

# ECS NEPAL

THE NEPALI WAY

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Retracing our ancestors' tracks / Lodging in Shiv's land / Tales of the guns / Lalpur

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## Retracing our ancestors' tracks

A bike ride takes two unlikely friends on a trip that traces Nepali history and heritage.

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### 36 THE GREAT HIMALAYAN TREKKER

Since 1993, Robin has trekked and then mapped and promoted the GHT in Nepal.

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A one-time wetland, Charikot and Jiri are beautiful getaways that are full of surprises.

### 102 PRESERVER OF HISTORY

ECS NEPAL talks to the man behind renovating and preserving Kathmandu's architectural wonders.

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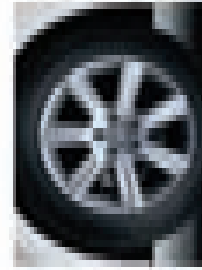
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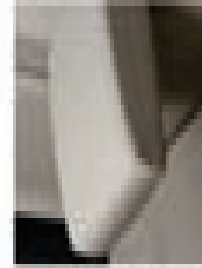
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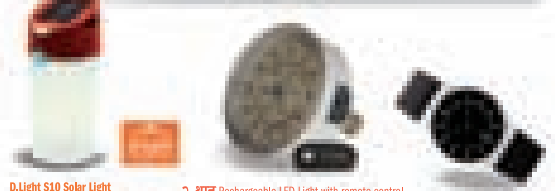
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Radish and red chillies hung out to dry outside a local's home in Chitlang.

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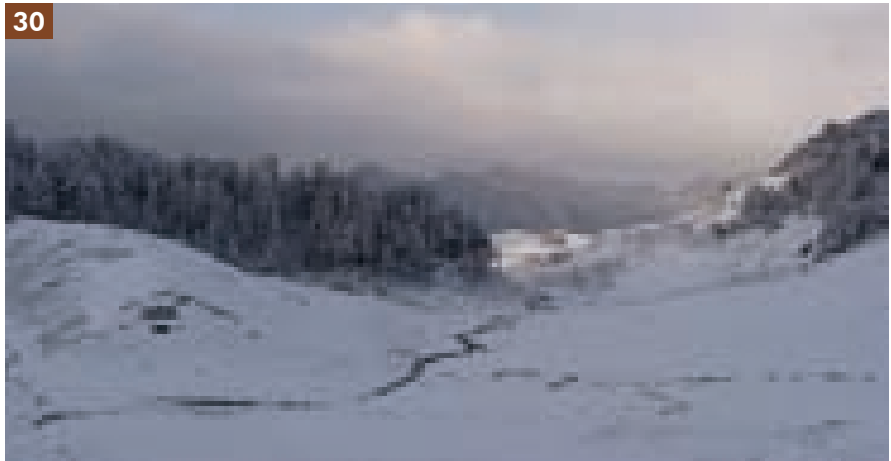
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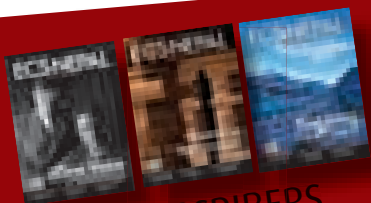
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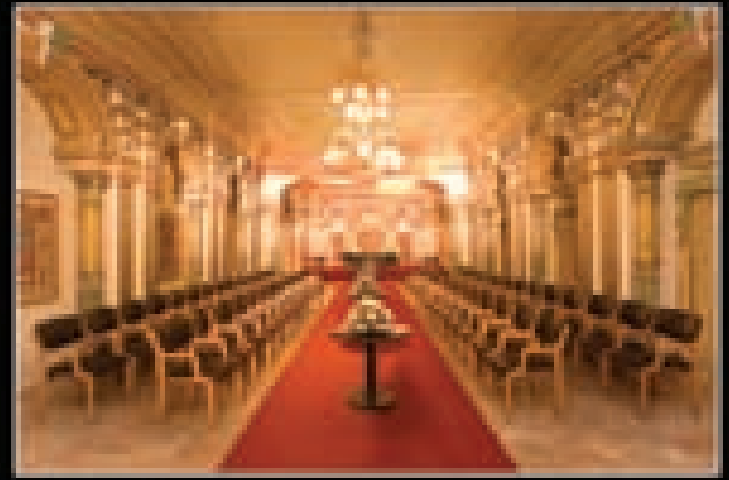
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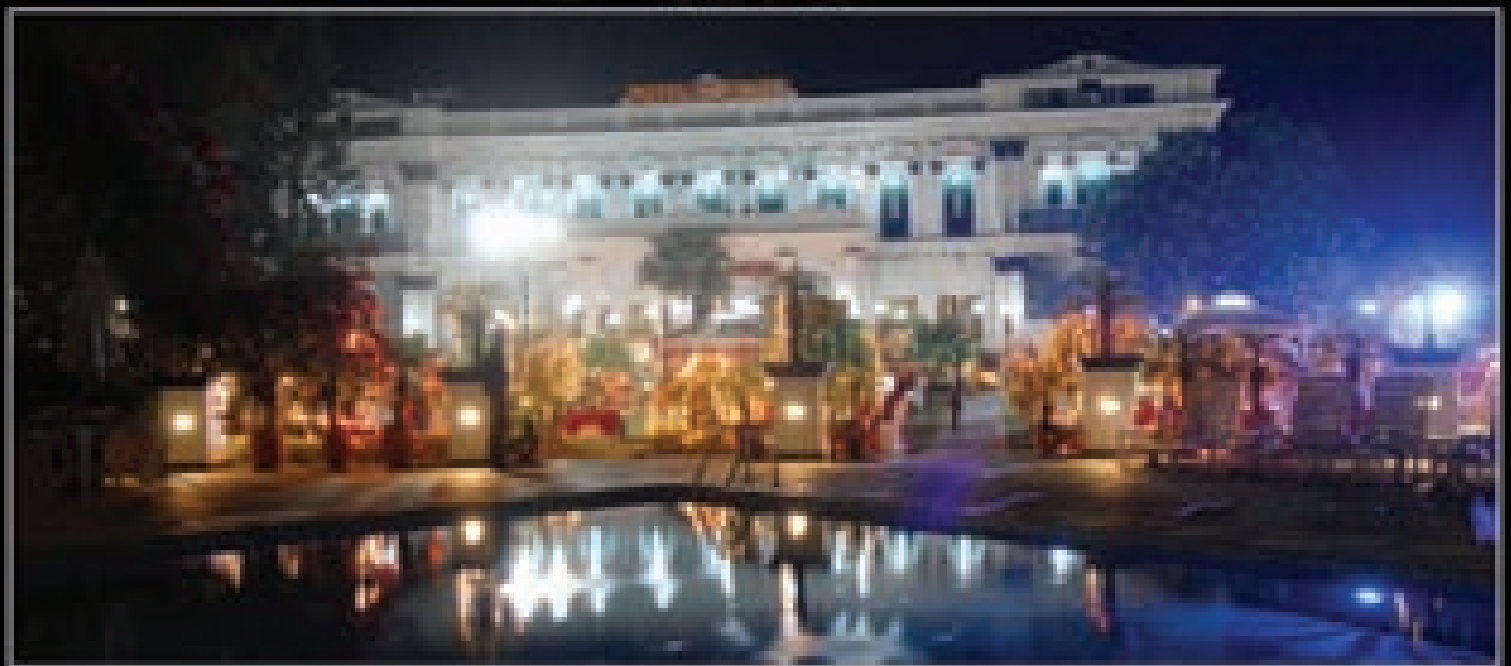




Photo by Ravi M Singh

## CONTINUITY

Nepali history is full of ups and down like many places in the world. Look at China and Greece. Every country seems to have good times and bad. Only then can we appreciate what has happened to Bandipur and Bhaktapur here in Nepal. They were the centers of commerce and power and something changed. The rulers and local people did not care or waited too long to understand the changes. They went through very bad times, and now with greater understanding of the realities, are in for better times. It has taken the effort of many people and a lot of resources but the places are back on the map again.

These success stories of how people are able to turn things around are very important during difficult times of transition. It is easy to despair and give up. We need success stories to keep our hopes up. It is also important to remind ourselves each day of what is possible. The Great Himalayan Trail looks like another important achievement that is here to stay and will help the lives of the people in communities in these remote areas. They contribute a lot to managing vital natural resources for the millions who live down stream. It is critical that we recognize their role and help them do what they do in any way we can.

As we enter the hot days in Nepal before the monsoon sets in, many festivals are upon us. From horse festivals to the chariot festival dedicated to bringing rain to Nepal, people everywhere will be participating in them. Perhaps the rulers understood the need to engage the population in “interest-

ing diversions” while waiting for the rains and the plantation season. It is also a climbing season and there are going to be numerous outdoor activities for you to choose from. Cycle rallies are in vogue. The more the people become involved in outdoor activities, the greater the chances to involve them in cleaning the environment. The two are closely related.

Talking of outdoors, let us not underestimate the value of reading and all the great books we have to choose from. There are some good book stores now to choose from. There are good publishers and good authors to select from for our reading pleasure. People are today more connected than ever before leading to a lot more sharing of experiences and insights. We are able to gather insights from the past for use in the present and future. In Nepal a lot of these insights are still in the oral tradition. As family structures change, we may need to do a lot more to record them in various mediums. At ECS we do our part to contribute to this process and goal.

Whatever you do this coming month and wherever your travels may take you, please make some time for the Nepali way



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# NOTICE BOARD

MARKET | EVENT | IN THE GALLERY

## MARKET

### 19<sup>th</sup> edition of Surya Nepal Pvt Ltd Masters 2012



The 19<sup>th</sup> edition of Surya Nepal Pvt. Ltd. Masters began on 13 March 2012. The largest and the only international golfing event of Nepal was organized with the objectives of promoting Nepal as a golf tourism destination and enhancing golfing talents of Nepal to international standards.

The top golf stars from the SAARC region took part in this prestigious event held at the exotic

Gokarna Forest Golf Resort. The Standard Chartered Pro-Am raised the curtains on 13 March with the main tournament – joint-sanctioned between the fledging Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI) and the Nepal Professional Golfers Association (NPGA) beginning from 14 March through 17 March, 2012. NRs. 4000000 was allocated as the prize money for this event which has been partnering along with Nepal Tourism Board since last eight years.

A Chipping Competition (closest to the pin) was also conducted for the media journalist after the press meet. The winners received a John Player gift voucher from Mr. Iswar Gautam, Brand Manager of Surya Nepal Pvt. Ltd.

### Thamel Eco Resort launched

Thamel Eco Resort is something more than an addition to the number of hotels existing in the valley. It is a boutique hotel that has engaged itself to prevent the carbon footprint by employing various methods. The woods used in the making of the hotel were brought from a company that plants as many trees as had been cut down to avoid deforestation.

The resort uses solar energy as well for power consumption and water heating. The green initiative taken by the resort is still progressing in the first phase. It has collaborated along with a Swiss university for waste management. Research claims that 60% of waste in a home comes from a kitchen and Thamel Eco Resort intends not just to clear their kitchen bins but employ a better way to keep the city area clean.



Local products from home accessories to furniture have adorned the space of this resort giving it the local appeal. Influenced by the Nepali architecture, each corner of the resort reminds one of our culture and heritage. The replicated miniature Swoyambhunath in the front yard or the corns and clay lanterns hanging over the *tudal*, each plays its part well to create a fine ambience.

The resort has 46 well furnished rooms with TV, attached bathrooms and air conditioning. It is a free Wi-Fi zone and offers services like yoga and meditation class, 24 hour room service, baby sitter, airport pickup, travel desk and doctor on call. The menu of the resort has also been well designed to cater to the tastes of guests from all parts of the world.

#### Disclaimer:

ECS NEPAL does not endorse the products and events featured in this section or the views expressed by the writers unless stated otherwise.

### Standard Chartered Donates

Standard Chartered Bank donated 10 computers to Mary Ward school in Lubhu, its company press release stated. Chief Executive of Standard Chartered Bank Nepal, Joseph Silvanus, and Principal of the school Sister Neena CJ, inaugurated the computer laboratory. According to

Silvanus, the bank has in the past been supporting many other community-based schools through computer donations, science lab and library upgrades and he also assured that the bank will continue to provide support in other areas as well. (Akriti Shilpakar)

### Eon Now in Nepal

Laxmi Intercontinental, the sole authorized distributor of Hyundai four-wheelers in Nepal, introduced the new models of Hyundai Eon on Friday. The company unveiled four models- the Eon Dlite, Dlite Plus, Era Plus and Eon Sportz. According to the press release, the car has been manufactured with an eye on markets like Nepal and the company is confident about its performance here.

The press release stated the price of the Eon Dlite, the most economical car among the four at NRs. 1.39 million. Similarly, the Eon Dlite Plus costs NRs. 1.52 million, the Eon Era Plus is priced NRs. 1.62 million and the Eon Sportz is



tagged NRs. 1.85 million. The car will be available in six colors. According to the press release, Ganesh Bahadur Shrestha, chairman of Laxmi Group said "Hyundai has always led the way when it comes to innovation and with the Eon, it's continuity to its legacy." (Akriti Shilpakar)



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# authentic nepali & newari restaurant

Housed in a beautifully restored centuries old Rana palace with traditional Newari décor, Nepali Chulo restaurant spares no detail in letting customers relive the rich culture and traditional heritage of Nepal. The restaurant located at Lazimpat offers delicious Nepali and Newari cuisine with plenty of Aila. Regular cultural shows are performed with local dances and instruments, allowing guests to have a lovely meal as well as a wonderful show. It can accommodate up to 250+ guests where they can enjoy a lovely lunch & dinner with most authentic Nepali and Newari heritage.

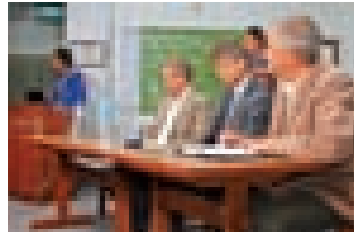


**NEPALI CHULO**

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## NOTICE BOARD ■ EVENT

### Can we put a price on nature?



With the joint effort of the British Council and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), a debate concerning "Ecosystem economics – can we put a price on nature?" was put in progress.

This regional "Earth Debate" was linked via Skype in the Hindu Kush-

Himalayan countries, Bangladesh, China and India. The debate was a part of a series of related debates held by the British Council in the UK from January through March 2012. It was organized in the run-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), also known as Rio+20, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 20 to 22 June, 2012.

The debate concentrated on the sustainability of ecosystem economics, valuation of ecosystem services, to conserve the resources in the mountain regions and control the climate change. (Nischal Oli)

### Exploring Sugata Surabha

As a part of the lecture series organized by Social Science Baha, Todd Lewis along with Subarna Man Tuladhar hosted a lecture on Sugata Saurabha. Lewis is an authority on Buddhism in the Kathmandu Valley as well as a professor in the Religious Studies Department at The College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Massachusetts. Tuladhar is director and professor of Administration at the Administrative Staff College in Patan. Sugata Saurabha is amongst the greatest works

of modern Himalayan literature written by Chittadhar Hridaya.

Lewis and Tuladhar explored a variety of topics ranging from the narrative richness in the book to the impact of this work and that of other authors who were imprisoned during the Rana regime. The evening concluded with an argument that Sugata Saurabha deserved a place among the great literary accomplishments of Buddhist history. (Yukta Bajracharya)

### Knorr Healthy Life Recipe Contest Finals

10th March 2012 was the date of the final cook off between the ten top finalists of the 'Knorr Healthy Life Recipe Contest' at the Academy of Culinary Arts in Lagankhel. With the effort to promote healthy soup consumption in Nepal, Knorr announced this contest for any enthusiast cooks. To participate the only steps required were to prepare a dish using one of the Knorr Soup as one of the ingredients and to send in their recipes to either iloveknorr@gmail.com or to submit their recipe through healthylife.com.np. The response received enthusiastic and ten of the top ten finalists faced a cook off to determine who would win the grand prize.

At the final round, the ten chosen cooks were required to prepare their dishes in front of the judges. Their dishes were then tasted and judged by Mr. Tripta Gurung from Jardin Restaurant, Mr. Sandeep KC

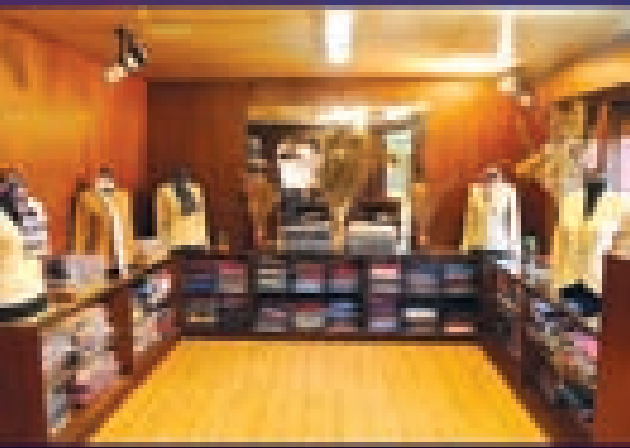
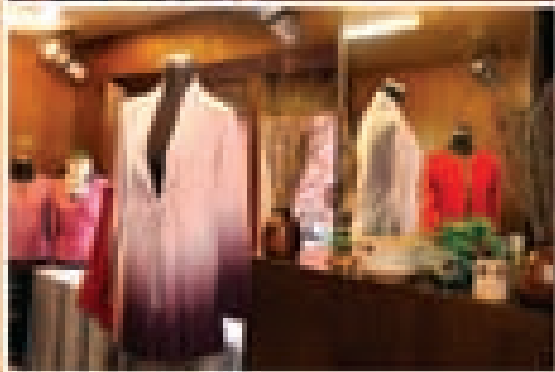


an instructor of the Academy of Culinary Arts and Ms. Upasana RL Singh, lyricist. The criterion for the judging was not only based on the taste but also the originality and presentation. The Rs. 70000 Grand Prize was won by Sunita Gurung from Kathmandu with her dish 'Mixed Lentils (Kwati) in Tomato Soup with Cheese T-Mo:Mo:.' The first runner up, Sangya Ghimire from Kathmandu received a Microwave Oven with her dish 'Delicious Knorr Pakoda Chaat +Knorr Soupy Delight' and the second runner up, Spana Shakya from Dharan won a Dinner Set for her 'Ysaau Knorr Soup Base.' All the participants received a free subscription of Healthy Life from ECS Media and Gift Hampers from Knorr.

# Three Stars to Ruslan Vodka

Ruslan Vodka was recently awarded 3 Stars for its superior taste and quality by ITQI (International Taste and Quality Institute, Belgium).

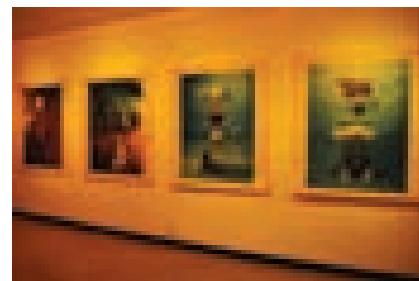




## “Buddha Nature” and “Time of Memory”

Korean artist Juyong Lee and Australian Brad Hey are both photographers. Lee teaches photography back in his country whereas, for Hey it's more of a vocation. By serendipity the artists are together at the Siddhartha Art Gallery for a short time. Lee and Hey do wonders behind the camera, but even with their mix and match of disciplines and styles both manage to keep that idea of composition and perspective blooming in their art. Starting with the idea of capturing an irreplaceable moment, Lee and Hey head in extreme directions but stay grounded and poised to use their knowledge of the lens to create a unique space for the viewer. Lee's giant prints and holographic images are rare for the Nepali audience, who are restricted by the appeal of the form and lack of technology. By the dimensions alone the prints and their sublime colors generate a sense of cool release, and the holographic images strike home just by novelty factor.

However, the calculated efforts do not go unnoticed. Just like the prints where Lee arranges objects he collects from the Korean peninsula (bones, dials, strings, mannequin appendices, spheres etc.) without reservation, only using the subject itself to define the structure of the whole, the holographic images have strict focal points. That pivotal point in



of existence, the idea of absorbing memories and making sense of the temporal when all we move towards is impending death, the seal of mortality.

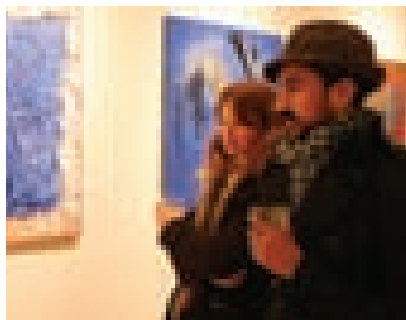
In similar ways, Hey dwells in the Buddhist principle of the innate possibility that dictates the pervasive nature of the Buddha, latent in all living things. Having studied under different masters in Australia and in Nepal Hey's paubha painting skills are impressive. None the less, he is quick to shed the rigidity of the traditional form. Interjecting his personal observations into the idea of this inherent potential, Hey uses paubha depictions of the Buddha over natural backgrounds to make the obvious relevant. The divine flows mystically through regular spaces, occupied by animals, plants and insects. Hey's paintings are complimented by images of bugs, and flowers, blown out birds and cranes, an earthy touch to an excellent exhibition. (Nischal Oli)

## Nepali Art Exhibition in Illinois, USA

The Art Center in Highland Park, Illinois put together a group exhibition entitled Arts of Nepal presenting the Nepalese Traditional and Contemporary Art organized by www.ArtofNepal.com. On exhibition from the 2nd March till the 6th April, this exhibition features works of 16 contemporary artists and 13 traditional artists. Curated by Mr Kiran Byanjankar, a Nepalese resident in Skokie, Illinois, he shared with the audience his concern for the traditional alongside the love for the uprising of an artistic culture. Renowned artists Mrs. Erina Tamrakar and Mr. Manish Lal Shrestha were invited to host the show.

With the mission of providing a common interactive platform for Nepali artists, two categories of painting were exhibited, the traditional Paubha and the relatively new contemporary forms. These two art forms with its unique array of diverse thoughts and expressions brought the attention of an international audience. It is a reflection upon the current situation of Nepal; a country on the verge of modernism while still holding on the heritage and traditional roots. Taking both the categories in mind, this group exhibition is the represents the promising and emerging artists from a younger generation.

The arts of Nepal houses one of the largest collection of Nepalese Art ranging of the 'Paubha', 'Thanka' and Mithila to contemporary forms such as the modern-abstract forms. It is a collection of more than 50 artists of both the well-established artists in Nepal to the artists in the uprising state. It is hence focused of exhibiting hidden talents of this generation and giving a chance to exhibit their work to an international audience.

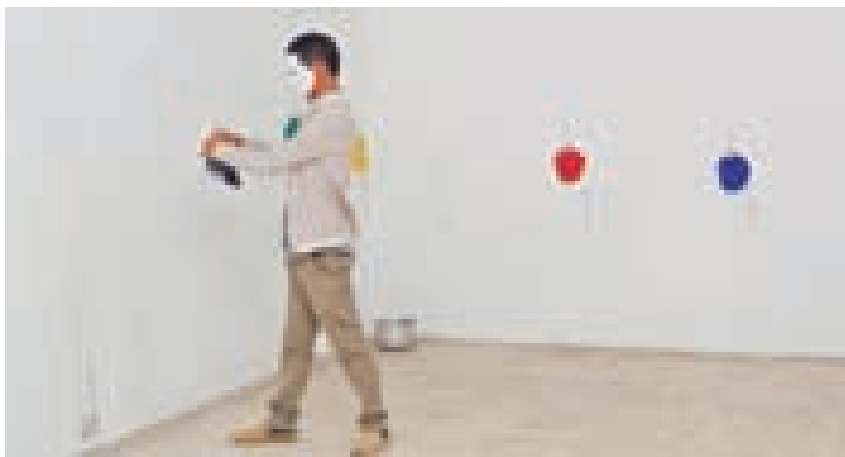


## Placid Nuances

Neera Joshi Pradhan comes from a family of artists, but she took up Botany as her vocation. Raised surrounded by paintings and artistry, she also cultivated a subliminal understanding of nature as she studied the life force absorbed in plants. Placid Nuances, is that insightful perception she presents with calm colors and fluid brush strokes. There is enough space between Pradhan's lines to gently nudge one's way into the vast spaces occupied by petals beyond our normal construct of space. Placed somewhere between the organic and emergent, the paintings sway rather than move; there is little to overwhelm, the few colors Pradhan employs are welcoming and their placement is unmistakable. From an overblown petal to many cross faded into complimentary patterns,

their diversity is not left behind on pages of a book. The floral forms crawl up like veins extracting a visceral connection that is neither abstract nor simple. The lines curve instantaneously as if the motion is second nature in the author's mind and trained hand. "These are the concepts I discovered through the years," says Pradhan, pointing at the paintings. In addition to the serious contemplation of the work, one also gets a sense of relish added by the love of botany. The artist confirms that joy, saying that she had actually wanted to make larger formats, as she was not able to put down the brush once she got started. The paintings are just as enjoyable to lock into a staring competition. Exchanging shapes and palettes for life and living. (Nischal Oli)

## Performance Arts Festival



Bindu, a space for artists, organized Nepal's first exhibition of performance arts at the premises of Nepal Art Council with 12 performances. The showcase was realized after renowned Japanese artist Seiji Shimoda taught a two-day workshop in Kathmandu to young and emerging artists of the local scene. There was an air of mystery throughout the event, without a canvas or the conventional sense of art, the viewers were kept on their toes. Bikash Shrestha, one of the participants said "most of the participating artists themselves aren't aware of the other performances." Their creative director, Shimoda adds that there is only about "10 minutes of creative thinking involved," where upon, it's onto the artist to take up the task of fulfilling the theatrical illustration. Ephemeral in many ways, each performer took advantage of that feature to let loose their artistic inhibitions in unbound freedom. The performance

though short-lived, settled in a meditative afterglow for the viewers seated or standing in a circle, parting the "make-shift" stages from the rest of the venue. About halfway into the event, Shimoda took to the spotlight and introduced sound (whistle) as an extending possibility of the method that was both playful and aggressive with its message. The crescendo of the debilitated whistle escalated as he continued to burn paper off his body. Risky and bold to say the least. But, in traditional dances and depictions throughout Nepal there is long history of performance aiding rituals and celebrations. So it trickles down to the lack of interest that has prevailed in the contemporary context. Events coordinators and artists, Sauganga Darshandhari and Prithivi Shrestha were the highlights of the day with delightfully violent portrayals appropriating ideas from rituals and exploiting local props to their artistic genius. (Nischal Oli)

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# what's on

things to do this month

## The Hangover

Date: 12 April (Thursday)  
Time: 6pm to midnight  
Venue: Meconopsis Boutique Hotel, Pulchowk 9841744302

Marking the Nepali New Year's eve and their first anniversary, We fear Silence is organizing an event titled "The Hangover". The event highlight is a ramp show displaying Tenzin Tseten Bhutia's first ever own label fashion collection 'le Melange'. The show will be opened by a belly dancer. But the partying won't end there. It also includes an after party with DJ Bickky from UK. So get ready to welcome BS 2069 in style and have a good party with those who know how to do it best.

Tickets: to be announced (the first 500 will be invitations)

### FAIR AND EXPO

#### Photokipa 2012

Opening Date: 13 April (Friday)  
Closing Date: 14 April (Friday)  
Time: 11am to 7pm  
Venue: Exhibition Hall, Bhrikuti Mandap

Creative D Pvt. Ltd. in association with Kathmandu Photographers Association is organizing - Photokipa 2012, an expo and seminar dedicated to photography and videography. Photokipa's objective is to summon the entire photography and imaging industry under one roof. It will bring together the industry, trade, professional/amateur users and consumers with a passion for photography and create a market, a market for people to understand and upgrade in this field.

Around 100 exhibitors from both the international and domestic markets will be exhibiting at the event, promising to offer a complete imaging experience featuring the latest photography equipment and technology and a series of concurrent forums and events.

Entry Fee: Rs. 150 (special discount of Rs. 100 if you come with your camera)

### MISCELLANEOUS

#### Spring Camp for Kids

Opening Date: 2 April (Monday)  
Closing Date: 6 April (Friday)  
Time: 10 am  
Venue: Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, Jhamsikhel 5013554, 2111505

The Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory, in association with Initiative Outdoor, is organizing a 10-day Spring Camp for kids aged 6-9 and 10-14. Although, they have been conducting Spring and Winter camps since 2008, this is the first time they are organizing a musical outdoor camp. The camp aims to empower the participants via music, dance, art and craft, and outdoor activities. The minimum number of participants for both the age groups is 10. The camp for the latter group is from 8-12 April. Participation is only available through registration. The cost for the registration includes expenses for equipments, first aid, instructors and light snacks.

Registration fee: Rs. 800

#### Photo Workshop with Frederic Lecloux

Opening Date: 3 April  
Closing Date: 6 April  
Time: 6hrs/ per day  
Venue: Photocircle office, Jhamsikhel 9851014930/learning@photocircle.com.np

It is always good to learn. The Photo Workshop with Frederic Lecloux is the perfect platform to enhance one's skill on photography. He is a French-Belgian photographer, traveler and a writer. In this workshop, he will be working with a group of 8-10 young Nepali photographers. The main objective of this is to change their way of looking at very simple things and events that happen around them. He will work with them to build a meaningful photographic story that might help them look at their country differently. The workshop targets young Nepali photographers with intermediate skills, who

should have technical base in photography and should be comfortable shooting on manual function with a DSLR.

To apply, interested participants need to fill in and email them attached application form, with a portfolio of 10 to 20 images [800 pixels on the longest side]. Images can be singles or a story. Registration deadline is 5 pm, Sunday, 25 March.

Participation fee: Rs. 3500

#### 4th Enfield Rendezvous & Poker Run 2012

Opening Date: 12 April (Thursday)  
Closing Date: 14 April (Saturday)  
Venue: From Kathmandu to Pokhara

Its time to take out your bikes, clean up the engines, shine it up or better give it a new paint job, because the annual Motorcycle riding event is back. Aimed to bring motorcycle riders together for a day's ride through the Nepali countryside, it will see international bikers from Germany, India, Luxemburg, Spain, Switzerland, UK and USA this year along with our very own home grown Royal Enfield Riders and classic bike owners.

To make things more interesting, the Poker Run is also aimed at finishing up with the best hand of Poker Cards. One card is dealt at each stop along the way to the destination. There are numeral awards and prizes up for grabs too. The event will end with a bang with lavish BBQ dinner and singing to a live band playing jazz, funk, blues, reggae and local hit numbers until countdown to usher in the Nepali New Year 2069 BS.

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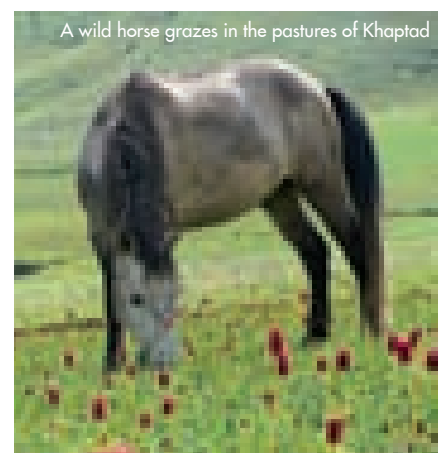
Text & Photos By KAPIL BISHT

Walking along the stream, I unknowingly startled a water redstart. A series of its sharp cries pierced the silence as it skimmed over the water towards another rock. The cries ceased once it landed on a rock. When this sudden burst of its shrill voice stopped, the silence felt even greater. Once again the only continuous sound was the happy murmur of the stream. Faint cries of ravens drifted in, as though to make up for the lack of sound. 'Sound O.K., silence better' seemed to be the belief here. My footsteps made alternating crunching or sucking sounds as I tread sometimes on the stone trail and at others on the boggy meadows. This is the home stretch to the Khaptad National Park in West Nepal.

Technically, you are in Khaptad once you walk past the yellow wooden signboard

that says in black letters 'WELCOME TO KHAPTAD NATIONAL PARK'. But most of Khaptad's attractions are in the vicinity of the national park headquarters and the army barracks. This is the place where trekkers want and, more importantly, need to get to, for it is the only year-round settlement in Khaptad. There are no teahouses or lodges in Khaptad. So you must either carry tents and food or be guests of the commanding officer at the army barracks or the warden of the national park.

It is this lack of even the barest comforts that keeps most travelers away from Khaptad. The same feature pulls others. And it was for the same reason that nearly seven decades ago one extraordinary ascetic decided to live here. In those days, Khaptad was an expanse of wilderness. The only people Khaptad saw were herdsman, who brought their cattle



A wild horse grazes in the pastures of Khaptad

Khaptad does not draw many trekkers. Here, solitude remains the only guarantee.

here annually for a few weeks during the wet season. Solitude was a guarantee in Khaptad. The ascetic decided this was the place to pursue his spiritual ambitions. In time, he became known as Khaptad Baba. When he passed away in 1996, he had already spent 50 years in Khaptad.

Khaptad, for obvious reasons, does not draw many trekkers. It is a source of frustration for many as well as of delight for some that the place hasn't changed much since Khaptad Baba's time. Here, solitude remains the only guarantee.

Khaptad Baba's hermitage is perhaps the most-visited site in Khaptad. Many people travel to Khaptad just to be able to sit there for a few moments. I think it has the same appeal and effect as all places once inhabited by special people do: you feel that you are seeing things, although momentarily, just as the occupant of the house saw them. Khaptad Baba once said that he was in Khaptad to "seek eternal happiness." Sitting in his hermitage, where for long periods the only sound is of falling leaves, you realize that if eternal happiness was to be found, it would be found in places like Khaptad. ■



Winter snow in Khaptad blankets the area in white



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# Ghode Jatra

*There are two very different sides to this popular day in Kathmandu - a formal event involving the army and a cultural event celebrated by locals.*

Text By ANUBHUTI POUDEL



Group horse riding in Tudikhel, Kathmandu during Ghode Jatra

ECS Media

To those who have known Kathmandu for all its festivals, Ghode Jatra is not something new. To those who have learnt to respect the valley for its color and novelty, this is an interesting festival. To those who are new to Kathmandu and all that is comes with, you are in for a surprise.

Every year, in mid March or early April, Kathmandu celebrates a festival of horse riding. There are horse parades in Tudikhel - a large open space in the middle of the city, along with competitions and celebrations that have changed over time. The entire program is carried out in front of politicians and heads of state. Its cultural side however is even more interesting.

Hundreds of years ago, after trading in Lhasa, people from Kathmandu returned home. They brought back porters and horses. Tudikhel was the area where the campers rested. In the inner city, whenever children disappeared, it was assumed that

...in order to scare off bad spirits, campers were asked to run horses around Tudikhel and rescue the city from their evil grip.

demons and cannibals had something to do with it. So in order to scare off these bad spirits, campers were asked to run horses around Tudikhel to suppress the demons and rescue the city from their evil grip. As a ritual, people gathered and fed the demons near the tree that is still located in the middle of Tudikhel. The food included typical Newari food of rice and meat all given to suppress the demons and assure a peaceful society free of devils and evil spirits.

In a Newari family, this day is marked with a traditional *bhoj* (feast), representative of any major celebration in their culture. The entire idea behind celebrating the festival could also be the celebration of the

change in season. Any big festival with great cultural significance is celebrated when the seasons are changing so that the additional festivity and food could work on the body and prevent the usual illness associated with the change in weather conditions. The celebrations assure good health by the consumption of nutritious food and time spent with closed ones makes this day all the more special.

With time, the tradition of chasing away bad spirits by racing horses changed into a formal, national festival. The two very different aspects of the festival, formal and cultural, are what make it special for Kathmandu residents and visitors. ■

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Text by Niraj Karki



Woh (Bara-Lentil pan cake) being prepared at Honacha

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Where it any other place, Honacha would be closed – or rather wouldn't have any customers. While that sounds terribly negative, think about it – how many restaurants do you keep going back to time and again where firstly, you can't find seats (and if you find them, they aren't really comfortable) and secondly, very often you find out that the food which is why you go there has run out?

Honacha is an oddity, but a delicious one at that. No seats and no food (oh the irony) are small excuses and quite ineffective at keeping those who love the food away. If you don't know, (oh how many good meals you've missed) behind the Krishna Mandir in Patan is this little gem of a place, old, dark, almost dingy, serving the same delicious Newari food for over 60 years.

Honacha is an oddity, but a delicious one at that. No seats and no food (oh the irony) are small excuses and quite ineffective at keeping those who love the food away.

I should mention there is another one just around the corner opposite the temple of Bhimsenthana. Run by brothers, these two absolutely local joints define Patan as much as anything else - going to Honacha being quite synonymous with going to Patan. To clarify, the food doesn't run out everyday – it is only an indication of the fact that this place gets busy everyday! For those wondering, Honacha is the name of place, not very far away from the square.

The menu is really simple – everything made from buffalo meat - chwela, kachila,

bhuttan, sukuti, and almost every organ from the animal and potatoes for veggies. It is almost pointless going here if you are a vegetarian but the spicy potatoes in gravy are really good – especially with a bara.

And then there are the 'baras' or 'wohs'. The goodness of lentil cooked as pancakes on a 'tawa' girdle that never gets a moment's rest during the day. Plain, egg or mixed (with minced buff meat) – it's these that you keep coming back for. Try them with a bit of meat gravy and chances are you'll be back, seat or no seat. ■

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# The Great Himalayan Trekker

*Robin Boustead has traversed, mapped out and campaigned hard to promote the Great Himalaya Trail.*

Text By Utsav Shakya

I first met Robin Boustead for lunch on a sunny, winter afternoon at Chez Caroline at Babar Mahal Revisited. Serious at first, Robin opened up soon, regaling us with colorful stories from his many adventures in the Nepali Himalayas. During that lunch and for much after, his conversations remained focused on a passion that he has put enormous time, money and effort into - trekking in the Himalayas.

Born in the UK, based in Sydney but now living in Kathmandu, Robin first trekked in Nepal in 1993. The idea of a larger than life trail that encompasses the entire Himalayan range of the area came to him much later though, in 2002 when new trekking areas opened. He immediately realized that much of the trekking trails he was doing were already connected. The basic idea for developing a Great Himalaya Trail (GHT) that connected the Himalayas in the region and looked at the immense potential it had in terms of tourism, employment and being a multi-activity trail was born.

Over his many treks, Robin completed a full traverse over two seasons, once in the monsoon of 2008 and then in the pre-monsoon of 2009. Losing twenty percent of his body weight on these mammoth undertakings, he would realize later that promoting what he had seen and mapped, would be a much harder task.

The Nepal section, which comprises an epic 157-day trek that takes trekkers from as high as 6200m to as low as 870m is mapped and open for tourism. This portion of the GHT is a trail network where people can opt for the high or the low route. The interesting part is that of the 7800km of trail, only 1000km overlaps with main trekking routes. The rest are paths that locals use for their own purposes.

What is special about Robin and his plans for the GHT is that he and it are able to see a much larger picture, one that sees the locals in control of the development of tourism in their areas.



Boustead poses for a photograph near Dzongla

Photo Courtesy: Robin Boustead

...of the 7800km of trail, only 1000km overlaps with main trekking routes.

This is essential not only because it increases employment opportunities but also because it gives the locals a sense of ownership. Local participation also means that each section of the Nepal portion will be unique in terms of ethnic diversity and all that this will entail. The locals like this idea, demonstrated by the fact that he was welcomed heartily in the remotest corners of the country, some of which had never seen a tourist before.

The promotion of the GHT is also a platform that should bring attention to the effects of global warming to what many people call 'the Third Pole' of the world and which is the source of water for 850 million people. Writing books and many an article to promote the various aspects of the GHT, Robin hopes foreigners and locals will venture out and re-discover the great Himalayan country that is Nepal. ■



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# The Rocky Sport

*Difficult, dangerous and expensive – that's what rock climbing seems and actually is. Try it though and find the better sides.*

Text & Photo By NIRAJ KARKI

If you've never done any rock climbing before, here is rule number one – 'rock climbing is dangerous.' Understand this and read on. Climbers, experts and novices alike have died from things as simple as not tying a knot, missing a single detail (of a hundred); the list, grimly, goes on. Rule number one of rock climbing is 'safety first'. Rule number two is 'first learn rule number one'.

Like all good things in life, it takes time and learning is a joy, and with rock climbing: pure, exhilarating, physical adrenaline-dosed joy!

## ROCK CLIMBING STARTS

.. (a little disappointingly but,) at a climbing centre. While the idea of climbing rocks is a lot more exciting, the fact that climbing is dangerous makes learning the basics at a climbing centre more of a compulsion and less of an option. There are some similarities and huge differences between climbing walls and rocks and even if you don't like climbing walls, you might actually enjoy climbing rocks. (It's a stupid analogy but) Taking up rock climbing is pretty much the same as deciding to learn a foreign language, like say French (unless you are French

and/or can speak French). Like a new language, you can't expect to learn rock climbing in a week, let alone a day. There is also the cost factor, climbing isn't cheap as a hobby.

## PERSEVERE!

Most people come very excited to climbing centers, put on harnesses and shoes, and realize that climbing uses never before used muscles and then come up with the conclusion that climbing isn't for them. They then consider the cost of a climbing pass for a day and climbing becomes an expensive sport that they aren't really good at... and using very sound logic, quit.

Persevere! Take a weekly or a monthly pass and make it a point to go for a week – climbing becomes so much easier on the second day.

## IT'S NOT ABOUT MUSCLES

Women tend to make better climbers than most men because they tend to focus on technique, not muscles. It is true that more men have climbed harder and higher graded climbs but female climbers tend to be elegant and graceful during climbs, using less energy which is how good climbers actually climb.

It doesn't matter if you work out regularly at a gym and have 6 packs and bulging biceps. Climbing is more about being dexterous, and having proper body coordination than about muscles. Yes, climbing is definitely easier if you are of a slimmer build. For those who want to lose weight, climbing regularly is pretty much a guaranteed method for losing weight and climbers are almost always of slimmer build.

At first glance, yes, climbing is terribly expensive. Day rates at most climbing centers alone are NRs. 250-500, and add to that the cost of equipment. A basic individual climbing set will run up to NRs. 15,000 and the cost of equipment necessary for an actual climb will cost at least twice that.

If you find that climbing appeals to you, then it is definitely worth buying your own gear. The most basic on that list is a pair of climbing shoes (NRs. 7000 plus), a harness (NRs. 4000 plus), a chalk bag (as cheap as NRs. 500) and a carabiner and a belay device. It is a huge sum upfront but lasts for ages. However, there are plenty of places in Thamel that rent equipment.

## WHERE TO START

If you're looking to start rock climbing, head to Pasang Lhamu Sherpa Climbing Centre (Tel: 4370742, [www.pasanglhamu.org](http://www.pasanglhamu.org)) where very frequently you get to climb with people who have actually climbed Everest. There are a few other places inside Kathmandu – Astrek in Thamel ([www.asian-trekking.com](http://www.asian-trekking.com)) and Bouldering Gym in Patan (Contact Paresh 9841226397).

For those who climb, there are few things that live up to the feeling of being on the rock – a mix of adrenaline meeting concentration, dexterity and something calm and serene. If you're interested in the health benefits, climbing is an excellent workout and really helps keep you slim. If you really want to know – go find out! ■

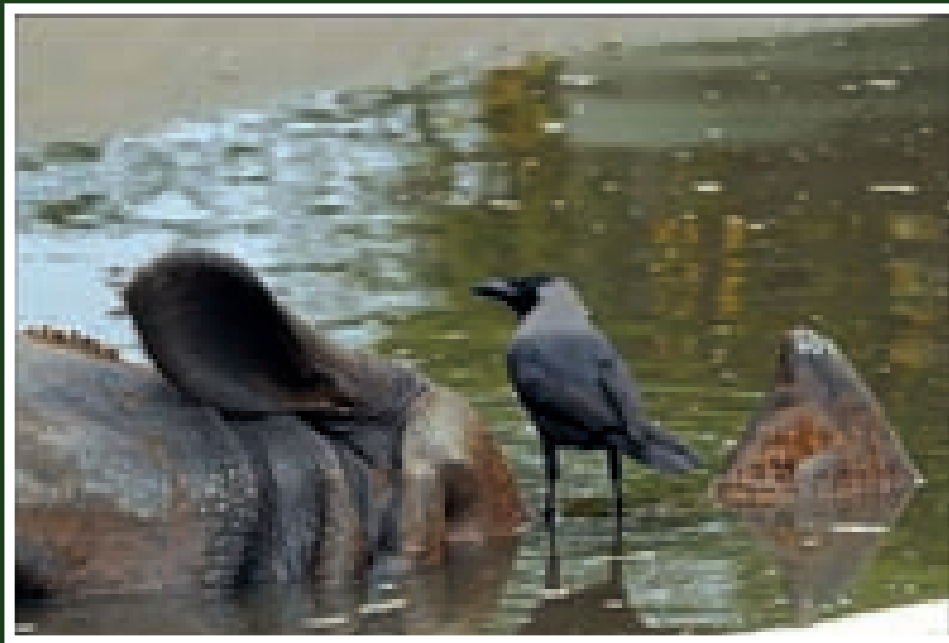
Safety first, and happy climbing!



An local rock climber practises his skills on a cliff near Hattiban.

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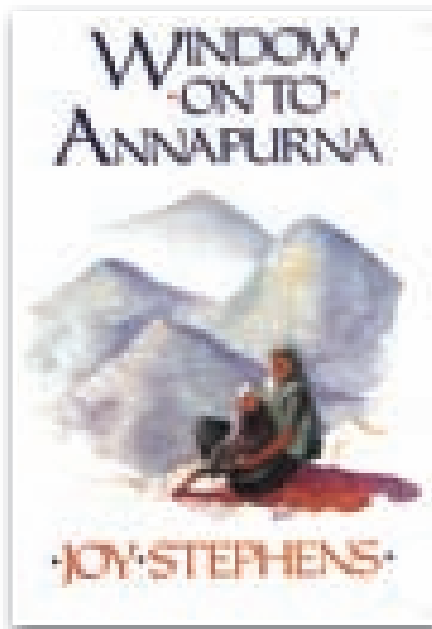
# Window on to Annapurna

*“We picked up our rucksacks and said goodbye to Grandmother in the courtyard. Our two porters had gone on ahead. In silence, we left the huddle of houses and clambered down the steep mountain path, past the barren terraces of red earth that rested, waiting for the cycle of seasons to revolve, for the rains to baptize them afresh.”*

Text By Dr. Ravi Shankar

This paragraph concludes an interesting book titled ‘Window on to Annapurna’ by Joy Stephens. Joy and her husband Duane were development workers in Nepal in the 1980s and 1990s. The author’s husband, a civil engineer was supervising work on a small hydroelectric scheme near Baglung in the Dhaulagiri zone, western Nepal. On their first visit to Baglung, they espy a small village Titeng, clinging to the hillside. They explore the possibility of staying in this hill village inhabited by *Magars*. The couple were accommodated in a converted ‘*gath*’ (a barn) owned by a farmer, Naina Singh. They stay on for a year in the village sharing in the joys, sorrows and daily activities of the villagers. In winter when the author first came, there were spectacular views of Dhaulagiri and Annapurnas to the North. The book is a delightful and sensitive read with the author using language in a gentle, peaceful and calm manner echoing the unhurried rhythms of life in the village.

Bhaat (rice) in Nepal is synonymous with food and the author is asked about the staple food in her home country, England. She mentions meat, potatoes and bread which are however, not considered ‘food’ by the villagers. The villagers were



For foreigners, trekking is an opportunity to see new sights and enjoy spectacular scenery.

uneducated and had very little in terms of material possessions but were happy with their lot in life. The village was a close-knit community and people considered them-

selves as members of one big family. The unhurried but purposeful pace of village life is described beautifully in the book. The issue of caste and of being untouchable and ‘*jutho*’ (impure) are described well without minimizing the seriousness of the issue. In Nepal, the artisans are usually members of the lower castes and the tailors (*damais*) also moonlight as musicians.

The differences in the mind set of ‘*bideshis*’ (foreigners) and the villagers have been highlighted using gentle humor. For foreigners, trekking is an opportunity to see new sights and enjoy spectacular scenery. For the villagers walking without tangible purpose is strange and difficult to understand. Forests are wonderful places with rich bird life for the author while for her neighbors they are the abode of evil spirits to be visited only if absolutely required, never alone. The descriptions of the Dashaish ‘*tika*’ and the acceptance of the author and her husband as ‘family’ by Naina Singh make for poignant reading. The author’s relationship with the women of the village offers a unique perspective on their lives.

A beautiful and gentle book, Window on to Annapurna echoes the flowing mid hills of Nepal which the author so lovingly describes. ■

Window on to Annapurna, Author Joy Stephens, Book Faith India

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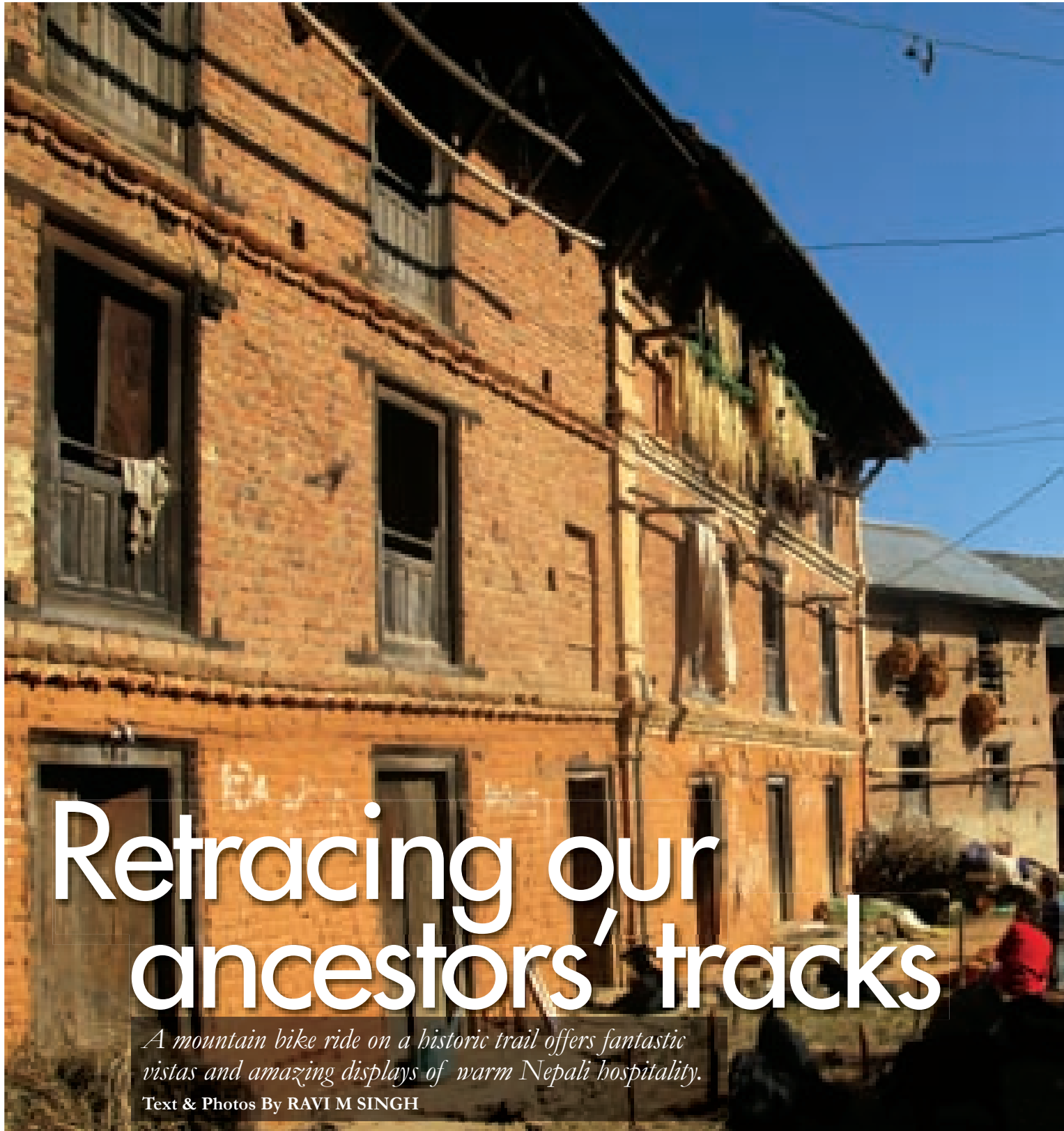
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# Retracing our ancestors' tracks

*A mountain bike ride on a historic trail offers fantastic vistas and amazing displays of warm Nepali hospitality.*

**Text & Photos By RAVI M SINGH**



Traditional mud and brick homes line parts of the historic trail

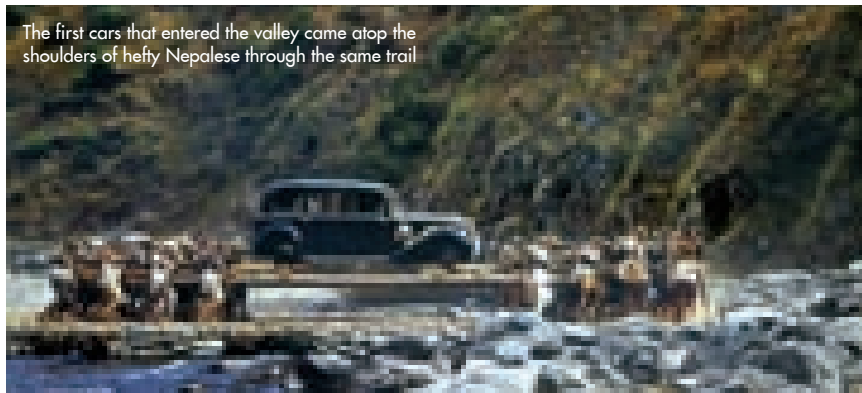
**Y**es, an ancient trail it was. Long before the dawn of recorded history, pilgrims, monks, royalty, foreign dignitaries, warriors, traders, and common people alike trod this path to and from the Valley of Nepal (Kathmandu). In fact, it was the only route that connected Nepal with India. Christened by some as the “Rolls Royce” trail, since the first ever automobile (in 1934), and subsequently others ridden by the capital’s royals and aristocrats were transported by this route—not on wheels but shouldered by porters. Much to my surprise, even my mother, an octogenarian, recalled having journeyed this route to India and back, some 66 years ago. Then, in 1956, the hustle and bustle that marked the villages along this route came to a grinding halt. That year, the Tribhuvan Rajpath, the first ever highway to link Kathmandu with the Terai, to Birgunj and Raxaul, across the Indian border opened. All too soon the old dusty footpath between Kathmandu-Thankot and over the Mahabharat hills via Chisapanigadi and Bhimphedi, was forgotten.

Khashing and I planned to explore a portion of this historic path southward from Thankot, traversing beautiful villages like Chitlang, Markhu, Kulekhani and Phakhel—not on foot like our venerable ancestors did but on two wheels—mountain bikes. We could hardly wait to set off.

#### STRUGGLING START

Negotiating traffic snarl-ups at Kalanki and dodging convoys of heavy vehicles that bore down on us, the first leg to Thankot proved rather sluggish. At Thankot, we left the main highway and followed a narrow paved road on our left from the police post past a jumble of houses that served as shops. We were spared the highway traffic from this point onward. After a half hour uphill ride on a paved but pitted road, we stopped for lunch at Godam as we learned no eatery appeared from there on to Chitlang.

After *dal-bhat* and a short rest, we filled our water bottles and started uphill. After Panighat, the road turned into a jeep track, which got steeper and rockier as we headed into the forested hills towards the 2,265m Chandragiri ridge. We felt a chill in the air as the sun receded further and the hills closed in above us. The steep gradient gradually took its toll on me—but Khashing who is less than ▶



The first cars that entered the valley came atop the shoulders of hefty Nepalese through the same trail



A deserted street in Chitlang surrounded by lush green hills and plantations

It took us a grueling three hours from Godam to crest the Chandragiri ridge (Mountain of the Moon) locally called the Chitlang Bhanjhyang (pass), atop the Mahabharat range.

half my age (59), took it all in stride. As I stopped to regain my breathing, I spotted women laden with huge piles of fuel wood descending. The old lady was taken by surprise when I asked her about the load (she took us for *kuirs*: white-skinned foreigners). “Fifty to fifty-five kilos”, she answered, a grin spreading across her fine wrinkled face. And there, I was struggling for breath with a five kilo back-pack!

#### IN THE LAP OF NATURE

The more we climbed, the denser the forests got. Tall pines spiraled tightly up into the high hills. The luxuriant vegetation appeared like a close-woven carpet of pale green and olive, while a sprinkling of Chilaune trees (needle wood) of autumn magenta foliage lent a floral motif to the pattern. The climb continued relentlessly—even the “granny” gear did not work. I had to dismount

and walk my bike. Khashing, too, got off on steep gravelly switchbacks. Join the club buddy!

Several spots on the hill offered bird’s eye views of Kathmandu valley—once a fertile bowl, now a jumble of concrete—basking in the afternoon sun. It took us a grueling three hours from Godam to crest the Chandragiri ridge (Mountain of the Moon) locally called the Chitlang Bhanjhyang (pass), atop the Mahabharat range. Dusk approached, as we stood on the cold windswept ridge. On our left two wooded hills undulated across the horizon, Bhaleswor and Tare Bhir. A dirt road went right towards Toplang (Tamang village). Buddhist chaityas (religious monuments) and a Hindu shrine stood by the pass.

The North opened with an arresting sight of lofty snow-capped Himalayas. On a clear day, the Chandragiri ridge offers a great view of Ganesh Himal, Langtang, Dorje Lakpa, Gaurishankar, and others, all the way to the mighty Everest. Kathmandu valley appeared below, on our east, like a massive amphitheatre surrounded by dark hills. It is said that King Prithivi Narayan Shah once stood on this pass and contemplated his initial assault on Kirtipur (Dec 4, 1757).

**“From the summit of Chandragiri there is a most commanding prospect, the eye, from hence, not only expatiating on the waving valley of Nepaul, beautifully and thickly dotted with villages, and abundantly chequered with rich fields fertilized by numerous meandering streams; but also embracing on every side a wide expanse of charmingly diversified country.”** --Col. William J Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul* (1811).

To our south the ridge dropped to the narrow Chitlang valley. We could make out terraced fields and scattered clusters of tiny looking houses framed by forested hills, turning into dark masses in the faint light as the sun slid below the horizon.



A historic guest house built by Rana era PM Chandra Shumsher

We soon put the lights on as we free-wheeled down the bumpy track. A half hour brought us to the valley. We pedaled along the dark deserted road heeding large stones, and shallow trenches used for irrigating fields. Soon, to our great relief, we saw lights and were acknowledged by a group of men chatting away at a shop. One of them even offered to take us to a home-stay within spitting distance.

Our arrival at the home-stay was followed by sharp barks of dogs. The first to receive us were ‘Michael’ and ‘Jackson’—a pair of pet dogs. We felt like VIPs as the host offered us *tika* and garlands before being shown to our room. With a little haggling the tariff came down to earth—400 rupees for supper, bed and breakfast (normally Rs. 650.00 for foreigners). Tired as we were, nothing could be more welcome than a hot meal and a warm bed. We wasted no time.

#### OPEN COUNTRYSIDE

The next morning was crisp but gloriously sunny. From where we stood, thick forests blanketed the hills to the North, East and the West, while to our South

the view spread out into expanses of terraced field; a road passed through the middle. Small pockets of houses, mostly stone-roofed, were scattered around. In the mid-November morning, the rustic landscape appeared like a freshly done painting, still on the easel.

**“...the sides of the hills [on] the upper part of the Chitlong valley... [are] well-wooded, and abound in a vast variety of wild shrubs, forming altogether a very pleasing sight...”** Col. Kirkpatrick.

While Khashing busied himself taking pictures, I struck up a conversation with some teachers who’d stopped for tea. I learned that the three crumbling buildings within the nearby school premises were built by the Rana Prime Minister, Chandra Shumsher (the fifth Prime Minister of Nepal, 1901-1929). The buildings once served as guest houses for Rana elites who stopped for the night on their journey to and from India, well before the motor road (Tribhuwan Rajpath) came.

“The hills covered with forests are protected community forest. We have quite a temperate variety like pine, chi-

laune (needlewood), phanlat (oak), lapsi (renowned for its small fruits called hog-plum), utis (alder), and katus (chestnut)”, said Dhruva, a teacher, satisfying my curiosity about the lush vegetation.

After breakfast our host, Rita Singh Thakuri, took us on a tour of her goat cheese factory. Chitlang is the first village in Nepal to produce goat-milk cheese (under French technical expertise). The cheese, soft and hard, sells for between 1,500 and 2,500 rupees per kilo in star hotels and restaurants of Kathmandu. We also visited the goat farm that she and her husband, Ashok Singh Thakuri run.

After a customary check and dusting of our bikes down, we took leave. With “*Pheri pani annus, hai*” (please visit again), our smiling host bid us good-bye.

#### STEEPED IN HISTORY

First, we stopped at an old settlement called Majhgaon, an ancient Newar village, which housed the renowned *caitya* built by Emperor Ashoka of India. It is believed Chitrapur (ancient name of Chitlang) was renamed *Chaityalon*, *caitya* (monument) and *lon* (path) in Newari, after this monument. Over time, the ▶

name got misquoted as Chitlang. We had a strong feeling of déjà vu as we walked our bikes through narrow alleys. It suddenly struck us that we were somewhere in the outer reaches of Bhaktapur. The men and women too, looked familiar — men in their *surumal* (tight trousers), shirts, waistcoats, and the ubiquitous black *Bhadgaunle topi* (the national cap), and women in cotton checkered blouses and black *fariya* (traditional dress) with red borders. They were the Balamis (ethnic Newars). Myth has it that *Bala* (middle) and *mi* (person) got their name when a child was born in the middle of a road amongst their community as they travelled out of the Kathmandu valley, deported as they were by the king of Bhaktapur for having contracted small pox. I spoke Newari to some and was answered back in Newari—very similar but contrasting to the Kathmandu dialect in the choice of words.

Chitlang is predominantly populated by the Balamis and the Gamals, another major Newar community. The Gamals (people from villages in Newari), who once served the royal kitchen in ancient Bhaktapur and Patan, were ousted for misconduct by the Malla Kings from

the Kathmandu valley to live in the villages. Other ethnic minorities in Chitlang include Brahmin and Chhetri. Full of rich Newari culture and believed to have descended from the ancient Kathmandu valley, Chitlang hosts similar Newari festivals, the *Kartik Nach* (the legendary dance performed in Patan, Lalitpur in Oct-Nov) being a popular one.

The Ashoka caitya in Majhgaon bore a stone inscription that dated back to Sambat 45 of the Lichhavi Era (between the 5th and 8th centuries AD), proclaiming Udayadev as the king of Chitlang. Next, we visited the perennial Sat Dhara (literally, the seven stone waterspouts)—the main source of water to a number of settlements.

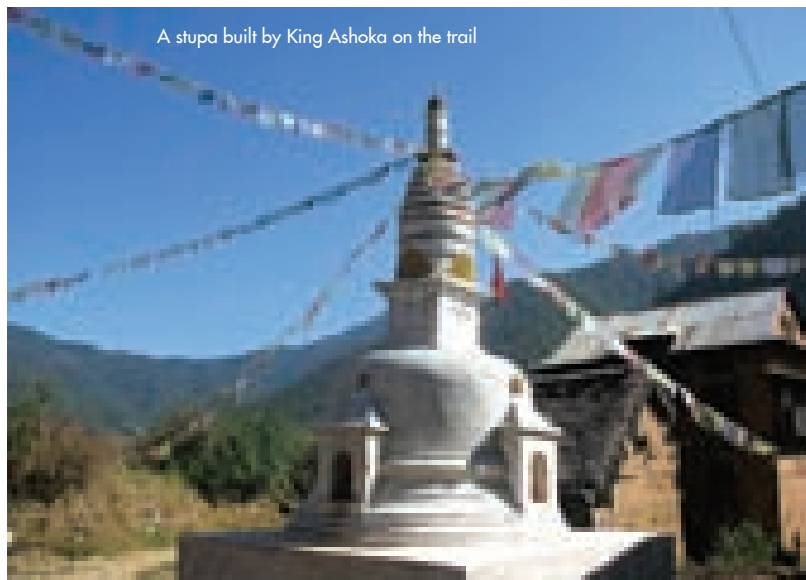
As we left Majhgaon, the main village road, although past 10 am, appeared deserted. There were no vehicles other than a handful of motorcycles, and hardly any people. It seemed unreal. “The village path bustled with life and trade flourished in the old days,” said Buddha Ratna Manandhar, a retired school head-teacher. “I was eight years old when my friends and I used to play pranks with the vehicles that were being lugged by the *bhariyas* (porters) on

the busy street,” reminisces a nostalgic 75-year old Babukaji Manandhar. Of the many porters, mostly deceased, one Hiranman Balami—now in his nineties - lives to tell his tales. We missed him as he had moved to a far-off village called Khadpu.

A little later, we saw men and women working their fields in the distance. The fields stretched away in a blaze of green and yellow - young crops of wheat and mustard in full bloom. We sighted our first truck at Narayanhiti, named after a shrine of god Narayan (Bishnu) and a stone spout. We continued past quaint little dwellings at Tibikhel and Kushlehour; a small rivulet called the Chitlang *kesi* (river in Newari) ran alongside the road.

After a half hour’s ride on the quiet road, we learned that we had taken the longer route to Toukhel missing behind the commonly used road at Narayanhiti. “Not to worry, as long as you stick to the road and take the right fork a little way downhill, the left path goes to Markhu,” a local farmer offered advice. We regretted later that we had missed the historic *kot* (fortress) built by the Malla Kings—only old bricks and some

A stupa built by King Ashoka on the trail



An arresting vista of Phakel with terraced farms besides traditional homes



Caitiyas at the ridge



Toukhel (6 km from Chitlang), is predominantly resided by the Gopalis, yet another ethnic Newar community. I could not understand a word of it when I heard them speak.

artifacts remain—located on a hilltop on the shorter route.

The ride was very quiet, with no souls in sight as we freewheeled down a steep hill through a thick pine forest. Soon the fork appeared; wow! The openings between the woods allowed us our first glimpse of the turquoise waters of the Indrasarovar (the Kulekhani reservoir that feeds the Kulekhani hydropower plants). The reservoir ran almost parallel to the gravel road for a while.

#### TIMELESS CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Toukhel (6 km from Chitlang), is predominantly resided by the Gopalis, yet another ethnic Newar community. I could not understand a word of it when I heard them speak. The Gopali dialect is different from the Balami or Gamal tongue—and not even remotely close to Kathmandu Newari. The Balamis, Gamals and the Gopalis, all Newars, live in such close proximity, but when it comes to their language, they are a world apart.

Rudra Gopali, a teacher at the local school, offered to take us around the village. “Toukhel (a big ground) is exclusively resided by the Gopalis, descendants of the Gopal era (before 300 A.D.) and milkmen or cow herders by origin,” informed Rudra us. “The people of Toukhel depend on agriculture and livestock,” he explained. As we continued our tour, we noticed old houses with carved windows; some had shutters reminiscent of neo-classical architecture. The entire setting again, like Majhagaon, captured the quintessence of old Madhyapur Thimi or Bhaktapur. Neat piles of straw, masticating buffaloes, men going their ways with their *kodalis* (digging tools), women tending to rice paddy laid before their houses to dry in the sun, bunches of chilies, corn-cobs and long strips of sliced radish hanging by the roofs—all showcased a traditional and timeless past.

Next, we visited an ancient stone inscription dating back to the Lichhavi era. According to Rudra, the inscribed words ▶



A picture-perfect scene of Markhu village leading down into a serene lake

were an appeal made by their ancestors to King Amshuverma (6th century AD) to move residence to Toukhel instead of to far off, dreaded forests where they originally belonged. It is also said that King Udayadeva (621 AD), the then King of Chitlang, donated the present land to the Gopali community. Nearby villages included Bisingkhel, Nhulgaon and Kunchhal. As our tour neared its end, Rudra pointed to a distant clump of trees, which he explained was the *jaitun* (olive) oil extraction center set up by the German government.

#### PICTURE PERFECT

Next leg: Markhu. The hillside small bazaar overlooked the beautiful Indrasarovar lake. The place boasted an old durbar building (a palace) built by the Rana Prime Minister Juddha Shumsher (1932-1945), which in the olden days put up travelling Rana nobility, for the night. The building today serves as a government guest house. After the clut-

ter of roadside shops and tea houses, the landscape changed. We suddenly found ourselves amidst tall, evergreen pine trees, with the hills around dotted with small houses and terraced fields that dropped to the man-made lake—a picture postcard setting.

I quietly gazed down at the vast expanse of water, musing on the fate of many old villages that lay there deep in their watery grave (500 families were displaced). A local fellow told me that the suspension bridge built by Chandra Shumsher, which people crossed while doing the ancient route too were submerged when the reservoir was built and flooded in 1983.

Markhu is known for a local delicacy — fresh fish from the reservoir. “People from Hetauda, Birgunj and as far away as Kathmandu, make frequent visits to savor the fish, canoe the serene waters and relax out in the serene ambience,” informed Ram Prasad Pradhan, the owner of Indrasarovar Hotel.

After a nice meal and a little rest, we headed South East towards Phakhel. The jeep track got better as we freewheeled past Shimle, enjoying the woods, and the terraced hillsides. The Indrasarovar lake kept company until Kalanki, a cluster of tea houses perched on a hillside that sharply dropped to the Kulekhani dam at the base. We stopped briefly for tea made with buffalo milk (loved it!) and a little snack. The road led to a fork at Kalanki; to the right was Bhimphedi (the last point on the old route, where the trail walkers of old used to catch a lorry south to Birgunj on the Indian border), while the left was Phakhel, due East. We parted company with the ancient track at that point.

The ride to Phakhel was a moderate climb with some steep inclines thrown in. Darkness soon crept in as we sped past tiny settlements called Salle and Sukaura. As the shadows lengthened, the road that continued along a deep gorge appeared pretty dicey at narrow

sections. Lights appeared in the distance. Phakel, at last!

We were expected at Phakel. Kumar Lama had not only arranged for our night-stay but had taken a lot of trouble in preparing a lavish dinner for us! The pre-dinner chat warmed as Kumar and I (Khashing abstained) helped ourselves to *jhwainkhatte* (local millet alcohol poured into a sizzling pan of rice grain fried in ghee) served by Kumar's wife. I felt my exhaustion cut down by half by the wonder drink.

#### WHERE THE WILD ROAMED

"*Fa* (wild boar) and *kel* (pasture) stands for a place where once the wild boars roamed," explained Bir Bahadur Lama, an elderly man from Phakel. The local folklore has it that Lord Shiva, accompanied by a pair of dogs on a hunting trip shot his bow and arrow at a huge boar that turned to stone. The stone figures of the wild boar and the dogs are still to

be found in Phakel. The idol of Shiva, as Kumar told me, lies at Latrambeswor hill, a four-hour walk from Phakel.

The morning's tour took us around a predominantly Tamang ethnic village. Another Tamang village, Chakhel lay close by. It is believed that a local king ruled the tiny villages before Prithivi Narayan Shah's unification of Nepal. We stumbled across old lumps of bricks said to be the ruins of the old kingdom. Said Kumar, "Previously dependant on maize and millet, the villagers have switched to vegetables and flowers." Interestingly, almost the entire Tamang community of Phakel has a history of working in the food line. Little surprise if you bump into Tamangs from Phakel in one or the other star hotels and restaurants of Kathmandu. Forty-seven years in the food line, 63 year old Prem Lama started his career as a dishwasher, and rose to the level of executive chef in a star hotel in Kathmandu. More recently,

there has been a mass immigration of local youngsters to the Middle East and South Korea for work.

It looked like hospitality knew no bounds in Phakel. Dheeraj Lama, brother of Prem Lama, offered us free lunch at his hotel, Tashi Delek. We left Phakel in the afternoon, much obliged to Kumar and other folks of Phakel.

It took us a one-half hour hard slog to the 2100m Humane Bhanjhyang. We spotted a group of tourists busy clicking at the spectacular view of the Kathmandu valley the ridge offered, the snow-covered mountain chains providing a dramatic backdrop. We followed suit. I learned the names of some of the peaks from the tour guide who accompanied the group: Langtang, Langtang Lirung, Dorje Lakpa, Purbi Chachu and Buddha Himal.

#### BACK HOME

The downhill track from Humane to Chhaimale felt deserted as we rode past forests, terraced fields and thin habitation. At some sections, the track narrowed into a single trail caused by landslip. At Chhaimale, we met a paved road, and, much to our dislike, Tata Sumo jeeps that roared past virtually every minute. Having done a traffic-free two days, riding the hectic road after Chhaimale and Dakshinkali proved a tricky business — sheer torture when we hit the city hub—and totally disoriented as we headed back home. But then my thoughts turned to the fantastic getaway and I felt elated at having done some justice to our ancestors' track as old as the Mahabharat hills. ■

The Chitlang-Markhu-Kulekhani-Phakel circuit is a well-used track by mountain bikers (95-100 km round trip). Recent times have seen hikers both foreign and Nepali frequenting the route. Buses and public jeeps can be intercepted, if need be, on Phakel-Pharping, and Chhaimale-Dakshinkali road. For accommodation, basic lodges, home-stays, tea houses and eateries are to be found fairly well on the route. You can also travel by a 4x4 motor-vehicle. The author can be contacted at mansinghravi@gmail.com



A view of Kathmandu valley as seen from the trail

# Lodging in Shiva's land

*The various lodges in the Gauri Shankar trail have USPs that make every stop worthwhile.*

**Text & Photos By DR. RAVI SHANKAR**

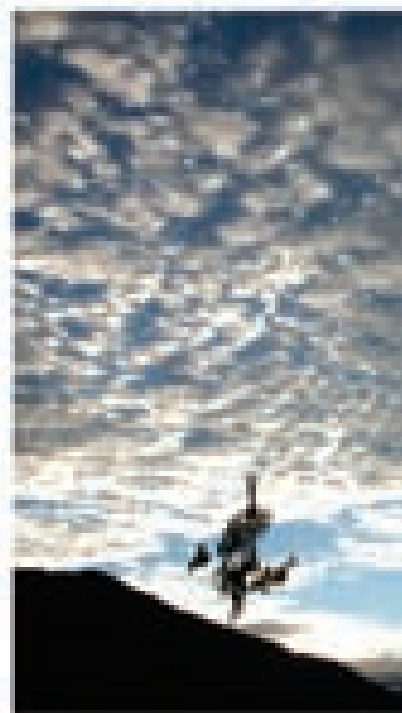
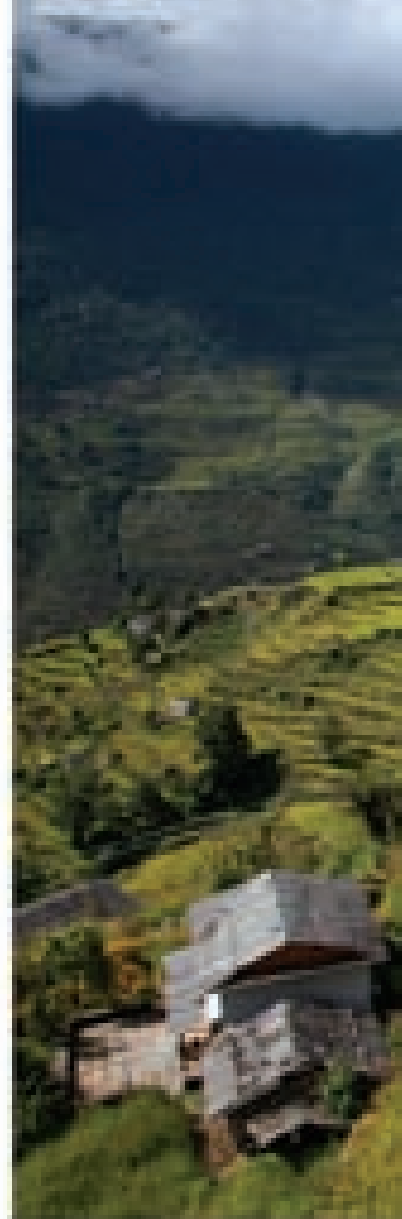
**T**he *puris* (fried pancakes) were delicious! Golden brown, hot, light and fluffy. The *tarkari* (spiced vegetables) was *mitho* with the slightly sweet mountain potatoes blending well with the spices. Even our British friend, David was enjoying the repast though struggling with the spices. We were in the Bigu lodge back after a morning visit to the *Gompa* (Buddhist religious shrine).

We (Nabin, David Wells and I) were trekking in the Gauri Shankar region, East of Kathmandu during *Dashain*. We had started from Barabhis, a town on the Arniko highway to Tibet and stayed the first night at the Karthali lodge managed by Sunil and Laxmi Rokha. In the late 1990s Eco Himal, a non-governmental organization based in Austria started developing this region encompassing the northern parts of Sindhupalchowk and Dolakha districts. Water supply schemes, toilet facilities and schools were built and local communities trained in organic farming methods and lodges and campsites constructed at different locations to encourage tourism in this beautiful region.

The lodges are built like a traditional hill home using mainly locally available resources and village workmen. The villagers formed community development committees (CDCs)

to run the lodges and manage development work in their villages. The Karthali lodge is in a beautiful location just outside the village on a small rise. The whitewashed lodge can be seen intermittently during the last thirty minutes of the trek from Barabhis. All CDC lodges have the same basic design. On the ground floor is a small stone-paved seating area, a kitchen and dining room. A small shop is run with the dual objectives of supplying necessities to villagers at reasonable prices and generating additional income for the lodge. On the first floor is a verandah with wooden railings offering splendid 'views' and three rooms with bunk beds offering a total of twenty-six beds to travelers. All lodges have solar electricity, clean toilets, camping grounds and hot showers to wash away the dirt and grime after a long and tiring day.

At Karthali (1600m) the well maintained lawns and blooming flowers entice tourists. The village sprawls along the hillside to the right of the lodge and the river flows far below. Layer after layer of hills stretch away to infinity with the distant ones turning various shades of blue as the sun slowly sets behind the western hills and the dark night comes creeping along. On my visit with Nabin and David it was raining and clouds were slowly ►

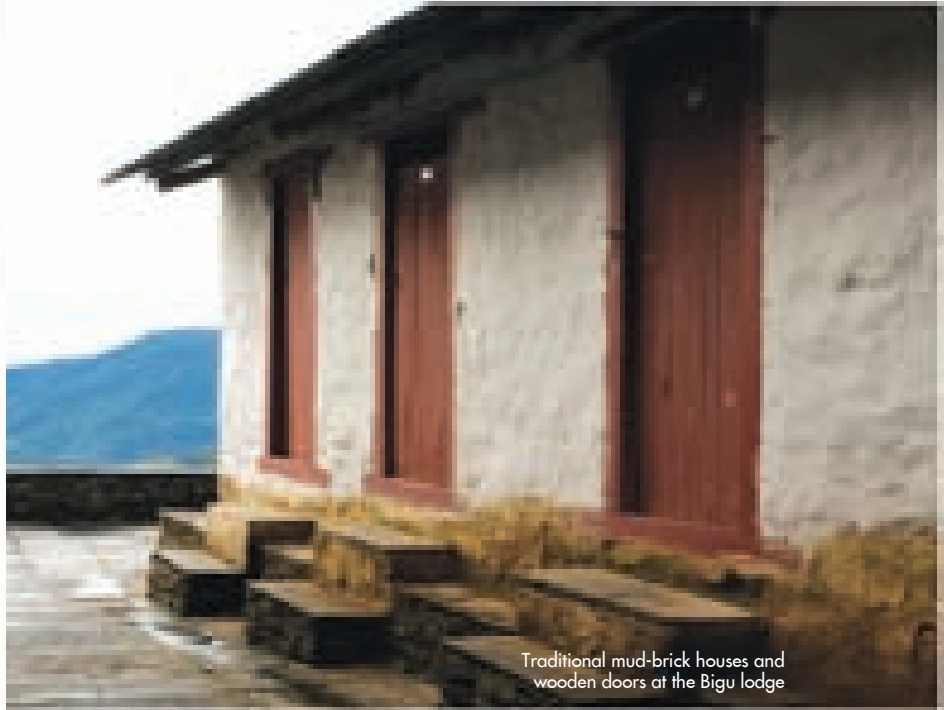




A few houses along the otherwise deserted Gauri Shankar trail



A dramatic afternoon sky at Bigu



Traditional mud-brick houses and wooden doors at the Bigu lodge



Tourists setting up tents along the way

rising from the fields to smother the village lights. On my first visit under a clean blue sky the hill was a sea of waving gold with mustard flowers in bloom.

The lodge at Dolangsa (2500m) is a fifteen minute climb above the village. The name of the village comes from two Sherpa words, 'do' meaning stone and 'sa' meaning standing. There is a sacred stone in the middle of the village. The trail climbs through the only covered wooden bridge I have come across on my treks in Nepal. The lodge is situated just above the Dolangs Gompa also called the Shyalbung Gompa. The monastery was established in the 1940s in a grove of Bael fruit trees known locally as 'shyalbung' giving the Gompa its local name. There are good views down into the valley and the old growth trees with their gnarled trees create a slightly eerie atmosphere. During one of my visits a group of Dutch trekkers with their large contingent of kitchen staff and porters were camped here. I became good friends with the 'Sirdar', a gentleman from Kavrepalanchowk. On another visit a religious festival was in full swing and beautiful, apple cheeked *Sherpanis* in colorful silk *chubas* were bustling about.

The Bigu lodge has a few unique touches with the doors and windows being painted a deep orange instead of the blue common in the other lodges.

From Dolangsa the trail climbs through a dense forest to the Tingsang pass at 3300 m. My friend, David is into detecting vibrations of living objects and he said the forest gave off very disturbing vibrations. There was a collection of prayer stones and *mani* walls in the forest may be to counteract the disturbing vibrations. The climb up to the pass is steep and difficult. We were caught in a thunderstorm at the pass and flashes of lightning and the roar of thunder were all around us. We took shelter in a small hut just below the pass on the other side. The trail dropped down slowly and on a previous visit I had good views of Gauri Shankar from the pass.

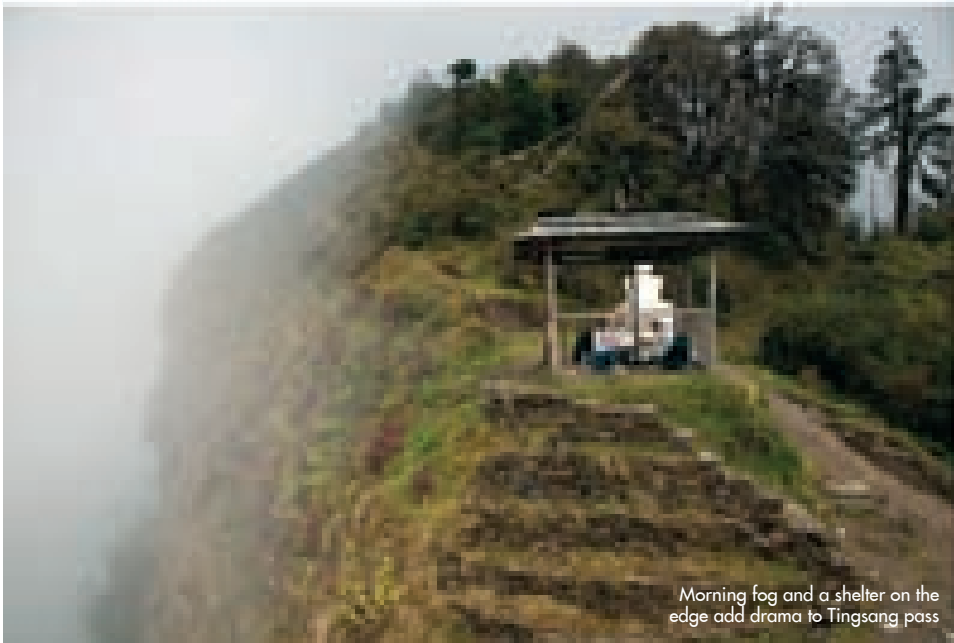
The trek to Bigu (2600m) is long with a stiff climb at the end. The Bigu lodge has a few unique touches with the doors and windows being painted a deep orange instead of the blue common in the other lodges. The solar electric lights

were of a different design and the mirrors in each room made trekkers feel welcome. In the 'Nepali Times' newspaper I had seen a picture of the lodge with the CDC members in front and it was nice meeting the ladies and gentlemen in person. The lodge is a major meeting place for villagers who drop in for a cup of tea or *chang* once their day's labor is over. The Bigu Gompa is a five minute walk away.

From Bigu the trail descends to the Kothali *Khola*. Svelte village beauties in their *Dashain* best were on the trail and the atmosphere was festive. After crossing the suspension bridge the trail climbs steeply. On my previous visit I had met a group of fashion conscious young ladies and gentlemen on the trail. The lodge is at the beginning of the village and I had mistakenly climbed for over twenty minutes right to the top of the village. Loting (1900m) is a *Chhetri* village with



A grand view of surrounding terraced farms from Bigu



Morning fog and a shelter on the edge add drama to Tingsang pass



Homogeneous houses blend in with the landscape

the lodge situated among green fields. You can look back and see the long trail from Bigu. I had a long and interesting discussion with Bhairab Joshi, a local farmer and the lodge manager.

From Loting it is a seven-hour walk to the lodge at Laduk. Laduk (2000m) is rapidly modernizing and has a large bazaar. I was even able to see a shop selling 'Dish TV', the direct to home television (DTH) service. The lodge is situated in a beautiful forest of conifers. The initial part of the trek to the Bulung (1900m) is along an unpaved road. After about ten minutes you get your first close views of the twin summits of Gauri Shankar, the holy mountain. The walk is level with splendid views. We soon found ourselves in the village of Orang (1900m) after passing through what has been described among the longest and steepest terraced fields which drop down over 1000 m to the valley floor. The lodge at Orang had a slightly neglected air and is run by a Gurung family who stay a twenty minute steep climb up the hill.

In Orang, Nabin killed a rooster which put up a spirited defence for its life. We had local chicken for lunch and dinner. The air was chilly and the Himalays veiled in clouds. In the afternoon after a heavy downpour the Himalays starting slowly clearing up and a rainbow was seen arcing over the mountains. David was busy clicking away and in the evening we were joined by a young Gurung girl from the village of Jagat on the valley floor. A relative of the lodge manager she was a good cook and provided much needed relief to Nabin.

The lodges provide decent accommodation, fresh air and superb views of villages, rural life and the mountains. They lack pizza, doughnuts and apple pie, picture windows and western toilets. The lodges are rich in things urbanites are thirsting for – fresh air, clean organic food, splendid views, zero pollution, smiling people and a strong sense of community. Come trek in this unspoiled region and discover the 'simple' pleasures of life! ■

# Tales of the guns

*The Nepal Police Museum is not just about the history of the Nepal Police but a window into bygone eras.*

Text By KAPIL BISHT, Photos By ECS MEDIA



I stopped in front of a familiar object. On display behind the glass was a tin toy pistol, the kind I had toted during many Tihar festivals of my childhood. But the similarities ended there. This particular piece was an abomination. The toy gun I used to have had a slender barrel, from which escaped an ephemeral plume of pungent smoke every time the trigger was

pulled. This one had a thick, grotesque barrel of rusty iron. A note said it was a hand-made gun. I checked with the policeman on duty at the museum if it was a real gun. He confirmed it. Real bullets came out from this particular ‘toy!’ It reminded me of my childhood, but it was also an object as different from its original version as a criminal’s life is from his innocent childhood.

I was in the Police Museum at the Nepal Police Headquarters, moving amidst a collection of weapons. The first items on display in this section were spears, hatchets, swords and *kebukuris* from over a century ago. Then came the collection of more lethal equipment—guns. Among them is a Martini-Henry rifle from the 1870s. Ancient revolvers of 45-bore caliber and decrepit muzzle-loading guns recline

alongside such simple defensive equipment as a bamboo shield. There were crude guns of strange designs, most of which were hand-made by dacoits or rebels. I had heard stories of robbers operating in the vast jungles of the Terai. Now I was seeing the weapons that they had used during those days of terror. The robbers have gone. So have vast swathes of those jungles. Only these objects remain. The days when bands of robbers operated in the Terai surely must have been unpleasant days for people living in the region. But it can be a fun exercise for a visitor standing in a museum to look at the weapons and try to picture the kind of lives the men who used these guns led. A pair of handcuffs from the 1950s had me thinking similarly. 'What notorious wrists had these been slapped around?' I wondered.

The history of the handcuffs is unknown. But there is one item whose history is well known. It is a dirty bundle of cloth, as harmless as a piece of laundry. 'Sucha Singh's turban' says a small piece of paper beside it. The turban's color has faded, but notoriety still clings to it. Its owner had slipped into Nepal after assassinating Pratap Singh Kairon, a former chief minister of the Punjab, in 1965. He had been wearing this turban when he was arrested (given away, I would think, as much by his distinct headwear as by an informant) from Mahendranagar in West Nepal. That single piece of cloth is a symbol of one of Nepal Police's greatest scalps.

All kinds of people have used Nepal as a haven in the past. Ascetics sought its isolated hills and mountains. The Terai jungles were the hideouts of dacoits. And high up in the harsh terrain of the mountains were the citadels of the Khampa rebels, from where they made sorties into Tibet to attack the Chinese forces. The guns that must have once pierced the stillness of the mountains are now silent. 'Semi-automatic Sten gun, Larke, Gorkha' reads a note beside a raven black gun. It was captured by the Nepal Police during a skirmish with Khampa rebels in Larke of Gorkha district. There ▶



There were crude guns of strange designs, most of which were hand-made by dacoits or rebels. I had heard stories of robbers operating in the vast jungles of the Terai.

is an irony in that small piece of information that isn't lost even decades after the Khampas laid down their arms. I have been on a trek to the place from where this weapon was captured. I find it ironic that such an advanced weapon was being toted around decades ago in Larke, where even today only a few people can boast of owning a radio. Some of Nepal's remotest regions were seeing the latest weapons when the Khampas were still at war with the Chinese. On display are revolvers and a Mauser pistol captured by the Nepal Police from Khampa rebels during encounters in various locations in Karnali, the least developed and poorest

region of Nepal. Also on display are a few hand-made bombs—grim reminders of the time when the country plunged into civil war. It seems it was the fate of the poorest parts of Nepal to see rebels and weapons before they could see roads or anything else of progress.

Progress is the dominant theme as soon as the section displaying weapons ends. The first item behind the glass in the section entitled 'communication' is a big metal box. Wires run in and out of it. There is a jumble of knobs, switches, and dials. And although I couldn't make out what the Chinese letters on the box meant, they at least helped me know one thing about this

strange contraption: It was made in China. The small card placed beside it only contained the name of the model, where it was made, and the letters 'H.F.' My guess was that this box was a device for transmitting messages. A police officer later told me that it was a high-frequency radio set. He told me that it was a dynamo-powered set, so that the lever on it had to be wound to start it. Getting it started must have been a ritual, and it seems one would have got through to God quicker than to whoever needed to be contacted via this machine. The first few instruments on display in this section are all different models of radio sets that used the Morse code to transmit messages.

As I moved along, the year denoting the time to which a particular object belonged became more recent. Radio sets with smaller and fewer knobs and dials appeared. I was looking at the gradual progress of the communication technol-

...it seems one would have got through to God quicker than to whoever needed to be contacted via this machine.





ogy used by the Nepal Police. A significant juncture in this progress is marked by the portable radio set, known as man pack. Antennae protruding, it is the bodily union of the instrument and operator. From there onwards, even smaller sets came into use. The age of the hand-held sets had arrived. But looking at the first hand-held sets used by the Nepal Police I wondered if one pair of hands would be enough to hold these large pieces. They seemed to have been made assuming that the hands of the Law are in proportion to its long arms. Another portable model, called Pocket Fone, is so big it would need a backpack to carry it in. The museum also has a relic that would be of interest to followers of the computer cult. The first ever computer used by the Nepal Police is on display, an ancient model with the logo of a rainbow-colored apple.

Equally archaic is the equipment that the Nepal Police team used during their Mt. Everest Cleaning Expedition of 1984. The equipments on display – a picket, tent poles, a section of a ladder – are all of wood. One can only imagine the kind of gear the Nepal Police Mountaineering and Adventure, a special wing of Nepal Police, must have had when they climbed Mt. Tukuhe (6,902 meters) in 1976.

Like everything else, the Nepal Police's uniform has undergone great changes too. Burly mannequins with thick moustaches have been dressed in uniforms dating back from the Rana era to the ones worn by the police today. The tunic worn by the late Police General Chandra Bahadur Thapa in 1950 hangs in the museum. Beside this august piece of uniform is a tie of yellow, maroon, and blue stripes—the first tie to have been ever worn in a Nepal Police uniform.

For reasons I shall never know, the sight of a police uniform caused great fear in me when I was a kid. I remember how as a kid I used to flee at the mere sight of a policeman. When too close to flee, I would offer a series of nervous 'namastes'. The memories of my childhood fear of the police came to mind as I looked at the museum's collection of uniforms of police forces from all over the world. They were impeccably ironed, were adorned with shiny badges, and numerous medals and insignia hung on them. The museum has police uniforms of numerous countries, including Denmark, India, Singapore, Sweden, Russia, Australia, Germany, and South Africa.

Nepal Police has earned international fame for its stellar performances as peace-

keeping forces in various conflict zones of the world and for its assistance in various international efforts to fight crime. Souvenirs from numerous countries are proof of Nepal Police's reputation in the international arena. Many countries and international organizations have presented the Nepal Police with plaques, flags, and gifts in recognition of their contributions. On display at the museum are souvenirs from Nigeria, Italy, Australia, Germany, Poland, International Police Association, Commonwealth Police, National Police Agency (Japan), Sri Lanka, National Police Academy (India), Interpol, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Every section at the Nepal Police Museum is a valuable collection of historical memorabilia. But I found the section displaying the weapons captured by the Nepal Police most appealing. It is a collection that reminds the visitor of the violent past. But people will also be relieved when they gaze at the weapons and realize that the days of violence have passed. In the silence of the guns is the sound of peace. ■

The writer is grateful to D.I.G. Binod Singh of the Nepal Police for the help given in researching this article. The writer can be contacted at [papercloudtree@hotmail.com](mailto:papercloudtree@hotmail.com)



Patan Durbar Square in the early morning mist



# Lalitpur

*Crammed with amazing architecture, a colorful history and some great local eateries, Lalitpur is full of surprises.*

Text By DR. RAVI SHANKAR, Photos By ECS MEDIA

**K**ing Sri Bir Deva while sitting at the window of his palace used to see a grass cutter suffering from leprosy going to cut grass regularly. One day, to his astonishment, he saw the grass cutter cured of his leprosy and looking very handsome. Upon questioning, the grass cutter stated that he had gone to the southern shore of the Bagmati River into the Lalita woods to cut grass. Feeling hot he had stuck his carrying pole into the ground and taken a bath. On finishing, he noted that he had been cured of his leprosy and his pole was firmly stuck to the ground.

He decided to build a magnificent capital city for some time. The great god Shiva appeared to him in a dream and told him to cut down the Lalita wood, design it in accordance with the 24 elements in the shape of a *mandala* and make his min-

ister, the grass cutter the architect. In the bright half of the month of Falgun, the minister inaugurated the building of the new city. The king created 24 *toles* (localities, pronounced similar to poles) representing the elements and an extremely beautiful city called Lalitapattana was born. Thus reads one of the main founding myths of the city of Lalitpur.

## **CITY WITH MANY NAMES**

The city of Lalitpur, to the South of the Bagmati River has three names – Patan, Lalitpur and Yala. Patan is the most commonly used name but the formal name of the city and the district is Lalitpur, which means beautiful city. Patan may be an abbreviation of the ancient name of the city Lalitapattana while Yala is the Newari name for the city. ►



The Malla period saw the construction of Nepal's finest temples

Lalitpur is regarded amongst the oldest human settlements in Nepal and has more association with the pre-Licchavi and Kirati period than other cities of the valley.

According to David Gellner in his article on the history of Lalitpur, the name 'Yala' could be a derivation of Yupa-grama, which means 'village of the sacred pillar.' Yala was the largest of the villages combined to form the city of Lalitpur.

#### ALL AT SEA

My first visit to the city of Lalitpur was in 2001 when I attended a workshop at Hotel Himalaya in Kupondole. Prof. Hemang Dixit, the noted medical educator and Dervla Murphy, an Irishwoman, have shown us glimpses of Lalitpur from the 1950s and 1960s in their books titled 'My 2 innings' and 'The waiting land'. The city was much less crowded then, with the city seeing an exponential rise in population in the last decade. On shifting to the crowded chaos of Lalitpur after

the peace and calm of Pokhara, I initially found living there very difficult.

Gwarko Chowk of Ring Road must be one of the most challenging road junctions in Kathmandu. Traffic comes from all direction (not just the four cardinal ones) and walking along the narrow road leading from Gwarko to Mangal Bazaar and beyond is an art. I always wonder how pedestrians and vehicles manage to occupy the same space without a fatal collision. In my initial days, this was my route to Mangal Bazaar until I discovered a quieter and more peaceful one through the by lanes.

Lalitpur is regarded amongst the oldest settlements in Nepal and has more association with the pre-Licchavi and Kirati period than other cities of the valley. The Licchavis and Kirats were two dynasties who ruled the Kathmandu valley in an-

cient times. The town is said to have been founded by the Kiratis in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC and was expanded later by the Licchavis. There is a legend about three people from the Kathmandu valley bringing the Rato Matsyendranath deity all the way from Assam, India. A person called Lalit played an important role in settling the God in Lalitpur. Matsyendranath is the god of rain and an annual chariot festival is held in his honor. The deity spends six months of the year in the village of Bungamati and is carried in a procession to Lalitpur. The chariot is a spectacular affair with the wood and jute spire rising over sixty feet from the ground. The chariot is pulled by local devotees in a merry procession through different parts of the city spending time in each locality.

#### ANCIENT TRADITIONS OF LALITPUR

One of my favorite walks in Lalitpur is to turn to the right from the main road to Mangal Bazaar from Gwarko and then walk through narrow brick paved streets with tall houses on either side. There are ancient temples at major junctions, which are well maintained and play an important part in local cultural traditions even today. Guthis, a communal body of the Newars with many important functions like worship, cultural processions, funeral rites and upkeep of temples are common in the valley and wherever Newars have settled in Nepal. There are two big guthi buildings near Gwarko which are often used for communal feasts and celebrations. The houses are a mix of the traditional and the modern. There are also modern houses built in the traditional style with red bricks, brick carvings and traditionally carved windows. Buddhism was and is an important religion in the city and many shrines show both Buddhist and Hindu influences. In Nepal, many traditionally Hindu deities have been adopted by other religions also with different names. Traditional Buddhist deities are also worshipped by Hindus. Many deities have feminine manifestations which are worshipped as goddesses adding to

the complexity. Resting places and small squares lend a homely atmosphere.

It is a matter of pride that ancient traditions and methods are still alive and thriving in Lalitpur. In many parts of the civilized world, the skill of working with the hand has vanished or is in decline. Lalitpur and other parts of the valley still maintain rich handicraft traditions. Stone carving, wood carving, metal works are all still carried out. Lalitpur is famous in Nepal as the city of artists and artisans. I always wonder at the 'magic' which these skilled craftsmen achieve using the simplest of tools. The skills and the materials to construct ancient temples and palaces still exist in the city.

#### PATAN DURBAR SQUARE

Kathmandu valley with a rich tradition of art, culture and architecture has seven World Heritage Sites. One of them is the Patan Durbar square. The square is the center of all heritage and other activities in the city. According to the website of the Lalitpur sub-metropolitan city, ([www.lalitpur.org.np](http://www.lalitpur.org.np)) there are 19 monuments in and around the square. In Nepal, religion is an integral part of life, and temples, houses and palaces are found in close proximity. The durbar square has been described in detail in many articles. The majority of temples in the square are in the traditional pagoda style of architecture supposed to have originated in Nepal and taken by the great architect, Arniko to Tibet from where it spread to China and the orient.

The Patan Museum is the converted residence of the old Malla Kings of Patan. It once served as the palace of the noted king Yoganarendra Malla. The museum's exhibits cover a long period of Nepal's cultural history and some rare objects are among its treasures. Their meanings and contexts within the living traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism are explained. Most are cast bronzes and gilt copper repousse work and traditional crafts for which Patan is famous. There are sculptures of Hindu and Buddhist deities created in the Kathmandu Valley, many in the nearby workshops of Patan itself. Others

originated in India, Tibet and the western Himalayas. They are accompanied by written commentaries that attempts to explain their spiritual and art historical significance as part of the cultural heritage of Nepal.

Patan's Durbar Square can be regarded as being integrated into the lives of the locals. There are throngs of people at all hours of the day and night. There are many restaurants here from which to enjoy a beautiful view of the square, or you can sit on the steps of the

many monuments around and watch the unceasing human drama. I was particularly lucky to have seen a Newari Buddhist procession winding its colorful way through the square. The square has three courtyards: the Keshab Narayan Chowk, Mul Chowk and Sundari Chowk (chowk meaning courtyard). The Krishna Mandir dedicated to the Hindu deity Krishna, one of the incarnations of Vishnu was built by King Siddhi Narsingh Malla. This is one of the square's most distinctive ►



The Rato Matsyendranath chariot pulling festival is the biggest festival of Lalitpur.



Kumbeshwor temple in the Banglamukhi temple premises in Patan

The Kumbeshwor Mahadev temple is one of the oldest temples in Patan believed to have been constructed in 1392 as a two-story shrine. In the 17th Century, the King Srinasava Malla added the upper three stories.

architectural treasures. Sundari Chowk has one of the grandest baths in the world, Tusha Hiti and one of the Malla kings was said to have slept here on cold nights and sit during monsoon rains with the objective of attaining eternal bliss. The director Bernardo Bertolucci used it as Prince Siddhartha's bath in the 1994 film 'Little Buddha'. Mulchowk served as the actual residence of the royal family. The golden temple, the Bhimsen temple, Degu Taleju and Taleju Bhawani temple are among the many attractions.

#### TEMPLES AND STUPAS

The Kumbeshwor Mahadev temple is one of the oldest temples in Patan believed to have been constructed in 1392 as a two-story shrine. In the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, the King Srinasava Malla added the upper three stories. Along with the Nyatapola in Bhaktapur, it is one of the two five-storied temples in the valley. Of special interest to me is the supposed underground connection of the ponds here with the Gosainkund Lake high in the Helambu region. The sacred waters of Gosainkund may thus be accessible in Patan. A pilgrim at Gosainkund is said to have dropped his pot (*kumbha*) into the lake. The pot appeared much later at the water tank of the temple giving rise to the belief in an underground channel and giving Lord Shiva yet another name of Kumbeshwor (Lord of the pots).

Matsyendranath Mandir (temple) is dedicated to the Rato Matsyendranath who has been described as the god of many guises. To the Newars, he is known as *Bunga Dya*, a manifestation of Karunamaya. He is Avalokiteshwara, the god of compassion to traditional Buddhists. There is an interesting legend about this deity. Gorakhnath once visited the valley and was offended that he was not accorded a proper reception. He caused a drought in the valley by rounding up all the snakes that bring rain and sitting on them, allowing none to escape. Matsyendranath was brought from Assam and Gorakhnath had to get up to pay homage to his guru. The snakes escaped, bringing life giving rain to the valley.



The temple of Rato Matsyendranath in Matsyendra Bahal in Tabahal, Patan



One of the four Ashok stupas located in Sankhamul

Both the Buddha and the emperor Ashoka are supposed to have visited the valley. However, many historians doubt this. Ashoka is said to have built four Ashoka stupas. These are at Imadol in the East, Ibahi in the North, Lagankhel in the South and Pulchowk in the West. These are in the old tradition of the stupa being a hemispherical mound of earth covered with grass. In later times, adornments have been carried out but these are still among the simplest stupas in the valley.

Lalitpur is also famous for Buddhist monasteries and water fountains (*bitis*).

In ancient days, a number of ponds dotted the city. Many have since being drained and covered over. The Pim Bahal Pokhari was built in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century and lies on my walk to Pulchowk and Kupon-dole. Recently the pond was cleaned extensively and renovated.

#### GUSTATORY DELICACIES

Lalitpur is a city dotted with temples, stupas, rich carvings and *Viharas*. There are also some excellent eateries in the city and its surrounding areas. Honacha (also mentioned as *wohnacha*) is a Lalitpur tradition and one of the most popular local

delicacy-serving restaurant in the city. The place is popular for its *wob* (a pancake-like dish made of soaked and pounded lentils). Most other Newari specialties like *chata-mari* and *choyla* are also available.

Another famous joint amongst locals for dal-bhat (rice and lentils) is Bijaya Bhojnaya (meaning 'eating house' in Nepali) in Gwarko. The restaurant attracts patrons of all social classes. Their specialty is rich mut-ton curry lovingly prepared in the traditional way. The fried chicken is crisp and tasty. The varieties of *achars* (pickles), *ghundruke* (fermented preparation) and *bhatmaas* (soya beans) all add up to a tasty and filling meal.

There is also the Nagdaha lake and Bishram Batika, a restaurant on its shore. The restaurant is famous for their *chhoyla* (spicy, barbecued buff), *bara*, *chata-mari* and *alu taama* (potatoes with young tender bamboo shoots). The wonderful location by the small lake adds to its charm. I have always had a weakness for Thakali food (from the arid Mustang region near Jomsom) and one of my missions on holidays is to search out good Thakali restaurants in Kathmandu. The Mustang Thakali Kitchen in Pulchowk on the way to Jhamsikhel is an excellent find. The mutton and the local chicken set are both good. The magic of Thakali (Thakalis are an ethnic group from the Thak Khola near Jomsom) food lies in the careful blending of spices. One of our recent discoveries has been the Samurai restaurant near Pulchowk on the way to the Patan Dhoka. Their Tibetan *gyakok* is excellent. *Gyakok* is a mildly spiced stew of cheese balls, vegetables and various types of meat gently stewing in a special vessel that keeps the food hot. The food can be had with rice or noodles.

Lalitpur has slowly eased its way into my heart. There are many problems with the city: dust, crowds, dirt, garbage, narrow roads and lack of space. However, its charm lies in its wonderful architecture, delightful public squares, lavishly carved temples and living wood, metal and stone working skills. This ancient, proud and beautiful city separated from Kathmandu by the holy Bagmati River is well worth a visit. ■

Pushpa Lal Ukari Park is a harmonious place to wind away the evenings. Even with its large pond now empty, it seems to only add to its character.

# Hetauda

Where a lot began

*The industrial town of Hetauda in Nepal's southern plains has its share of interesting trivia.*

**Text & Photos By PAT KAUBA**

**T**he Tarai will always hold a special place in my heart, a land where life is worked out of the earth, with warmth, reflecting those bright, special hues of morning and evening time, contrasting life in this old jungle area. There are many reasons not to go Tarai-side, such as: mosquitoes, slow tourism development and far too many languages to ever be understood. Yet it provides a place where adventures and simple luxuries can be found.

Next time you have to go to Birgunj or the border crossing of Raxal, in Bara District, maybe you too would consider a different route, and stop at the small hill-station of Hetauda, for a little time outside of the norm?

#### **WHY?**

Hetauda, the district capital for Makwanpur, is by far one of the quaintest, most

well thought-out towns along the Tarai, thanks to its first *Mir*, or town chief. He laid out the major road-junctions, making it the central point it is, outside of the town. The roads to Chitwan, India and Kathmandu, don't come near the town-centre. Trees line the streets, shop and market placement makes sense and the whole place gives an air of calm, tranquil organization.

Three rivers: the Rapti, Kara and Bagi cut Hetauda in three lines, turning it into a triangular island, giving the place a unique character. All this water also aids in making the flora and fauna of this jungle area quiet diverse. Flowers such as orchids grow in abundance in this environment, as does medicinal herbs or *Jheribbuti*. Just outside of town is another island, cut by two rivers, here is a centre for studying and learning all about the aforementioned

*jheributhi*. These rivers also provide pleasant respite on those hot Tarai-day's.

#### **FEMININE POWERS**

Hetauda, takes its name after a fearsome, demonic queen that lived in its malaria-infested jungles, long ago. Her name was Hedumba and all of the area around the town is considered a *Devi* place: affected by the world's feminine energies. Hedumba ended up marrying one of the Pandav princes', who fled after the *Mahabharat* wars. Bhimpheedi, high up the top hill over Hetauda, was the name of the old district capital, named after the prince, Bhimsen. Also, it is said, that the now infamous Indian *yogi*, Pilot Baba, who is known for burying himself alive for weeks on end, even in water, started his *Sadhu*-life here. He is well known too, for his ability to heal, perhaps a reflection of his time in this area.



The jungle surrounding Hetauda, stretches up the Sivalik Hills (a fortress of rock that kept marauding armies at bay through centuries) and all the way over to Chitwan National Park. In past days, wandering rhinos were a common sight at the local market. Those times have changed, but still a diversity of wildlife can be spotted, including the adorable, white haired monkey.

The area's diverse forestry is also the reason why one of Nepal's two Institutes of Forestry is located here. Teaching the next generating of Park Rangers and Forestry workers.

#### **THE FIRST!**

The Tribhuvan Highway, which cuts through Hetauda, has the distinction of being Nepal's first road, connecting it to the outside world. Finished in 1956, with the assistance of India, it took the name of King Tribhuvan, who died the year before. It also was the site of Nepal's first motoring tunnel, just big enough for one jeep, although no longer in use, it is possible to find outside the town on the

When foreign INGOs started working in Nepal, Hetauda was one of the very first locations, back in the 70s. It may have something to do with the planning and upkeep that can be seen around the town.

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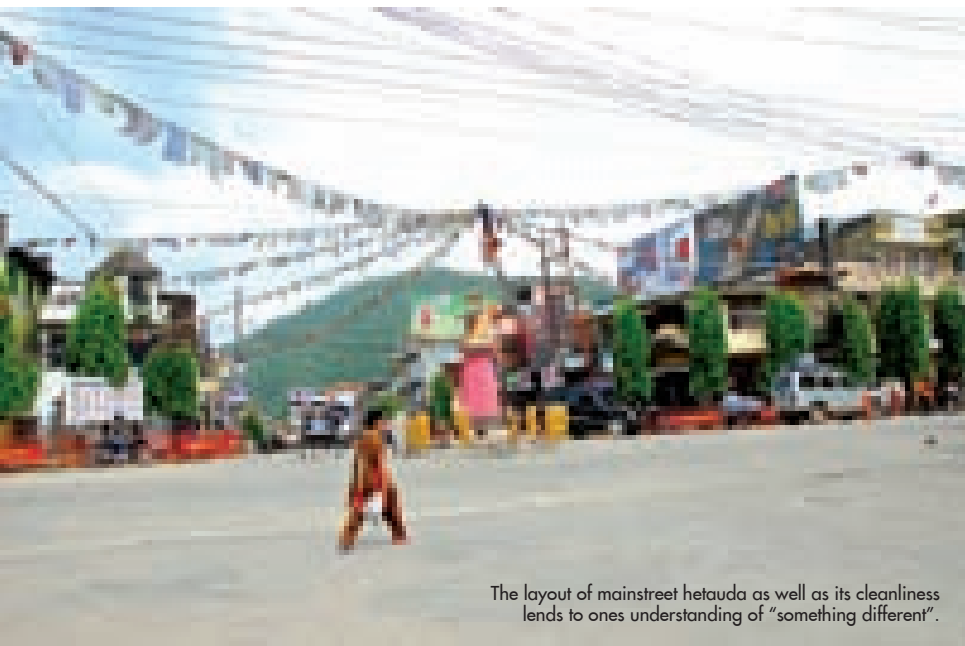
Birgunj-side, near Churiyamai Temple. The highway has undergone massive development in recent years and now is almost totally "black-topped", making the journey to Kathmandu, of 158Km, possible by jeep, in under four hours. Other ongoing developments will see the journey cut to 108Km, in the near future.

The 1960s saw the start of the eradication of malaria in the Tarai's jungles and many peoples of Nepal and India came to settle here after. It is why you can find just about every one of Nepal's intricate social-fabric living here, side by side. The Tribhuvan Highway, is also the reason why Hetauda has become a major industrial

zone, with many factories producing items such as steel, but thanks to smart planning, it is all kept far-out, from the town.

When foreign INGOs started working in Nepal, Hetauda was one of the very first locations, back in the 70s. It may have something to do with the planning and upkeep that can be seen around the town. There are also a number of well laid out parks to visit, to while away the evenings. Pushpa Lal Ukari Park, for example, has a small lake, with a seating area in the centre, the layout is very clean and is home to many types of flowers and medicinal herbs, but in an educative way, with labels in various languages, teaching people their importance. ►

When I visited in the humid month of June, the market was bustling with the sale of heavenly mangoes, so much so that I couldn't help but gorge myself on these wonders.



The layout of mainstreet hetauda as well as its cleanliness lends to ones understanding of "something different".



All of the parks trees and plants are labelled making a more informed visit.

#### OUT AND ABOUT

If wondering what else to do here, why not visit the local cinema, screening Nepali movies at three o'clock each day and a Hindi movie in the evenings. Or, you could have an exploration at the numerous Indian eateries, where you can get many types of super-sweet *meethi*-sweets, or *thali*, the Indian version of the ubiquitous *dal-bhat*.

For accommodation there are a few simple places to stay near the bus-station, or, if feeling financially flush, you could stay at the well-known Motel Avocado & Orchid Resort; a long time established hotel, with massive capacity, and, big well-tended gardens, full of... orchids. It is also the first place in all of Nepal to grow avocados, bringing an uncommon variation to its menus.

When I visited in the humid month of June, the market was bustling with the sale of heavenly mangoes, so much so that I couldn't help but gorge myself on these wonders. Fresh from the tree, each bite was a taste explosion on orgasmic levels. However, Hetauda's unique climate also makes the growing of mountainous apples possible too, for the colder months.

#### THE LONG ROAD HOME

Even though you have the road, one could still have a little adventure, going to/from Kathmandu, if you know the way. One could easily walk, the "original road", from Hetauda to Bhimpedhi, on to Khulakhani (passing the hydro-station), onto Bakhel and then Mahtatirta; eventually bringing you towards Kathmandu. As well as this you could visit the Chepang villages of Raksirang and Kairang, but this will be basic.

When you get to Bhimpedhi, ask for the *Kali-toop*, a medieval catapult that shot huge iron balls and worse, upon invading armies, such as the British, keeping them out of Nepal, with terrifying ferocity.

On a good day, this is a great place to watch those colourful sunsets and sunrises, contrasted with the width of the Himalaya towering behind. ■

Pat Kauba is a freelance writer and photographer with a love for unique places. You can contact him at [patkauba@gmail.com](mailto:patkauba@gmail.com).



*There is no time to waste than the time of food*

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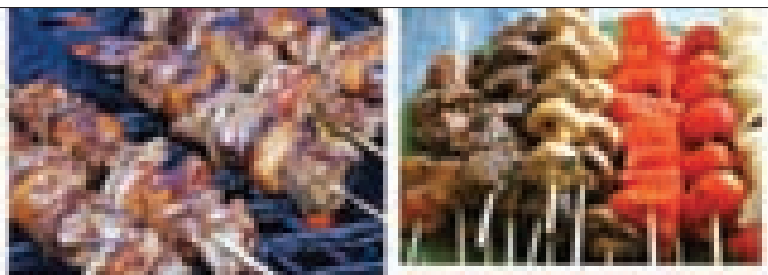
**Date:** 17<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2012 onwards every working day  
**Venue:** Shambala Garden Cafe, Hotel Shangri-La  
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# The Maithili Renaissance

*Art is expression. Liberation. Freedom.*

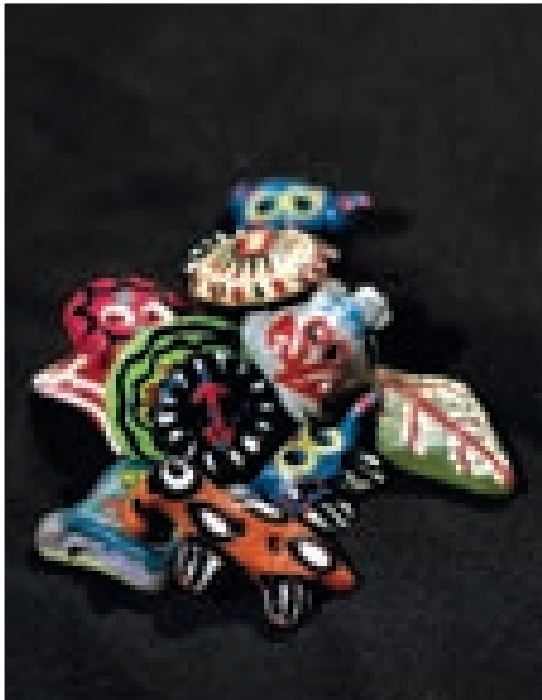
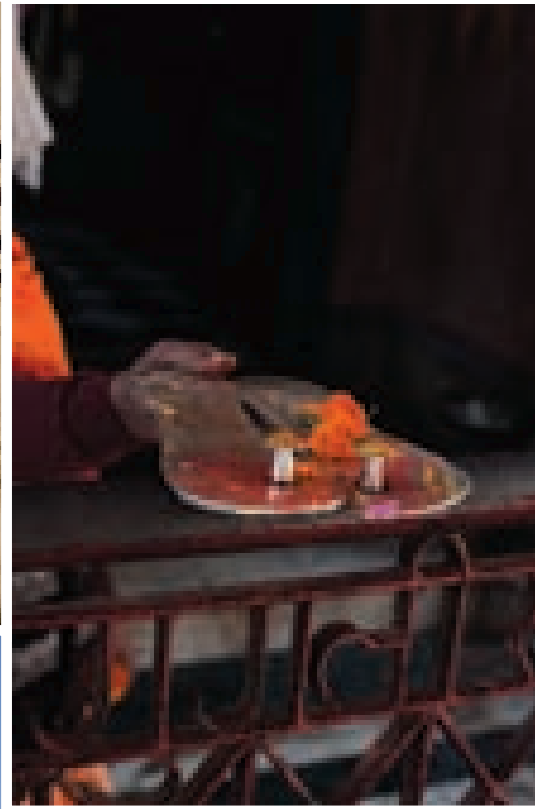
Text and photos by Niraj Karki & Wallace Woon

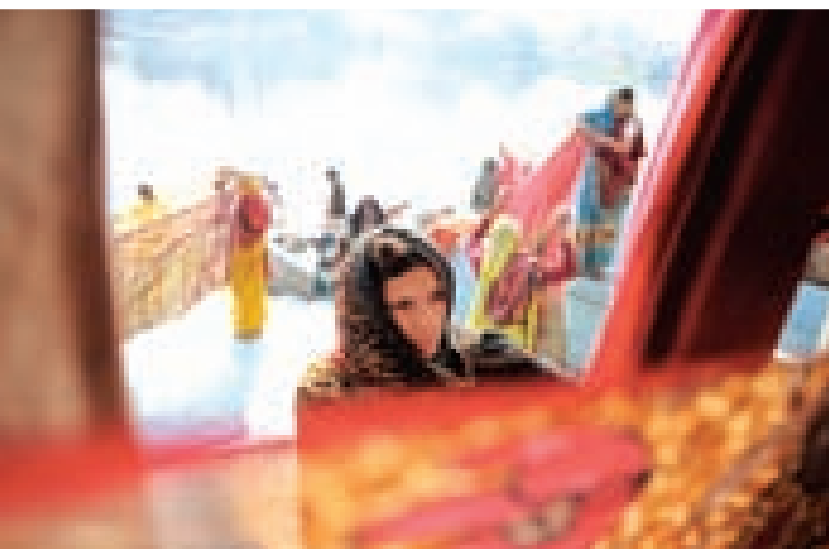
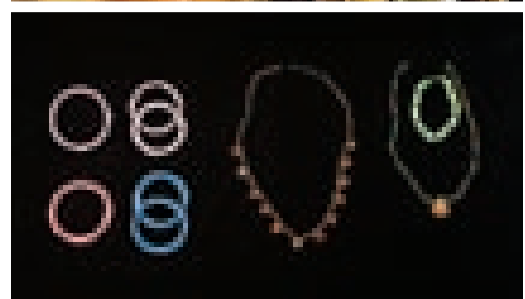
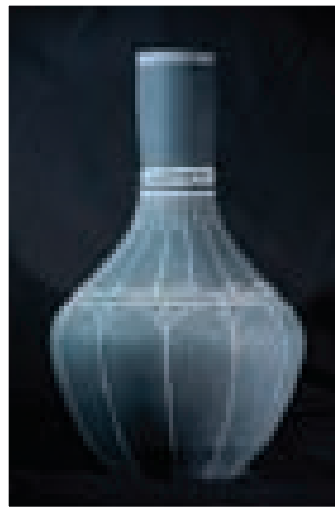
**M**aithili art is old, telling ancient stories like the Ramayana. While this form of art has been practised as arduously as any other and religiously handed down through generations, there is a reason why it has never gained popularity or even recognition. Maithili art is an integral part of the culture and traditions of the Maithili people but was constricted as it was painted only on walls.

That is the way things were until the Janakpur Women's Development Centre (JWDC) was initiated in 1989. Through the efforts of the Australian Embassy in Kathmandu, the women artisans learned to transfer their wall designs into paper and soon after, the art form literary jumped off the wall to become paintings, motifs on pottery and much more. Ironically, Maithili art has travelled and been exhibited in countries like USA, UK, Germany, Austria, and Belgium but is virtually unknown at home.

It is a unique form of art, with an even more unique story. For the women of Janakpur, through the JWDC, Maithili art has become a means of expression, liberation and freedom. Where once women were thought to do no more ►







than hide behind the shawl of their sarees, these days the women at JWDC are proud women with an income – and women who cycle. No longer limited to painting on walls, and only for rituals, the art produced by the women at JWDC is now pure expression, but a unique one at that.

You would have to visit Janakpur to really understand this amazing, influential and life-changing story. It is a place of much more worth than just a visit - an old place, timeless in a way, dominated by the temples of Ram, Sita, Janak and more.

Once there, head over to JWDC in the village of Kuwa, only 3km south of the town centre. ■

The author would like to thank the Australian Embassy in Kathmandu for supporting the trip to Janakpur and to the JWDC.

## Bugles & Tigers

With a name like Bugles & Tigers, expect nothing but a great time at the elegant hotel bar. Decorated to resemble a British Officer's mess, the watering hole celebrates the gallantry & bravery of the Nepali Gurkha. On offer is an extensive range of drinks to suit your style & mood & popular hot spot amid hotel guests as well as locals. Bugles & Tigers is the best place to mingle with locals indulge yourself in tall drinks & tall tales.

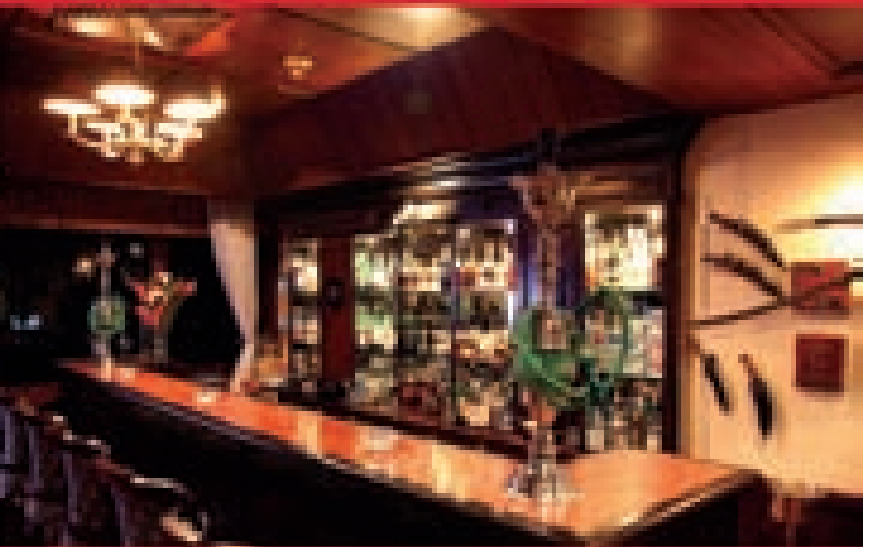
### Opening Hours

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10% discount on Happy Hour (3 pm to 7 pm)

Live music by The 2nd Regiment Trio band

(7 pm to 10:30pm) Except Monday



## Far Pavilion

For those looking to hang loose after a long day amidst an environment of comfort and traditional charm, the secluded garden, the feel of the Far Pavilion would be the best choice. Wind down with a drink while soothing music wafted to you in a backdrop of the hotel's landscaped gardens and the city lights beyond.

The Far Pavilion offers the best dishes from the Mughal period of India, some recipes date back more than a hundred years. Also on offer is the royal cuisine of the Kingdom of Assam. Sit on your succulent piece of royalty!

### Opening Hours

7 pm to 11 pm Except Tuesday (Dinner only)

Live Duet with Authentic Indian food

## MANDARIN

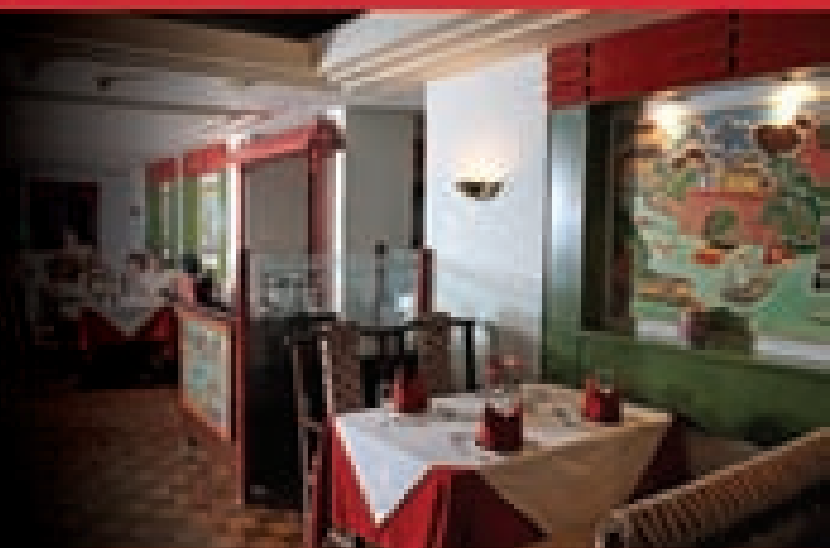
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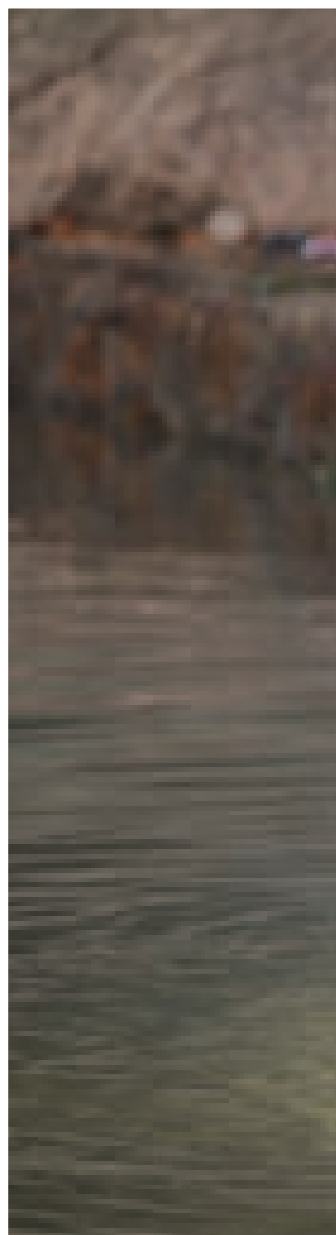


# Faith and devotion



*Each year Nepali women, married or unmarried, fast during the month of January/February for the longevity of their husbands or for the prospect of a perfect husband. This fast popularly known as Swasthani Brata has a popular river, Salinadi and a fascinating tale associated with it.*

**Text By ANUBHUTI POUDYAL**  
**Photos By HARI MAHARJAN**  
**(ECS MEDIA)**



**S***wasthani Brata* is observed in the Nepali month of Maagh (January/February) by women around Nepal. Married women pray for the long lives of their husbands and their family's prosperity while single women try to please the gods to give them good husbands. For an entire month, the Goddess of Swasthani is remembered as a religious book with stories on gods, demons and religions and read in almost every household that believes in this festival. Besides

regular prayers and Swasthani katha (stories of Swasthaani), there is the tradition of making an annual visit to Sali nadi or River Sali, in Saakhu at least once during the month by women who are fasting.

There is mention of this religious river in *Swasthani Katha*, that explains the power of the goddess and the river itself. Chandrawati, one of the characters in the story was too restless to meet her long lost husband who showed up as a king after

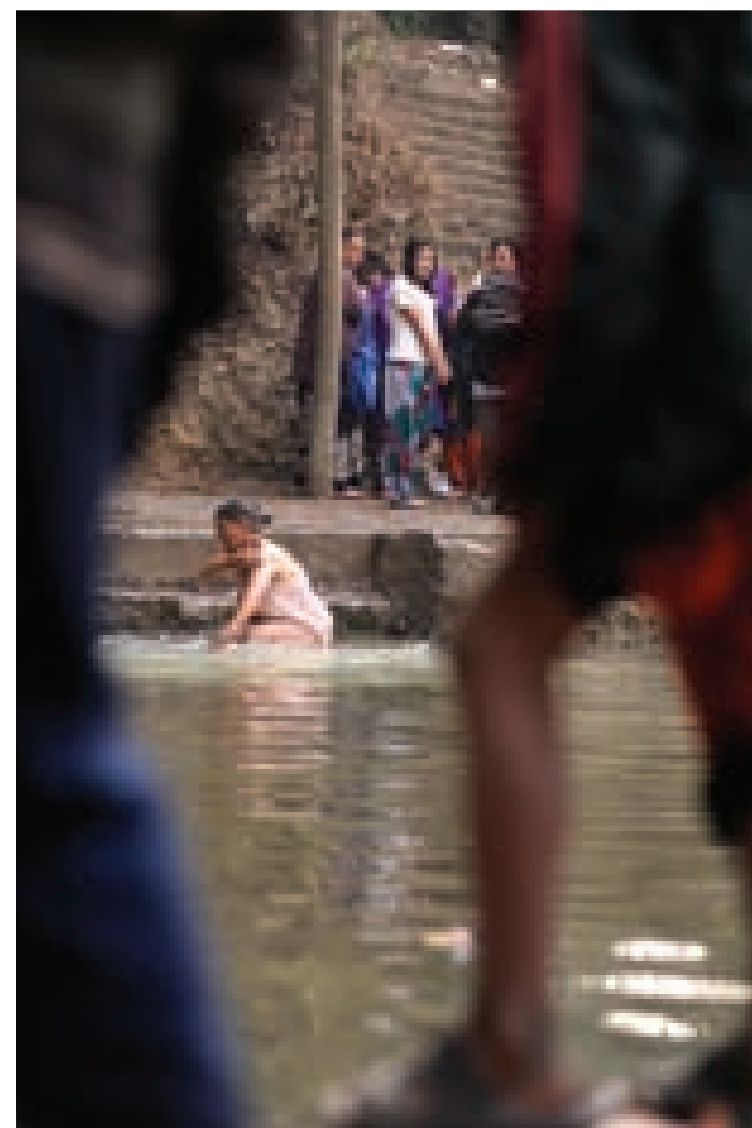


a long time. In her rush to get to her husband, she asked her helpers to take her back and when told that they were busy praying to Goddess Swasthani, she rudely criticized *Swasthani brata*. As a result, when she walked over a bridge above River Saali on her way back, the weather suddenly turned really bad and she was blown into the river and trapped there like a log for years. Only after she fasted and paid respect to the *Swasthani brata* did she get out of the river.

The power of this river along with the festival itself, is why people flock in groups there. The pious river associated with this festival, is the place to be during January/February. Women of all ages pay their respect to this river and its religious potential of actually punishing the wrong doers and rewarding the good ones. The tale of the river, among other stories in the book, is what makes the river so popular among women and visitors who believe in experiencing Nepalese festivals at their best. ■









the  
**NEPALI**  
way | An ECSNEPAL  
Photo Contest



**Sushil Sthapit**

Kupondol

Cyclist in Asan with his daily duties.



# First City life

*Life in a Nepali city is as vibrant and happening as any other city in the world. What are the things that make city life interesting? Our readers sent us pictures of their experiences with the Nepali cities they call home.*

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Penetrators were reading the newspaper at road side in Indrachowk in Kathmandu.



the  
NEPALI  
way An ESCAPE  
PhotoContest

# Second

Govind Khadka  
Kupondol

I took this shot in Koteshwor few days back. The tea junction here is the place where city life lives till late night.



the  
NEPALI  
way An ESCAPE  
PhotoContest

# Third

Bishwas Bajracharya  
Balkumari, Patan



Hurry Makes a Bad Curry!!

the  
**NEPALI**  
way An ONLINE  
PhotoContest

## Consolation

**Sumit Ram Vaidya**  
Kupondol



Shopkeeper showcasing the stuff to attract the penetrators in Asan.

the  
**NEPALI**  
way An ONLINE  
PhotoContest

## Consolation

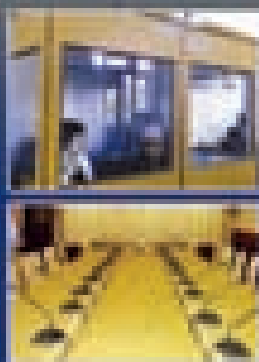
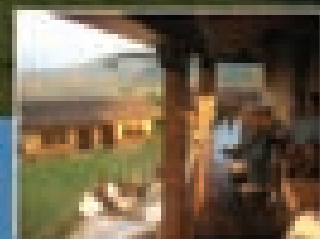
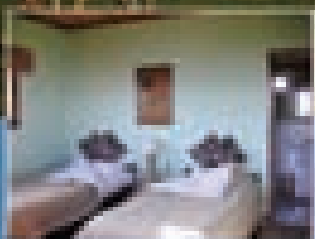
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- Galyan
- Waling
- Tansen
- Gaidakot
- Kawasoti
- Arun Khola
- Bardhaghat
- Parasi
- Taulihawa\*
- Sunwal\*
- Butwal
- Bhairahawa
- Sandhikharka\*
- Tamghas\*
- Tulsipur
- Ghorahi
- Lamahi
- Kushma
- Kohalpur
- Birendranagar
- Dailekh
- Guleria
- Dhangadhi
- Mahendranagar
- Tikapur
- Silgadhi
- Dipayal
- Aamargadhi\*
- Tatopani
- Salyan\*
- Libang\*
- Pyuthan\*
- Musikot\*
- Besisahar
- Sundarbazar
- Boteodar
- Turture
- Central Region**
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- Lahan
- Janakpur
- Jaleswore
- Sindhulimadhi
- Chandranigahpur
- Nijgadh
- Malangwa\*
- Charikot
- Jiri\*
- Nagarkot
- Banepa
- Dhulikhel
- Panchkhal
- Hetauda
- Birgunj
- Kaliaya
- Gaur
- Simara
- Pathlaiya
- Narayanghat
- Bharatpur
- Tandi
- Parsa
- Sauraha
- Mugling
- Khanikhola
- Naubise
- Galchhi
- Gajuri
- Kurintar
- Manakamana
- Malekhu
- Dhadingbesi
- Bidur, Trishuli
- Gorkha
- Dumre
- Ambukhaireni
- Okhaldhunga\*
- Manthali\*
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86 CRAFT RIGHT NOW  
88 REVIEWS: TThong Na Ga Wa  
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## 5th National Agro Expo organized



Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) organized the fifth Agro Expo with the support of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives from 9 March, Friday to 11 March, Sunday at Bhrikuti Mandap Exhibition Hall in Kathmandu. A total of 150 exhibitors showcased their products under 5 pavilions in total comprising of a

herbal pavillion, One Village One Product (OVOP) Pavillion, a coffee pavillion, a dairy pavillion and a honey pavillion. Around 40,000 visitors visited the expo in the span of three days. Apart from the product display, a workshop was also conducted simultaenously on the Role of Private sector in development of NTFPs related enterprise and export promotion.

## Craft entrepreneurs form NTIS cell



Handicraft entrepreneurs have formed a Nepal Trade Integration Strategy (NTIS) Cell for handicraft products to prepare annual plans. The cell includes pashmina, handmade paper, woolen products, and silver jewelry.

GIZ, a German development cooperation has started implementing its promotion program for silver jewelry. Under the initiative, GIZ will also organize a six-month training program for 10 people. Meanwhile, under the NTIS program, UNIDO has already provided a yarn-testing machine for the pashmina industry. However, woolen products and handmade paper have not yet received any product promotion program as of now. The association recently submitted a proposal regarding prospects for developing raw materials for lokta paper.

## Nepali Times Eco Fair 2012

Nepali Times Eco Fair 2012 was held from 11 February, Saturday to 12 February, Sunday. GIZ WTO/ EIF-SP supported Nepal Herbs and Herbal Producers Association (NEHHPA) with six stalls to showcase their herbs and herbal products.

## Industrial Census next year

The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) began making preparations to conduct an industrial census in the next fiscal year 2012-13. The 10th count of industrial enterprises will collect information from firms employing more than 10 people. The census will give a clear picture of the industrial establishments operating in the country including number, employment, wages and salaries, value of input and output, value addition, value of fixed assets and the average output to input ratio. The survey, which is carried out every five years, is expected to be useful for planning, policy formulation, monitoring and research purposes. According to the survey conducted in 2006-07, there were 3,446 manufacturing units employing 169,891 persons.

The number of manufacturing units represented an increase of 7.2 percent over the 2001-02 figure. However, the number of employees was down 7.5 percent. The CBS plans to send out its enumerators to collect data around October next year. The CBS is also discussing making a list of industries to be included in the count so that its staff will be better prepared when they go out into the field. It had conducted a survey of small industries in 2008-09.

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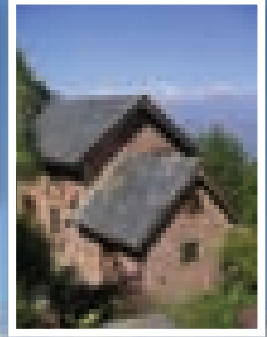
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# Thong Na Ga Wa

*Thong Na Ga Wa produces beautiful works of art as much as classy furniture.*

Text By ANUBHUTI POUDYAL

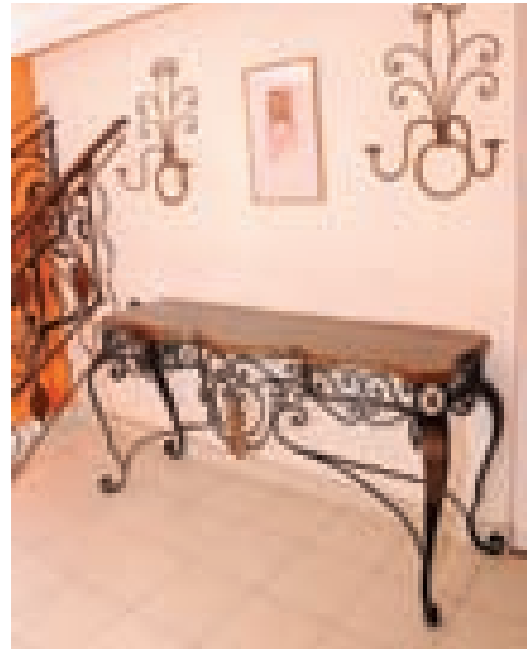
What good has come off iron? A lot apparently. I realized it on my recent visit to Thong Na Ga wa which is not an unknown shop to those who love Lalitpur for various reasons. To your left, just before you reach Dhukuti, there is a small shop which you won't miss if you are careful. The name stands proudly so does the shop that has made a name for its quality products and service.

Thong Na Ga Wa in Tibetan means "love at first sight". It means liking something when you look at it the first time. You realize how apt the name is when you walk into the shop. For a society that prides itself on lavish wooden furniture and huge couches, the products at the store are a pleasant change. There is a wide range of furniture and accessories which are an interesting mix of novelty and beauty.

It is new because it is different from the traditional items which have made their ways into our homes since ages. The chairs, tables and beds which are the popular items at Thong Na Ga Wa are all made of iron. Wrought iron is changed into something so beautiful that you have to commend the work that has gone into creating the items. Workers in Bhaishipati take it upon themselves to change mere iron into a form of art.

The beauty of these items is indeed worth talking about. Tables and stands have wooden or marble top and iron tendrils creating the body. The tendrils with leaves in some cases are a treat to the eyes. If you are looking for a unique piece, you will find the products here very interesting.

The products of Thong Na Ga Wa are as much a commodity as a work of art. They are intricate on one hand and useful on the other.



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The accessories include mirrors, candle stands and wall lamps among other things. There are window grills and partitions which are elegant and delightful. The mirrors catch your eyes easily with the unconventional design and shape.

The most popular item of the shop however is the staircase railings. They are as finely made as other items present in the shop and you can see from their elegance why they are so popular among customers. Sunita Acharya, the owner of Thong Na Ga Wa, opened the place 10 years ago without the intention of actually making it a commercial venture. "I actually started working on the interior of my own home by hiring people to create designs. People fell in love with the new designs and they asked me to work for their homes too. One thing led to another and we began running it as a commercial house. Today we have employees working in our factory and we are a good working business," shares Sunita.

The products of Thong Na Ga Wa are as much a commodity as a work of art. They are intricate on one hand and useful on the other. This combination is what makes the products rich. If you are one of those people who believe each item in home needs to have a story attached to it, you might find what you like in this place. Enter this place and you might indeed fall in love with something at the very first sight. ■



Up and down: Products on display at the store

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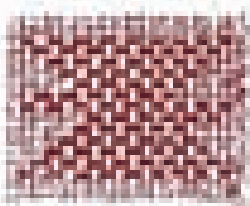
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# Preserver of history

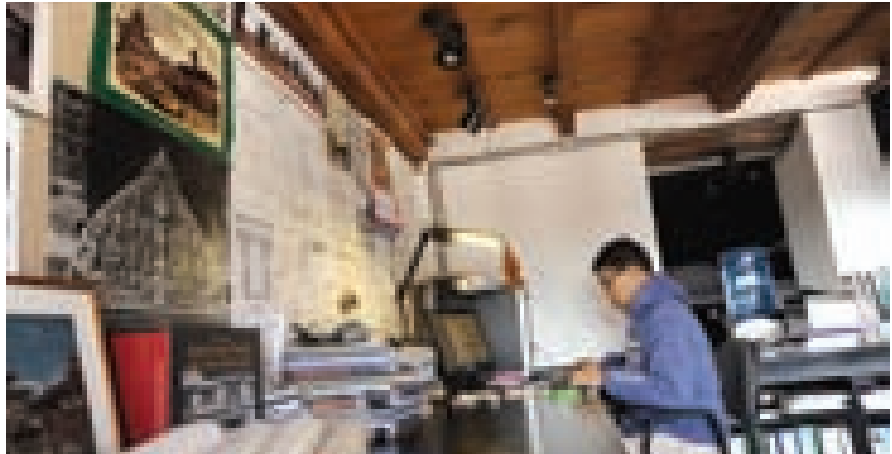
*The rich architectural history of Kathmandu makes it a unique place with seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites scattered across this tiny yet ancient, timeless historical valley.*

Text By **NIRAJ KARKI**

It is a grim, sad truth but the increasing demands of development and the consequent urbanization - unplanned, inconsiderate of the rich heritage of this valley have led to a different Kathmandu – one without its glorious identity, one without regard to history that once gone cannot be brought back.

There is hope though kept alive by people such as Dr. Rohit Ranjitkar who works with the Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust (KVPT), an INGO that since its inception in 1998 has been key in the preservation of Kathmandu's architectural heritage. The trust was started by Professor Eduard F. Sekler along with his two associates. Since then it has restored 25 buildings in the Patan Durbar Square area alone with many more within Kathmandu.

Dr. Ranjitkar grew up a few blocks south of Patan Durbar Square, surrounded by the same monuments and buildings that he now works to preserve. "My father was the first engineer in the



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Dr. Ranjitkar grew up a few blocks south of Patan Durbar Square, surrounded by the same monuments and buildings that he now works to preserve.

Department of Archaeology. When I was in school during the 1970s, UNDP funded the renovation of the Hanuman Dhoka Palace for the coronation ceremony of late king Birendra, and my father was in charge of the project. I used to visit my father at work and saw all these details and carvings; that fed my interest."

After finishing his schooling, Dr. Ranjitkar studied architecture at Pulchowk Engineering Campus and then worked for the Pashupati Conservation Project. He then received a scholarship to continue his studies in architecture in the Soviet Union in 1985. Six years and a Master's degree later, he returned to Nepal and joined the Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust.

He returned to Russia to pursue a PhD in conservation in 1993 choosing the analysis of all the conservation scattered across Kathmandu as his dissertation topic. He visited the places noting the different ideas and concepts that people had about conservation. Unlike others who stuck to their ideas, he spent his time learning from all the different conservation efforts.

It escapes comprehension but conservation is complicated, to say the least. Different people have different approaches to

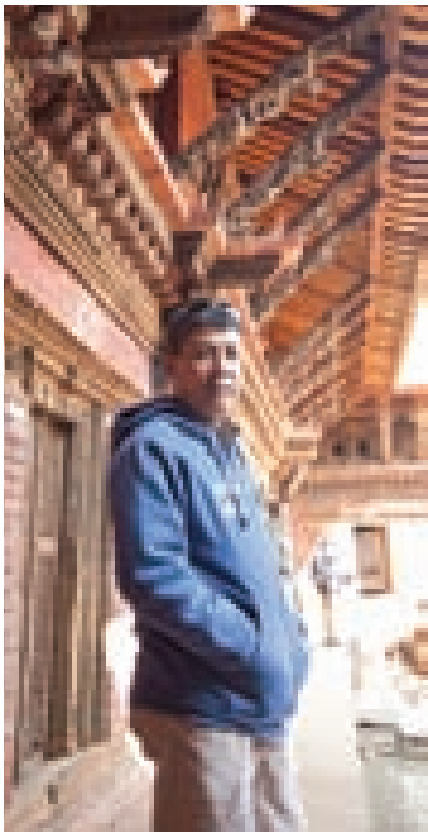
conservation. "Our approach to conservation and even architecture now will shape and define history for the future generations and scholars," explains Dr. Ranjitkar.

The trust raises required funds for the projects it undertakes. While some come from private donors, the trust has won the Ambassador Fund for Cultural Preservation which was started in 2002 seven times including a very substantial award in 2009 where only selected organizations were allowed to apply. The funds from the award made the restoration of Mulchowk and surrounding areas in Patan possible.

"Donors want recognition of their contributions towards conservation projects which means that only popular attractions are highlighted for preservation," says Dr. Ranjitkar. In Kathmandu though, prime examples of extraordinary architecture are prevalent in the form of old houses and dilapidated temples.

Patan Durbar square and Kathmandu square are among the only places that remind people of the heritage that Kathmandu has and sadly, the importance of conservation will not be realized until it is too late. ■

For more information: [www.kvptnepal.org](http://www.kvptnepal.org),  
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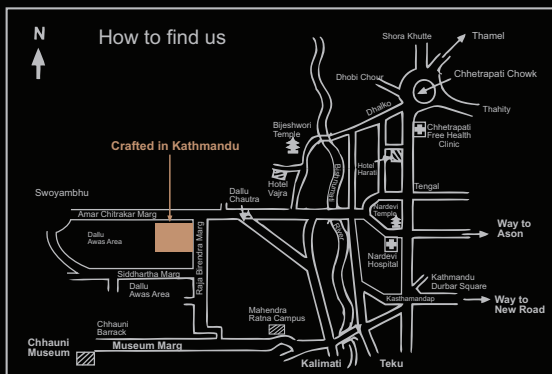
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# A gallery of perspectives

*Why should art be a mere reflection of society when it can itself be an opinion?*

Text By NIMMA ADHIKARI

How the definition of art has changed over the course of time. Although art has never had a definite meaning, people have continued to label anything beautiful to the eyes as an object of art. A painting on the wall, a piece of sculpture, a simple embroidered pattern on a pillow case, calligraphy; anything and everything that requires skill can be called art it seems. Even the actors and performers are now considered artists and their performance an art.

The world had not always been positive to these ideas of art though. Then again, there is a concept of 'pure art' that is deprived of the realisms of society. Literature always and is active in defining the critical cores of society so, why deprive art from the same? As a refutation against beautified misconceptions of art, the Live Art Hub (LAH) was created (as a part of Lasanaa) to create a platform for 'artists' who go beyond the conventional definitions of art.

Live Art Hub is a physical space created for interactions, performances, workshops, film screenings, and other experimental modes of cultural production by Lasanaa in the premises of Martin Chautari, Thapathali. Lasanaa is an art trust that allows people to come



Up and down: Artists working at the live art hub

together and learn from each other by exchanging their ideas and skills. Live Art Hub further elevates this objective by promoting artists and awareness on several ongoing issues (socio-political, religious, or gender issues) creating "artivism", a final product of art that has a provoking thought of activism. A pictorial ad with the caption, "There is nothing like a man in the kitchen" for instance was created to defy the traditional role of a man and a woman.

Likewise, LAH promotes and encourages art that uses different modes of expression. Theatrical performances, paintings, film, sculptures and any other experimental works fall under LAH's definition of art. It is also a ground for critical analysis of these forms of art. Regular workshops, discussions and talk programs intended to broaden one's horizon are the other positive aspect of LAH. This art space has been a fertile ground for exploration for progressive Nepali artists.

"It is not a perfect gallery with proper lighting like at other art galleries," admits Ashmina Ranjit, one of the founders of LAH adding, "It is simply a physical space for artists who have a different perspectives and new ideas." LAH, at present, has 15 residents who are working on a project "Being in Kathmandu Valley". Five groups of these artists will be exploring five different cities and creating something individually to see the city through different perspectives.

Art has never been defined so well perhaps because it is an indefinite form of self expression. No matter how you express yourself, it takes the form of art and becomes something more than just an object of beauty or passion. It becomes a perspective. So while the definition keeps on evolving, let's wait for the revelation of these five cities. ■



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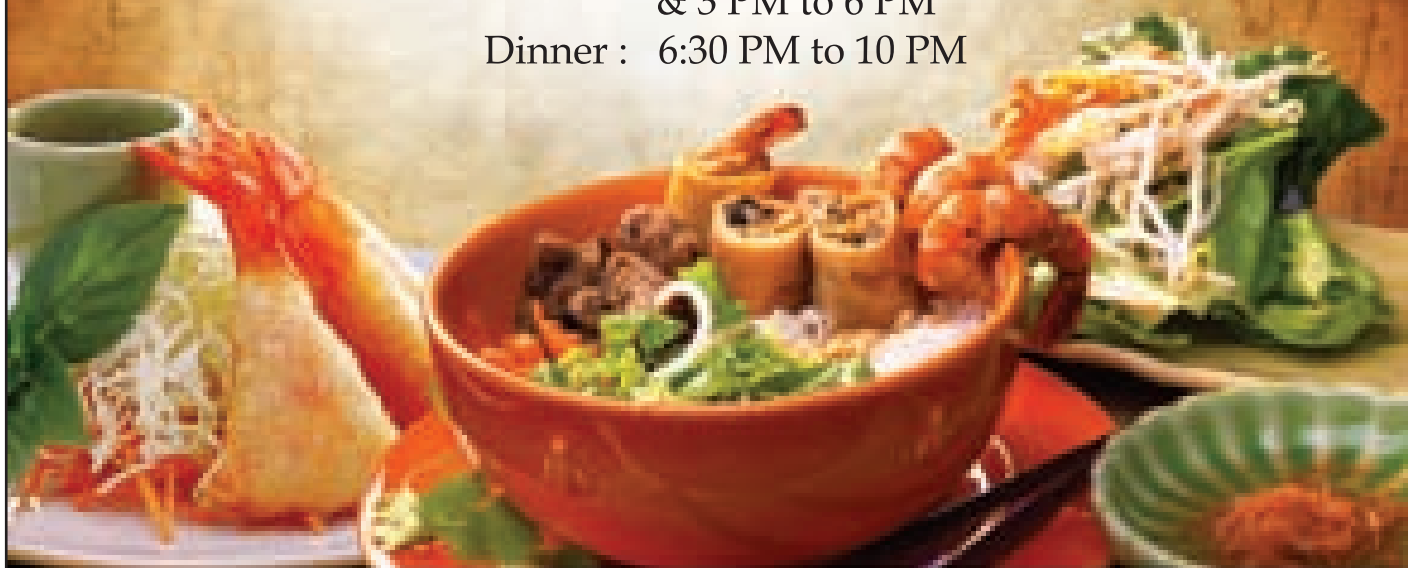
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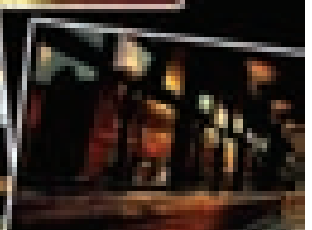
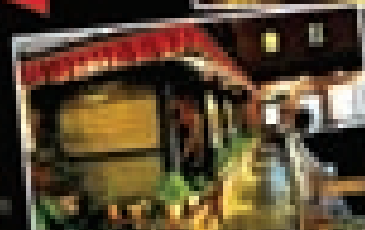
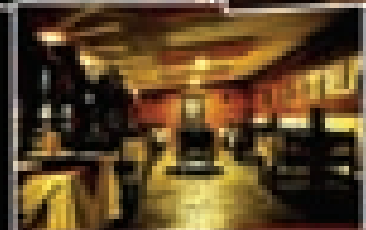
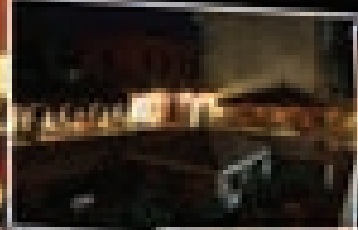
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# TRAVEL

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## February witnesses growth in tourist arrivals by 14%



Tourist arrivals to Nepal via air in February went up by 13.7 percent compared to arrival figures of the same period of 2011. According to the statistics of Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) Immigration Office, a total of 42,716 foreign tourists visited the country via air during the period. Arrivals from China, which was recorded as the highest growth till January however declined by 23.1 percent. A total of 3,226 Chinese nationals visited the country in February, down from 4,193 recorded in February, 2011.

Arrivals from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan also declined by 12.4 percent, 16 percent and 23.8 percent respectively, but the South Asian segment recorded

positive growth of 20.4 percent due to healthy rise in arrivals from India. A total of 11,093 Indian nationals visited Nepal via air in February, a rise of 28.8 percent compared to arrival figures of the same period last year.

Likewise, arrivals from Japan, Malaysia, South Korea and Thailand increased by 33.2 percent, 19.8 percent, 31.5 percent and 7.9 percent respectively during the review period. The European market also observed positive growth of 17.5 percent in February. A total of 11,000 tourists from Europe visited Nepal during the review period. Total arrivals over the first two months of 2012 increased by 20.2 percent to 85,000 compared to the figures of last year.

## Two Nepali adventurers receive National Geographic honor

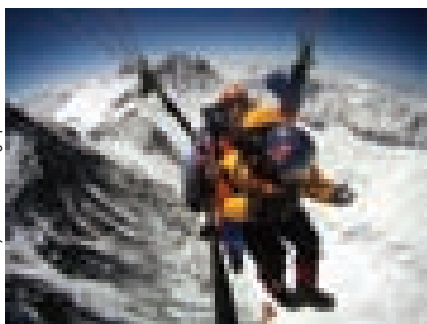


Photo Courtesy: National Geographic

High mountain guide Lakpa Tsheri Sherpa and kayaker Sano Babu Sunuwar have been named the People's Choice Adventurers of the Year 2012 for their Everest summit, paragliding descent and long-distance kayak from Nepal to the Bay of Bengal.

The duo was selected from a group of 12 individuals whose extraordinary achievements in exploration, conservation and adventure sports distinguished them in the past year. National Geographic Adventure has been naming Adventurers of the Year for the past seven years.

Sherpa and Sunuwar were selected through online voting on National Geographic Adventure's website. The winning duo was chosen for its three-month adventure called 'The Ultimate Descent' that which included climb to the Everest summit, paraglide descent from the summit and an 850-km kayak trip from Nepal to the Bay of Bengal."

## Tourist coaches hike PKR-KTM-PKR fare

Tourist coaches operating on Pokhara-Kathmandu-Pokhara route have raised the fares citing recent hikes in petroleum prices, making traveling expensive for both domestic as well as foreign tourists travelling across the route. Under the new rates, Nepali tourists will now need to pay NRs 50 more for traveling on a tourist bus. For traveling on a non-AC bus, they will now need to pay NRs 400 for the one-way journey. One-way fare for AC buses has been fixed at NRs 550 per person. Foreign tourists taking non-AC coaches can travel one way at the fare same as Nepali tourists, that is NRs 400 per person. However, for traveling on an AC coach they will need to pay US\$ 12 per person. Previously, they were charged US\$ 10 per person for a one-way journey.

The new fares have come into effect from 6 March, 2012. Nepal Association of Tours and Travel Agents (NATTA) had not raised the fares on Pokhara-Kathmandu-Pokhara route for the last one-and-a-half years. Currently, various travel and tour agencies are operating 16 tourist coaches every day on Pokhara-Kathmandu route. Similar number of buses also operated on the Kathmandu-Pokhara route. Together, they cater to 800 tourists every day.



## TAAN General Secretary Awarded

National Civil Concern Center (NCCC) recently felicitated General Secretary of Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal (TAAN) Mohan Lamsal, for his contribution to Nepal's tourism industry particularly the trekking sector through TAAN. Minister for Physical Planning and Works Hridayesh Tripathi bestowed National Civil Golden Award 2068 on Lamsal who is also the managing director of Makalu Adventure Treks, on behalf of the NCCC. Other personalities making significant contribution in their respective fields were felicitated on the occasion.



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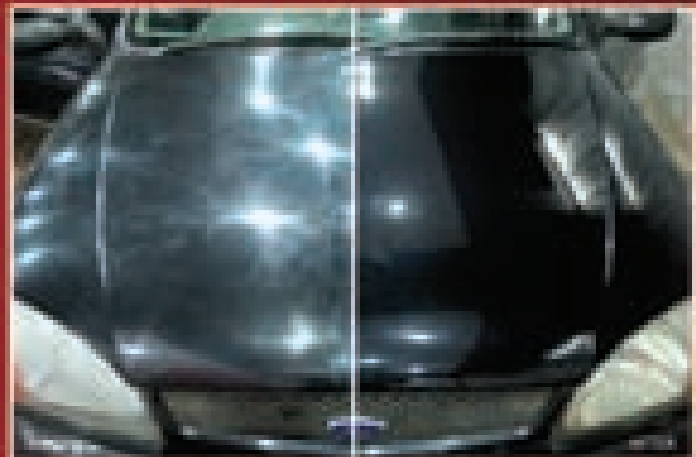
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Traditional houses line the streets in Jiri and Charikot



A miniature Singha (lion) guards a local temple



Young students pose for the camera

# On the road to Charikot and Jiri

*Beautiful people and their resilient nature add to the scenic brilliance of Charikot and Jiri.*

Text By RICHA SHAKYA, Photos By SURAJ RATNA SHAKYA

After a wearisome week, to renounce all your crowded thoughts, what would be your notion of breaking away? How does the idea of working in a place where you wake up to the smell of fresh coffee, a stunning view and a day filled with adventure and explorations of new places, cultures, cuisines and everything in between sound?

I got lucky as the year 2011 came to an end in a place called Jiri, courtesy of Wildlife Conservation Nepal/Nepal Prakriti Pathasala (WCN/NPP). The organization works with the vision of ac-

knowledging the youth with more hands-on experiences about climate change.

Our journey started with getting to know the people in the group better with each turn in the road as we finally pulled in to Charikot with a lunar eclipse waiting for us! It was dark and we were tired, which made it obvious what we wanted – good food and warm beds.

Waking up to snow covered mountains acknowledging my presence in the morning instead of temple bells and vehicle horns felt wonderful. That I would feel like this for a few more days made me smile as I took a sip of my tea in bed.

This journey to Charikot and our final destination Jiri revolved around working with the children of different schools on climate change, which made working with the students our primary objective. Unlike most schools in the city, the schools we worked with had huge playgrounds with the school building surrounded by thick forests against a backdrop of snowcapped mountains. The school did not however have a bus for their students and I found out later that most of the children had to walk an hour to get to school.

As the day unfolded, we planned to hike up to Dolakha Bhimsen, the oldest



Local children of Jiri



A cross between a sheep and a giraffe, an Alpaca is one of the attractions at Jiri



A little girl's magical smile stops us midway

Keeping in mind the school program schedule, we decided to take a break and explore Jiri.



historical temple in Dolakha district where Charikot and Jiri lie. A huge temple with long stairs and a golden door appeared from within the narrow lanes of inner Charikot. The temple reflected the very history of the place. Another interesting thing I noticed was a wall of mirrors in the temple with names of deceased loved ones left behind by families.

Coming back to the hotel after a long day, we got both good *and* bad news. The hotel we stayed in had no hot water but had free Wi-Fi, which meant we could connect with friends and family but take a cold shower later on. After spending three days in Charikot interacting with students on various topics related to climate change, it was time to get to Jiri.

Since Jiri falls on the trek route to Lukla, everyone expects to see mountains there. No mountain views greeted us but its idyllic location in the middle hills made it seem as

if someone had laid out a thick green carpet on the entire area. The winding road to Jiri ended at a place called 'Jirel Gabila', which has been serving lodging and good food to everyone from lone trekkers to ministers who visited here. The place looked promising and the hospitality simply swept us off our feet. Also, there was hot water round the clock and all the local cheese you can nibble on, which Jiri is famous for.

Keeping in mind the school program schedule, we decided to take a break and explore Jiri. The Gabila family gave us a list of things we were not to miss. First on the list were the Alpaca, an adorable creature which locals informed us was a cross between a sheep and a giraffe. The farm we visited had five Alpaca and our arrival only got them alarmed. When we tried to take pictures, they ran in a straight line. The caretaker later informed us that Alpaca were also bred at Thaiba in Kathmandu's Lalitpur district.

Next on the list was the famous farm in Jiri. The locals informed us that Swiss volunteers had visited the farm area in a helicopter and had found the topography to be very similar to their hometown. The area was a huge wetland then, which the Swiss converted into a farm for pigs and cows. An underground drainage system drained the water from the wetland that still works beautifully. A single blockage could convert Jiri into a wetland again.

Small incidents, lessons learnt and beautiful people met make up sweet memories. People we share our trip with are as important as the destination and so is the road that leads to our destination. What fun would it be to travel without the roadside local lunch, the fresh air, the smell of forest and the sound of rivers? If you are planning to take a trip this year, you might just want to rethink that expensive plane ticket instead melt in! 🍫

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Text By SADICHCHHA DHAKHWA



Left and right, Mandala boasts of thousands of titles on a wide range of topics

To all book enthusiasts, Mandala Book Point is a book paradise. Located in Kantipath, the bookstore provides a variety of books, most of which are based on humanities and social sciences of the Himalayan belt. Since its opening in 1988, the store has dedicated its efforts to preserving the culture and religion of this part of the world while catering books to the customers with varying interests regardless of their age and profession.

Although small, Mandala Book Point is crowded with approximately 40,000 titles on subjects ranging from academia to children's fiction. Storeowner Madhav Lal Maharjan, who has been in the business since 1969, describes his profession as being 'merchants of knowledge'.

The store is divided into six sections, each with shelves stacked with books on various topics, categorized by their subject matter and the genre of the books. This is however not their entire collection. If you cannot find a book, it may be because the book is not on display. Ask at the counter to take a look into another room in the back that is filled with books of various titles ranging from the

It has also engaged in publishing selective journals since the 1980s, the topics of which are studies based on Nepal.

Harry Potter series to reference books on art and religion. In addition to this collection, the store also organizes book signings to celebrate the publishing of and push sales for a new book.

Due to the political changes in the country, the industry has seen significant growth and is still booming. With this boom, Mandala Book Point has become a prominent bookseller in the country. It has also engaged in publishing selective journals since the 1980s, the topics of which are studies based on Nepal.

Nepal has also seen a high rise in the demand for reference and academic books. Mandala Book Point has been catering to this need by providing required books to the universities in Nepal. Maharjan has been corresponding with international publishers

such as Oxford, and Cambridge to meet this demand without having to charge a higher price. He acts as a medium between the universities and the publishers to bring books into the country at a cheaper price. He also conducts market research to maintain a relationship with the publishers abroad to help them expand their market in the country.

Living up to the motto it started out with, Mandala has been providing a diverse collection of books to their costumers. Although more focused on academic topics and reference books, it has been able to expand to meet the various needs of its patrons. They have seen a significant rise in the demand for books with the importance placed on knowledge and continue to sell books written by both domestic and international authors. ■

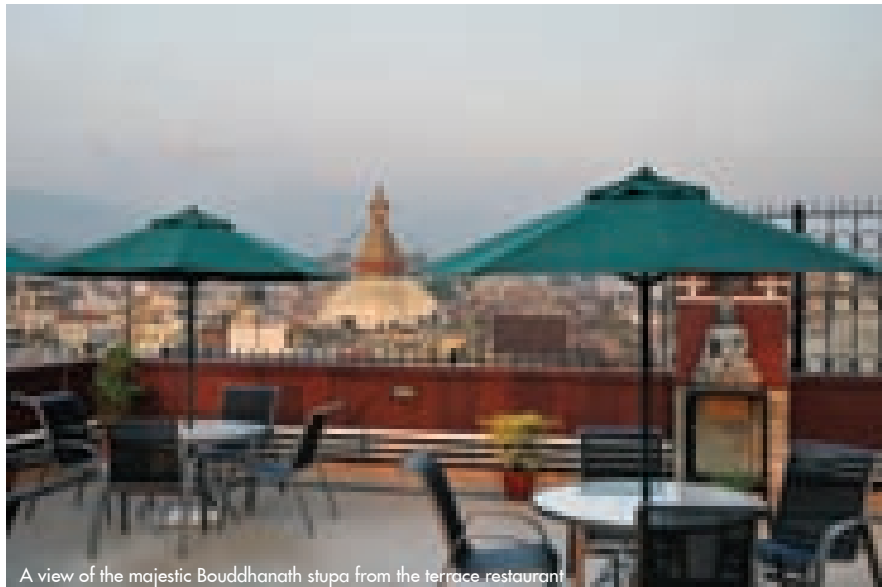
# The birth of a jewel in Boudha

While stakeholders in the hotel industry were scrambling to renovate and upgrade their hotels in view of the Nepal Tourism Year 2011, we saw the emergence of a new hotel in Boudha, the Hotel Tibet International. Ideally located at a two-minute walk from the Boudhanath Stupa, this boutique hotel complements the existing five star Hotel Hyatt and the economy hotels and guest houses in the area.

A decade old hotel, Tibet International has been refurbished and transformed into a fine boutique hotel offering 68 rooms. The décor of the rooms are characteristic of authentic Tibetan architecture and culture combined with western standards. Intricately designed handcrafted woodwork is the highlight of its décor. The hotel provides an executive floor, housing executive suites that have a terrace looking into the majestic Boudhanath Stupa.

Hotel Tibet International comprises of two blocks of elegant buildings finished in distinct handpainted and handcut stones that qualify authentic Tibetan architecture.

On the first floor is the Shangrila Kitchen, a fine dining restaurant set in



A view of the majestic Boudhanath stupa from the terrace restaurant

Irresistibly, one must mention Shangrila Fine Dining, comprising of three beautifully decorated private dining rooms for a more personalized and memorable dining experience.



The imposing exteriors of the Tibet International Hotel

Tibetan ambience, offering Tibetan, Chinese and Continental cuisines. The restaurant is equipped to comfortably accommodate large parties along with its unique Yak Bar on the second floor. Irresistibly, one must mention Shangrila Fine Dining, comprising of three beautifully decorated private dining rooms for a more personalized and memorable dining experience. To complement the hotel experience is the Shambala Spa that offers a range of treatments and more specifically, the best traditional Tibetan massage.

Finally, The Norbulingka Terrace, on the rooftop, serves breakfast amidst a stunning view of the Boudhanath Stupa with the backdrop of the rising sun; a truly breathtaking view!

True to their claim, this hotel offers Nepali hospitality with a touch of Tibetan warmth! ■

# From Park to Café

*“Making a name for your self doesn’t happen overnight.”*

Text By NIMMA ADHIKARI

**D**o we seriously need luck when we have the perfect strategy? Many a time people have blamed their luck for their failure in education, job, business or even life. Maybe we do need some luck but we cannot deny the perfection strategy brings along. Shyam S. L. Kakshapati, the man behind Nanglo chain of restaurants, shares his journey from a counter in a grocery store to the branding of chain restaurants.

The success story of Kakshapati starts from a simple thought about trying to make something out of nothing. His family was involved in the trading of clothing line and expected him to do the same. That’s quite natural, he admits, and shares how he expects the same from his children. He had little

He calls this venture an opportunity since opening of restaurants then had less or no competition at all though it had its own share of challenges.

interest in pursuing skill in the family business though. Just a teenager during the early 1970s, Kakshapati started his own grocery store. “A young businessman with business in his blood,” he remarks.

He soon began to realize that the grocery store was not ‘his cup of tea’. “I wanted to start a business that I loved to do. My favorite pastime was to go to a restaurant, sit down with

friends and have a good time. Unfortunately back in 73, there were limited restaurants in Kathmandu. They were highly priced where a young guy like me could not afford to eat. There were other small joints too where you didn’t feel comfortable to spend quality time with friends; you had to finish eating quickly and then leave.” So came the idea of opening up a place where people could come by and enjoy the food along with their friends and family.

Café de Park was inaugurated in the Ratna Park of the early 70s. He calls

this venture an opportunity since opening of restaurants then had less or no competition at all though it had its own share of challenges. Few years later he opened up a new café in Durbar Marg and named it Nanglo – the Bakery Café. With the naming of the restaurant came along short-lived criticisms. Appreciation came too, for the food they served and the good old music. “It was very difficult to come by good music at that time,” says Kakshapati. He used to request his friends traveling abroad to get him latest records. “Other times, I would spend late evenings in places like the Freak Street; those were the places where tourists used to stay. Thamel wasn’t there then. Some of the tourists needed money and I would ask them to sell good records to me.” He knew that people would come for music if not for food. They came for both and had a good time.

Nanglo now has 14 outlets, two of which are in Butwal and Tansen, and the rest within the valley. Chefs, in the beginning, who were brought from India are all replaced with the local help. Momos, that were served only in the lanes, are now a huge part of the Nepalese food culture, and this was made possible all because of Kakshapati.

So, what’s behind the success story? “Making a name for yourself doesn’t happen overnight, you have to have patience, you have to reassess your plans, make new strategies, and avoid shortcuts,” he says patiently. ■



Nanglo owner and new HAN President Shyam Kakshapati

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## Mike's Breakfast & Indigo Gallery

A lush garden and traditional Rana/ Newar homes are the setting for Mike's Breakfast and the Indigo Gallery, two of Kathmandu's most delightful destinations. Enjoy fine cuisine and soft music in the garden and come up to wander through the gallery, which showcases traditional Newari paintings and brocade art, as well as a diversity of modern exhibitions.

### Mike's Breakfast

Open Daily 7:00 am to 9:00 pm

### Mike's Bar

Open Daily 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Phone: 4411-580 Fax: 4411-724

E-mail: [mikesbreakfast@indigo.com.np](mailto:mikesbreakfast@indigo.com.np)



### Indigo Gallery

Open Daily 9:00 am - 6:00 pm

Phone: 4411-580 Fax: 4411-724

E-mail: [indigo@indigo.com.np](mailto:indigo@indigo.com.np)

In Naxal, close to the Police H.Q.

# 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) or [services@ecs.com.np](mailto:services@ecs.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.

**INTERVIEW FEE:** Rs. 1,500 **PLACEMENT FEE:** Rs. 2,500



## 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. This is a two months course, 5 days a week, one hour a day. **FEE:** Rs. 8,000

## 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. This is a one month course, 5 days a week, one hour a day. **FEE:** Rs. 4,000

## 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)

## FOOD HANDLING & HYGIENE

### 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. Two days course, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. **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. We will also teach them how to keep food and the kitchen hygienically clean. 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. Duration of course: 6 weeks, five days a week and two hours a day. **VENUE:** Maharajgunj **FEE:** Rs. 15,000

## THAI COOKING COURSE

Participants will be able to cook the following items.

1. Fried chicken with satay sauce
2. Baked fish chili sauce
3. Chiang thai noodle soup
4. Bean curd veg curry
5. Cucumber salad

**DATE:** 29th April 2012  
**TIME:** 1.00 pm to 5.00 pm  
**VENUE:** Maharajgunj  
**FEE:** Rs. 1,200



## CHINESE COOKING COURSE

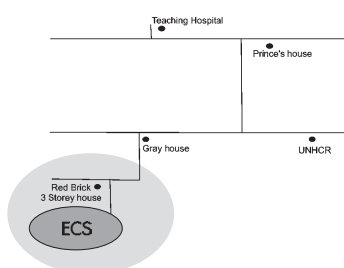
Participants will be able to cook the following items.

1. Honey dijon mustard bake fish
2. Mixed veg fry noodles
3. Sesame chicken salad
4. Green beans with mustard
5. Lemon cake orange glaze

**DATE:** 27th May 2012  
**TIME:** 1.00 pm to 5.00 pm  
**VENUE:** Maharajgunj  
**FEE:** Rs. 1,200

## ECS

Maharajgunj, Kathmandu  
Phone: 442.6439/98510.07.900  
[ecs@infoclub.com.np](mailto:ecs@infoclub.com.np) or  
[services@ecs.com.np](mailto:services@ecs.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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# Restaurant & Bars

## CHINESE CUISINE

### CAFÉ DU TEMPLE

Patan Durbar Square  
Tel: 5527127  
Spaghetti Bolognese Rs.175  
Temple Special Chicken Rs. 225  
Nepali Style Grilled Fish Rs. 250

## ITALIAN RESTAURANT

### OLIVE GARDEN

Radisson Hotel, Lazimpat  
Tel: 441818  
Italian Cuisine  
Gourmet Trout Rs. 800  
Dinner 6:30pm onwards

## FIRE AND ICE

### Pizzeria

Thamel,  
Tel: 4250210

Tel.4260326

Chicken Sandeko  
Salad: Rs 290/-  
Salmon with cream & Wine Sauce: Rs 760/-  
Mediterranean Platter: Rs 580

## CONTINENTAL CUISINE

### TFC

Radisson Hotel  
Lazimpat, Tel: 441818  
Congi Lamb Rs. 600  
Seasame  
Chicken Rs 500  
Fillet Mignon Rs. 550

## CHEZ CAROLINE RESTAURANT

Mediterranean and French food

Chicken steak – Rs.200  
Paneer tikka – Rs.150  
Chicken sashlik – Rs.220  
Lamb steak – Rs.275  
Murg makhani – Rs.250

## COURTYARD RESTAURANT

Kamaladi  
Tel: 4253056  
Roasted Chicken Rs.195  
Chicken Steak Rs.190  
Mix Pizza Rs.220

## RICE & BOWL RESTAURANT

Tripureswar  
Tel: 4251678  
Hakka Prawn Rs.550  
Jambo Prawn Special sauce Rs.950

## THAMEL ECO RESORT

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info@thamelechoresort.com  
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## Tian Rui Chinese Restaurant

Thapathali  
Tel: 4243078  
Crispy fried chicken – Rs.549  
Bong bong chicken – Rs.279  
Spicy corn – Rs.149  
Tofu with black bean sauce – Rs.119  
Cold buff – Rs.239

## THE VENUE RESTAURANT AND BAR

Pani Pokhari  
Tel: 4415722  
Whole Fish: Rs. 510  
Mix Gyako: Rs. 1700  
Prawn Tempura: 540  
Mutton Sticks Rs: 435

## WALTER'S RESTAURANT AND BAR

(Continental Gourmet)  
BabarMahal Revisited  
Tel: 4253337  
Fried Salmon  
With Cumin Rs. 850  
Sea Food  
Platter Rs. 950  
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Cheese Rs. 550

## STATION BBQ

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Pork Chop-450  
Burrito-350  
Spicy whole Fish-700



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**BAKERY CAFÉ NEW BANESHWOR**  
Tel: 4488528  
Chicken sizzler Rs 250  
Chicken mo mo Rs 120  
Taglatella at surgi Rs 190

**BAKERY CAFÉ BOUD-DHA**  
Nepali lunch set Rs 240  
Club sandwich Rs 225  
Bandel tareko / sandeko Rs 205

**BAKERY CAFÉ PULCHOCK**  
Tel: 5010110  
Buffet set lunch Rs 310  
Chicken barbeque Rs 195

C: Mo mo Chicken Rs 130  
Margeritta Pizza Rs 165  
Chicken Burger Rs145  
Grilled fish with rice Rs 250

**BAKERY CAFÉ TINDHARA**  
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Masala dosa Rs 105  
Mutton Mo mo Rs 160

## NEPALI AND NEWARI CUISINE

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Tel: 4412193  
Mix Bara: Rs.90  
Mix Chatamari: Rs.90  
Choyela : Rs.100

## BAITHAK

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BabarMahal  
Tel: 4267346  
Feast Of Rana Maharaja  
Normal Menu Rs. 1040  
Royal Menu Rs. 1430  
Delux Menu Rs. 1595

## UTSAV

Durbarmarg  
Tel: 4430170  
Samay Bajji Rs. 450  
Chicken Bara Rs. 260  
Chicken Chatamari Rs. 310

## CAFÉ & BAKERY

aCube Cafe  
Sanepa, Lalitpur  
9841218773

Safallay- Rs 80  
Newari Khaja Set- Rs 80  
Chicken tandori- Rs 300

## Buzz Café & Bar

Baluwatar  
Tel: 4429903  
Buffalo wings – Rs.220  
Mozzarella sticks – Rs.180

Momo – Rs.160  
BBQ wings – Rs.280  
Quesadilla – Rs.230

## Bu Keba The Organic Village

Bakhundole, Lalitpur  
5524368  
Buck wheat Pan Cake0- Rs 280

## HYATT REGENCY KATHMANDU

Taragaon, Boudha, Tel: 4491234

**ROX RESTAURANT**  
Melting Chocolate: NRs 750  
Smoked Trout & Salmon Culet: NRs 690  
Prawn and Salmon Risotto: NRs 1050  
Skewers: NRs 1150-1450

**THE CAFE**  
Pepper Steak: NRs 800  
Arabic Chicken Shishta-wouk: NRs 800  
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New Baneshwor, Kathmandu, Tel: 01 4780100

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Saturday Brunch: Nrs 1200  
Nasi Goreng: Nrs 650  
Grilled Prawns: Nrs 1200  
Crumb Fried Stuffed Mushrooms: Nrs 375

### Far Pavilion Roof Top Indian Restaurant

Kakori Kabab: Nrs 725  
Chandi Chowk Tikki: Nrs 525  
Gosht Ki Biryani: Nrs 725

### Mandarin Roof Top Chinese Restaurant

Crispy Fried salt & pepper Duck: Nrs 995  
Lobster in Mushroom & wine sauce: Nrs 2150  
Multi Flavoured shredded Chicken: Nrs 625  
Tibetan Gyakok (Veg or Non Veg) (Minimum order for 2 persons): Nrs 1400

### Bugles and Tigers Roof Top Gurkha Bar

Kama Kazi: Nrs 520  
Flatliner: Nrs 595  
Beer (Domestic): Nrs 475

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## THAI CUISINE

### YING YANG RESTAURANT

Thamel, 4701510  
Prawn Tempura-Rs 595  
Chicken Satay- Rs 385

## THIRD EYE RESTAURANT

Thamel, 4260289  
Wrapped Prawn- Rs 595  
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## FRENCH CUISINE

### DELICES DE FRANCE RESTAURANT

Thamel

Baber Mahal Revisited  
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Lamb chop Rs. 1295

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BlueBird Food Court  
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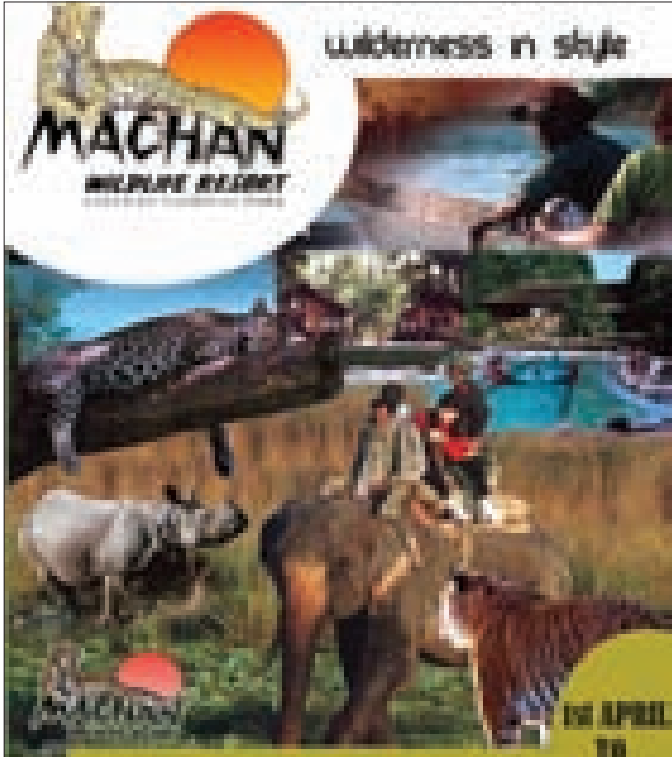


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Newari set – Rs.210  
Rainbow trout – Rs.425  
Thai chicken – Rs.170

**DELICATESSEN CAFÉ**  
Durbar Marg  
Tel: 4221331  
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Chicken sizzler – Rs.430  
Chicken Hawaiian – Rs.305  
Chicken wings – Rs.280  
Combo meal (king size) – Rs.390

**DHOKAIMA CAFE**  
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4442615  
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**CINNAMON GRILL LOUNGE**  
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Tel: 5521339  
Chicken Rag Out Rs. 350  
Grilled Pork Chop Rs. 425  
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Rs. 380  
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aioli Rs 399  
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**MOKSH LIVE RESTAURANT & BAR**  
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Tel: 5528362  
Duck Breast Rs 650  
Rainbow Trout Rs 550

**NAMOBUDHA RESTAURANT**  
Kavre, 9851106802  
shaitan served with garden  
fresh vegetables and deep  
fried kalamari – Rs 900

**PICASSO "ARTISTE DE LA CUISINE"**  
Jawalakhel, 5009076  
BBQ Pork – Rs 650  
Seafood Platter - Rs 800

**THE CORNER BAR**  
Radisson Hotel

Lazimpat Tel: 4411818  
**ZAIKA NEPALI CUISINE**  
Thamel  
Tel: 4700972

Chicken Pizza Rs 270  
Ham and cheese sanswich  
Rs120



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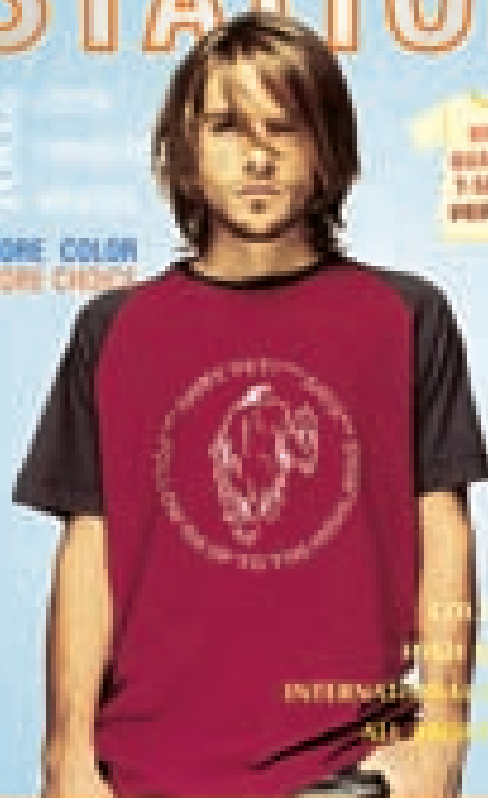
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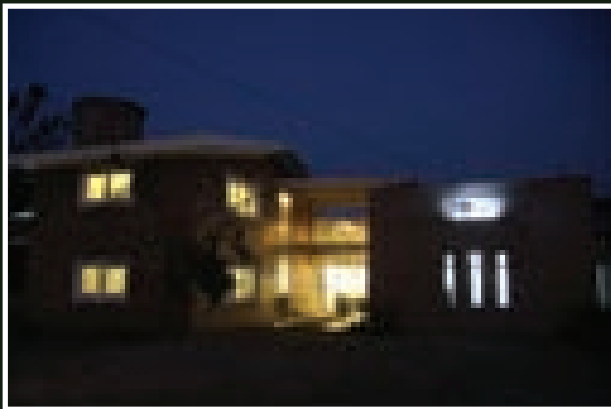
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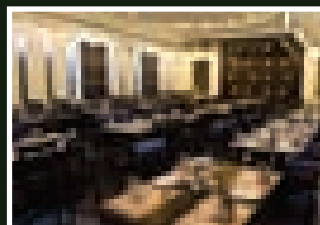


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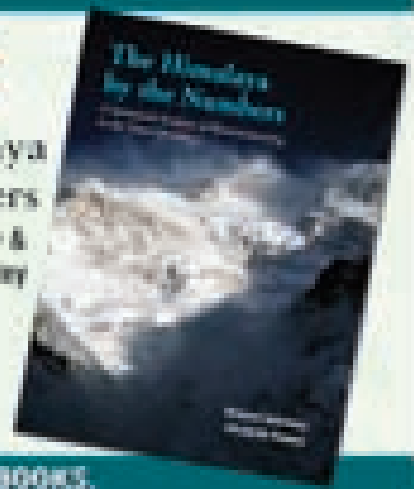
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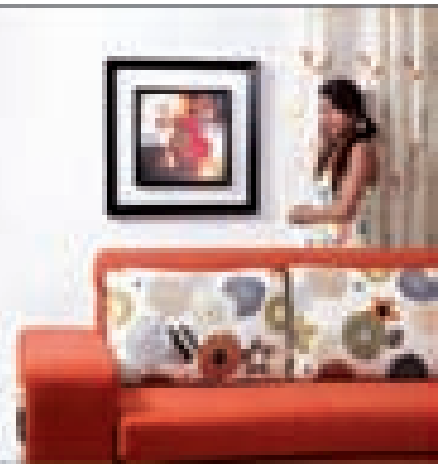
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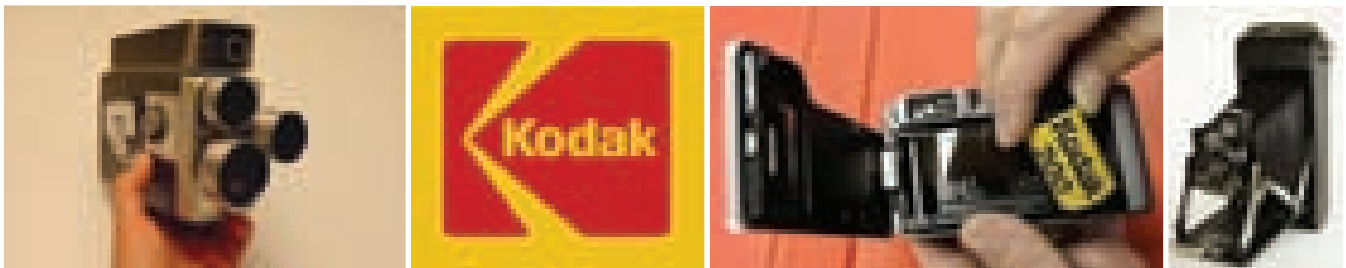
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# A Kodak Moment

Text By DON MESSERSCHMIDT

*Kodak's moment has come and gone.*

*The glory days, when Eastman Kodak Co. ruled the world of film photography, lasted for over a century. Then came a stunning reversal of fortune: cutthroat competition from Japanese firms in the 1980s and a seismic shift to the digital technology it pioneered but couldn't capitalize on. Now comes a wistful worry that this American business icon is edging towards extinction. (Associated Press)*



My first camera was a Kodak Brownie. As a boy in the 1940s, it was my pride and joy. I carried it everywhere and snapped everything, then waited impatiently for the old man at the photo shop to process and print the pictures.

Over the years, I graduated to other cameras. In 1952 I acquired my first 35mm single lens reflex camera, an 'Exa', the cheaper version of the more famous 'Exacta' manufactured by Ihagee Kammerwerk of Dresden Germany.

A little over a decade later, when I first came to Nepal, I carried an advanced 35mm camera with interchangeable lenses, a Yashica SLR (single lens reflex) manufactured in Nagano, Japan. I had my black-&-white photos processed by Ganesh Photo Studio at Bhimsenthana, Kathmandu. Nowadays, I favor digital and I do all the 'processing' necessary on my laptop computer. My Canon Powershot G-11 is good enough to take excellent photographs, small enough to carry in a coat pocket.

Those first Brownie 'snaps' didn't amount to much, but the thrill of capturing an image of something, anything, on film was instilled in me, and has never left. Well..., what I mean to say (looking back) is that although celluloid film is no longer 'in the picture' the thrill of taking pictures and savoring the result is still there. Digital imagery now rules photography, and a huge chunk of memory on my computer.

Historians remember George Eastman, founder of the Kodak company, as the man who put easy photography in the hands of the common person. He sold the first Brownie point-and-shoot camera in 1888 with the slogan "You press the button, we do the rest." The first Brownie cameras sold for \$1 and from then on photography was a hobby available to virtually anybody. Prior to that it was a complicated professional endeavor using cumbersome glass plates.

Just as George Eastman invented film photography with the iconic big red 'K' on a yellow background on all boxes of Kodak film, his company also pioneered digital imagery. Unfortunately, however, the company did not follow through, and by the 1990s Kodak's own image began to fade in the face of stiff competition from Japanese camera companies like Fuji, Canon, Sony and Nikon. In January 2012 the Eastman Kodak Company filed for bankruptcy. It may still survive, but only as a faint reflection of its once famous self. Kodak's new image will apparently be in printer ink and inkjet printers.

#### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Where did 'Kodak' come from. A 1962 article quotes George Eastman as saying that a "trademark should be short" and it should be "vigorous." It should be "incapable of being misspelled to an extent that will destroy its identity." And "it must mean nothing"—all good

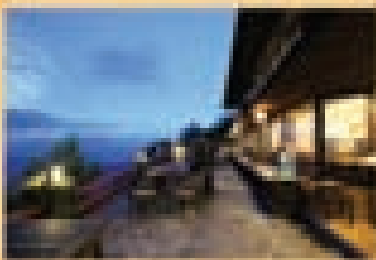
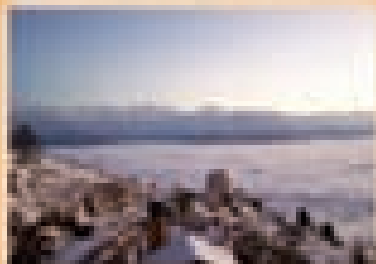
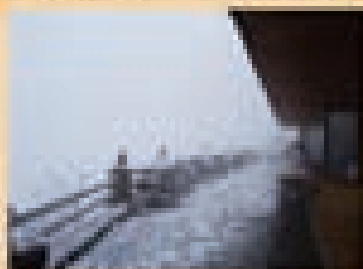


Kodak Brownie Camera popular for well over half a century worldwide after its invention in 1888.

advice to advertisers and (some of it) to writers: Keep it short. Keep it simple. Make it unforgettable. (But, for writers, it must mean *something*, of course.)

The letter 'K', Eastman once said, was his favorite "it seemed a strong, incisive sort of letter." After trying out various combinations he came up with the short, distinctive 'KODAK'. Since then, Kodak "has become a permanent member of advertising's international lingo. No nook of the globe is a stranger to its use." Until now, that is, in the Digital Age.

The quotes from George Eastman and the origins of the brand name 'Kodak' are from 'The story behind Kodak Trademark' in Kiplinger Personal Finance magazine (April 1962). For more Kodak history go to [www.kodak.com](http://www.kodak.com). The writer is a contributing editor to ECS Nepal magazine. He can be contacted at [don.editor@gmail.com](mailto:don.editor@gmail.com).



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# Celebrate Success

Text By ANIL CHITRAKAR

The fact that not a single rhino was poached in the last year is worthy of a national celebration. We have a lot to thank for the rhinos. They were the cornerstone of building diplomatic relationships with Britain through hunting trips for visiting dignitaries. When King George V visited Nepal in December 1911, eighteen rhinos were shot. During the visit by the Prince of Wales in December, 1921, eight rhinos were hunted. Similarly the Rana rulers and later on the Shah kings continued the tradition of hunting rhinos each winter. Prime Minister Juddha Sumsher killed 13 in 1932.

Today the rhino employs many Nepalis in the tourism sector. Whether you sell airline tickets globally or locally, run a hotel or cook in one, whether you sell paintings or photos, or work for a conservation project or agency, we all need to be thankful to the rhino. Nepal rhino population represents one of three Asiatic species and is known as the Greater One-horned Rhino. Officials in the parks department tell us that there are close to 600 rhinos in Nepal now and

is growing in population. This is good news for everyone involved in protecting them and need to be thanked.

A century ago, rhinos and their habitat were “protected” so that the rich and powerful could hunt them and collect trophies. Today they are protected because they are a key part of the ecosystem and they are a great contributor to the local and national economy. Naturally a time could come when we have “too many” of these great animals for the area of our parks. Efforts are hence already underway to facilitate regional cooperation in wildlife management in the region beyond Nepal. It would be nice if countries in Asia whose economies are doing really well could invest in re-populating areas from where they have become extinct.

Till the 1950s rhinos were safe, thanks to the six-legged mosquitoes and malaria in many parts of the Terai. After malaria eradication campaigns, huge numbers of hill people moved down to the plains and began to compete with the rhino for land. The two-legged man seemed to have almost failed to save the rhino till

the Chitwan National Park was created in 1972 to save the last sixty rhinos. A tenfold increase in population is a great success and worthy of celebrations. The tourism sector needs to organize a civic reception for the conservation community to show gratitude.

As politicians raise their rhetoric about federal boundaries, the rhinos and their habitat need to come under a single jurisdiction. We cannot allow them to do anything to lose the successes in wildlife management achieved over the past 40 years. We must also help spread the word in the regions of the world that have markets for wildlife body parts that they will be better off buying Viagra. We must make an effort to get rich people in the region to love wildlife in the wild rather than seeking their body parts. This new aspiration to be in nature will be our ultimate success to save the rhino from extinction. Let us also make sure we do not entertain any proposal to put these magnificent animals in captivity and breed them as domestic livestock. Let us celebrate success and commit ourselves to do more. ■



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