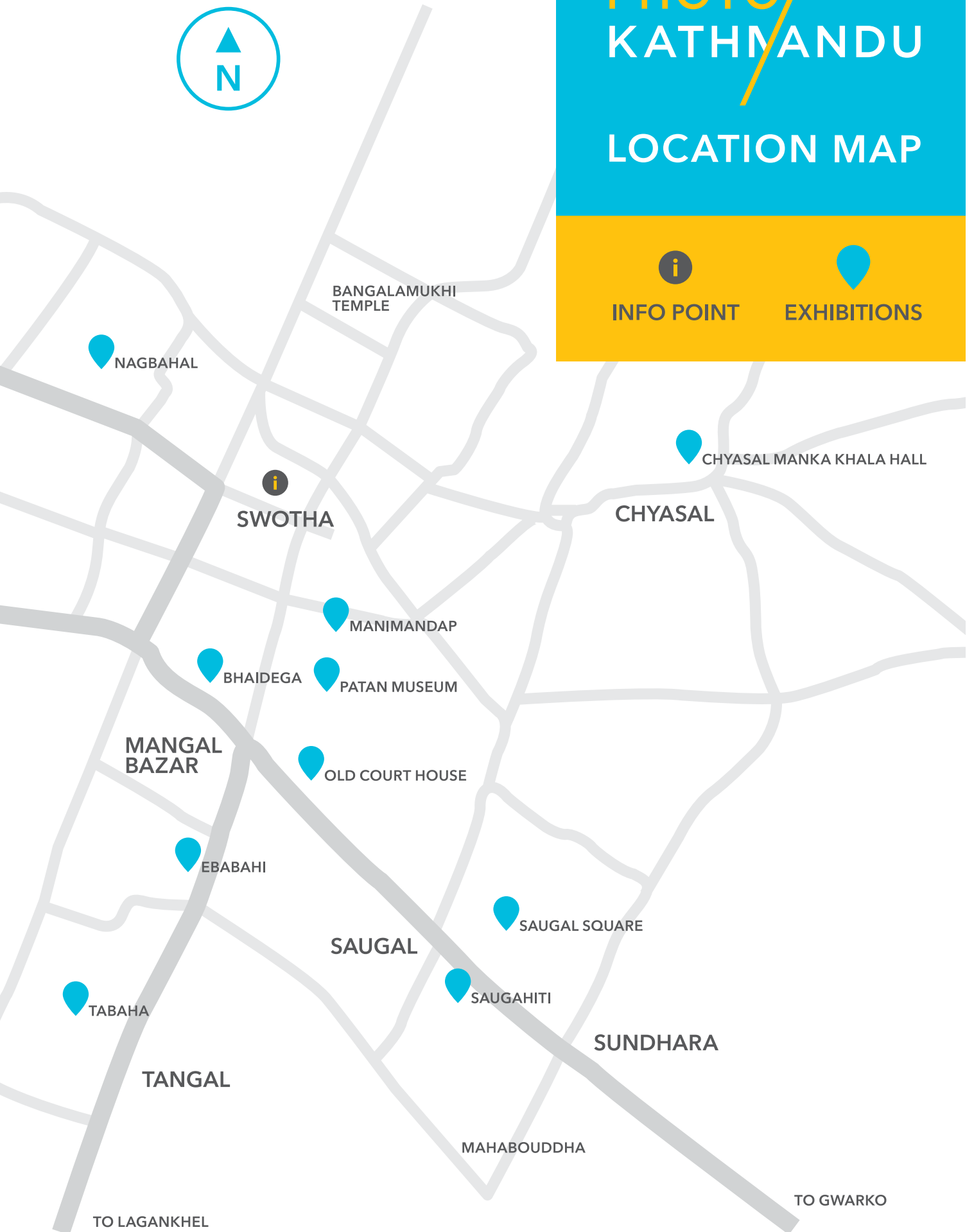
# PHOTO/ KATHMANDU

## LOCATION MAP



 INFO POINT

 EXHIBITIONS



# A GLIMPSE INTO PHOTO KATHMANDU 2016

Photo Kathmandu in its second edition is hosting 12 exhibitions, here is a sneak-peek of the show.



## Ian Teh

**The Vanishing: Altered Landscapes and Displaced Lives on the Yangtze River (UK/Malaysia)**

### Saugahiti

The Vanishing highlights the gradual yet monumental transformation of the once vibrant Three Gorges region into ‘submerged’ communities. Banked behind a 2 kilometre long and 175 metre high wall, the river transformed within hours into a giant artificial lake, submerging settlements in the broad, fertile val-

leys between and beyond the gorges. By 2006, thirteen cities, 400 towns and 1,352 villages were submerged, displacing an estimated 1.4 million people. In the series, the Three Gorges Dam may appear as representative of any immense change during industrial and economic development.



## Shikhar Bhattarai – The Other Side of Annapurna (Nepal)

### Bhaidega

Shikhar Bhattarai is a Nepali photographer, who having walked a number of the Annapurna routes several times, began to wonder what life must be like beyond the window of the trekking season.

His photographs of Marpha village in Mustang district were sparked by this curiosity. This work represents an attempt to understand the people of Marpha and their relationship with the land. It is a reflection on the silence and rhythm of life on the other side of Annapurna. The village and the people are beautiful beyond doubt. Yet there is a sense of emptiness about the place. Many of the young have left the village in search of work. And those left behind have a far-away look in their eyes, as if they too would like to go somewhere else. When a trekking season is over, a sense of desolation hangs over this striking landscape. People live in limbo, uncertain of what the future holds.



## Kim Hak – Alive (Cambodia)

### Ebabahi

Alive is a deeply personal examination of the intimate memories raised by old photos and everyday objects entrusted to Kim Hak by local Cambodian families, forty years after the Khmer Rouge regime. Whilst many families (including Hak's) threw away images and identity cards in order to hide their educated backgrounds, for fear of being killed; some people took great risks to keep photographs to remember their loved ones, and objects which represented something important to them. Having started the series from his

own family's memory, the purpose now is to expand the project to other families throughout Cambodia. It is becoming a race against the clock, as living witnesses are gradually disappearing. For Hak, "all these photographs and objects are deeply significant. They are evidence of the past time in history. War can kill victims, but it cannot kill memory of the survivors. The memory should be alive, known and shared for the current research of human beings, and the preservation of heritage for the next generations."



## Jannatul Mawa - Close Distance (Bangladesh)

### Labim Mahal

Wanting to highlight the often ignored issue of domestic servants in Bangladesh, Jannatul Mawa approached urban, middle class housewives, asking to take their portraits together with their housemaid, seated on the drawing room sofa. Through this project, Mawa wants to challenge the spatial taboo in urban middle class homes which is essentially nothing more than a class taboo. Although the mistress and the housemaid inhabit the same domestic space, their social and economic privileges, and their perceived ideological

worth are poles apart. Through her work, Mawa wants to explore the possibility of creating bonds of intimacy among women who, according to dominant norms, are unequal; norms which we ourselves come internalise. Although this constructed moment of intimacy, and perhaps equality, is brief, and such moments are rare, Mawa is a believer in the reformist power of photography; hoping that her work will help us reflect on the need to change domestic relationships, which are not 'natural' but rather social and historical.



**Sandra Calligaro – Afghan Dream (France)**

📍 **Saugal Square**

Arriving in Kabul from France with the aim of realising her adolescent dream of becoming a war correspondent, Sandra Calligaro found herself shooting very few war photographs at all over the course of the five years she spent working on the project (2011-2015).

Instead, *Afghan Dreams* portrays the fragility of the everyday life of this turbulent country, with Calligaro trying to convey a sense of the Afghan uneasiness that persists, underlined by imperceptible details that emerge from these scenes: ordinary situations, moments in-between, where tension is tangible, emotions perceptible, but the conflict rarely visible. In this way, Calligaro seeks to show Afghans, and especially Kabulis in the most ordinary, relatable way possible, thus bringing them closer to the Western viewer, and going against the tide of the majority of the pictures spread by the media, which remain focused on the spectacle of the conflict.

**Arantxa Cedillo – Broken Rules (Spain)**

📍 **Mani Mandap**

*Broken Rules* is a project that speaks of the power of women in Nepal. All the women in Arantxa Cedillo's project share one characteristic: being the first women to have broken certain rules in their native Nepal. They are representatives of change. Having often heard stories of discrimination towards women, Cedillo wanted to highlight this issue; Choosing to photograph a group of women working in a range of different fields, fighting for their rights in a highly conservative society. Inspired by traditional Nepali portrait photography, Cedillo decided to reverse the common form of strictly posed, serious portraiture, instead allowing each woman to represent herself in her portrait, thereby opening a visual debate of what being a woman means in a changing society like Nepal. The photographs include short statements by each woman to highlight their work and carry messages of inspiration, frustration or change.





**Tasneem Al-Sultan** – Saudi Tales of Love  
(Saudi Arabia)

### Nagbahal

Whilst Saudi Arabia is an international symbol of Islam, for many Saudis there appears to be a strong disconnect between the Qur'an and local traditions. Tasneem Al-Sultan wanted to answer a question shared by many: Do we need marriage to signify that we have love? Do you need a husband to have a significant life? Starting the project, she thought that she had only her own story to share: married at the age of 17, and living separately as a single parent for the last six years of an unhappy 10-year marriage. Only later did she realize that there were many Saudi women who had similar experiences,

challenging her own preconceptions of a typical Saudi housewife. With each story, she found more women sharing complex marriage theories and experiences; and she followed the stories of widows, happily married, and divorced women. Utilizing imagery from weddings she had photographed, she interlaced the constructions and expectations of marriage through often elaborate wedding ceremony imagery and rituals. A common realization with every woman Al-Sultan photographed, was that they all managed to overcome the many hurdles that were put in their way by society and/or the state.

### **Azadeh Akhlaghi** – By an Eyewitness (Iran)

#### Chyasal Manka Khala Hall

In her series *By an Eyewitness*, Azadeh Akhlaghi intricately reconstructs and stages the scenes of significant murders or deaths that occurred in recent Iranian history. Having taken place in a time before ubiquitous camera phones, or citizen journalism, there exist no visual records of these events, and so Akhlaghi's reconstructions, based on news reports, varying witness accounts, and archived sources, become a new kind of public commemoration. For Akhlaghi, the images are about depicting the dying moments of these people who, according to her "lived decently and passed bitterly," with there being something sacred about their death, "which has been forgotten or stained." Among her reconstructed subjects are Iranian artists, clerics, athletes and revolutionary figures.

# MOVING ASIA



**PHOTO KATHMANDU 2016 will be showcasing a slideshow of photographic and multimedia work focusing on labour migration in/from/to Asia. This slideshow will be curated by Robert Godden.**

## **SLIDESHOW THEME: MOVING ASIA**

There are more people migrating for work now than at any time in human history. Nowhere is this movement of people greater than in Asia. The majority go in search of a better life for themselves and their families, driven by poverty and a lack of opportunities at home.

The impact of this movement is manifold and complex. It is both con-

temporary and historic – each community shaped by previous waves of migration over decades and centuries. Economically, remittances sustain the families who remain behind. Yet, the absence of a family member can destroy the very relationships that drove the migration in the first place. In host countries, discrimination often greets those who come from afar to work. Despite this, migrant populations can foster the growth of cosmopolitanism

through the cultures they bring with them.

Our understanding of the impact of migration is in part shaped by images. More often than not it is the outsider's gaze that determines that representation. Occasionally, the view is from inside – where migrants tell their own stories. Whoever the author of these tales; they provide us with insight into what is happening and how we can react in a way that promotes tolerance, acceptance and understanding.

## **ABOUT THE CURATOR**

Robert Godden is a human rights campaigner who uses visual media for positive social change. He is currently the Director of Campaigns and Communications at Rights Exposure, an NGO focussed on the rights of migrant workers in Asia. Previously, he was with Amnesty International for 15 years, and from 2004 the organization's Asia-Pacific Campaign Coordinator based in London, Kathmandu, and Hong Kong. In 2015, he worked with independent journalist Mei Chi So to produce the photos for the book 'Strangers at Home – migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong', winner of the RTHK 9th Book Awards 2016. He holds an MA in South Asian Area Studies from SOAS, University of London, and is an alumnus of the New York University Tisch School of the Arts/Magnum Foundation Photography & Human Rights programme.

## **PHOTO KATHMANDU FUNDRAISING BHOÉ**

Photo.Circle in collaboration with Bungamati Museum are organizing a GRAND NEWARI FEAST to raise funds for the museum.

The event starts with a Rato Machindranath photo exhibition by Bruce Owens, a slideshow presentation, followed by a KUTUMBA concert and then the Bhoé.

### **BUNGAMATI NOW**

Bungamati is an important Newari settlement, notably home to one of the most important Gods in Newari culture; the God of rain: "Machindranath", who has been worshipped in the temple situated at the heart of Bungamati for centuries. Bungamati is also famed for its many festivals and cultural practices, and for the artistic proficiency of its local wood carvers. Over the last decade however, Bungamati's identity has faced a number of challenges, with increased youth migration, and disastrous damage caused

by the 2015 earthquakes. Today, over a year on, Bungamati is still struggling to recover and rebuild: crucial tasks in restoring both its physical and cultural identity, as well as re-creating viable economic opportunities.

photo.circle and the Bungamati Cultural Museum are working on a number of projects that will contribute to both documenting the history (and recent damage), as well as to the rebuilding of Bungamati for the future.

**DATE:** TUESDAY, 25 OCTOBER, 2016

**TIME:** 7–9 PM

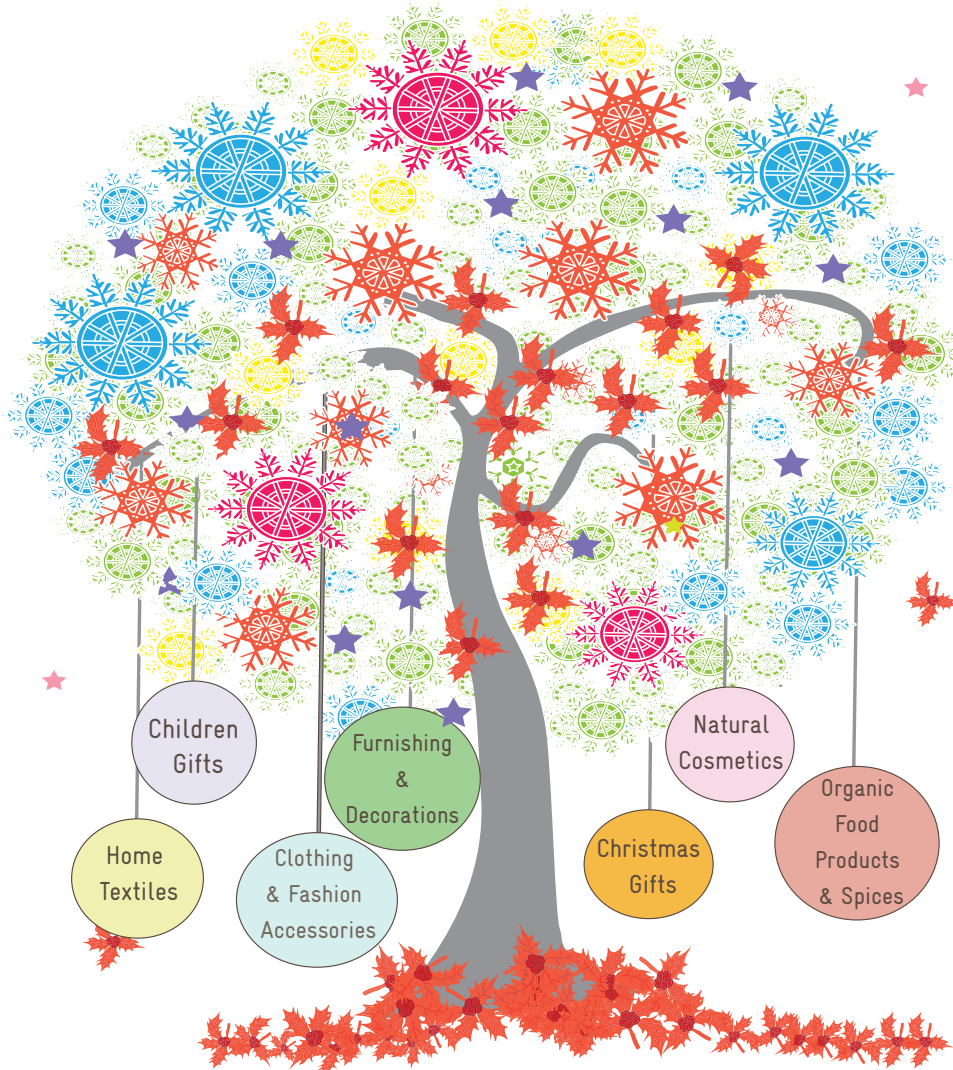
**VENUE:** MAHARJAN SAMAJ COMMUNITY BUILDING, BUNGAMATI

**Tickets:** 1000 RS (write to mail@photoktm.com to pre-book the tickets)

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# Craft

REVIEW • CRAFTED TALE • PLACE OF CRAFT • CRAFT MAKER • CRAFT SHOP



# The Maker Faire Comes to Town Event

The first Maker Faire was held in California in 2006, and it has since spread all around the world—but the one recently organized in Nepal is the first of its kind, which makes it all the more awesome.

📷 EVANGELINE NEVE

Nepal's very first Mini Maker Faire was held on September 24th and 25th at the Communitere building in Pulchowk, Lalitpur. A Maker Faire is an event licensed by Maker Magazine in the USA, and this is not only Nepal's first, but the first humanitarian themed Maker Faire to be held anywhere in the world. To quote the hosts, Communitere, "The event will celebrate the Maker Movement – a movement that brings together tech innovators, tinkerers, and artisans – and showcase an array of new technologies and innovative projects that promote STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) learning." The first Maker Faire was held in California in 2006, and it has since spread all around the world—but the one recently organized in Nepal is the first of its kind, which makes it all the more awesome.

I admit that I really did not know what to expect, but when we arrived I was struck by the tangible energy and enthusiasm that filled the event, known as KMMF (Kathmandu Mini Maker Faire). From virtual reality and robotics to more customary methods of making things, it was a fascinating blend of old and new, technology and tradition.

The event was inaugurated and sponsored by the US embassy (among others), but the



attendees of the event belonged to all over the world –altogether there were over 40 booths showcasing different angles of what it means to make things. For instance, I spoke to a youthful team from Israel, the Tikkun Olam Makers, who focus on connecting people with disabilities with designers who can create and produce solutions to some of the daily challenges they face. Portal Bikes is another interesting project that produces sturdy bikes that can both haul large amounts of goods or people, and can even, as demonstrated on site, with a special attachment husk corn! The Robotics Association of Nepal was there too, with some of their fascinating designs. 3-D printers and plasma cutters were shown in action. And front and center were two traditional wood

carvers exhibiting their skills; a good reminder that making things doesn't have to be hi-tech and modern, but can also encompass the old ways and traditions.

Bahar Kumar, Nepal Strategic Advisor for Communitere, told me: "The goal is to foster innovation and entrepreneurship, and to engage young people in creating viable small businesses. It's a hub for cross-cultural collaboration."

This was definitely an event for all ages, and Karkhana had a large space set up for children, where they held a design challenge and science competition for teams of school students, which was a highlight for the younger generation. There were also a lot of other things on display for kids to experiment and interact with. Children who came—the event was free for all to attend—were

also able to visit the various booths and get a hands on look at the kind of gizmos that are not so widely available here in Nepal. Simple computers that can be customized, even by kids, were here too, such as Raspberry Pi and Arduino. It's really wonderful to see children having the opportunity to interact so freely with this kind of cutting edge technology. I ran into two young students who had made a smart car with obstacle avoidance to enter in the science competition—pretty impressive!

Throughout the day there was a series of talks held inside the main Communitere hall, running concurrently to the other events, at which many of the makers shared their knowledge and experiences for the education and benefit of all.

There was a practical and fun focus on making things,

down to the simplest elements – even the usual event swag, such as t-shirts and tote bags, were screen printed on the spot with your choice of design and colour, turning a routine transaction into something unusual and fun. I love collecting bags from places and events I go to, and seeing mine being printed and then waiting for it to be dried made what is generally a routine purchase a learning experience, and made it feel more valuable to me. Interesting, isn't it?

It was easy to get caught up in the enthusiastic spirit of the Maker Faire, and I find myself already looking forward to next year's. Ideas like those promoted here are something we could use here in Nepal, along with the all-important lesson of keeping what is of value from the past while looking ahead to the new.



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# Bags with Purpose People A Story Worth Hearing

An interview with Dr. Milan Maharjan, the founder of Ear Care Nepal, a charity which helps in the redressal of a pressing health issue that pervades the country.

 EVANGELINE NEVE



Recently I was invited to attend the launch of a new line of eco-friendly handbags; it was a fun event and I was impressed with the quality, fresh designs and stylishness of the bags displayed. But the event wasn't just about a fashion accessory—all the profits from the sales were for Ear Care Nepal, an organization that works for the prevention of deafness and the promotion and conservation of hearing in Nepal. Fascinated, I wanted to know more, and Dr. Milan Maharjan, the founder and driving force behind the project, took time out of her busy schedule to meet and tell me more.

**Question: What is your professional background?**

Dr Milan Maharjan: I am an ENT Surgeon, and I was Assistant Pro-

fessor at the Kathmandu Medical College. Even when I was working, I was always doing volunteer work when I could, and I wanted to do it fulltime.

**Q: What inspired you to start Ear Care Nepal?**

A: Nepal has among the highest prevalence of deafness in South-East Asia. There are a lot of eye hospitals - it is a good example of progress and quality health care in the country. But there are only 126 ENT surgeons registered in Nepal, and many of those are now retired. There is not enough manpower to address the need.

**Q: Is hearing loss a big problem in Nepal? I wasn't aware of this before.**

A: In 1991, the last national survey reported that 16.6 % of the population has hearing loss, and

50% of that number are school age children. Amongst those with hearing loss, more than 50% of the cases are preventable. It's only less than 1% that are deaf and mute and can't be treated. In September 2013 I started Ear Care Nepal, and now I do it fulltime. I'm a volunteer, I receive no pay from it, but keep a small clinic in Patan in the evenings to cover my expenses.

**Q: What does Ear Care Nepal do?**

A: We started with two programmes:

A screening programme at government schools, coordinating with the Lalitpur District Education Office. This programme covers children ages five to sixteen. It's a very good method of finding those who need help, as the children who attend government schools are generally from poorer families, so it is an automatic filter; those who attend these schools are needy. There are 196 government schools in Lalitpur alone.

The second place we do screening is at monastic schools - Buddhist monasteries and nunneries: again, we target the young monks and nuns who are studying there.

Over 20,000 children have been screened for hearing problems so far through these programs, and 216 children have been operated on to date, all for free. In addition to screening, we also produce educational booklets on primary ear care,

and illustrated posters on this topic as well. If the schools have electricity—most of them don't—we also show a Power-Point presentation. We try to educate the children, teachers and parents. Prevention is very important—most children pick their ears with whatever they have, and people pour warm oil into their ears for ear problems, but now it is often contaminated and causes infections. Some even put urine, squeezed roses or squeezed tobacco inside their ears, all sorts of unusual and potentially dangerous things. So awareness and education are really important.

And all the funds for these programmes and surgeries have been from personal contributions—with the exception of a small Rotary Club grant—the work has all been supported by individuals, friends, family; I'm very proud of that.

Ear surgeries are very expensive—even at government hospitals they can cost up to Rs. 25,000. Some places say they are “free” but there are many hidden costs, and it is often difficult for those who really need it to afford it.

Nidan Hospital has been very kind to us, allowing us to do our surgeries here at a very subsidized rate, and Ani Choying Dolma's Arogya Foundation contributes the lab costs for the children who need it. Some friends who are also ENT surgeons volunteer their time, but most of it I do myself.

**Q: Why bags?**

**A:** It hasn't been easy with fund-raising, paying our small staff (we can't afford to pay doctors). We do have an ambulance donated by the government of India, and we have to pay a salary to the driver, of course. A businessman from the US who made handbags happened to be at the Rotary Club the day I went there to give a talk; at first the idea was to give training and open a small factory to make the bags, but we couldn't afford that.

Sushmita Malla, from Yala Handicrafts, designed the bags—not from her company, but as a volunteer, herself, to help. She has created a brand for these bags called Iyarkai. We will continue to create new designs, not repeat the current ones.

**Q: You use a lot of unusual fabrics – how did you decide to do this?**

**A:** We wanted to make a bag that was unique and trendy, and made of natural fibres. We used hemp, banana, nettle, and also old tyre parts. No where else uses this combination. We do not use any leather or animal products, and the cotton is hand loomed. We thought that instead of wasting what is already available, to use the inner tubes from tyres, instead of leather. Some of our bags even still have the tyre patches on them, which is part of telling the story of where they came from.

Everything is handmade, not mass produced. We make sure that we produce each bag care-

fully, with lots of attention. We want people to buy it because it's good quality, made by Nepalis. In fact, except for the zippers—we could not find quality ones made here—each part of the bag is locally made by local artisans. But we didn't want the cause to be the primary cause—both are important. A good design, good material, for a good cause. And 100% of the profit goes to Ear Care Nepal.

**Q: Anything else?**

**A:** There have been lots of sacrifices, personally and professionally. I come from a Buddhist family and our Rinpoche told me once, “Don't just be a volunteer, be a professional.” I've tried to do that.

We keep expenses low—Nidan Hospital has also provided the use of our small office space for free, for example—and work with limited money, but we have to grow. There is a real need.

\* \*

I was personally impressed after my interaction with Dr. Milan Maharjan and her staff—their professionalism and also the passion for what they feel called to do shine through clearly. It was also refreshing to see such clarity, transparency and focus in a social organization. They're not trying to save the whole world, but just concentrate on the needs they see in front of them and know best how to meet. It's a simple idea, but it works. And I've always had a soft spot for social causes that also aim for sustainability—it's the best of both worlds, I think.

And let's not forget the bags—while it's amazing that they are supporting a good cause, they are also quite simply very fine bags with careful, quality workmanship and a beautiful use of local materials.

You can find more information about Ear Care Nepal, as well as how to get an awesome bag of your own (with free delivery anywhere in the Kathmandu Valley!) at the below contact points:  
[info@earcarenepal.org](mailto:info@earcarenepal.org)  
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**Projects Undertaken**

INTERPOL, Nepal Police 10th Regional Conference	1988
UNEP-UNV Third Inter Governmental Meeting (IGM)	1992
Third LDC Ministerial Symposium Sustainable	1994
IV Int Surgical Conference of Society of Surgeons (ISS)	1997
34th Civil Aviation Director General Meeting	1998
11th SAARC Summit Kathmandu	2001
Weapons of Mass Destruction Awareness Conference (USA)	2003
International Resources Group (USA)	2005
Sanghata Nepal	2006
Friends for Peace	2006
GACF (Global Alliance of Community Forest)	2006
AFO Inc. (Rule of Law project USAID Nepal)	2006
CECI (Canadian Center for Int Studies & Co-operation	2007
MS Nepal (DAREDA)	2007
SDC (Swiss Development Co-operation)	2007
International Labour Organisation (ILO)	2007
Asian Development Bank (PPTA-4973-NEP)	2008
ICIMOD	2008
GTZ / UNICEF	2008
International Land Coalition (IFAD (Italy)	2008
JICA / GEMSP	2015
Sarvata Foundation	2015
ILO	2015
British Council Nepal	2006 - 2015
World Bank Nepal	1998 - 2015
United Nations Office of The High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR) Nepal	2009 - 2015
UNICEF	2009 - 2015
DANDA HUGOU	2016 - 2015
NDI Nepal	2016 - 2015
UNDP	2016 - 2015

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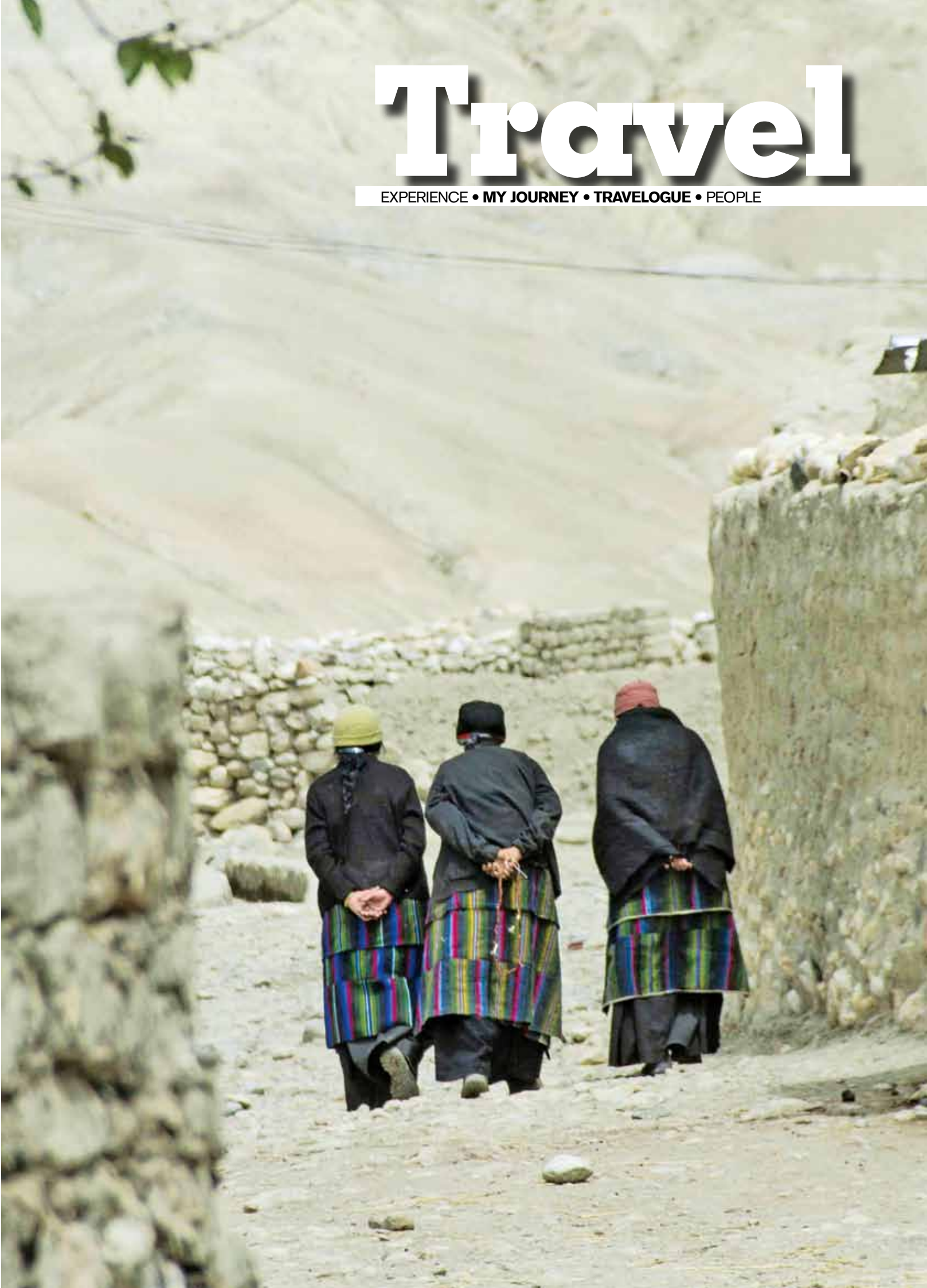
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# Travel

EXPERIENCE • MY JOURNEY • TRAVELOGUE • PEOPLE



A first-hand experience of Gokarna Forest Resort, where history, nature and luxury blend seamlessly into creating an amazing experience.

# Luxury with Nature <sup>Escape</sup>

 NEEMA GHIMIRE



**W**hat would be more comforting than going away from the hustle-bustle of the city when you are tired and exhausted? Just as when expert hands give you a soothing massage you have deserve laboring for long hours at work, I experienced something similar the moment I reached Gokarna Forest Resort. It is not just the enthusiastic hotel staff who make you feel welcomed there but the whole ambiance of the resort is absolutely welcoming.

Gokarna has merged itself with the surrounding forest so well that one can feel the rich-

ness of nature while enjoying luxurious facilities in a comfortable setting. All my way to the resort, I kept imagining how I would throw myself on the soft bed and relax endlessly. Little did I know, that the in-house Harmony Spa has so many things to offer - Ayurveda based treatments, indoor temperature control, a swimming pool, luxurious treatment rooms with a sauna each, steam room, Jacuzzi and what not!

When I went for the massage, I realized had I opted to rest in the room instead of this massage, I would have missed a great deal. The relaxing massage kept me energized even the next day.

As Tesring Deki Sherpa took me around the property, I realized Gokarna is not just another resort that you stay in for a day and leave. It is rather a rich and complex place which conserves history, nature, memories, it also has luxury and it has maintained standard of its own. Hunter's Lodge at Gokarna used to be a private royal hunting ground of the Kings of Nepal. Today, the lodge serves, authentic Nepali cuisine. It has conserved nature's luxury. While you are roaming around, you can see herds of shy deer (they find some place to hide themselves as soon as they see people) and mischievous monkeys.



Luxury is another thing to look for in Gokarna. It is a most popular destination for Golf in Nepal. The game never seemed interesting to me until I tried my hands on this luxurious sport myself. I held the club and hit the golf ball. As the coach in the club was showing me the techniques, I realized that the game has quite a charm. I kept hitting those 25 golf balls and by the end I actually liked it.

Gokarna has maintained the international standard of its Golf course. One can feel how well the course is maintained as one takes a look at it. From maintaining the length of the grass to maintaining the texture and moisture, everything is just perfect. You do not need to be perfect for the game. Just follow the tricks, maintain your body postures and practice how to hold the golf club - then, hit the ball and bingo!

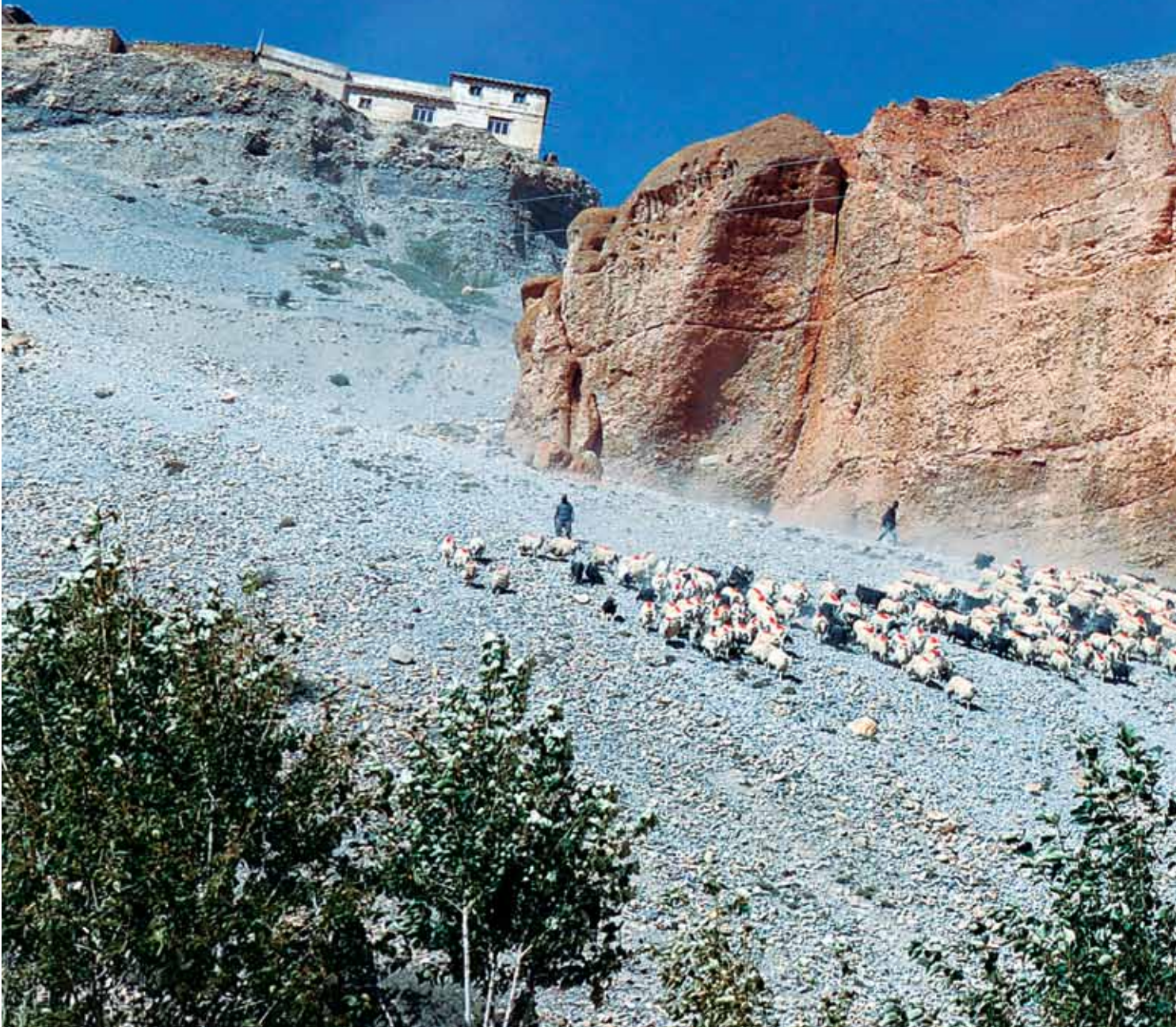
**Don't Miss**

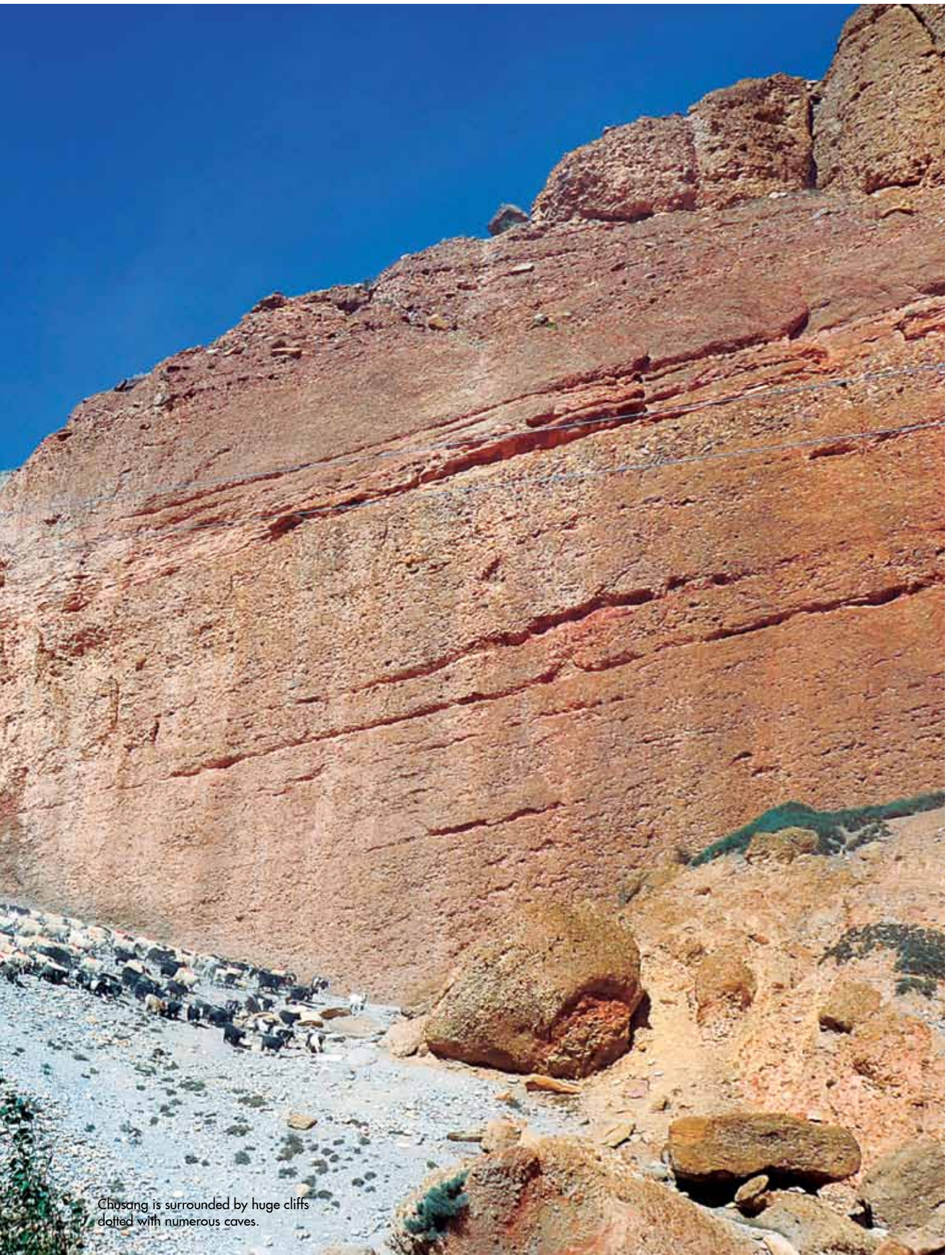
Saturday's barbeque brunch is something you should not miss while you plan to visit Gokarna. They have a brunch every Saturday and the place would be so much more fun to visit with your friends during the weekends.



# TETANG-CHUSANG, UNDER THE Photo story GREAT MUSTANG UMBRELLA.

 SHIRISH KHATRI  AMAR DANUWAR RAI





Chusang is surrounded by huge cliffs dotted with numerous caves.

**C**husang (3022) is a village development committee in Mustang District in the Dhawalagiri Zone of northern Nepal. It is located on the Upper Mustang trekking route, between Tangbe and Chele, about an hour's walk north of Tangbe. It lies at the junction of the Narshing River and the Kali Gandaki. Chusang is arrived from a descent while Tetang is reached by an ascent. It is surrounded by gigantic red, orange and silver gray cliffs spotted with cave dwellings. The village consists of three different hamlets: north of the Narshing River is Tangma, to the south of it is Braga, and west of Braga, towards the Kali Gandaki, is Cikyab. It is an active farming community.

The main hydrographic feature of this region is the Kali Gandaki. Routes around the treacherous terrain wind around the

Kali Gandaki and its tributaries and other seasonal flood rivers. Chusang/Tetang, much like the rest of Mustang, are regions with a strong Tibetan influence blended with Nepali culture. Still untouched and isolated it remains not fiddled with. The region is rich in Buddhist culture, similar to the area of the Tibet Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China. It is an alternate way to experience the Tibetan culture and landscape to the tours provided by the Chinese government.

The people here, are very slowly moving towards modernization. Till a few years ago, the only way into the region was on foot; the only way to transport goods was by pony, yak or dzo (yak-cow hybrids). Life is still peaceful and serene here, and moves forward slowly like it has always done, over the years.



## Photo story



Having been a restricted area for quite some time, the march of urbanization has been slow here, and ponies, yaks, and dzos (yak-cow hybrids) are still very much used for transportation of goods.

Lying at the border with Tibet, the influence of Tibetan Buddhism is very strong in Mustang. Mustang's culture is predominantly Tibetan, but the changes accompanying the opening up of the region to the outside world is introducing other cultures and lifestyles, too.

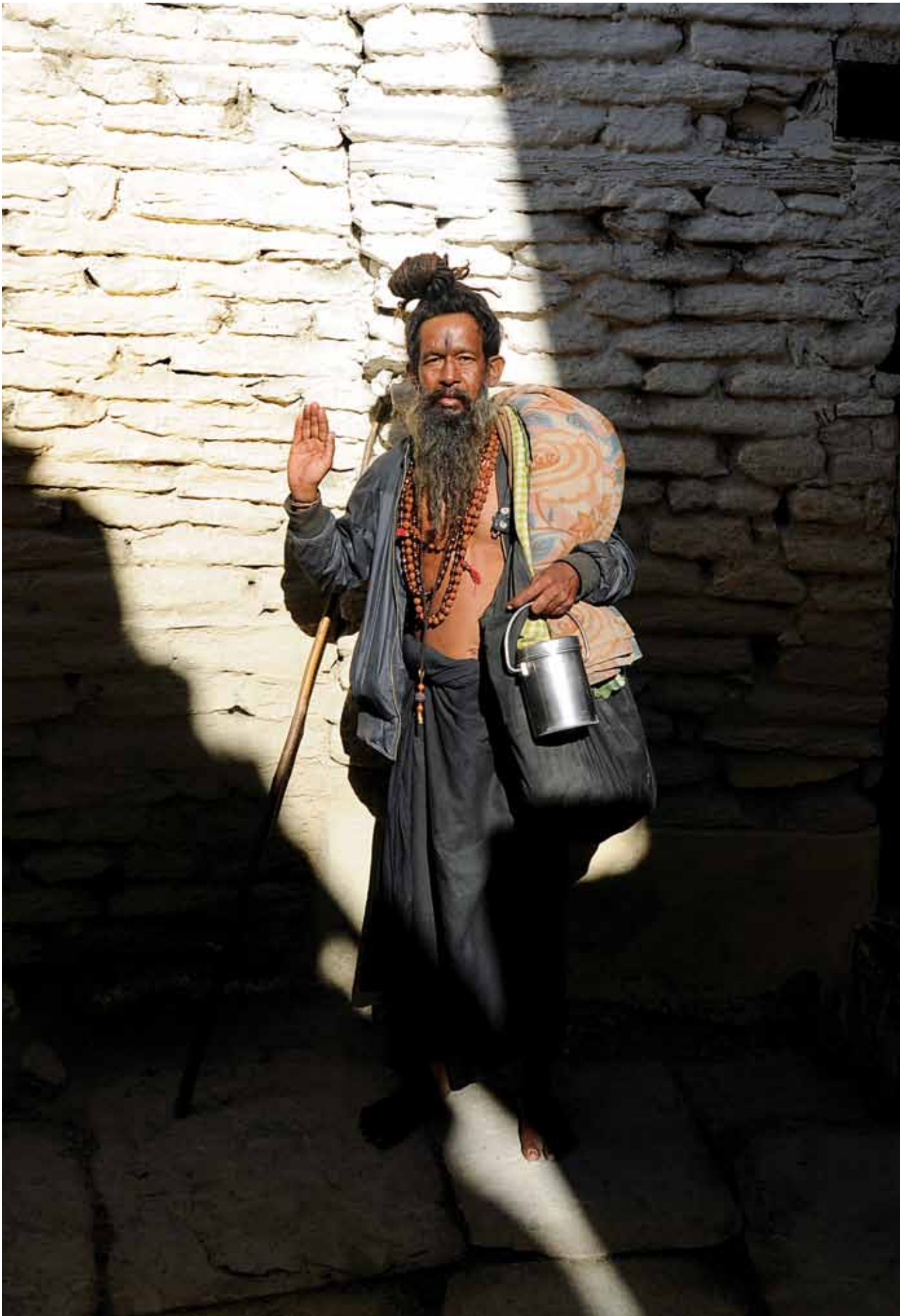




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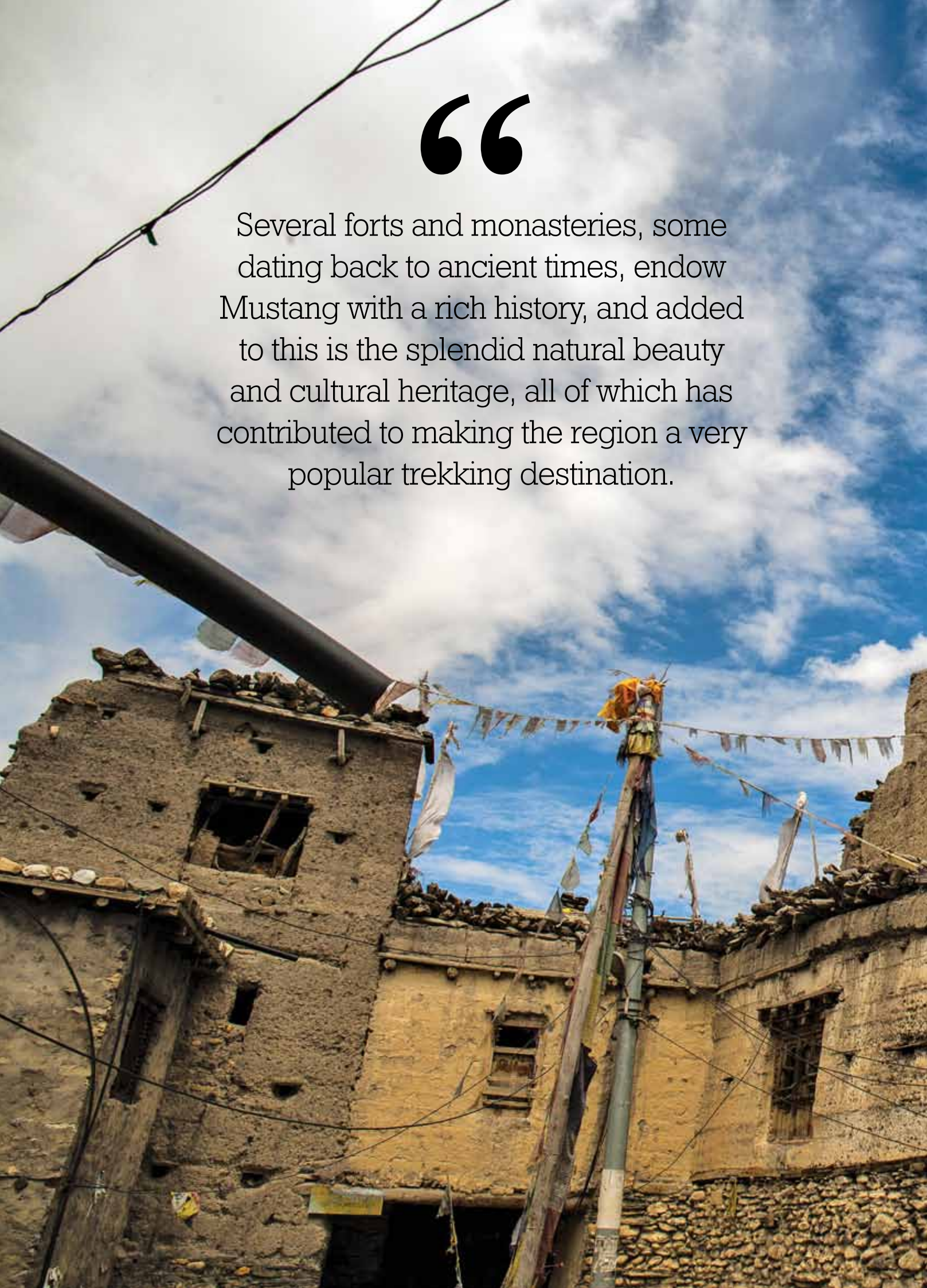
Life in Chusang has remained unchanged, for the most part, from what it was centuries ago. Its inhabitants are deeply steeped in religion, and one will find many gompas, mani walls, and chortens everywhere.





“

Several forts and monasteries, some dating back to ancient times, endow Mustang with a rich history, and added to this is the splendid natural beauty and cultural heritage, all of which has contributed to making the region a very popular trekking destination.



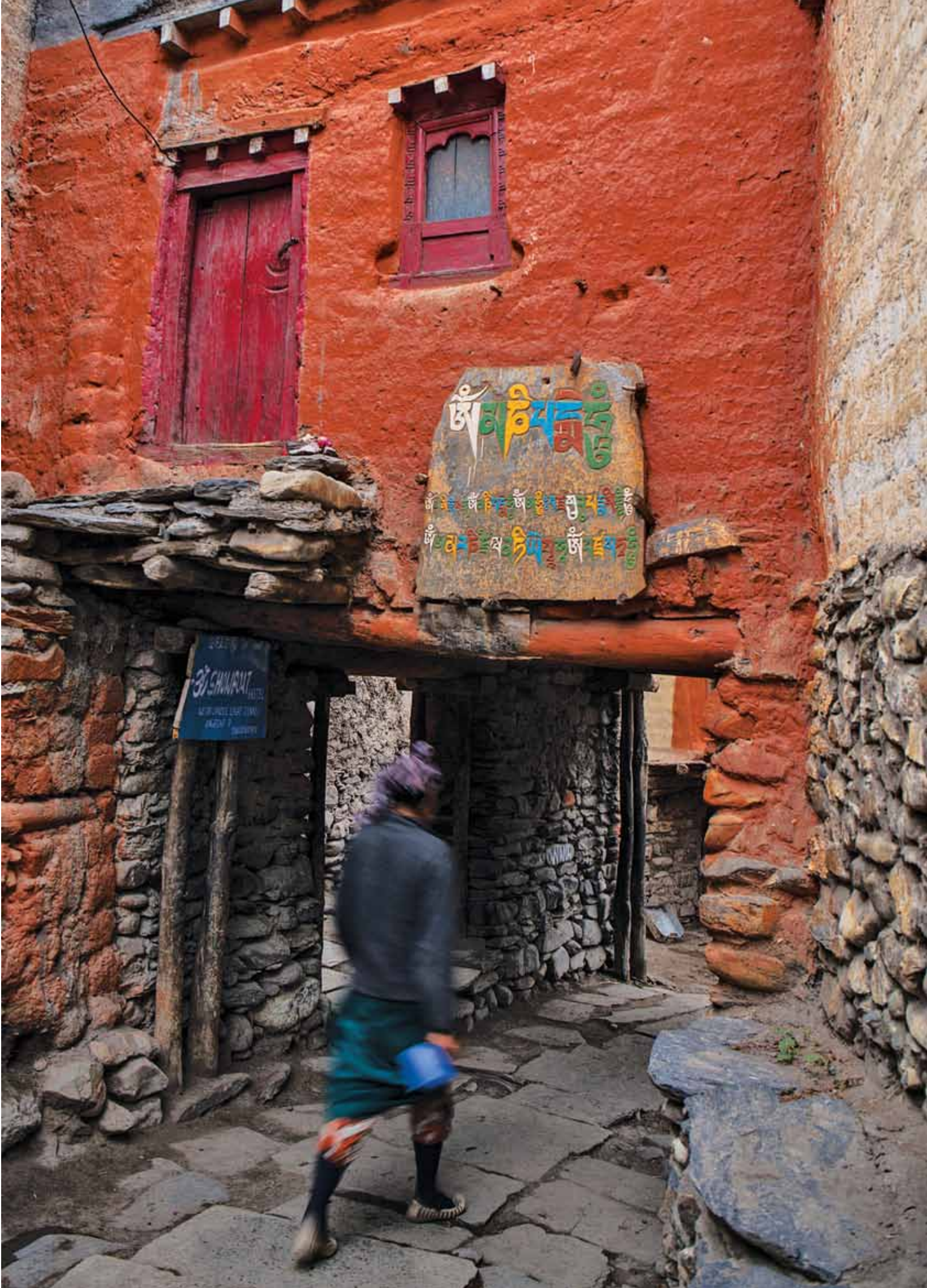




Churpi is one of the most popular souvenirs to take back home from Chusang, Mustang. Pictured here are threads of churpis hung out in the sun to be dried.

Mustang is a semi-arid region, so locals are prone to be pretty weather-beaten more often than not, which makes them sturdy and resilient.





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Change is the only constant and we must take it in the spirit of the need to make Nepal better for everyone.

# Nepal can and Escape Will, Still Change You

 ANIL CHITRAKAR

In the early days of the Annapurna Conservation Area Project, visitors could purchase a T-shirt that had a slogan, “Nepal is here to change you...” There was and still is a bit of magic in Nepal and everything Nepali that is still magical. Most of us believe that all the political changes and disruptions we have gone through will make Nepal a better place. It is also true that many of the disruptive activities were probably unnecessary and did not contribute to making things better for Nepalis nor for the tourists. In the old Nepal, few enjoyed the fruits of all economic activities; today we have too many trying to get a piece of the pie. If the market does what it is supposed to do, the ones who serve will make Nepal a truly magical place it was and still is. Change is the only constant and we must take it in the spirit of the need to make Nepal better for everyone

## Means and an end

There are two very distinct contributions that tourism makes to Nepal that are attributable. One is the fact that the tourist activity is a great way to distribute wealth, with almost no overheads and no or few middlemen (and women) being involved. The second is that many natural resources and our built and cultural heritage is today preserved due to the fact that tourist came to appreciate them. If it was not for tourism many young people



would never have taken up their traditional occupations. The fact that tourists have helped spread Nepali art and craft all over the world means there is a vibrant market and demand for small and cottage industries all over Nepal to continue to produce. These include precious metals, wood, Pashmina, traditional

paintings, Nepali Khukuri and jewelry. Nepalis have been able to pay for education and health services from these incomes.

## Quality, standards, pricing

Nepal has lost many opportunities to get tourists to spend more during their stay here simply because there are no assurances

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## In Nepal , a few days after the massive earthquake the message that went out was, “The best way to help Nepal is to go there.”

on the quality and standards of meat, water and sanitation facilities in eating places, vegetables, fresh fruits, yogurt etc. All these would have contributed even more to the local economy. Guides are often not sure if they should recommend that tourists eat or drink at various stops due to fear of indigestion and hence delay and even having to cancel the trip. Many settlements on trek routes and in our cultural sites the sanitation infrastructure is bad. What we all need to understand is that standards

have to be maintained, quality assurance is a non negotiable and only then can we put the appropriate price on the products and services we are offering. Standards help us attain an economy of scale. At 800 thousand tourists a year Nepal can and should do much better.

### Tourism cares

Nepal has been hit by many man-made and natural disasters that have negatively affected the economy hard. These have affected tourist numbers over the



last decade in general but the last year and half in particular. History teaches us that all countries go through similar ups and downs. Many cities around the world are today falling victim to terrorism and the message that is put out is that if “you do not come to our city, the terrorists have won.” The same principle applies to Nepal. The Seattle based group called Tourism Cares has got it right. When in bad times and when in good times, tourism cares. In Nepal , a few days after the massive earthquake the message that went out was, “The best way to help Nepal is to go there.” Today Nepal can do a much better job of communicating with the market that, for example, the Annapurna region, was least affected by the earthquake. In the Kathmandu valley the restoration work on the stupa at Bouddha is a tourism product in itself. Nepal is ready for business and we need to shout, so everyone can hear us.



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Photo courtesy: Richard Bull





# Great Views on the Nepal GHT

**Nepal is famous for its great natural beauty that trekkers can enjoy when trekking on the GHT.**

The Nepal GHT offers fantastic views, along with amazing biodiversity.

Text: Amar B. Shrestha

**G**reat Himalaya Trails (GHT), is a network of extraordinary journeys that offers fantastic views of some of the highest peaks, along with breathtaking scenery. The trails go along the shadows of eight massive 8,000-meter-high mountains, ranging from Makalu to Everest, the highest mountain on Earth. Here are a few of the great views you can

expect to see on the Nepal GHT:

#### **Red hills**

The Kanchenjunga Conservation Area has pristine forests, alpine meadows, and high-altitude wetlands. The majestic Kanchenjunga (8,586 m; 'Five Treasures of Snow'), the third highest peak in the world is, doubtless, the highlight of this section. Around November, the sky is deep blue, completely

undisturbed by any cloud, while around April, the hills become red with the blossoming of the national flower, the rhododendron. Due to heavy monsoon rainfall, the area is rich in flora that includes over 2,000 plant species. The trail begins in Tumlingtar, first going through Rai and Limbu villages, and then through Sherpa, Tamang, and Bhutia villages. The Milke Danda ridge, an area with many small lakes,

provides magnificent views of Kanchenjunga, Makalu, and Everest.

### Amazing flora and fauna

The Makalu Barun National Park has amazing biodiversity, because its forests extend through climatic zones ranging from tropical to alpine. The flora and fauna includes 25 rhododendron and 47 orchid species, as well as 440 kinds of birds and 75 kinds of animals, the more exotic being the clouded leopard, Asian golden cat, and red panda. The trek along this section goes through some pretty high altitudes, and so, you'll get awe-inspiring views of Everest, Lhotse, and Baruntse.

### Mighty peaks

A predominantly Sherpa territory, this is where three of the world's highest peaks, Everest, Lhotse, and Cho Oyu, are to be found. The trek will take you into Sagarmatha National Park, the highest national park in the world. It has beautiful

turquoise lakes and exotic monasteries, and probably the best view of Everest from the Renjo La. The trail carries on to the Rolwaling valley through the Tashi Labsta (5,760 m). On the way, you'll see mighty Gauri Shanker (7,121 m).

### Sacred valleys and holy lakes

The trek takes you to Helambu, one of the 108 sacred valleys (beyul) of the Himalayas, whose Sherpa inhabitants call themselves Hyalmo. The trail reaches Langtang National Park through the Tilman Pass (5,308 m), from where the view of the vast Tibetan plateau is simply spectacular. As you descend, you pass through a valley of glaciers and snowy peaks, including the imposing Langtang Lirung (7,227 m). On the way, you'll come across a number of holy lakes, among which Gosainkunda is the most famous. Thousands of devotees congregate here once every year, during the full moon of August, to



PHOTO: ANTON JANKOVY





welcoming; Tatopani ('Hot Water') being famous for its hot spring water gushing out from stone spouts. This is where you can experience the culture and lifestyle of the Tamangs.

### Gompas and gorges

The Annapurna Circuit is the most popular trek after the Everest Base Camp trek, not only due to easy accessibility, but equally due to the stupendous views on the route, including that of Annapurna I, the world's 10th highest mountain (note: the Annapurnas consist of six mountains, all over 7,200 m, extending for 55 km). Large glaciers and deep valleys are highlights of the region, as is the mysterious kingdom of Lo Manthang in Mustang. The barren landscape is somewhat offset by lovely gompas and blooming apple orchards. You are certain to be mesmerized by the sight of Kali Gandaki Valley, located between the magnificent Annapurna and Dhaulagiri mountains, and said to be the deepest gorge in the world.

take a dip in its icy waters, after which they change their sacred janai thread. Another well-known holy lake here is PaanchPokhari (Five Lakes).

### Peaceful majesty

The mid-point of the Nepal GHT lies in Manaslu ('Mountain of the Spirit'), the 8th highest peak in the world. As you trek

up to TiruDanda ridge, you get fantastic views of Annapurna, Manaslu, and Ganesh Himal. Larkya La (5,135 m) is the highest point of the trek. A side trip on the route takes you to Tsum Valley, whose Tsuma people follow a strict code of non-violence, and where no animals can be killed. The villages on the trail are simple and



# Adventure

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When festivals are an adventure in itself,  
why go on the lookout for anything more .

# A Dashain Adventure with my Cousins

## Experience

While most Dashain holidays were spent at home, in the midst of family members, there was one Dashain I remember that veered from the usual. That was the time I, two of my cousins, and two friends went on a trek up the mountains.

✍️ AMAR B. SHRESTHA

I grew up with first cousins, three boys, one elder to me, one around my age, and the third, two years younger. We all studied in the same school; as it happened, in different classes. We got up at six, and would be trudging our way to the bus stop by seven-thirty. The weather was pretty cool most of the time, Darjeeling being a hill station (pretty famous, too!), and it was never easy getting up early. Then, along with the arrival of the fall, our hearts started to sing a different tune, one of joy and expectation. Dashain was around the corner! Ten days of feast, fun, and frolic.

While most Dashain holidays were spent at home, in the midst of family members, there was one Dashain I remember that veered from the usual. That was the time I, two of my cousins, and two friends went on a trek up the mountains. Now, Darjeeling is surrounded by dales and valleys, and the hills roll on, in the proverbial manner, to distances far beyond the reach of the eyes. In other words, it's a nice place to go trekking.

One of the two friends had an aunt who lived high up yonder in the blue mountains, growing her own food, raising chickens, pigs, and cows, and making cheese. And having a helluva good time! Well, that's where we were going. The other friend's dad was a big shot at the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI), and we got all our stuff for the four-day trek at easy-on-the-pocket rates from this famous institute's ample stores. We started off with a spring to our steps, and a song on our lips down to the village of Bijanbari, from where we would head off on seldom-trodden paths up into the mountains. We figured that we would be crossing two mountains, at least, before reaching our destination.

The three-hour hike downhill to Bijanbari was a breeze, but after that, it was uphill all the way. As we hiked along narrow trails, we could feel our rucksacks getting heavier by the minute. Soon, we were at a rushing mountain river that packed some punch, it

seemed like, judging from the swiftness of its current. I don't remember now, but even back then, it somehow escaped logic why we decided to cross the 20-meter-wide stretch of churning water. Anyway, crossing it was the call of the day. So, my older cousin who had quite a reputation for bravado, began to wade across, trailing along a rope as he went.

It wasn't easy, he slipped a couple of times and pulled himself up with some trouble. By and by, he was standing on a big rock near the middle of the river, and winding the rope tightly around it, signaled for us to start crossing. We did just that, holding on to the rope tightly. In this way, we reached the opposite end, where a sandy beach awaited us. The sky was getting dark, and we decided to camp for the night. Then, as we were lighting a fire, after having set up our one single tent, it started to rain.

Man, did it rain? It came down in torrents, and all of us were soaked to the bone. Apart from the tent, there was no other shelter on the small beach, and the tent was far from waterproof. Well, we couldn't light a fire, and a lot of sand somehow got mixed up with the rice, and all in all, it promised to be a miserable night. Cold, wet, and hungry. I still don't remember who it was that instigated the river crossing; I swear, even today, I can feel the misery of that night, and I would love to wring that foolhardy instigator's neck.

Anyway, morning brought hope of a better day, the rain having stopped in the middle of the long drawn out night full of the sound of hunger pangs, empty bellies growling in the darkness like a train speeding along on iron rails. However, the sun the next morning was bright and welcoming. We put everything out to dry, and grabbed a few pieces of bread and some milk made with powder. And, soon enough, we were on our way. We had to cross the river to get on the right track, can you believe that? Why did we cross the river in the first place? Still don't know. The route went steeply uphill,



---

**No sooner had we stopped for a break, and were leaning against the hillside, when we saw dark black leeches all over our ankles, as well as up on the calves, sucking away to glory.**

and we filed single line on the narrow trail, taking turns to carry the soggy, heavy tent.

Now, rain and forested mountains don't really go together. No sooner had we stopped for a break, and were leaning against the hillside, when we saw dark black leeches all over our ankles, as well as up on the calves, sucking away to glory. As one, all of us stepped away from the hillside with alacrity. We sprinkled handfuls of salt over the bloody suckers. They

fell one by one, and I swear, they all looked like they had had their fill, so fat and plump were they!

This was something that we would be plagued by all the way up to our destination—that promised land of roast chicken, steaming rice, double omelet, fresh vegetable curry, and so on and so forth. Oh, such thoughts actually plagued me more than the plump red suckers' shenanigans. For I was as hungry as a horse after a mile-long

The route went steeply uphill, and we filed single line on the narrow trail, taking turns to carry the soggy, heavy tent.





We stayed the night in a big room in the cottage, the day passing by swiftly, eating, drinking, eating, drinking, eating

## Then, my hands fell on something familiar. A corn! Bush and all! Manna from heaven! Now, all of us started plucking any corn that our hands landed on in the darkness.

sprint. Really, all that climbing up had taken its toll, and we were running on empty tanks.

We tried making some noodles, but the damn fire refused to light (the forest was as wet as could be), and besides, the noodles was so sandy, it was practically inedible. On top of everything, we were pretty much in the midst of wilderness. So, all we could do was carry on up, up, and up. Came the time when dusk began to fall, and we were groping along on the increasingly dark path. We were desperate to reach our destination, where awaited warmth, comfort, food, and relaxation. But, it was also clear that we wouldn't be making it that night.

So, we groped along, and soon were groping among tall stalks for balance. Then, my hands fell on something familiar. A corn! Bush and all! Manna from heaven! Now, all of us started plucking any corn that our hands landed on in the darkness. We decided to halt for the night, besides the corn field, on a narrow piece of terraced land. While two of us pitched up the tent, the rest of us got a fire going, and began frying the corn. I tell you, never in my life have I tasted anything sweeter, never mind if the corn was only half cooked.

It rejuvenated us, I could actually feel my blood coursing through my body, carrying protein-rich nourishment to millions of exhausted cells on the brink of starvation. We gorged and gorged on all that delicious corn, too hungry to wait for it to be well cooked. Our bellies were finally full, and we lay out

in our sleeping bags, letting the luxurious feeling of sated lethargy wash over us.

Early the next morning, we had a leisurely breakfast (fried corn, of course) and started off for our friend's aunt's cottage, which wasn't far off now. Soon enough we were at its gates, and being welcomed into the house by the pleasant faced aunt. We were immediately ushered into the dining room, where a sumptuous breakfast awaited us—everything farm fresh—from the still warm homemade bread and peach jam and soft boiled eggs, to fresh greens, smoked ham, and roast chicken. Well, we turned into wolves then, wolfing down everything in sight with undisguised delight and ecstatic pleasure.

We stayed the night in a big room in the cottage, the day passing by swiftly, eating, drinking, eating, drinking, eating...you get the picture. The next morning, the friend's aunt filled our rucksacks with guavas, apples, and oranges, and we set off all fresh and invigorated. The trek back till Bijanbari wasn't so bad, but then, in the rush to reach our homes to enjoy what was left of Dashain, we didn't think of stopping to have lunch in Bijanbari, and thus the trek uphill, which took us five hours (compared to three hours downhill), became a race against time and starvation. Again, we were running on completely depleted tanks, and I don't need to tell you, the leftovers that we had on reaching home was perhaps the sweetest food we had ever eaten. Second, of course, to the corn that dark, dark, night.



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# Onity

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# Free Fallin' Amidst the Mountains

**A first time bungee jumper relives the  
experience for ECS Nepal**

 **BIPLAV SHRESTHA**    **ILLUSTRATED ISHAN MAHARJAN**

**N**epal is widely known as one of the best adventure destinations in the world. It just takes a few hours' drive from the capital to know exactly why. With soaring snowcapped mountains, raging white water Rivers, dense tropical forests and majestic wildlife, Nepal is the perfect destination for free spirited adventure seekers. One of the biggest adventure sports attractions in Nepal is Bungee/ Bungy jumping.

The Hilly Region covers about 68% of the total land area of the country and rises from 600m to 3600m. Hence, there is no dearth of high altitude bridges in the nation. Bungee Jumping is described as “an activity that involves jumping from a tall structure while connected to a large elastic cord. The tall structure is usually a fixed object, such as a building, bridge or crane.”

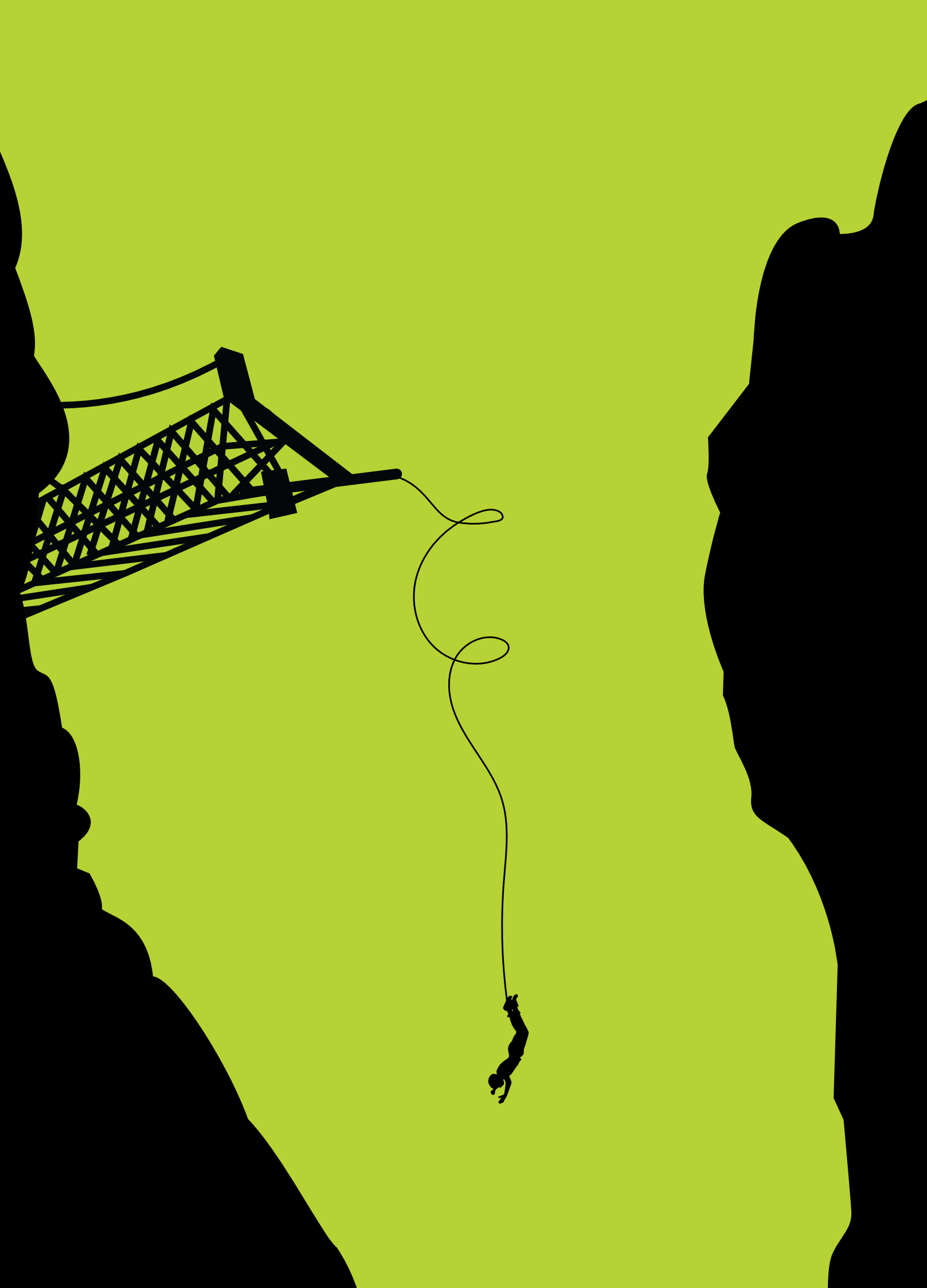
The first time I tried bungee jumping was during a 2014 trip to Pokhara. High Ground Bungee is Nepal's first and only tower bungee platform. It takes you about a 20 minute drive from Lakeside to reach the venue. Feeling panic, anxiety and excitement is normal before your first jump. Upon reaching the place, you are given a short but detailed instruction on what you are supposed to do. Once every important detail is covered, you make your way towards the tower. I was second in the line of jumpers and seeing my friend jump from the ledge was a very scary experience. For someone who has never

been afraid of heights, the prospect of having to jump off of a tower was a newly felt fear. As my turn to jump came, the instructor asked me to stand on my heels at the edge of the platform with my hands holding the side beams. He then started counting back from 10, and when the countdown reached 1, I had to jump!

The High Ground Bungee tower provides you with a 70m vertical drop; which amounts to about a 3 – 4 second free fall. It might sound like very little time, but for someone who's jumping for the first time, a second almost feels like a minute. The sudden surge of adrenaline, the instant thrust of the wind hitting your face at full force and the tiny pool at the bottom starting to grow in size almost feels other worldly. And just like that, before you can contemplate what just happened, it is over. You are pulled into a small boat and are relieved of your harness. The adrenalin high stays with you for as long as you let it and you are left with a sense of accomplishment.

High Ground Bungee is one of many bungee jumping sites in Nepal. There is the “Ultimate Bungy” at The Last Resort that may be the most spectacular Bungee jumping sites on the planet. The remarkable 160m drop into the Bhoti Kosi River gorge on the Nepal/Tibet border is considered the longest free-fall in the world.

So go ahead! Take your pick for an amazing adventure where you experience what life truly is and discover who you really are inside.





# Soaring Down the Slopes

 SHIRISH KHATRI

**O**ur rugged country is home to the tallest mountains, and possesses majestic snowy eminence in abundance. Despite that, when we think of winter sports like skiing and snowboarding, rarely do we connect Nepal with these adventures. However, Skiing and Snowboarding Foundation Nepal, against all odds, have brought skiing into Nepal, and it has been an endearing and exciting journey along the way.

The Skiing and snowboarding Foundation (NFSS) was founded in 2015 by a motley group of nine enthusiasts. A never before heard concept in Nepal, a few years ago, it would seem crazy to mention a Skiing and Snowboarding school in even such a mountainous country such as ours. The existing Ski agencies and trekking agencies in Nepal are mostly run by foreigners who guide and provide skiing expeditions to foreign travelers to the country. NFSS wanted to change that. They were determined to start adventure sports in Nepal, which could also be sustainable. What Nepal needed was the ability to produce their own expertise on winter sports about their peaks. Therefore, persisting through all the necessary paperwork and dealing with issues borne out of an absence of laws pertaining to skiing and snowboarding in Nepal, these young people at NFSS pulled it off and are now are leading

the first Skiing and snowboarding school in Nepal which also happens to be highest situated one in the world.

Last February in Rolwaling, about 28 young Nepali were standing for the very first time on skis, under the guidance of five ski instructors from Germany, Austria and Switzerland. All the starting equipment were donated: pairs of 25 skiers and snowboards. Far away from snow cannons and cable cars, the kind often made available to skiers, the group still maintained high level of energy and excitement at 6000 feet and under difficult weather conditions.

A year and a half later these skiers and many others are almost adept at gliding down the slopes. They may not look as graceful while descending as their instructors do, but their spirit towards the sport makes up for the lack. People from different backgrounds have come together to embrace the gifts of our mountains under the guidance of talented instructors, and the initiative of Nepali youth.

The founders of the NFSS emphasized on the importance of self-trust, focus, and friendship to make this dream a reality. Many Nepalese youth might be interested in trying new ideas but shy away when it comes to taking those ideas to the next level. The ability to channel these positive emotions are our best bet to bring positive changes to our country. Nepal has plenty



of inspiring natural beauty and its potential only needs to be unlocked. It is true that doing so is a difficult bid, and the key is to never lose focus. “NFSS started when a group of friends learning skiing had a crazy idea to take things to the next level”

NFSS further aims to teach Nepalese youngsters skiing, snowboarding, ski touring, and rescue. With the support of a consortium of Austrian, German and Swiss ski instructors, keen on sharing their NFSS plans to run a dual track SC. They also train mountain guides and Climbing Sherpas on how to conduct skitours securely with tourists. Now a part of the World snowboarding federation, NFSS is looking forward to an establishment of a permanent skiing school in Mera Peak and Rolwaling. They may not have the flashy infrastructure but that is not what it wishes to achieve. In order for Ski and snowboarding tourism to flourish in Nepal, it has to be run by Nepali people in a sustainable way. There are more and

more students, guides, and climbers learning how to ski and snowboard through the NFSS, they are the part of the dream the NFSS is approaching, of a full snow adventure tourism filled Nepal. The process is fun, and exciting and being patient for the end product is not difficult at all. Nepal is home to inspirations plenty, and NFSS is a fine example of how we can make the best of such inspiring gifts our home country has given us. We just need to get out there and dare to dream. “You don’t have to be a fantastic hero to do certain things - to compete. You can be just an ordinary chap, sufficiently motivated.” - Sir Edmund Hilary

Go support NFSS at: [indiegogo.com/projects/ski-for-nepal-school](https://indiegogo.com/projects/ski-for-nepal-school)



Pathak emphasized that self-trust, focus, and friendship were key to making this dream a reality. Many Nepalese youth may have the idea but may shy away when it came to taking those ideas to the next level. The ability to channel these positive emotions are our best bet as Nepalese youth to bring positive changes to our country.

Get going

# The Valley on a Vespa

As told to Shreeya and Avilasha, Vespa Valley Crew provides further information about the exhilarating experience.

SHREYA GAUTAM



If only there was a better and exciting form of mobility!" We mutter to each other as we rode the risky, tedious journey that the public transportation usually has to offer. The absence of congestion on two wheels, sun on your back, wind in your hair, experiencing the sights and smells up close and personal, listening to the personal narratives of the local driver, series of aesthetic visuals of the deep nooks and corners of Kathmandu as you travel-too good to be true? The newly introduced project, Vespa Valley, has exactly what every tourist trying to explore the city, or in that case, any Nepali trying to immerse themselves in the rich culture and sights of Nepal, needs. Information, more extensive and updated than a guide book, the experiences that the project offers is truly praiseworthy. Add Vespa Valley to your bucket list and give in to the experience like never before.

## What is the main aim and objective of this 'Vespa Valley'?

The main objective is fun! We're a group of Kathmandu locals who work hard in a trekking company and wanted to have a simultaneous personal project, and so Vespa Valley was born to show people around to some of our favorite places in the city.

There is so much to see here and so many different elements that make up the city, so our objective is to showcase the diversity that Kathmandu has to offer. It's not just a city of temples that are mentioned in the guide books. Around every corner there's something new, different and exciting that makes Kathmandu unique and special.

There is nothing like feeling connected to the place you're in and the Vespas really give you the feeling of being part of the streetscape. We're all about 'going local' and for many Kathmandu residents, that means getting around on 2 wheels, sun



on your back, wind in your hair, experiencing the sights and smells up close and personal. We think the Vespa is a great way to do that as it is a little quirky, not exactly what you see everyday – just as Kathmandu is quirky and different than every other city around the world.

**How did you come up with this idea and when did it begin?**

We started working on Vespa Valley in 2014. We came up with several ideas and while some of those ideas never get off the ground, we all thought this one was a great idea and we were all excited to make it happen! Gradually the team came together, we started working on the tours and routes, we collected a fleet of vintage Vespas and here we are today!

**What are the routes and destinations for this program?**

We have around 10 tours at this point and our most popular so far have been “Villages of the Valley”, which explores villages to the south of Kathmandu. For visitors this is a great way to experience life outside the city that’s not on a trekking trail. “Nepali Food Safari” has also been popular, showcasing the variety of food available in Kathmandu in locations that are well known for being popular and top quality.

The routes are a big part of our tours, it’s not just about the destinations. We go through the back streets and alleys, where ‘real life’ happens



**Other Places around Central Zoo:** if you hope to explore natural world of Nepal by riding elephants or watching wild animals, then the Central Zoo

in Jawalakhel (near the Jawalakhel bus stop) must be your best choice. This Zoo open at 10:00-17:00 from Sunday to Saturday.

– the part of the city that many tourists never get to see. We go through local bazaars and temples that are not mentioned in the guide books and experience the real Kathmandu.

**Will the tours be shown through local perspective or guide book perspective?**

Our tours are definitely a local’s perspective. Our routes take the inside alleys and back streets and you won’t find our guides throwing a list of dates and events at our guests. Our tours tell the personal stories of each place they visit. Anyone can read a guide book and get the facts, but it’s the personal anecdotes, memories and unique stories that create connection and lasting impressions and ultimately, we believe that’s what our guests want.

**Is this service only applicable for foreign tourists or domestic tourists are included as well?**

We originally created Vespa Valley for foreign tourists but have had such a warm welcome by domestic tourists and Kathmandu locals that we’ve created products for them too. Of course they can do any

tour they like, but we thought things that would be more interesting is our Custom Chauffeur Service where we can create a custom tour, help them make a special entrance to a party or just enjoy a fun way of getting around with a group of friends.

We’re also about to launch some new products that will have wide appeal and not your ‘everyday’ Kathmandu experiences, even for locals. We’ll be working with Circus Kathmandu and a Behind the Scenes workshop where you get to meet the performers, have them teach you a trick or two, put on your own personal performance. And of course transport is on the back of our classic Vespas.

The other tour we’re launching for next season is in collaboration with Sattya Inc and it showcases their project Kolor Kathmandu which is a collection of 75 street murals around the city. Cruising the streets, Sattya’s specialist guide will be telling the stories of the art and the artists.

With so much creativity around Kathmandu, we’re excited to be partnering with these local social enterprises.



# On Finding Chaityas Where am I?

**You will be amazed to find chaityas everywhere you go in Kathmandu Valley. And surely it will become the stories of your best discoveries in Nepal.**

 LUNIBHA SHAKYA

**I**f you have been in and around Kathmandu Valley, you will most definitely recognize this place. This Chaitya is opposite a beautiful pond in Patan and was built in 1357 AD. However, it's not a commercial area where you hope to find Java and Wi-Fi services. It is still a secluded area, away from the hub dub of modernity. During festivals like Buddha Jayanti and Mataya this place is as crowded as the alleys of Patan.

This Chaitya is believed to have been built by Emperor Ashok. And there are four Chaityas surrounding this central Chaitya. These four Chaityas are representation of the four important Stupas in Nepal: Boudha, Swoyambhu, Namobuddha, and lastly, the stupa of Badegaun. It is said that the Indian Muslim Sultan Sam-suddhin had once destroyed this stupa to discourage the outspread of Buddhism at the time. However, it was rebuilt again later.

On a nice warm day, you should come here and read books. It's one of the best local places for some 'me time.' And if you are bored, you should try the famous chips that you find around the corner on the way to Mangalbazar.

My best spot in this place is a traditional falcha which stands diagonally to the chaitya. Mostly because I can enjoy all my views from here: like children rushing for school, the ducks swimming in the green pool, the gardener nurturing his plants, old men and women enjoying idle chatters.

If you are feeling lonesome, come and enjoy your solitude here.

(Hint: a place where you will find a lot of Bahal and Bahis.)

# Going Vegan for a Day!

Are you the kind of person who cannot live without eating meat? Is meat a part of your everyday diet?

NUMA SHAKYA



**I**f you ask the same to me, I am quite neutral; I can live without eating meat, but meat is a part of my everyday diet, consequently, maybe, making me an anti-vegan person. I am not sure, because I have never given it a thought.

Consuming meat products doesn't make me guilty, thus going vegan, consciously too, is out of the question. But a new taste now and then, even for a 'chickiterian' like me is always interesting and impelling. So I thought, which led me to try-

ing out the dishes at Bliss Raw Café, a vegan restaurant hidden behind the kora of Boudha.

I ordered their popular bliss rice paper rolls, vegan sushi roll, and bliss rainbow salad. I was a bit hesitant when Kathryn Sunantha, the owner of the cafe, started explaining to me what being a vegan meant, "No dairy products, no meat, and no butter."

With the very essence of Newari cuisine ripped off; going vegan sounded like a foreign idea that I would never come to terms

with. Veganism of course is not a bad lifestyle; in fact, it is a much healthier choice.

As I mulled over its meaning, I began to realize that veganism wasn't a completely new idea for me. In some way, I could relate to veganism, because we also celebrate the holy month of Gunla when we abstain from meat, practicing 'ahimsa' ourselves.

Just like Bliss Raw Café, which too is inspired from the idea of ahimsa, meaning to practice good virtue, ergo, good virtue starting from diet. The

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## Ever since my brunch at Bliss Raw Café, the question of my diet and conscience has been tickling me. Kathryn Sunatha's, "You are what you eat" has been troubling me for good reasons.

food here tastes subtle; actually, it wouldn't be wrong to say that the food here tasted of kindness.

Bliss Rice Paper Rolls is stuffed with organic greens, sprouts, and hummus paste, and is decorated beautifully with fruits and served with smooth black lentil soup. It's like dim sum, but with a healthier taste. It's fresh, and hence, crunchy. I liked the boiled mushrooms that came with the platter, which was seasoned with sprouts and sesame seeds. It tasted like chicken.

The vegan sushi roll is a must-try. However, since it uses the

same ingredients, sprouts and organic green veggies, garnered with mango and avocado paste and seasoned with sesame seeds, the taste is almost similar to the paper rolls. But I would suggest ordering this if you are here, because it is milder and yummi-er.

The Bliss Rainbow Salad was another surprise. The combo of cold noodle with green veggie salad, sauced in avocado and mango sauce, tasted ripe.

And, for a sweet tooth like me, nothing tasted better than the café's special, 'Don't worry be happy', chocolate-smoothie grinded with banana, organic



cacao powder, maca powder, and cashew milk. The smoothie promises benefits such as healthy bones and good energy, but it won my heart because of its rich taste.

Brunch at Bliss Raw Cafe definitely won't be a wrong number. But it certainly will surprise you at a lot of levels, because veganism underlines strictures like no dairy products, no fried food, and no food cooked over 48 degree Celsius heat. And, it will surely leave you to question your conscience later, or thoughts of conscience to curl upon on your bed.

Ever since my brunch at Bliss Raw Café, the question of my diet and conscience has been tickling me. Kathryn Sunatha's, "You are what you eat" has been troubling me for good reasons. Because good food sometimes is hard to take, and for a perplexed person like me, blissful and kind things do give me indigestion ;)

But, I am guessing, this could be a start to going vegan some-time in the future.



# LAAVANYA LUXURY AYURVEDA

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"I am always very careful about the ingredients of my skin care products. I have tried Laavanya's nutritional cream, the soaps and the beauty masks. The products' quality is very high and they leave my skin with a sense of cleanliness, freshness and perfume. In one sentence: I feel like taking care of myself! I my friends have also appreciated the finely crafted case package: not only it is made with natural materials, but it is also beautiful and re-usable!"

Meena Kaini  
Kathmandu, Nepal

"I regularly use Deep Nourishing Cream and the Toner. These products suit me and make my skin last longer. I carry them with me all the time, anywhere I go."

Dr. Anju Ranjit  
Pokhara, Nepal

"Thanks to Laavanya, my skin feels better each day."

Adeline Wenger  
Geneva, Switzerland

"The Mukha Karsandhik Powder smells lovely and leaves the skin absolutely radiant. From the moment I opened the container, I embarked on a skincare journey. I used the deep exfoliating cream afterwards and all my friends told me I was looking stunning."

Marcus Cotton, Managing Director  
Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge, Nepal

"Laavanya Luxury Ayurveda sets a new standard in providing the timeless qualities of ayurvedic skincare products in a modern and contemporary style. With rigorous attention to product authenticity, quality and smart presentation, Laavanya is a natural leader in its field. Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge is honoured to supply these excellent Nepal made products to our guests."

# The Buzz

MARKET WATCH • EVENTS • NEWS



## Quality in the Air Qatar Airways

Qatar Airways has been awarded Best Up in the Air Experience at the Future Travel Experience Awards for the second consecutive year. The Best Up in the Air Experience award commends leading airlines that are committed to continually advancing the passenger experience. The award highlighted Qatar Airways becoming the first airline globally to

operate the Airbus A350, enhancing its in-flight entertainment system with the launch of the award-winning Oryx One, continuing to roll out on-board Wi-Fi across its fleet, and investing in Cabin Crew development, including Emotional Intelligence training and Elite Service training, tailored to the needs of premium passengers.

## ■ The Taste of Heaven: Everest Glacier

September 8, Maan Nam Restaurant, Bhatbhateni

On September 8, Dynamic Dream Group, in collaboration with Freedom Export, organized a launch program of 'Everest Glacier Artesian Mineral Water.' The bottled water has been extracted directly from

the Everest glacier (Qomolangma glacier) that lies on the Tibetan side at a height of 8,844 meters. The marketing and distributing company, Dynamic Dream Tradelink, aims to provide the best drinking water to people

at their doorsteps. They claim it as the best drinking water available, and it seems that this pure water from the top of the world is here to stay. Expectedly, for such a premium product, the price is on the higher side.

## Witness the Himalayan Evolution

The book tells us the story of the evolution of mountains of Nepal. Perfectly highlighting the impact of tourism over the years on the resilient inhabitants of the Himalayas. With enthralling photographs by Sujoy Das and precise writing by Lisa Choegyal, the book is an impeccable portrayal of life in Nepal's mountains.

Captivating the changing lifestyles, and landscapes, the photographs in black and white celebrate the dwellers of this blessed region. Further, the personal perspective the writer brings to the narrative, adds context to the contribution of tourism, both physically and spiritually in the region. This book is definitely going to resonate with the emotions of anyone who loves the mountains of Nepal as much.

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## Button Mahal at Baber Mahal



On September 24 and 25, a button exhibition—Button Mahal—was held in the courtyard of Baber Mahal Revisited. Organized by Shailee Crafts, it showcased an original and artistic selection of buttons made of wood, buffalo horns, and bones. Shailee Crafts is run by brothers Shailesh and Success Dhamala, who first learned carving and crafting skills as children in their father's workshop. He used horn and bone, as well, but in those days he mostly made hippy-type crafts for the tourist industry. The brothers started Shailee Crafts in

2012, making updated crafts, and in 2014, began producing buttons, too. Success Dhamala explained to me how they use byproducts from the meat industry that would otherwise be wasted. "In my father's day, people used to throw bones and carcasses into the holy water of the Bagmati River," he told me. "But, now what

would have been thrown away has commercial value. After we're finished using all that we can, what is left become fertilizer."

It's an excellent example of taking something that is already there in abundance, and updating traditional crafting methods to turn it into something new of great value and beauty.

You can check out some of the beautiful designs at [www.shaileecrafts.com](http://www.shaileecrafts.com). I couldn't believe a simple button could be so attractive.

## Himalaya Airlines to Colombo



Himalayan Airlines, a Nepal-China Joint Venture airline announces their much awaited second destination – Colombo, the Sri-Lankan capital. The airline will commence service from October 1st onwards, with its flight numbered A320-214 (configured with 8 business class and 150 economy class seats), on this new route. Three flights will fly every week on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday as H9673.

After holding observations for many prior years, it was concluded that

a direct route from Kathmandu /Colombo/ Kathmandu was required, as there were unnecessary transit times, and airfares in the mix between two countries with very strong bilateral connections, politically and tourism wise. Adding to the opening of the Kathmandu/ Colombo / Kathmandu route, the Airline has planned regular flights to Delhi, Yangon, Dammam, Beijing, Lhasa, Chengdu, Bangkok, Hong Kong and Dubai in the near future.

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## Tangalwood Music Festival

Internationally acclaimed rock super group Aristocrats headlined the Tangalwood Music Festival this September. The band consists the trio of guitarist Guthrie Govan, bassist Bryan Beller and drummer Marco Minneman, all renowned in their respective fields. While the band put forward a blasting set list, Aristocrats grabbed and transfixed the audience with wonderful stage presence, showmanship and interaction with crowd. Frequent instant musical improvisations by the band also did its trick while everyone was left amazed with the insane drum solo in between the set. This should be the only international grade concert that happened after the last edition of Silence Festival. Held at the premises of Tangalwood, Naxal, this event also saw performances of Indian sitar player Rishab Seen. Rishab is the first musician to bridge Indian classical music with Metal genre. Two Nepali bands The Act and Space opened for Aristocrats.

## Imprint of Faith

"There are some people who are like candles—who burn themselves to give light to others—while there are some who not only burn themselves, they also teach others on how to light the lives of others," said Anil Shah, as he congratulated Sanjeet Maharjan on his exhibition, 'Astha, an Imprint of Faith.' Maharjan's exhibition showcased a beautiful collection of bells and prayer flags, representing our faith in religion and gods and goddesses. His paintings portray our faith in life, and artistically moves our unpronounced questions to the gods we heed. His paintings are embedded with symbols and signs of permanence, and the essence of faith that will still remain when we eventually perish.



## Kasthamandap: On the path to Recovery.

The Kasthamandap temple, famously said to have been made from wood of only one tree, 881 years ago, was the inspiration behind the name of the Kathmandu valley. The long standing heritage of the valley, held dear by Nepali people succumbed to the April earthquakes of 2015. As a part of the citizen led Campaign to Rebuild Kasthamandap, a program was organized on September 25th, called 'Why Kasthamandap Matters?' The program started with royal priest Manjushree

Ratna Bajracharya from Shikhamu Bahaa giving a brief introduction of Kasthamandap. Dipesh Risal, a writer and history enthusiast who was also a former investigative journalist with Himal Magazine in 1991, did an extensive presentation about Kasthamandap. Mr. Risal talked about the history of Kasthamandap, sharing two stories of its origin. The message from the petition was simple and moving. Kasthamandap and other heritage sites deserve priority from the government for reconstruction.

# ECS COURSES

In order to improve the skills and knowledge of your household staff, ECS offers the following courses this month. Please let us know if you are interested in enrolling your staff for these courses.

Phone: 442.6439, 98510.07.900

Email: [ecs@infoclub.com.np](mailto:ecs@infoclub.com.np) to book a place.

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Many excellent staff are registered with us, including cooks, guards, gardeners, maids and drivers. Our list is constantly updated. Interviews are carried at our office to help resolve language problems between our clients and the staff. If you are looking for efficient and reliable staff, please come and discuss your requirements with us and don't forget to register your staff with us before you leave. **PLACEMENT FEE:** Rs.5,000



## NEPALI LANGUAGE CLASS FOR FOREIGNERS

ECS Services has been supporting foreigners to learn the Nepali Language (speaking, reading and writing) for many years. If you would like to learn or improve your Nepali vocabulary, please call us. Group or individual classes are available.

## BASIC ENGLISH READING & WRITING

### FOR HOUSEHOLD STAFF

Our clients and their staff often face problems when not communicating face to face. If your staff could read and write memos or notes, things could be easier for you. We present this reading and writing course that will enable your household staff to read notes/memos, write simple sentences, and take telephone messages. This will also help your staff to get employed after you leave.

## BASIC ENGLISH LANGUAGE

### FOR HOUSEHOLD STAFF

Our English class for household staff enables them to communicate with you in simple English. Language structures are taught along with vocabulary that is related to household matters (for daily use). Oral communication skills will be emphasized in this course rather than reading and writing skills.

## NEPALI LANGUAGE CD

The revised ECS Nepali language CD is now available. It gives you the chance not only to listen but also to practice your Nepali along with the CD. We feel that this improved CD will help you learn the Nepali language more effectively. A booklet comes with the CD. **PRICE:** Rs. 999 (including booklet)

## HOUSE KEEPING & FOOD HANDLING

### FOR HOUSEHOLD STAFF

ECS is organizing food handling and hygiene course for your household staff. If you are unsure whether your staff is aware about hygiene then this is the ideal course. This hands-on class includes daily hygiene, importance of hand washing and preparation of fruits and vegetables. We will teach them the proper way of cleaning - tables, windows, kitchen floor and bathroom. We will also teach them how to take care of a refrigerator. We will discuss how illness is spread and why the corner and behind the door is important to clean. We intend this course to help your staff to clean the house properly.

**VENUE:** Maharajgunj

## SPECIAL COOKING

### FOR HOUSEHOLD STAFF

ECS cooking course is an opportunity for your maid or cook to improve his/her cooking skills. At the end of this course, participants will be able to work as a cook independently and can even organize a small party. The course content includes information on different food items for practical cooking and will also make them aware about kitchen hygiene. We teach them how to prepare Indian, Chinese and continental items, as well as basic Western cooking techniques like simmer, sauté, etc. We will also discuss how to organize a kitchen, to prepare menus, cutting techniques, steps for serving food during small and big parties. This course helps them improve their skills so your staff will not only serve you better while you are here, but they will find it easier to find a job when you leave.

**VENUE:** Maharajgunj **FEE:** Rs. 15,000

## VEGETARIAN COOKING COURSE

Participants will be able to cook the following items :

- 1) Vegetable moussaka
- 2) Zucchini Patty
- 3) Pan glaze tofu with orange juice warm spice
- 4) Mozzarella Aubergine Rolls
- 5) Mushroom Blintz

**DATE:** 23rd October 2016

**TIME:** 1:00pm – 5:00pm

**VENUE:** Maharajgunj

**FEE:** RS. 1,500

## DINNER COOKING COURSE

Participants will be able to cook the following items:

1. BBQ Chicken Burger
2. Macaroni Cheese
3. Mushroom Soup
4. Apple Prist
5. Coleslaw

**DATE:** 27th November, 2016

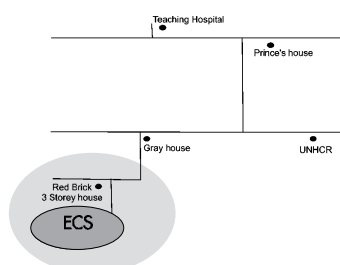
**TIME:** 1:00p.m-5:00p.m

**VENUE:** Maharajgunj

**FEE:** Rs. 1,500

# ECS

Maharajgunj, Kathmandu  
Phone: 442.6439/98510.07.900  
[ecs@infoclub.com.np](mailto:ecs@infoclub.com.np)  
Office Hour:  
11:00am to 3:00pm  
(Monday through Friday)



**ECS Services offers staff employment services (cooks, watchmen, gardeners, housemaids and drivers); courses for household staff (cooking and health); Nepali language for expatriates and English language for household staff. We hope that these services provided by ECS help make your life more comfortable.**

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**AD INDEX**

**AUTO**

- GO Ford (02)
- TOYOTA (27)
- VIJAYA MOTERS (29)

**BREWERY/CIGARETTE**

- Global Trading Concern Pvt. Ltd (120)
- Shiraj Trading Concern Pvt. Ltd (19)
- Nepal Distillery (09)
- Yeti Distillery ( 117, 119)

**GIFTS /HANDICRAFT AND GALLERY**

- Fewa Pashmina (07)
- Tara Oriental (03)
- Himalayan Cashmere (35)
- Khukuri House (96)

**HOTEL, RESTAURANTS AND CAFÉS**

- Gokarna Forest Resort (05)
- Hotel Shanker (11)
- Sangri-la Hotel (76)
- Hotel Aannapurna (04)
- Hotel Shambala (25)
- Borderlands (107)
- Chandra Ban Resort (115)
- Nepali Chulo (17)
- Kaze Darbar (20)

**ISP / WEB DESIGNER / GADGETS**

- World Link (06)
- Subisu (08)
- Nepal Link (107)
- ITNTI (96)
- Deluxe Radio (45)

**TOURS & TRAVELS**

- Red Fox (45)
- Royal Mountain Travel (115)
- Greenline (115)

**SPA & BEAUTY PARLOUR**

- Lavannya (112)

**OTHER**

- Foodmandu (95)
- Bath 'n'Room (13, 15)
- The British College (91)
- Annapurna Post (80)



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