

हाम्रो पत्रिका

HAMRO PATRIKA VAR AVIS  
ORGAN FOR NORGE-NEPAL-FORENINGEN

APRIL 1992



Vi gjenntar den velsmakende suksessen fra i fjor....

MEDLEMSMØTE MED DAL-BHAT  
KULTUR, HØYTFLYVENDE EVENTYR,  
INFORMASJON OG SOSIALT SAMVÆR....

4.MAI kl. 1900 LEKTORENE'S HUS. Werqelandsveien 15

Se siste side ...



## HER MASTER'S VOICE, ELLER NYTT FRA STYRET

Tibetanske flyktninger er ikke lenger trygde i Nepal. Ved flere anledninger har nepalesisk politi utlovert tibetanere til kinesiske myndigheter, selv om dette er imot internasjonale avtaler.

Antallet politiske fanger i Tibet stiger stadig, mange er fengslet for å ha deltatt i fredelige demonstrasjoner. Tortur er vanlig i fengslene. Kina benekter imidlertid brudd på menneskerettighetene i Tibet. En rapport fra Den norske Tibetkomite i dette nummer av HP gir et grelt bilde av situasjonen.

Styret i Norge-Nepal-Foreningen har vedtatt å sende et brev til den nepalesiske ambassaden i London, der vi gir uttrykk for vår bekymring over denne situasjonen. Nepal har ristet av seg føydalstyret og tatt mål av seg til å få et demokratisk styresett. Da burde respekt for internasjonale konvensjoner som beskytter flyktninger være en selvfølge.

Styret har også bestemt seg for å legge forholdene til rette for mer aktive medlemsmøter. Vi vil ta opp aktuelle tema, og bruke Hamro Patrika til å presentere forskjellige sider av tema før møtet, slik at dere vil få anledning til å sette dere inn i stoffet på forhånd. Møtene vil ofte bli lagt opp som debatt-møter med to innledere og med spørsmål og innlegg fra dere.

I fjor hadde NNF et møte hvor norske bistands-organisasjoner som arbeider i Nepal ble invitert til å presentere seg og sine prosjekter. Dette ble svært godt mottatt av medlemmene såvel som av organisasjonene, og de fleste var forbauset over hvor mange aspekter det norske Nepal-engasjementet har!

Styret har vedtatt å ha et slikt årlig Nepal-forum, fortrinnsvis på det første høst-møtet. Videre vil vi invitere de forskjellige organisasjonene til å lage en kort presentasjon av seg selv og sine prosjekter i HP.

NNF fikk i mars en hyggelig henvendelse fra Hybris Film, som skal lage en film om hvordan turismen påvirker Sherpa-kulturen. Initiativ-takerne lurte på om noen av oss i styret ville diskutere ideene med dem, og gi dem reaksjoner og forslag. Det gjorde vi, og syntes det var en fin og spennende måte å få brukt noe av den varierte erfaringen vi sitter inne med. Vi gleder oss til å se resultatet av filmingen!

Den 4. mai feirer vi (noe forsinket) toårs-dagen for revolusjonen i Nepal. Det blir dal-bhat med noko attåt!

Ane Haaland



What's this queue for ? For sugar or kerosene ?

For Upper House tickets...



[ Vimarsha (Weekly), June 7, 1991 ]

## Mot en het politisk sommer

Temperaturen stiger i Nepal. I går ble det målt over 35 grader i Pokhara, og lufta er tørr. I åsene hvirvler vinden opp sand og jord fra de tørre terrassene, og i byene er det vanskelig å puste i de støvete gatene.

### Mot en het politisk sommer

Politiske er Nepal også på vei inn i en het sommer. Regjeringspartiet Nepali Congress møter stadig sterkere angrep fra opposisjonspartiet Nepal Communist Party (UML) i parlamentet. Også utenfor nasjonalforsamlingen

Reiserapport  
fra Vibeke  
Kathmandu,  
2. april 1992.

diskuteres og demonstreres det; i pressen og i gatene blir regjeringen og statsminister G.P.Koirala angrepet for ikke å holde sine løfter, for å vise unnfalighet og manglende evne til å bringe Nepal videre på veien til velstand og menneskerettigheter for alle.



### Utenrikspolitisk balansegang

Forholdet til Nepals store, mektige naboer i sør og nord er fortsatt det som opptar nepaleserne mest i utenrikspolitikken.

Statsminister Koirala fortsetter balansegangen med besøk både i India og i mars måned til Kina. Han blir kritisert for ikke å ha tatt opp menneskerettighetsspørsmålet i Tibet med Li Peng, men snarere å ha bekreftet at Tibet er en del av Kina. En generell felleserklæring om betydningen av

menneskerettigheter var det nærmeste de to satsministrene Li Peng og Koirala kom i Tibet-spørsmålet.

Besøket i India tidligere har medført politisk uro i fordi Koirala uten lovfestet samtykke fra parlamentet har "solgt" Nepals vannressurser og landområder i forbindelse med reguleringen av elva Mahakali. Kongresspartiet viser en sterk pro-indisk holdning og unnfalighet overfor Kina, mener opposisjonen. Dessuten har den godtatt Verdensbankens krav til økte avgifter og reduserte subsidier. For den jevne nepaleser betyr dette heller større vanskeligheter enn økt velstand. I byene viser opposisjonen sin misnøye ved bl.a. å demonstrere mot økte strømpriser utenfor Nepals elektrisitetsverk.

### Innenrikspolitisk mobilisering

På landsbygda går likevel livet sin vante gang, selv om økte priser merkes her også. Det store samtaleemnet er det kommende lokalvalget.

Loven om lokale valg er gått igjennom i parlamentet, og venter nå på sanksjon av Kong Birendra. Ingen tror kongen vil motsette seg noe lovforslag, han har mistet sin makt og følger kongresspartiet - noen mener i altfor stor grad.

Lokalvalgene må finne sted før monsunen begynner,

ellers blir det umulig både å drive valgkamp og å gjennomføre valgene i distriktene. Tidligere panchayat-tilhengere tror ikke folk på landsbygda vil stemme annerledes enn før, dvs. de vil støtte enkeltpersoner som tidligere har ledet landkommunene. Kongress- og kommunisttilhengerne tror derimot at folk er blitt politisk bevisste etter folkets revolusjon og demokratiseringsprosessen. Opposisjonen initierer i disse dagene en "oppvåkningskampanje" med store folkemøter. Etter planene skal valget gjennomføres i april/mai, og det er derfor ikke lang tid til å få mobilisert massene på.

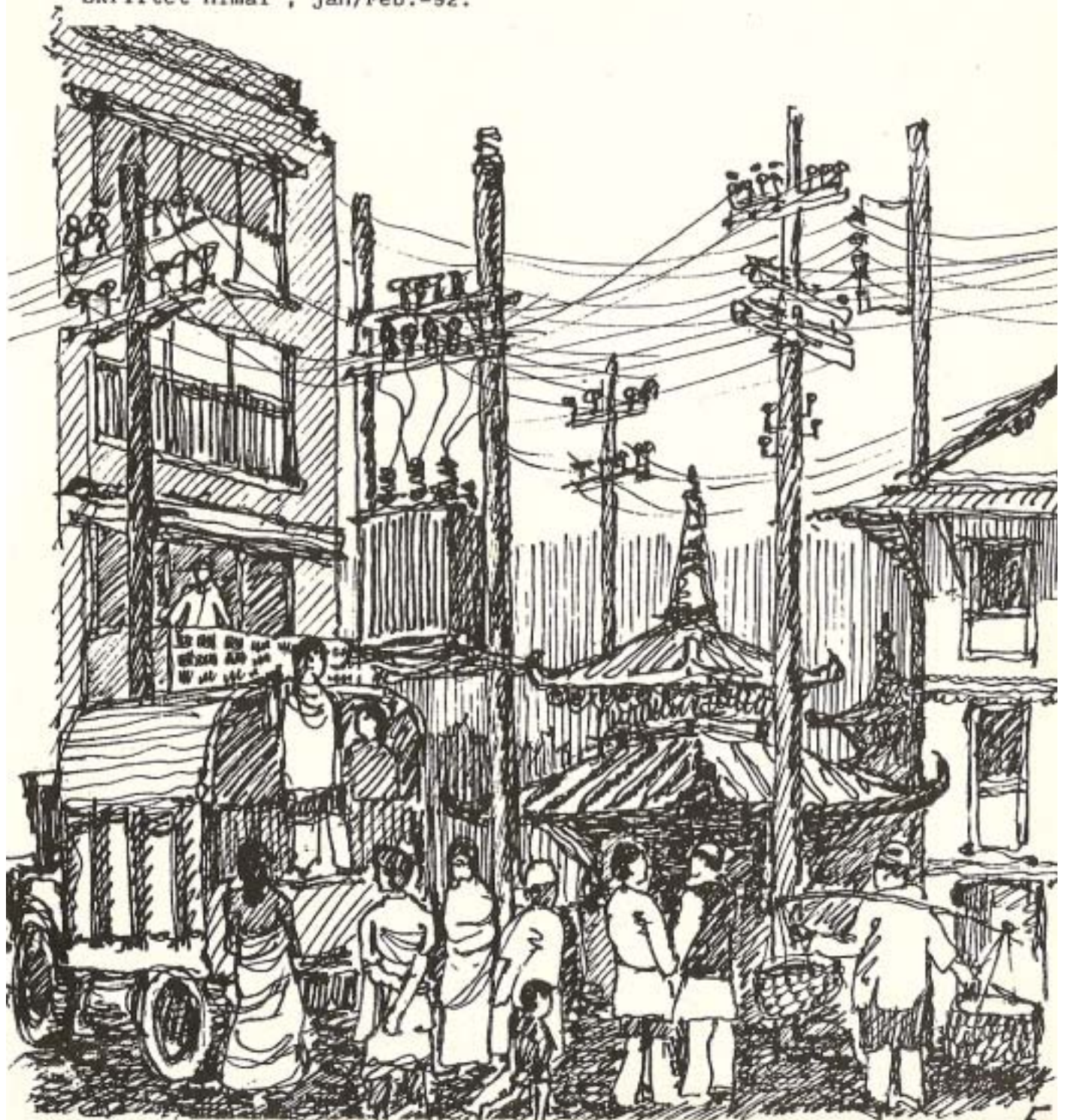
### Jubileum og streik

Venstresidens felles aksjonskomité lanserer nå 6. april som "Folkets Revolusjonsdag". I forbindelse med årets 2-årsjubileum oppfordrer de alle til generalstreik denne dagen. I tillegg til en mengde krav til Koiralas 10 måneder gamle demokratisk valgte regjering, ber de alle som arbeider i transport, handel, fabrikker og undervisning til å vise sin misnøye med landets styre. Det gjenstår å se hvor stor oppslutning streiken får. I alle tilfelle går Nepal inn i en varm politisk sommer i møte.



# Kathmandu

Gjennom flere hundre år, fra Kirati-tiden og fram til Malla-dynastiet brøt sammen på slutten av 1700-tallet, utviklet byene i Kathmandudalen en rik religiøs-kulturell urbanisme som historisk sett var ganske enestående. Arven fra denne epoken har preget dalen helt fram til vår egen tid, men i løpet av de siste 40 årene er svært mye blitt ødelagt. Kathmandu er nå inne i en utvikling som kjennes så altfor godt fra andre storbyer i den 3. verden. Til å illustrere problemene har vi valgt å sakse noen artikler fra det utmerkede tidskriftet Himal , jan/feb.-92.







Patan Durbar Square

KEVIN SUBRSKI

## No Future for an Urban Past

*Through the reigns of the Kirats, the Lichhavis and finally the Mallas, the Valley's towns developed and maintained a "religio-cultural urbanism" that was unique. Sadly, the last forty years have been enough to destroy much of the cultural fabric of these settlements.*

by Sudarshan Raj Tiwari

Dense settlements began to emerge in Kathmandu Valley at least 1500 years ago. But first, there were the Kirats, who inhabited and ruled Kathmandu Valley in the latter half of the first millennium BC. Although nothing definite can be said about the settlements established by the Kirats, it can be surmised from place-names that their settlements were mostly located at the foothills of the Valley rim and on the ridge spurs extending inward. The Kirat places of worship were located on hilltops, which today remain active as Hindu or Buddhist *piras* ("power places") such as Phulchoki, Nagarjun, Changu and Bishankhu.

Around the 2nd century AD, towards the end of the Kirat period and by the early Lichhavi period, small town-like settlements began to emerge on high ground on the Valley floor. Using the Lichhavi names, they were towns like Khopring (now Bhaktapur), Lembaui (Lele), Bungayumi (Bungamati), Thencho (Dahachok) and Mathang (possibly today's Bansbari). Along with these settlements, new *piras* took root, like the Adinath of Chobar, Bungmalokteswor of Bungamati and Saraswati of Lele.

By the middle of the Lichhavi period, about the 7th century AD, many temple towns had developed within the Valley, which may have varied in size and importance with the capital towns of Maneswor, Sankasya, Gokarna and Deupatan, which were themselves expanding. These towns usually developed on ridges adjacent to rivers, on land that was not agriculturally productive. The cultural nucleus was provided by the ruling temple or *piri*, and the economic base was intensive farming and expanding trade with each other and with states to the north and south of the Valley.

Strategic considerations probably account for the periodic shifting of settlements within the Valley, and the growth of towns like Gokarna, Deupatan, Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Lele, Kisipidi and Naxal. The changes in the ruling houses during the Kirat and Lichhavi times might have been another reason for the dispersal. During the late-Lichhavi and early-Malla periods (8th to 12th century) the temple towns also doubled as tax collectives and as defence units away from the capital towns, further polarising settlements around them.

The smaller Lichhavi settlements developed into the Malla towns. These small towns, energised by abundant agriculture and trade, developed into the accomplished Malla period settlements whose ambience is so decisively present even today. Imbued with a strong sense of religio-cultural urbanism, these towns saw continuous development over the next 600 years, until the 18th century.

From about the beginning of the Malla period, we are able to get some indication of town size and population. Just prior to the Mallas' dominance, Kathmandu town had grown to about 1,800 houses. This "Kathmandu" most likely referred to a settlement between Pashupati and Naxal, and not, as many historians tend to believe, the current Basantpur-centric Kathmandu.

In the 13th century, Ananda Malla expanded the town of Bhaktapur to about 12,000 houses, while the nearby Banepa, Panauti, Nala and other settlements on the eastern reaches of the Valley had about 700 houses each. By the year 1655, Patan had 24,000 houses.

Meanwhile, the Lichhavi villages producing specific agricultural produce or labour services



were developing under the Mallas as specialised satellite towns, one focusing on oil pressing, another on pottery-making, and so on. These specialised towns served either a particular city-state, or the whole Valley.

Even in the early Malla period, efforts were made to restrict the growth of the capital towns, such as when satellite settlements like Kirtipur were laid out. Kirtipur's *tole* (ward) names were derived from those of *toles* in the parent city, which was Patan. At least 11 such place-names which have their origins in Patan survive to this day in Kirtipur.

### A DEVELOPING MOSAIC

The pre-1950 urban form of the Kathmandu Valley towns was thus a result of cultural accretion over two millennia, made possible by a unique cultural continuity and the overwhelming dominance of religious strictures which directed the lives of the urban inhabitants. The physical space was philosophically defined through the Vastupurusha Mandala, a unified design principle in the shape of a square diagram. The principle extended doctrinal control over the physical activity of building houses, palaces, villages and towns. The Mandala dictated specific locations and 'directionality' of temples and deities in the Valley settlements, with specific boundary deities and cremation grounds serving as the outer markers.

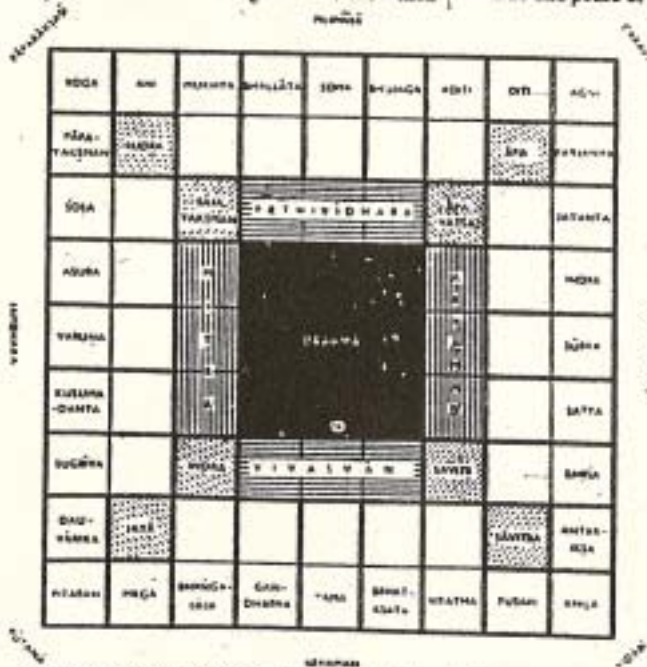
Towns which were expanding could not ignore the location of the boundary gods and *piths* as they shifted outwards. Often, a growing town would create new series of cultural sites at its expanding perimeter. This process of expansion around the original nucleus, which

could have been a palace, a major temple or a tax collectorate, placed politico-religious nobility at the center, circled by markets with middle-class housing. These were in turn surrounded by lower-class housing interspersed with religious sites which served as perimeter markers. The whole of this was enveloped by agricultural land.

These distinct sectors of the Valley towns were sprinkled with various religious sites and temples, which became the polarising centers for the neighbourhood population. These nodes, distanced by time and space, were controlled by an ordered framework in which godly movement remained as conceptually meaningful as the response of the expanding town to the welfare and peace of the living being. With the



Rice dries in Harisiddhi town. UNITED NATIONS



VASTUPURUSA MANDALA (Source: The Hindu Temple - Stella Kramrich)

### RESILIENCE

The Valley towns' culture, demographics and character proved resilient to the historical vicissitudes following the eclipse of the Mallas. For example, Prithvi Narayan's takeover of the Valley in 1769 left them largely intact. Neither did the various other political and cultural changes that took place in the Valley before 1845, when Jung Bahadur took power, appear to cause adverse impact on the character of urban settlements. Among the significant changes were the increasing Parabatey population, the rise of non-Newar nobility, the infusion of ethnic groups with no urban history, the lack of community-based life-style of the non-Newar population, and so on.

The Rana rule brought significant psychological distress into the urban fabric by introducing Victorian palaces and their underlying concept — the occupation of large chunks of agricultural land outside the old boundaries of urban Kathmandu and Lalitpur. For the common people and craftsmen, the temples and the durbar squares lost some of their importance. The new points of reference for many became the Victorian palaces with their





decor, materials and technology. The marvels of traditional culture were psychologically in eclipse.

However, the occupation of lands by the Ranas could be seen as a boon in disguise: the urbanism of the Valley towns remained unaffected because the Ranas built their fantasy estates outside the settlement boundaries. For better or worse, the Rana enclaves also served as physical barriers to expansion. The deliberate Rana policy of restricting migration into the Valley ("Nepal Khaiko") also helped maintain the physical and cultural integrity of the settlements.

### CULTURAL DEATH MARCH

The changes since the collapse of the Rana regime in 1950 have been so powerful that four decades have been enough to culturally destroy the Valley urbanism developed and maintained over 15 centuries.

The nature, scale and speed of urban expansion since the 1950s have been marked by accelerating breakdown of the religio-cultural framework of the Valley towns. The fast and culturally incongruous physical expansion of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur has brought severe stress both inside the towns (*Duney*, as Newari speakers will know) and outside (*Piney*).

*Duney*, there has been cultural and physical destruction of the city nodes such as the durbar squares, market squares and other chowks,

essentially reducing the religious landmarks into building artefacts bereft of cultural meaning, surrounded by incongruous development. The characteristic main streets and their cultural hubs are on a death march.

The *Piney* stresses are more visible, particularly to the non-Newar outsider. The expansion of settlements beyond the cultural and religious boundaries into historically protected agricultural and natural areas has engulfed the *pihr*; even funeral areas have forcibly been brought into the urban domain. The power places of Matidevi, Tunandevi, Kankeswari and Sovabhabani have all been reduced to "in-town" features, without a planned outward

placement of new *pihr*. The cremation ghats and Kumaria, perimeter deities, no longer serve a boundary function.

Only the location of the monuments and the *pihr* are intact; their religio-cultural domain has been much reduced, physically and otherwise. Their potency and meaning are on the verge of being erased forever. Additionally, today's urban development is engulfing unstudied archaeological and historical sites. Careful study of un-built areas might have led to the discovery of Lichhavi and early Malla sites, but today's urban march makes them forever inaccessible.

The loss is not only one of physical space. The cultural festivals which link the urban settlements are more and more difficult to enact because the ordained sites are out of reach. For



A Kathmandu *dyochhe*.

example, the *javra* of Matidevi can no longer travel up to Kankeswari because the responsible Guthi household was pushed off. The Mahalaksmi *Ahar* can no longer be pulled up to Kiladol because the site has been erased, it is said, because public lands have been encroached upon. The Bhagabati of Naxal can no longer make her *javra* rounds to Basantapur and Batsala.

There are numerous other instances of such profound cultural losses occurring due to the physical destruction or change in the environment of religious sites. The recent legal provision allowing conversion of *guthi* (religious) lands to *raikar* land (paying rent to government) has further speeded up the process of destruction.

### URBAN FUTURE

Unfortunately, many cultural, religious and historical sites, and the meaning they hold, have already been obliterated and it is too late to resurrect them. However, potent sites still remain, and they can be protected from conversion into cultural deserts.

It is important to understand that the problem of the changing urban landscape is not only one of the Newars losing cultural sites related to their past. Though it is true that major aspects of the cultural development of Kathmandu Valley owe their origins to the Newars and their ethnic predecessors, the Valley's legacy has a multi-ethnic substance. This makes cultural preservation of the Valley important to all communities.

The future of the Valley's urban milieu would indeed be culturally barren in the absence of the legacy of its cultural and religious past. The assimilation of in-migrants into the cultural milieu of the Valley towns is still possible, since the religious mix of the migrants is similar to the religious mix of the population in the hey-day of these towns.

Though the Kathmandu scene may be physically beyond repair, Patan and Bhaktapur still remain well within the possibility of a planned urban expansion in which there is limited urban conservation as well as sufficient infusion of cultural nodes to serve as polarization centers. A realistic cultural conservation strategy combined with good urban sense can give our urban planners a hopeful approach towards evolving a future urban space which will demonstrate and justify continuity with our brilliant past. The ultra-conservationists and ultra-modernists should both take to the sidelines if we are to try for a healthy response to the malaise of the past four decades.

May the gods remain undisturbed in their power places and may the Valley inhabitants derive urban peace from the continuing potency of their deities!

S.R. Tiwari, an architect, is a reader at Tribhuvan University and Dean of the Institute of Engineering.



# Little Water, Dirty Water

*While the Kathmandu cognoscenti continues to dream of Nepal's hydro-power potential, the subject of water supply receives short shrift.*

*Because enormous amounts are being spent on the Valley's drinking water supply and because the Melamchi Project proposes to become a reality, debate must begin on water, the lack of which, more than any other natural resource, will set limits to the Valley's growth.*

by Ajaya Dixit

Planners were perturbed enough when Kathmandu Valley's population growth rate was thought to be 4.8 per cent a year. Recently released data shows that the figure is more than 5 per cent. This means that every year, about 23,000 new residents make demands on the Valley's services and extremely limited resource base. Both land and water are limited in Kathmandu Valley, but it seems likely that we will run out of water before we run out of land.

The limits to Kathmandu's growth in terms of the availability of drinking water were set millions of years ago by evolving Himalayan geology. Kathmandu is a "hanging valley" far above the snow-fed abundance of the Indrawati and Trisuli rivers on the east and west, which flow 750 m and 1,000 m below the Valley floor. The Valley's own Bagmati River and its tributaries rise in the surrounding hills and are spring-fed.

If the Valley's rivers provide but a trickle, the amount of money that has been pumped into its water supply system may be likened to a flood. And it is not for want of spending that Kathmandu's water supply remains poor and erratic. The Nepal Water Supply Corporation

(NWSC) is well into its fourth credit package from the International Development Association (IDA), the World Bank affiliate that provides soft loans to developing countries. A total of NRs 1 billion has been digested since IDA first opened its purse strings, and the most recently sanctioned loan is for "network rehabilitation" and is worth US\$ 60 million. Due to extraordinary ineptness in their implementation, none of the earlier loan programmes met their targets.

It was not always so, says Rabindra Man Shrestha, an engineer who was with the Corporation in the early 1970s, before the IDA largesse was showered on the NWSC. "We did not have much money then, and the approach was hands-on, and the goal was to improve water quality. Every visible leak used to be checked and repaired, and we learnt a lot about the water supply." It is Shrestha's view, shared by many other engineers and managers, that the Corporation allowed its own institutional experience to lapse when the big money arrived.

The first IDA credit package was sanctioned in 1974, the second in 1977, and the third in the early 1980s. Programmes meant to install a functional water distribution system in the capital

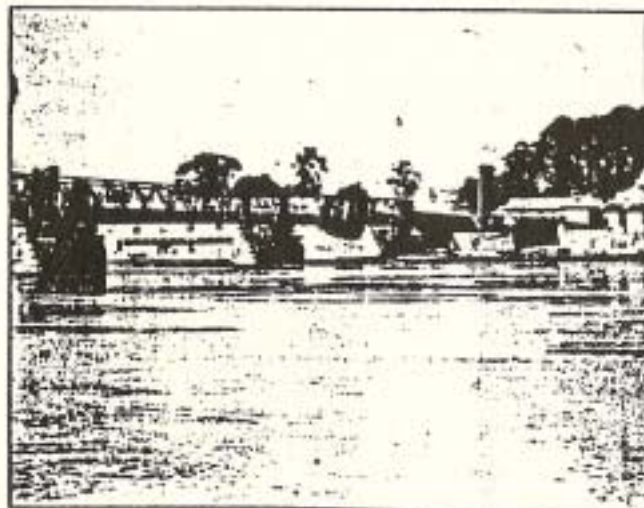
city became unsustainable exercises marked by negligence and the dominance of big money. To take just one example, out of the 34 tube wells planned to be installed by the end of the third project in 1985, while how many were actually sunk could not be ascertained, only eight are operational today.

## WATER QUALITY AND WASTE

There are physical limitations to what the Corporation can do in trying to provide potable water; it has only two treatment plants, one at Sundarjal and the other at Maharajanj, while water is collected from a variety of physically separate sources. The problem is compounded by the leaking sewers laid along the water mains. To improve the quality, NWSC relies on simple chlorination, using both bleaching powder and gaseous chlorine at selected points, but this has limited use in treating Kathmandu water. Says microbiologist Achyut P. Sharma, "In the presence of high organic contaminants in the water, the microbial activity of these compounds is lowered by almost 80 per cent." The bleaching powder used to disinfect the water is often so adulterated that the low chlorine content is not enough for purification.

In many areas, residents would be happy just to receive water in their taps, whether clean or dirty. Illegal connections and leaky old pipes account for as much as 70 per cent of water loss from some neighbourhood taps, according to a 1988 report by an Austrian consultancy firm. The Corporation, when pressed, will maintain that leakage is only 40 per cent, but the figure is highly suspect. Binnie and Partners, UK consultants who have been associated with Nepali water for 16 years, recently reported leakage at about 65 per cent.

Besides being diverted illegally for household purposes, Kathmandu's "treated



Half a century apart: the old Bagmati bridge at Thapathali circa 1940, and the view today. A diversion has been made due to collapse of the 1970 Bagmati bridge in September 1991. The old bridge still stands.



water" is also used for non-consumptive uses such as washing wool and carpets, and even to irrigate fields. One of the goals of the recently sanctioned IDA loan is to rehabilitate the urban water network by the year 2000 and to ensure that leakage is brought down to 35 per cent.

The IDA is not the Corporation's only benefactor. The governments of Norway and Austria have agreed to provide grants and "commodity assistance" in the form of pipes and fittings. In addition, the Japanese are set to augment the surface water supplies and to improve quality. Given the Corporation's past record, it is not clear whether this infusion of foreign aid will be well utilised.

#### ASK THE USER

The water supply programmes as a whole have failed because the intended beneficiaries were never consulted. Decisions have all been made in Government board rooms. As the Government's 1991 Drinking Water Sector Review and Development Plan states, "Sustainable improvements are seldom achieved through a top-down approach where governments or project teams plan and implement projects and beneficiaries have no role in planning, construction or financing."

Proper management of the drinking water supply must involve the users, but as yet there is no procedure to ensure this involvement. The Corporation Board consists exclusively of Government bureaucrats. A beginning could be made by including in the Board, representatives of the city council, the chambers of commerce, hotel, management and medical associations, as well as consumer activists. As things stand, there is little public confidence in the Corporation and even less willingness to believe its assertions that things will turn rosy after 2000.

To make life a little harder for the Corporation, Bai Bahadur Rai, the new Minister for Housing and Physical Planning asked it to present a concrete plan for supply improvement by early 1992. However, an effective plan for the supply improvement is unlikely within such short deadline since the NWSC management does not even have a mandate to exercise its legal authority.

The Water Supply Corporation Act of 2046 empowers the NWSC to prosecute illegal connections in municipalities within its jurisdiction, but it still does not have the legislative wherewithal to do so. Even the rights to some water sources have not been secured by the Corporation and conflicts with local farmers continue. One senior Corporation official laments, "We spend the day plugging the holes in the transmission, at night they are all broken."

Certainly, no amount of foreign credit and grants is going to change the fact that the problem of Kathmandu's water supply is essentially managerial and political. The

Corporation's habit of hiring foreign experts for every task under the advice of doozes will lead it further up the wrong creek. Expatriate consultants are best used in technical areas where they have expertise that the Nepalis lack.

In order to improve water supply, the Corporation must: a) strengthen operation and maintenance capability through better supervision, b) enhance revenue collection and proper cash accounting, and c) institute administrative reforms. An effective management must be developed to meticulously monitor the proposed US \$ 60 million rehabilitation programme.

Unfortunately, the tendency of the Corporation and its advisors has been to shirk basic groundwork in favour of pompous promises of high-visibility water-treatment plants and other grandiose quick-fixes — such as the gigantic Melamchi Project, which holds the Corporation in thrall. No one in the Corporation is asking crucial questions, such as whether entire Nepali population should be made to pay for the privilege of supplying Kathmandu's urban residents with snow-fed water. That, in essence, is what would happen if Nepal decides to go in for the US \$ 400

million Melamchi, which would be paid not out of Kathmandu Valley's metropolitan budget but from the national treasury. Incidentally, Melamchi would take away one-fourth of the investment costs which would be required to extend water supply facilities to the rest of the country.

"Kathmandu needs water, but not to be turned into a major industrial city," says Suresh Raj Chalisey, a Nepali environmental scientist. Kathmandu does not need to be deluged with water, from remote Melamchi or anywhere else. Instead, it would suffice if the Valley learned to conserve its own resources. It does not make sense to bring a gigantic project to "flush" the Bagmati — a claim that is actually made for Melamchi — when proper waste management would be more effective. Similarly, savings made by plugging leakage and ending water theft could bring significant improvement.

In the end, should Kathmandu be pampered with expensive showcase water projects and programmes when it has not even seriously tried to save and conserve what it has?  $\Delta$

A Dixit is a water engineer who edits the journal *Water Nepal*.





# SPEAKING FOR SHIVAPURI'S RIM-DWELLERS

*Efforts to ensure Kathmandu town's water supply by cordoning off the Shivapuri watershed area has led to injustice. The urban population needs water, and the Shivapuri residents need a livelihood.*

by Katharine N. Rankin and Mona Shrestha Joshi

The inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley rim are caught in a frustratingly inequitable tangle. While the urban settlements within the Valley freely exploit the surrounding forests for fuel, water, fodder and recreation, the rural population has little or no access to urban amenities. The rim-dwellers look to their urban neighbours as models of modernity and progress. Yet their own villages, falling within the primarily urban district of Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur, escape the attention of national and international development agencies seeking to alleviate the plight of the rural poor.

In the Shivapuri ridge north of Kathmandu town, the problem is even more acute. This is the catchment area for the Bagmati River, which provides much of Kathmandu's drinking water. In order to protect the watershed from rapid degradation, the Nepali Government initiated the Shivapuri Watershed and Wildlife Reserve Project (SWWRP) in 1972. The Project prohibited the use of forest resources, introducing a severe shock to local family farms. Later efforts by a United Nations agency, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), to provide income opportunities and alternative fuel and fodder have been unsuccessful.

Shivapuri's forest remains in control of the distant Government project today, managed for the benefit of the city. Obviously, Kathmandu needs a reliable water supply, and it is reasonable that the water come from the surrounding mountain areas. But as the urban centers draw from the resources of the Valley rim, should not local people also get a share of the benefits for the controls they relinquish? Moreover, can efforts to manage rim areas succeed without the commitment of the local people?

## "SWWRP"

According to a Project brochure, early objectives of SWWRP were to control land degradation, ensure a reliable supply of water to Kathmandu and the local population, and protect the natural environment of Shivapuri. The area had become severely deforested due to local use of resources and, more importantly, substantial sales of fuelwood for consumption in the city. Deforestation resulted in erosion and dwindling water flows. To control these processes, the project adopted its policy of demarcating the forest boundary and preventing further use of resources therein.

The Project first constructed a 111 km boundary wall and a jeepable road around a 112 sq km protected area, made up of the main ridge of Shivapuri around the distinctive dome summit. Hunting, grazing livestock, and collecting fuelwood and fodder were prohibited. To enforce its decisions, the Project posted army guards around the perimeter of the protected area and developed a system of penalties for those who violated the Project rules. Since 1983, the SWWRP has sought to minimise human impact by evicting families from all but the two largest settlements that fall within the boundary wall. Evicted residents were compensated for the value of their lands and homes at a rate set by the Project, minus the value of house timbers, which they were permitted to carry away.

After ten years of neglecting the needs of the Shivapuri area residents, the Government sought assistance from FAO to develop alternative sources of fuel, fodder and livelihood for them. With funding from the Norwegian Trust Fund, FAO in 1985 initiated an extension programme to involve the local people in plantation, conservation and income generation. The extension programme addresses both villages that remain inside the protected area and villages in a 32 sq km buffer zone outside the wall. The

question is whether these laudable policies can be translated into increased opportunities for the villagers of Shivapuri.

## LIFE ON THE EDGE

Mulkharka is one of the two remaining villages inside the Shivapuri boundary wall. It is an hour's walk up the ridge from the roadhead at Sundarijal, where the Bagmati river descends to the Valley floor through a series of cataracts.

The residents of Mulkharka raise livestock and grow corn and millet on un-irrigated highland fields, although there are also several stores and a trekking lodge. Since they consume more than they can produce, most families depend on the wage labour of at least one member to tide over the food deficit months. There is no electricity and no health post. There is a small school for grades one through four and children now walk down to Sundarijal for further schooling. Only four Mulkharka residents have thus far passed the Government's School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination.

While Mulkharka falls within Kathmandu District, a two-hour climb up to the ridge and down the other side brings one into Sindhupalchowk, known as one of the most under-developed districts in central Nepal. As a result, Sindhupalchowk has many non-governmental organisations involved in its forestry, agriculture, education and family planning. On the Kathmandu side of the ridge, however, Mulkharka has received almost no development aid despite many pleas. The irony is not lost on the villagers here.

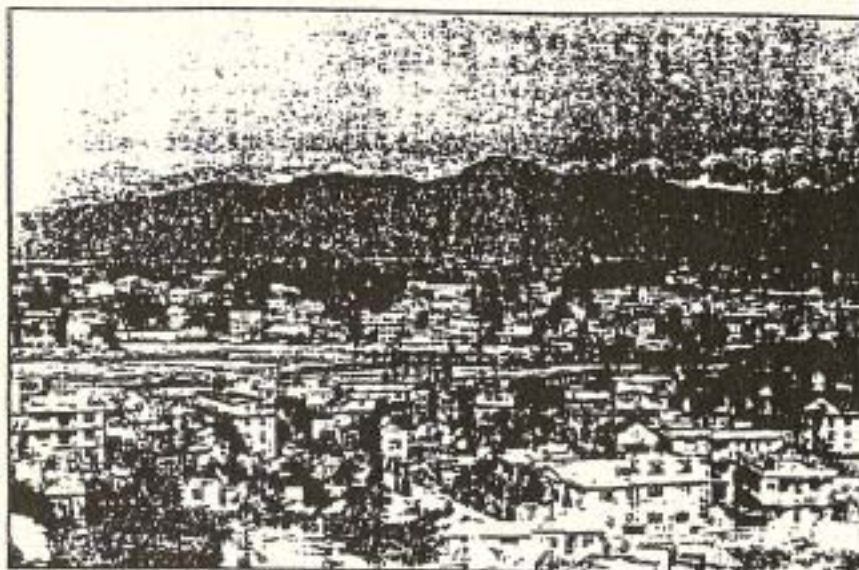
## LOVELY WATERS

Mulkharka's misfortune is rendered even more stark by the contrast that Sundarijal presents. Lying at the foot of the Shivapuri ridge, Sundarijal ("Lovely Waters") falls within the buffer zone of the Project and is the administrative center for the communities of this area: the Village Development Committee (formerly "Panchayat") sits here. Sundarijal has regular bus and tax service from Kathmandu, a health post and secondary school. Its SLC graduates number 40, three of whom even have Bachelor's degrees. Farmers and business people have easy access to Kathmandu markets and there are several sources of employment not available to the residents of Mulkharka, such as at the local hydropower plant



Woman of the Project area.





Kathmandu Sprawl: Shivapuri in background.

B. PALNIAR

which supplies the city. Of course, Sundarjal has electricity.

Despite their relative good fortune, however, Sundarjal residents too have lost homes, highland fields and livestock sheds to SWWRP's eviction programme. During the past three years, they and their neighbours in Mulkharka have had new visitors — army patrols enforcing Project regulations. Households, unable to get wood from the forest, have had to resort to burning residues of rice, wheat, corn and millet, which earlier went into fertiliser or fodder.

Almost all the households in Mulkharka and Sundarjal, however, have been unable to do without collecting some firewood — which they collect from Shivapuri forest itself. Some send children on forays because they can evade the soldiers more easily. At other times, adults sneak into the forest before dawn or after dark. One Sundarjal resident commented that, by closing the forest, SWWRP had actually negated the traditional conservation practices which had existed in his village. While he and his neighbours once took only dead branches and were concerned about the longevity of the forest, people now greedily took whatever they could get.

Fodder and grazing land have become scarce, and the villagers are forced to stall-feed because seasonal grazing is limited to their own land. By and large, they have been forced to keep fewer cows, buffaloes and goats. Reduced crop residue and cow dung has hurt crop productivity. One Gurung woman estimates that the yield of her fields is down by half, and more than half of households surveyed in Sundarjal said that they were being forced to buy chemical fertiliser.

As if this were not enough, wild boars pose further problems. Boars which arrived as gifts from the Russian Government to King Birendra, were released in Shivapuri during the early phase of the Project. Since hunting is prohibited, the

boars have multiplied and become a menace to the villagers and their crops. Crop yields have declined dramatically as the boars raid fields all over the area. Responding to complaints from Mulkharka residents, the Project officials determined that farmers could kill boars caught on their own land. But the real problem lies within the forest, where there must be better control of the boar population.

The combination of these hardships have made it difficult for the villagers to maintain family farms. Some villagers feel that the Project objectives would not be affected if there were a permit system allowing them to collect from the forest at designated times. In fact, Larry Tennyson, the Project's Chief Technical Advisor Officer (FAO) agreed that this was the only viable option. The villagers will never be able to overcome the fuel and fodder deficit unless they are allowed to use part of the protected resources, he says.

Among the people of Mulkharka, however, there is a sense of hopelessness. Such is their desperation that many express a desire to be evicted by the Project, even though they have not received official notice of eviction. "If the Project would give us 25,000 rupees per *ropani* (0.05 hectare), everyone in this village would move," said the school teacher.

It is clear that the Mulkharka families cannot exist much longer under present circumstances. Many have no clear vision of where to go, what to do, or how their lives will change; they are simply responding to immediate pressures.

#### FATE OF THE EVICTED

Even though some households in Mulkharka might want to take compensation and move to escape their present travails, the experience of those who have been evicted is not very heartening. Shilmati had been a small settlement

just west of Mulkharka. Its residents were evicted in 1983-84 with compensation of NRs 5,000 per *ropani* of unirrigated *bari* land. At that time, one *ropani* of land around Sundarjal, where most Shilmati households resettled, was NRs 20,000 per *ropani*. One Brahmin family which had owned a house, a livestock shed and ten *ropanis* now owns a single *ropani* of land and shares a house with a relative. A family that settled in the Kathmandu suburbs fared much worse, losing eight *ropanis* of land for a rented house and no land.

The women of the two villages are particularly skeptical about the benefit of the Shivapuri Project. Almost unanimously they claim that the Project benefits the *sarkar*. A few women had planted new vegetables obtained from the Project, and one had received training in vegetable cultivation, but most had never personally been met by the local extension worker. The women's clearest images of SWWRP were linked to the difficulties it had brought into their lives: fewer livestock, more wild boars, and the scarcity of once-plentiful fuelwood, fodder and fertiliser.

When interviewed, the women of Mulkharka seemed to be more knowledgeable than their husbands or sons about which local tree species yielded the best fuel, fodder and timber. Despite their expertise, almost all the women of Mulkharka today consider forest management the responsibility of the Government. SWWRP has, ironically, succeeded in ensuring that local women, the forest's heaviest users, are not committed to meeting the Project's objectives.

#### WASTED EFFORT

While the FAO project has tried to alleviate some of these pressures, the condition of the villagers has not changed. Recently, Mulkharka villagers proposed to abandon current cropping and to concentrate entirely on fruit tree cultivation. They asked the Project for saplings and a commitment to provide food rations until the trees matured.

The agency provided 350,000 seedlings for community forests (known earlier as Panchayat Forests) within and around the Shivapuri boundaries. Although these forests had developed restrictions against indiscriminate use, only a few villagers — and no women — were involved in their management. The context was hardly conducive to collective planning, with even the forest guard stealing fuelwood. One Mulkharka resident complained, "In fact, since the Army began patrolling, many families have begun to collect exclusively from the community forest, where the guards will not catch them."

FAO also introduced vegetable cultivation, mushroom farming, beekeeping, fruit tree plantations, smokeless *chulo* (cooking-stoves)



and wage labour in SWWRP works. But the problems remain unresolved, say the villagers. Mushroom cultivators could not turn a profit due to the low level of production. Those who had tried fruit had a similar story to tell. Said a Tamang farmer who was considered one of the more successful fruit-growers, "Those who tried to sell fruit would have made more money working as wage labourers." The "improved" *chulos* were not useful for preparing cooking *dhindo*, the grain paste consumed by poorer households, nor could they prepare rice for more than six persons.

As for the promised income from wage labour, Muldharka residents who tried contracting for construction of the motorable road within the Shivapuri watershed said the outside contractors, who had contacts within the SWWRP, always brought in labour from elsewhere.

All these programmes share another weakness. They inevitably favour those residents who are relatively more educated, innovative and rich enough to take some risk — usually of

Bahun and Chhetri landholders in Sundarjal. Only those with surplus land, for example, have the margin to experiment with fuelwood and fodder plantations. "We have to plant our crops," exclaimed one woman from Sundarjal, "how can we plant trees that will make shade and ruin the crops?"

#### WHAT NEXT?

The Shivapuri Project's rules, extension programmes and community forests are but a series of disassociated, if sometimes well-intended, efforts that have no meaning to the people for whom they were intended. In the end, little has been done to alleviate the pain of those who have lost so much due to the zoning off of Shivapuri.

Management of the natural resources of the Valley rim must include and benefit local people. Efforts at controlling forest degradation simply cannot succeed without the commitment of the locals. *Ad hoc* measures, such as the introduction of improved *chulos*, vegetable cultivation and

tree plantation, do not address the fundamental insecurities that farmers in and around Shivapuri face every day. They cannot sustain farming practices but are unable to move because of the high price of land elsewhere. And yet they expect that they will ultimately meet the fate of neighbours who have been evicted. They understand the finiteness of forest resources, yet present circumstances require them to take whatever they can now in order to survive.

These are the levels of concern to which the Shivapuri Project and its partners must respond even as they try to meet the original goal of protecting Kathmandu's drinking water supply. That water will taste bitter, unless the villagers of Shivapuri are taken care of first. ▽

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## "Communion with the Infinite"

by Carl Pruscha

**T**he care and veneration shown by the Valley's inhabitants for their settlements and towns, their temples and holy places, are closely matched by their concern for the natural environment, in the sowing and harvesting of the rice which is their staple diet.

Thus, farming becomes an artistic creation. Over the centuries, the face of the land has been shaped by this process. Thousands of terraces have been constructed and landscape veined by countless canals to irrigate the growing rice. This great task of landscaping has been carried out with no other tools but simple hoes.

Now the valley has hardly an acre of land which has not been pressed into use. Here man has genuinely conquered the earth — but without destroying it. In close creative interplay, man and nature have developed together. When the dry winter etches the grey tones of the terraces against

the white backdrop of mountain peaks, the handiwork of man is most clearly seen for a few short weeks. Soon the heavy monsoon rains turn the picture into a waterscape, with hundreds of small lakes rising in tiers. Then, very soon, the rice begins to grow — looking from a distance like light moss — and fills the landscape with innumerable shades of green. Finally comes the ripening, and the rice takes on a burning brightness ranging from yellow to orange.

The settlements themselves, built of the same material and the same earth, also change with the seasons, always maintaining their essential relationship with the soil on which they stand.

Until now this people has preserved intact its environment, maintained its traditional way of life based on its system of the extended family and continued undisturbed its communion with the spiritual and the infinite.

But today the people of Kathmandu Valley face a critical choice: whether to build their future quietly on the foundations of their past, and go on living in their paradise, or to opt for a 20th-century way of life so often beset with commercialism and the errors of misapplied technology."

The writer, an Austrian town planner, worked as a United Nations expert in Nepal from 1965 till the mid-1970s. He helped direct a monument survey of the Valley. This excerpt is from a longer piece printed in the December 1974 issue of the *UNESCO Courier*.







## The Bagmati Scorned

*The Bagmati is forced to carry the burden of Kathmandu's polluting ways. It has rapidly lost much of its character as a river.*

by Ajaya Dixit

Sand from its riverbed, hydro-power from Sundarijal, drinking water from Budhanilkantha and Sundarijal, irrigation water throughout its length — metropolitan Kathmandu takes all these from the Bagmati River. Does the city give anything in return? It does — raw sewage generated by hundreds of thousands, untreated effluent from industrial estates, hospital wastes, toxic chemicals and acid from "carpet washing" plants, pesticides and chemical fertiliser leaching from fields, the detritus of cremation ghats.

In short, planners and public alike expect the Bagmati to dutifully carry away everything that is dumped into it. As a result, the Chobar gorge, through which the river exits to the South, smells like an uncleaned toilet bowl. It is advisable not to bathe in the river's "fluid" even when it descends to the Tarai 45 km downstream. But so strong are the cultural compulsions and the lack of targeted warnings that even the most polluted sections of the river are used for bathing, creating a public health menace.

The Bagmati, which traverses Kathmandu Valley in a sluggish meander from the Sundarijal cataracts to the Chobar Gorge, is an oxygen-less river by the time it arrives adjacent to Kathmandu town. Germs have a field day because the algae and protozoa that help control their growth are mostly dead in the absence of oxygen.

Every day, according to one conservative estimate, Kathmandu's city folk produce 150 tons of waste. In terms of volume, that is about 520 cubic meters of garbage, only half of which is picked up by the German-aided waste disposal squads. The rest is dumped by the river in the historical belief that it will be carried away by flowing water. But a river with a minimum winter-time flow of 2.04 cusecs (cubic-meter per second) can hardly hope to serve as an urban flush of the Valley. For comparison, the Ganga's minimum flow at Benaras is 2,730 cusecs, and yet at that stretch it is regarded as one of the dirtiest rivers in the world.

One survey estimated that there were nine heaps of refuse, with total weight of about 40,000 tons, within a 1.8 km stretch of the Bishnumati, the Bagmati's major tributary, where it flows past Kathmandu town. About 4,000 persons from Kathmandu's inner city are said to use the Bishnumati, mostly in the mornings, for their daily ablutions. No river or rivulet should suffer such indignity.

### FROM RIVER TO TOXIC SEWER

Up to just a few years ago, Bagmati water was relatively clean until the point at which it received the first discharges from Kathmandu town. Today, leaching from a solid wastes landfill, fecal inflow from an open sewage outlet, and carpet washings from factories upstream pollute the river even before it enters Kathmandu's metropolitan area at Gokarna. From then on, the Bagmati's condition steadily worsens.

The definitive study of the Bagmati water was conducted by DISVI, an Italian consultancy, in 1988. It found that the Bagmati's pollution levels rise dramatically after the tributaries and sewage emerging from Kathmandu and Patan towns join the main stream, particularly the untreated waters of the Dhobi Khola, Tukucha and Bishnumati.

By the time it has joined the Bishnumati at Teku and begins to wind its way to Chobar, the Bagmati is really an open sewer with water quality standards greatly violated in terms of oxygen content, organic pollution, nitrates phosphates and coliforms (contamination by human faeces).

Treatment of industrial effluents does not exist in the Valley, and the industrial districts of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur unload significant loads of toxic compounds into the river system. The Banabari Shoe factory, just one example, discharges high concentrations of chromium directly into the Dhobi Khola, which

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is one of the most polluted of the Bagmati tributaries. The most polluted is the Tukucha. It traverses the full length of Kathmandu town, and was described recently as consisting of "slightly diluted sewerage effluent."

#### SAND

The unthinking rape of the Bagmati is best highlighted by the sand problem. As long as Valley townships proceeded in their leisurely historical pace of building and rebuilding with brick and mud, Bagmati was able to provide all the water and sand required by the townspeople. There was a quantum jump in the demand for sand after the introduction of cement and concrete technology in the mid-1940s. The demand for sand increased exponentially as construction accelerated unrelentingly, particularly since the mid-1970s.

Sand was mined from the Bagmati as if there were no tomorrow. It has been mined so deep near the metropolitan area that diggers have hit earth below the river's bed, which is why the Bagmati's expanse as seen from the main bridge to Thapathali is today full of weeds and plants rather than the sandy beaches of just a decade ago.

The exploitation of the Bagmati is a story of thoughtless chicanery, a product of collusion between businessmen and administrators who thought of neither ecology nor the future. The district office awarded excavation contracts to the highest bidder for sites with road access. Once the contract was awarded, the contractor was free to plumb the depths of the sand strata, to haul away as much as he could of thousands of years worth of deposition. Presently, sand mining is banned within the Ring Road area, but the damage has already been done. The sand being generated upriver will not be able to fill in what has been extracted downstream. Bagmati, after all, is a very small river, with headwaters just a dozen kilometers upriver.

Under the Thapathali bridge, the Bagmati river flows through a narrow canyon of clay. Just a few years ago, it meandered over a wide, sandy bed. So much sand has been taken from the metropolitan area that the lowest steps of the Bagmati ghats between Sankhamul and Kalmochan are now two meters above the riverbed, and crumbling.

The inability to anticipate the growth of Kathmandu Valley and take corrective measures was bared by the collapse of the Thapathali bridge on 15 September 1991. The subsidence of the bridge's central pillar was clearly related to the scouring of the foundations in the absence of sand. The bridge is the busiest traffic hub in the Valley, carrying 25,000 vehicles each way daily, in addition to pedestrians.

As the sand disappears from the Bagmati and its tributaries, where does metropolitan Kathmandu look for more? Clearly, the Bagmati

needs a rest of decades before one can even contemplate further excavation. The alternatives could be to use rock crushers, mine the sand hillocks of the Valley, or truck in sand from the Trisuli and Sunkosi rivers. All these options are expensive and would invite further environmental and resource-use problems. One viable alternative would be to develop construction technology that does not require profuse use of sand. Another is to revert to mud-mortar.

The pollution of the Bagmati and the over-exploitation of sand come together incongruously

in the truckloads of sand excavated in the lower reaches of the river. When the sand is unloaded at the construction site, it is not the clean mica-laden sand of the past in which children loved to play. This sand smells of the sewer. It also comes with lumps of clay, indicating that the bottom-most layer has been scraped off the Bagmati. The river's rape is almost complete.

A. Dixit is also member of the Save Bagmati Campaign, a group that is working to create awareness about the river's decline.

## Urban Voices

*A merchant, a garbage-collector, a lay citizen, a politician, a journalist, and an urban planner provide a sampling of city-dwellers' concerns.*

by Suman Basnet

Tirtha Krishna Manandhar, 63, is a merchant who lives and works in Kel Tole, one of the most densely populated neighborhoods of Kathmandu. In 1952, he paid NRs 30 per month as rent in his shop, which sells paint. Today, he pays NRs 12,000. Manandhar has watched the city transform, and he agrees that today it is more crowded and more unkempt. But he would not be anywhere else. "I have been to America and London, but nowhere is it like Kathmandu. This is my birthplace. I love our gods and goddesses and our people. They are good at heart."

Ram Krishna Shrestha, 55, concedes that the city people are good at heart — "but they produce too much garbage." Shrestha has worked for the Kathmandu municipality for 28 years, driving a dirty yellow tractor-trailer collecting solid waste from different points in the city. "Just ten years ago I used to collect half a tractor-load of garbage from Kathmandupur every morning. These days, I have to make two, sometimes three, trips. It is becoming impossible to keep this place clean."

At 71, Chinmaya Maharjan, too, has seen the town in decline. The decisive moment came when a few years ago the sunken water spout in her neighbourhood dried up. "When the goddess of the land herself has decided to deprive us of water, I do not trust humans to make life more comfortable here."

Harilal Bhattarai says he did try to make things more comfortable. The veteran Nepali Congress Party worker was elected mayor of Kathmandu during the glumest years of the Panchayat. He says the Panchayat regime wasted more than three decades during which time it could have planned for the proper development of the Valley towns. "Local governments were not allowed to function by the centralised system, and the Nagar Panchayats stagnated. The National Government would neither provide support nor allow us to work without hindrance. We had little authority to raise tax and revenue, and could not use independent means to raise funds." Bhattarai believes that it is not too late to turn around the decline of the Valley towns. "But it will require tremendous effort on the part of all residents. If we are to live in this place, we have to make it better."

Malla K. Sunder, a left-leaning journalist, sees unchecked migration into the Valley as the worst legacy of the Panchayat regime. This happened, he says, because development efforts were centered around Kathmandu and the hinterland was neglected. "Uncontrolled migration into Kathmandu has made it over-crowded and unmanageable." Sunder, who runs a Newari language weekly, suggests that if the trend continues, the Newar community might soon become a minority in its home ground, which might not be too good for communal harmony in the Valley, he says.

There is pessimism, but there is also hope. Says Umesh Malla, an urban planner, "It is not a hopeless situation. Urbanisation covers only 11 per cent of the Valley's land area at present. All you need is a proper urban infrastructure, which it is not too late to provide." Malla is convinced that planning must be done within a regional framework. Local government must be energised, he says. "Polluting industries must be located outside the Valley, in Hetauda or Bharatpur. Housing for the under-privileged is a critical issue."

S. Basnet is a Kathmandu-based journalist.



## Valley Tourism The Shine is Off

*As the Valley loses its lustre, there is less that attracts the tourist. Environmental and cultural erosion is akin to economic suicide for a nation so dependent on Valley-based tourism.*

by Bijaya Lal Shrestha

When Simo Milojevic, the chief of the World Esperanto Association, returned to Kathmandu in September 1991 after 30 years, he was sorely disappointed with the noise and filth that had overtaken the Valley. Kathmandu was beginning to look like any chaotic Third World city, whereas it had emerged in the mid-1950s with its centuries-old atmosphere intact — a prize destination for international travelers.

Milojevic, a Serb, arrived in 1961 for a few months to teach Esperanto, an "experimental" Indo-European language. At that time, he remembers, there were only two good budget restaurants in Kathmandu, the Uttam and Aroma. "I could not afford the outrageously expensive Royal Hotel or Hotel Coronation." There were no tourist coaches. When a handful of tourists could be gotten together, guides borrowed friends' cars and made do.

"But if you ask me which Kathmandu I prefer, as a foreigner I prefer the quiet, simple, laid back Valley of the early 1960s."

Milojevic is not alone in his harking back to earlier, more innocent, times. The Valley's old-world charm is rapidly eroding. Today, major parts of Kathmandu and Patan towns are indistinguishable from the congested, built-up quarters of other South Asian cities. The changes are readily obvious to the traveler who visits after a long hiatus, much more so than to the resident who lived through them.

Tourists in their hundreds of thousands collectively contribute their share to changing the cultural facade of Kathmandu Valley. The development aid business and the inherent tilt towards "westernisation" among urbanites are the other major factors that have helped change the urban face of Kathmandu.

### TOURISM MAINSTAY

For the tourist, Nepal's charms may be divided into three categories: the scenic beauty of the High Himalaya (accessed through trekking and RNAC's mountain flights), the attraction of the hill ethnic culture (of the Sherpas, Thakalis, and others), and the cultural allure of the Kathmandu Valley. More than 180,000 of the 255,000 tourists arriving every year have the Valley as their primary destination. Since the Nepal excursion is often an add-on to package tours of India, tourists have only three or four days to spend here, for which the Kathmandu sights are sufficient.

Kathmandu Valley is the mainstay of Nepal's tourism industry, which nationally brings in about US 70 million annually and provides direct employment to more than 15,000. There are numerous ancillary benefits: tourism spawns everything from laundry services to poultry farms. Elsewhere, towns and cities which rely on their ancient architectural and cultural heritage to attract tourists strive to maintain their traditional

urban character. The strict zoning codes of the old quarters of European towns are meant to do just that. The Valley's major assets in terms of tourism are its Malla-period houses, its three durbar squares, its *bahal* courtyards, and sunken water spouts. If tourism is to continue, it is essential to keep those houses standing, the squares clean, the *bahals* intact and the water spouts running.



Old Ason, winter afternoon.

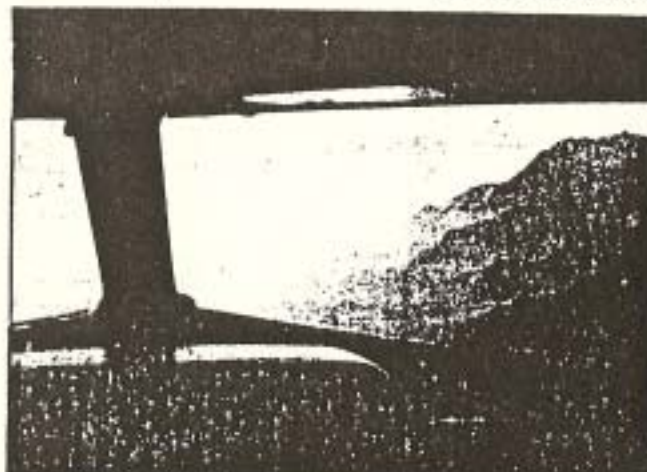
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Preservation and conservation are not merely products of an emotional attachment to the past, but rather are critical to the economic health of the Valley. Maintain the character of Machindra Bahal of Patan, or prohibit non-traditional architecture from dominating the circle of houses around the Baudha stupa, and the tourists will keep coming. It is better that a 15th century *bahal* earns income by charging entrance fees to tourists than it be razed to provide space for a concrete structure which serves as a garment factory.

Tragically, Kathmandu and Patan towns, in particular, are fast losing their holistic historical unity and ambience — and hence their touristic allure. While their durbar squares survive as museum pieces bereft of context, the flavour of the by-lanes and *bahals* is fast disappearing. While it may be partially true that the lives of the inhabitants have changed enough that the old quarters are no longer viable entities, it is important to "keep up appearances", otherwise why should the tourists bother to come at all? If Venice, in northern Italy, can still sell itself as a Renaissance city (when in fact practically every economic activity derives sustenance from tourism), the towns of Kathmandu Valley have a much easier task. What is "sold" to tourists remains, at least today, by and large, the truth.

### FACTS OF KATHMANDU

The very first tourist-eye view of the Valley from an airplane window used to be of the Patan city core surrounded by expanses of softly terraced fields of green gold or grey, depending upon the



Pilot-eye view of Valley smog.

ARNOCK PANDEY



time of the year. Today, ribbon development and urban sprawl strikes the incoming passenger — and smoking brick kiln chimneys. The sparkling ice cliffs of Ganesh Himal lose their shine as the plane loses height and enters layers of Kathmandu-generated smog. For an instant before the plane lands, right by the runway threshold, the air traveler can catch a glimpse of a shantytown that was never meant to be Kathmandu.

Just a few years ago, the drive from the airport into town was a unique experience as the broad curve of the Chinese-built highway took in terraced paddies and the lazily meandering Bagmati. Today, this section of the highway is lined with haphazard housing, an ice-cream factory, repair garages and welding shops, and trucks extracting sand from the Bagmati riverbed. The paddy patches are nearly gone with housing overflow from New Banerwar.

The Valley's air pollution is not merely a concern of environmentalists and public health

officials. It has become a dollars and cents problem for travel agents and hoteliers. "November used to be the month for mountain-watching, once the morning fog lifted," recalls Brian Whyte, a long-time observer of Nepali tourism. "This past November, there was not a day when the mountains were absolutely clear."

As the air gets dirty, so does the rest of the Valley. The tourist still experiences the flavour of the past in the bylanes, but intermingled with that flavour is the odour of uncollected garbage at temple sites, dust and diesel smoke, traffic congestion, and political graffiti. All this, added to the Hong Kong-style pseudo-westernisation of Kathmandu society will soon be enough to kill any notion of the Valley as a tourists' haven.

It speaks to the incredible cultural strength of the Valley towns that visitors are willing to disregard all the bother for a glimpse of old Kathmandu. But the threshold of disgust will soon be reached, after which the number of

tourists will start to decline. An American tourist, a landscape architect, who arrived in early January said later that she was glad to have arrived at night. This spared her the initial shock of seeing the Valley of her dreams turn out to be like any other unsightly Third World urban space.

"The wildest dreams of Kew, are but facts of Kathmandu," wrote Rudyard Kipling. The line has been quoted in travel brochures *ad nauseam*, but today it might be gaining a slightly different connotation. Certainly, the decline of the Valley these past decades has been beyond the wildest of dreams.

The sordid facts of Kathmandu are items that will never get into tourist brochures, nor should they. But it is important for the planners and public alike to realise that the days are over when Kathmandu Valley's ancient charms alone would be enough to bring tourists over. Kathmandu was once unique. Today's international travelers have many other choices, in South Asia, Central Asia and elsewhere.

Nepal's mountain tourism is on a solid geological foundation: the mountains themselves will not self-destruct. But Kathmandu's attractions are cultural, and fragile. While congestion, pollution and environmental degradation are the bane of every Third World city, Kathmandu can hardly afford to go the way of Calcutta, Karachi or Patna — they do not depend on tourists.

Valley residents, as well as tourists, deserve a cleaner, nicer Kathmandu. Who knows, perhaps Simo Milojevic will be surprised when he visits the Valley a decade from now. Perhaps we will surprise ourselves.

B. L. Shrestha reports for the *Rising Nepal* daily.



Directions at Thamel.

B. Rauniar

## International Rendezvous

Twenty years ago, Thamel was just a semi-suburb to the north of Kathmandu town, where houses were scattered among fields and vegetable patches. Five ropanis of land did not fetch even NRs 10,000 and people did not venture out of their homes for fear of the spirits or robbers. "It seemed that this place had no future," recalls Karna Shakya, the proprietor of Kathmandu Guest House, who as a student used to pass through Thamel on his way to the Public Science College, which lay to the north of Thamel.

Today, the fields and vegetable patches are gone. Every available square foot has been used up by hotels, restaurants, bookshops, pie shops, travel agencies and other services for tourists. Thamel has become the budget travelers' mecca.

The catalyst for Thamel's transformation was Shakya's Kathmandu Guest House, which opened in 1973 and initially housed Peace Corps volunteers. Soon, budget travelers began to arrive holding little chits with the Thamel address of Shakya. The travel writers, too, discovered Kathmandu Guest House and the rooms have not been empty since. Shakya, a forester by training, encouraged his next door friends to convert their homes into lodges and restaurants. The transformation of Thamel had begun.

Thamel picked up where Jhochhen left off. Located at the shadow of Kathmandu's old darbar, Jhochhen earned brief notoriety as a hippie haven in the early 1970s. It was known as "Freak Street". Of a different breed, today's budget travelers prefer Thamel.

Today, Thamel is an international rendezvous. They come from all over, professors, doctors, writers and students, all in casual attire, to browse at Pilgrim's Book House or dine at K.C.'s. And Jimmy Carter tried the ices at Rum Doodle.

- B. L. Shrestha

20 HIMAL • Jan/Feb 1992

## Getting Around

Kathmandu Valley has approximately 680 km of motorable roads. Of these, 41 km is classified as highways, 891 km as feeder roads, 254 km as district roads, and 304 km as urban roads. Minibus services are the mainstay of public transport, and over 500 operate daily, carrying more than 150,000 passengers. Three-wheel "tempos" exceed 1,800 in number and carry about 55,000 passengers daily. There are 1,900 regular taxis, 150 long-distance buses depart daily, 105 to the west via Thankot, 34 east via Dhulikhel and 11 to Teruli to the north-west. Almost 60 percent of journeys taken every day by Valley residents are on foot. Nine per cent travel by bicycle. Five per cent use motorcycles, four per cent use cars, one percent use taxis. The remaining 21 per cent use buses and mini-buses.

(Source: Kathmandu Valley Urban Development Plans & Programmes)



# Energi og bærekraftig utvikling

I Nepal har skogen hittil vært energigiveren på grunnplanet og vil være det i mange år fremover med nedbrytende følger for miljøet. Men landet har vannkraftressurser på høyde med Norges og kan dekke sitt energibehov gjennom utbygging av disse, skriver sivilingeniør Ludvig Johan Bakkevig, som selv har arbeidet i Nepal. Med Bakkevigs tillatelse gjengir vi her et foredrag holdt på «U-landsdagene 1991» arrangert av NIFs u-landsgruppe.

Nepal er et av verdens aller fattigste land. Over 90 prosen av befolkningen lever av den jorda de bor på. Med en fødselsrate på 2,4 prosent betyr det at stadig flere mennesker må livnære seg av de samme jordflekkene og varmes av den samme skogen. Nepal utvikles ikke, Nepal brytes ned. Et mønster som vi finner igjen mange andre steder i de fattige jordbruksland.

Skogen spiller en nøkkelrolle

i dette mønsteret, først og fremst som energigiver til koking og oppvarming. Selv på eksistensminimum trenger mennesket energitilgang. Men når skogen brukes til brenne eller må vike plass for mer dyrkingsjord, utsettes landet for erosjonskrefter som spesielt i Nepal er enorme. De bratte skråningene sammen med konsistensen på jord- og løsmasser gjør at jordras hører til dagens orden når monsunregnet kommer. Det

som kunne eller skulle blitt nytt jordbruksland, forsvinner rett og slett i elvene og ender opp i India eller Bangladesh. Skal denne negative utviklingen stanses må skogen som den primære energigiver erstattes av annen energi. Dessuten er det ikke noen løsning på overbefolkningsproblemet å hugge ned skogen i håp om å kunne legge til noe nytt jordbruksland. Alternativ beskjefligelse for de søn-



ner og dotre som ikke lenger kan livnære seg på gården må skaffes tilveie.

Stilt overfor disse problemene var det at Odd Hoftun, elektroingeniør fra NTH, utsendt til Nepal av Den Norske Tibetmisjon, foreslo oppbyggingen av Butwal Technical Institute, BTI, i 1964. BTI skulle kombinere fagopplæring med industrireisning og utbygging av vannkraft. Stedet var Butwal, en samling hytter og skur et par mil fra den indiske grensen langs handelsruten fra India opp til Pokhara og videre nordover til Tibet. Fagopplæringen var basert på at lærlinger jobbet sammen med utenlandske læremestere. Det ble etablert et mekanisk verksted og en møbelfabrikk og senere også andre enheter, og målsettingen var at virksomheten skulle bære seg og være lønnsom innenfor visse rammer.

Elektrisk kraft til industrien og til Butwal fant Hoftun i elven som rant forbi, og han satte

igang med byggingen av Tinau kraftanlegg etter sine egne planer. NORAD støttet med 200000 kr til første utbyggingstrinn som ga 50 kw. Senere ble kraftstasjonen utvidet trinnvis til ca 1 MW.

Tinau ble Nepals første vannkraftanlegg i fjell. Dalsidene var så bratte at anlegget nødvendigvis måtte inn i fjellet. Bygningen ble gjennomført etter den vanlige BTI-filosofien, det vil si ved hjelp av ufaglærte på stedet sammen med utenlandske læremestere. Fjellsprenget sto Hoftun for selv etter beste evne. Maskinstyret kom fra Bøylefoss, Fiskå Bruk og Øgreifoss kraftstasjoner hvor det var blitt overflodig. Det kunne sies meget om dette, men la oss gjøre historien kort her. Det kom elektrisk kraft til Butwal som satte igang en videre utvikling slik at Butwal i dag etter bare 25 år er en by med omkring 70000 innbyggere og en av Nepals ledende industristeder. Hele 17 prosent av de

over 200 læregutter som til nå har kommet ut fra BTI driver sin egen bedrift, og det er skapt mange arbeidsplasser.

De forskjellige læreguttssentra ble organisert som aksjeselskaper basert på et samarbeid mellom UMN og de nepalesiske myndigheter. UMN, United Mission of Nepal, er det arbeidsfellesskap Den Norske Tibetmisjon arbeider gjennom i Nepal. Bak UMN står omkring 40 forskjellige kirker og organisasjoner fra 20 land. De har 300-400 voksne medarbeidere i forskjellig utviklingsarbeid i Nepal og beskjeftiger for tiden omkring 2500 nepalesere i sitt arbeid.

UMN etablerte også en egen organisasjon (DCS) for forskning og utvikling innenfor energisektoren. Det resulterte blant annet i dannelsen av et eget firma for utbygging av biogassanlegg. Biogassanleggene nyttiggjør seg makk fra beifene som de holder som husdyr. Gjeds-



Skogen er fattigfolks kilde til energi i Nepal. Forbruket truer hele den økologiske balansen. Men vannkraften kan bygges ut til å dekke behovet, skriver Bakkevig.



lingseffekten blir ikke borte etter bruk i biogassanlegget. Det er i dag installert over 4000 slike anlegg i Nepal.

Videre ble et enkelt konsept for vantturbindrevne mølleanlegg utviklet, og det er hittil bygget et par hundre slike. De har dels erstattet dieseldrevne møller, dels erstattet manuelt arbeid.

Et mål i seg selv er å sette Ne-

pal i stand til å utbygge sine latente energiresurser, vannkraften, med egne krefter og ikke være avhengig av å kjøpe utenlandsk ekspertise for selv de minste anlegg. På dette grunnlag ble arbeidet ved Andhi Khola kraftverket satt i gang. Kraftselskapet var allerede der, Butwal Power Company (BPC), som hadde bygd Tinau kraftverk. Med utgangspunkt i dem som hadde vært med på byggingen i Tinau, ble et entreprenørselskap stiftet, Hinal Hydro and Construction Ltd., for å utføre byggearbeidene. I Butwal ble Nepal Hydro and Electric dannet på basis av den mekaniske virksomheten som allerede var i gang der. De fikk jobben med det elektro-mekaniske utstyret, forøvrig tiloversblitt utstyr fra Mesna Kraftverk. Kværner ble trukket inn i samarbeidet. Planleggingen ble lagt til BPC Hydroconsult som ble bygget opp med unge nepalesiske ingeniører og utenlandsk ekspertise gjennom UMN:

Kraftverket som ligger midt mellom Butwal og Pokhara, er av størrelsen 5 MW. Det har en

tilløpstunnel på en kilometers lengde etter dammen, en lodd-sjakt på 250 m ned til kraftstasjonshallen i fjell og en avløpstunnel på ca. en km. Kraftverket starter sin kraftproduksjon i disse dager. NORAD har støttet prosjektet med finansiering.

Imidlertid, prosjektet er ikke lene bare et kraftverksprosjekt. Vannmengden som kommer gjennom tilløpstunnelen øverst i lia blir delt mellom kraftproduksjon og et irrigasjonsprosjekt. I det totale distriktsutbyggingsprosjekt inngår også et vannforsyningsanlegg, latrinebygging, skogreising og elektrifisering foruten voksenopplæring. I forbindelse med elektrifiseringen

er lokale krefter trukket inn med forstudier og motivasjonsarbeid, og en god del nytenkning er gjort fra opplegget for distribusjon og helt ned til egne kokekar for langtidskoking av ris på lav wattstyrke.

Som et resultat av utviklingen av kraftutbyggingsfirmaene har vi sett at Hinal Hydro som det eneste nepalesiske firma med tunnel ekspertise, har vært i stand til å konkurrere med uten-

landske firma på mindre tunnelarbeider. De har hittil gjennomført noen slike med utmerket resultat. Nepal Hydro and Electric har overhølet og installert de 3 peltonturbinene fra Mesna kraftverk med noe hjelp fra Kværner, og har etablert seg i det lokale marked med sine småturbiner, luker og stålkonstruksjoner for kraftverksektoren. BPC Hydroconsult har bygget opp en god stab på sine kontorer i Kathmandu og tilbyr utenlandske konsulentfirmaer lokalt samarbeid.

Da NORAD i mai 1988 ga sitt tilsagn til nepalesiske myndigheter om finansiering av Jhimruk kraftanlegg med inntil 19 mill amerikanske dollar ble 3. fase av norsk kraftutbygging i Nepal innledet. Jhimruk er et kraftanlegg på 12 MW og har omtrent samme utforming som Andhi Khola. Det er meningen at opplæringen av de nepalesiske firma skal fortsette og forhåpentligvis avsluttes med Jhimruk. Mens Andhi Khola var småskole hvor kontraktsforhold og de forskjellige relasjoner mellom byggherre og entreprenør var løse og tidsaspektet for fer-

digstillelse var slakt, blir nå Jhimruk forsøkt gjennomført på et mer helprofesjonelt grunnlag med ordinære internasjonalt baserte kontraktsrelasjoner.

Energi vil alltid være en nøkkel faktor i et lands utvikling. Behovet for energitilgang er allerede tilstede hos den enkelte lille familieenhet hvor fattig den enn er, og øker på med nødvendigheten av å skaffe arbeidsplasser utenom jordbruket i produksjonsarbeid av ulike slag, industrireisning, transport m.m. Utfordringen ligger i å skaffe energi til en overkommelig pris. Innsats på energisektoren burde derfor være et hovedsatsingsområde for utviklingsgjivere.

I Nepal har skogen hittil vært energigiveren på grunnplanen og vil dessverre komme til å være det i mange år fremover med de ødeleggende og nedbrytende følger som det har. Nepal har imidlertid vannkraftressurser omtrent på høyde med Norges og har mulighet for å dekke sitt energibehov gjennom utbygging av disse. Det kan skje i det små ved utbygging av bygdkraftverk med strøm til husholdningene og til en spirende industriell utvikling, og det kan skje i det store med utbygging av hovedelvene og eksport av kraft til India og Bangladesh. Utbygging i Nepal for slik eksport vil gi store miljømessige gevinster for hele regionen og dessuten gi valutainntekter til et fattig land.

Vi har sett hvorledes utbyggingen av Tinau kraftanlegg og læreguttindustrien i Butwal sammen med andre faktorer har ført til utviklingen av et industristed med tusenvis av arbeidsplasser bare over en 25-års periode. Vi har videre sett hvorledes arbeidet med kraftanleggene har utviklet egen ekspertise i nepalesiske kraftutbyggingsfirmaer, en ekspertise som tidligere måtte innføres. Den videre utvikling rundt Andhi Khola og Jhimruk vil tiden vise, men vi har den tro at kimen til en bærekraftig utvikling lokalt ligger der allerede.

Det er blitt fortalt at da elektrisiteten kom for fullt i Egypt gikk fødselsraten ned. En lignende utvikling i Nepal som har doblet sitt innbyggertall fra 50-årene til i dag, vil heller ikke være uten betydning i det spørsmål vi har for oss.

LUDVIG JOHAN BAKKEVIG

KLASSEKAMPEN

KK  
KRONIKK

Lørdag 23. mars 1991



# POWER POLITICS IN NEPAL

FRED PEARCE reports on plans for a controversial US\$6bn dam in the Himalayas that would supply northern India with up to 10,800 megawatts of peak-power electricity.

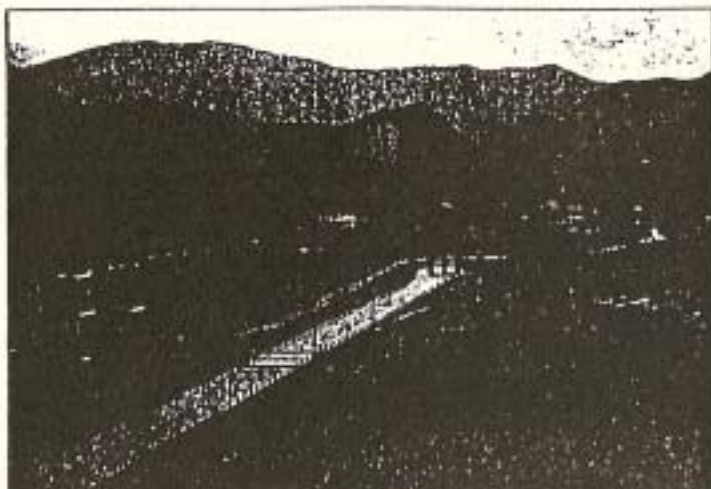
Nepal is close to making a decision on proposals for a hydroelectric dam in western Nepal—likely to be the largest engineering project in the Indian subcontinent. The proposed dam, at Chisapani gorge on the Karnali River (a tributary of the Ganga), would create a 340 sq.km reservoir containing 16 cu. km of water. The site is 600 kilometres from the Nepalese capital, Kathmandu, but only 45 kilometres from the Indian border.

An initial feasibility study, completed two years ago, proposed a swift go-ahead for a dam on the site and of the largest possible size—about 270 metres high. Now follow-up studies are nearing completion and pressure to begin detailed design work for the scheme, which the 1989 study predicted would recoup more than twice its cost, is growing. Finance would probably be from the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank. Both Japanese and Indian construction companies are said to be keen to bid for the project.

The electricity authorities in India are among the foremost supporters of the dam. They have been warning for some time of a growing crisis in energy supply for the industrial cities of India, claiming that they need 38 000 megawatts more generating capacity by 1995, an increase of more than 60 per cent.

At the same time, the Indian government, faced with a growing debt crisis, has decided that the current five-year plan, which runs until 1995, should include no new large dam projects. It should instead attempt to complete a backlog of existing schemes, such as the controversial 250-metre Tehri dam project in the Himalayan hills of northern Uttar Pradesh.

The majority of the extra Indian demand is predicted for the region of 300 million people covered by the northern Indian grid system, which can easily be linked to Nepal by overhead power lines. The Chisapani proposal suggests the construction of five high-voltage power lines linking the power plant to India.



Hydro-electric project in Nepal. The proposed dam on the Karnali River is supported by the Indian electricity authorities.

Despite the fact that a large dam on the River Karnali could not be finished before 2003, there is growing pressure for Nepal to make use of its hydroelectric potential. However, any large dam on the Karnali will face massive objections from environmentalists.

The initial feasibility study conceded that there were "major environmental effects requiring urgent review". It would flood large areas of forests as well as fertile farmland. More forests would be cut down to rehouse the thousands of evacuees from the project. Reductions in river flow below the dam will probably destroy habitats for the rare Ganges river dolphin and a local Gharial crocodile.

The first proposal for a dam in the Chisapani gorge came during studies in Nepal in the mid-1960s by the Japanese dam construction company Nippon Koei, funded by the UN Development Programme. But the current proposal is for an installed generating capacity six times that proposed by the Japanese. Both the Karnali project and a similar proposal for a dam with 2000 megawatts of capacity at nearby Pancheswar have received consistent support from the World Bank.

India is already tapping the hydroelectric resources of another Himalayan state, Bhutan. Late last year, India signed a memorandum of understanding with Bhutan for the development of a second and third hydroelectric projects in Bhutan on

the river Wangchuck, a tributary of the giant Brahmaputra, at Chukha. As with the first such scheme, completed in 1988 at a cost of about US\$160m, construction work was by Indian companies and almost the entire output is to be exported to India.

Bhutan could eventually supply up to 20 000 megawatts of power to India. But the current projects at Chukha are relatively small. They are known as run-of-river projects because they rely on the natural flow of the river and do not require large storage reservoirs.

Similar run-of-river projects could be built on many other sites in the Himalayas, including the Karnali river. While they can use less of the river's power, they are much quicker and cheaper to build, have many more potential sites and, having no reservoir, are less vulnerable to unleash disaster downstream following landslides or earthquakes.

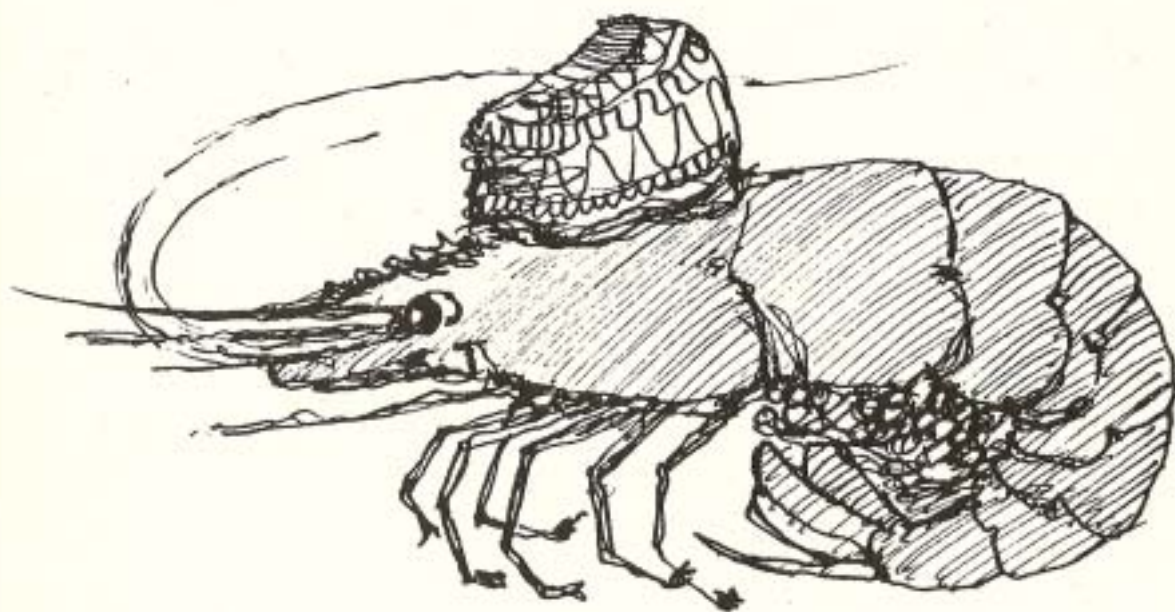
In addition such projects do not flood valuable farmland or forests, and avoid the need to resettle large numbers of people. Nor are they vulnerable to the accumulation of silt in the reservoirs a serious problem in Himalayan rivers. Tehri reservoir, for instance, is expected to become useless for generating electricity within 40 to 60 years of its completion.

Other proposals for large hydroelectric dams in the Himalayas include what would be the first major scheme on the Brahmaputra in the far north-east of India. The river, which at one point drops 2,000 metres within a few tens of kilometres, could yield more than 20 000 megawatts of power. However the area has been disputed between India and China since 1962.

Another favoured site is Tipaimukh on the Meghna, which meets two other great rivers in a vast delta stretching across Bangladesh. Some analysts believe that the large-scale impoundment of Himalayan rivers could, besides unlocking vast stores of hydroelectric power, provide the key to controlling river floods in Bangladesh, such as those which covered half the country in 1987 and 1988. ■



# OLAV'S REKECURRY



## Etter utallige brannslokningsøvelser....

har jeg kommet fram til denne oppskriften, som blir en krysning mellom norsk og nepalsk smak og råvarer. Oppskriften rekker til 2-3 personer. Opprinnelsen ligger i "jhinge machhako tarkari", en ferskvannsreke-curry fra Terai. Godt forarbeid minsker frustrasjon og forvirring: For eksempel; skjær opp alle grønnsakene, og bland krydderet i ei skål, før du gjør noe annet. Ei glovarm olje/løk-gryte før andre ingredienser er ferdige, har stresset mang en vordende curry-kokk....

**Du trenger:** 1 boks ferdig pillede reker i lake  
10-15 sjalottløk, hele  
1 stor løk, finskåret  
1-2 fedd hvitløk, finskåret/knust  
2 middels store poteter skåret i terninger  
2 middels tomater skåret i tynne båter  
Litt dill og persille  
1/2 sitron

### Krydder:

1/2 teskje karvefrø  
1 teskje gurkemeie  
1/2 teskje (eller mindre) chillipulver  
1 spiseskje korianderpulver  
(Krydderet blandes)

**Matolje:** helst senneps- eller maisolje.  
Ikke bruk olivenolje.



**Framgangsmåte:**

1. Varm olje i ei gryte som kan romme hele retten.
2. Ha oppi en løkbit for å sjekke temperaturen.
3. Ha i den finskårne løken og hvitløken. Stek til den begynner å bli gylden.
4. Ha i alt krydderet og rør.
5. Ta i sjalottløken og rekene, men hold av 2 spiseskjeer reker. Hell av laken først.
6. Stekes til det er brunt, eller til det blir for mye saus til videre steking. Ha i presset saft fra den 1/2 sitronen.
7. Ha i potet-terningene (laken gir nok salt) og sett på lokk. Kokes til potetbitene er møre. Tilsett vann hvis nødvendig.
8. Dander tomatbåter, de siste rekene, dill og persille på toppen, og sett på lokket igjen.
9. Serveres med yoghurt-salat, chutney/achar og basmati-ris. Yoghurt kjøler ned en heit curry!
10. Spinat i variasjoner ved siden, \*kjøler\* ned styrken i retten og smaker godt.

**Yoghurt-salat:** Bland yoghurt naturell med bittesmå biter agurk, dill, tomater, urtesalt og svart pepper. Smakes til.

**“Nepalese eat a little quantity of spices just for the sake of medicinal properties.”**



**“Purity in food and drink is one of the ten essential disciplines of life.”**

**Mahabharata**



**Cow philosophy**



# Terror in Udayapur

A lot of forest covered area has been captured during the general election in Udayapur district. Forest Minister Shailaja Acharya has taken a positive step to remove the illegal settlers. On contrary to the govt. notice to remove the settlers settled after 1990, many people settled during panchayati regime are also removed forcefully by the forest

administration. This is projected in every village. Especially the villagers of Hadiya, Musarniya and Gaighat who have settled there since last 16 years were also driven by the forest administration. This activity made the people terrorized.

[ Nepal Patra (Weekly), Aug. 15]

## 1100 Houses Smashed in Udayapur

Thousands of people have gone homeless as 1,100 houses have been demolished (till July 26) in a village in Udayapur. These people, from whom the Forest Consolidation Commission collected millions of rupees during the Panchayat regime, were residing in the area for the past 17-18 years. The concerned CDO, DSP and DFO admit that "government decision has compelled" them to follow such a course. These officials are involved in demolishing the houses with 80 armed guards and 25 civil servants.

[Nepali Awaj (Weekly), Aug 16]

## Bid to Halt Encroachment

Minister for Forest and Soil Conservation Miss Shailaja Acharya has said that HMG would settle the landless people outside the forest areas by formulating a policy in accordance with HMG's commitment of making necessary arrangements for settling them.

Minister Acharya made this remark in reply to a question raised by Bishnu Bahadur Raut of the CPN (UML) concerning the excesses being carried out by the administration in removing the landless people in different places of Udaipur district.

Mr Raut had alleged that the local administration had destroyed more than 300 houses at Hadiya, Sunderpur and Jyamire of Udaipur district by using elephants and driven away the landless people.

[TRN (Daily), Aug 4]

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## NEPAL & THE WORLD

### 50,000 Bhutanese Refugees

The people's Forum for Human Rights, Bhutan claimed Tuesday that 50,000 Bhutanese refugees are now in India and Nepal, as a result of the Thimpu regime's "atrocities".

Addressing the news conference, the Forum's joint under secretary, and member of the Bhutan People's Party, S.K. Pradhan, disclosed that 35,000 Bhutanese refugees were currently living in seven districts of Assam and West Bengal bordering Bhutan, besides another 15,000 in Nepal.

Pradhan also claimed that "more than 2000" southern Bhutanese were being held in jails.

Tara Subedi, general secretary of the Student's Union of Bhutan, alleged that on 31 July the "Assam police" had "extradited" 1,500 refugees from Assam to Bhutan.

[The Independent (Weekly), Aug 14]



## Elkem-kontrakt i Bhutan

OSLO Elkem Technology har inngått en kontrakt med Bhutan Alloys Limited i Bhutan om salg av utstyr og teknisk hjelp for å bygge et nytt ferrosiliciumverk i det lille kongedømmet i Himalaya. Kontrakten har en verdi på 111 millioner kroner.

Det nye verket i byen Pasakha skal stå ferdig om to til tre år. Kontrakten er finansiert gjennom Eksportfinans og støttet av norske myndigheter gjennom Norad.

Produksjonen på 15.000-18.000 tonn ferrosilicium vil bli eksportert under en markedsføringsavtale med det japanske selskapet Marubeni Corporation.

### *India takes steps to conserve Himalayas*

The Indian Ministry of Environment and Forestry has drawn up a plan to restore the ecological balance of the Gangotri river basin, the source of the Ganges in the mountains of Uttar Pradesh. Growing numbers of pilgrims and tourists are visiting the area, and it is now one of the most polluted regions of the Himalayas. Fuelwood and clean water are growing scarce, topsoil is being washed away, and raw sewage is entering the river in increasing amounts.

The ministry's seven-point plan aims to establish a national park and wildlife sanctuary, control tree felling, regulate the flow of tourists, restrict construction and development, build water-treatment plants, and reduce people's reliance of fuelwood by introducing subsidies on other fuels.

● Nepal has announced the launch of a Clean Himalaya Campaign to cope with tons of rubbish left by trekkers and mountaineers. Around 90,000 people trek and climb in Nepal every year.

New Scientist 17 August  
Independent 6 August

### *Climbers to pay for clean-up of Everest*

The Nepalese government is increasing its charges for climbing Mount Everest, the world's highest mountain, and six other peaks in the Himalayas as part of its effort to clear the rubbish left behind by climbing teams.

Some estimates suggest that around 50 tons of waste - including cans, bottles, boxes, packing materials, tents and oxygen cylinders - are strewn around the foothills and lower slopes of Everest. Other estimates put the figure much higher. Edmund Hillary, who with Tenzing Norgay was the first man to climb Everest in 1953, has called the mountain a "junk heap" and has suggested it should be closed for five years to clear the rubbish. Such a move was considered by the government but rejected after protests from the tourist industry and local people.

Independent 24 September

## OUR ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE IS POVERTY

Deforestation is the most besetting problems in Nepal's environment. Owing to the lack of our industrial growth, our environment has not been as polluted as it is in the west. However, the main reason for its pollution is the lack of our awareness towards it. If we had this awareness, there would have been no such problem in our society. The root cause of this problem is our poverty. It has given rise to population growth, deforestation, land erosion, and the like. It is all due to poverty that people have taken recourse to deforestation for their livelihood. To eliminate poverty, all, including governmental works, ought to be geared rightly and those involved in causing the nation poor ought to be checked. Hence, it would be an effective measure for the government to implement its policies and programmes effectively in order to improve our environment.

Nepalese people who are mostly illiterate are, in fact, not so much ignorant and obstinate that they would continue to pollute environment in spite of being instructed not to do so; however, they are left with no options except deforestation. Hence, intellectuals, environmentalists,

government and international agencies concerned should cater for alternative means of livelihood for preserving environment.

So far as the pollution of environment caused by urbanisation is concerned, it also requires governmental initiatives and people's affluence. That's to say, preservation of environment and lessening people's burden should be worked out simultaneously.

It's heartening to note that there has been growing interest in improving environment in Nepal among Nepalese intellectuals and political circles. Similarly, foreign agencies have provided grant-in-aid as well as carried out projects for the improvement of environment in Nepal. However, its main source is poverty and the effort made by a handful of individuals can do little to improve the existing situation. It is also to be noted that some of the individuals are enthusiastic about it owing to the allurements of foreign financial assistance.

[Hindu (Daily), June 6]





Ifølge en øyenvitneskildring mottatt i London 10 januar 1992 ble det i desember måned 1991, overlevert tibetanske flyktninger til kinesiske myndigheter, av nepalsk politi. Dette føyer seg inn i rekken av nepalske brudd på internasjonale forpliktelser.

Minst 18 tibetanere ble overlevert den 13. desember 1991. Hendelsen fant sted ved grenseposten på "Friendship Bridge", 8 kilometer sør for den kinesiske tollstasjonen ved Drangmo (Av kineserne kalt Zhangmu)

Tibetanerne marsjerte med eskorte fra Folkets bevapnede politi til tollstasjonen ved Drangmo. Et øyenvitne, som ønsker å være anonym, fortalte at han hadde sett 5 nonner, 4 munkar blant tibetanerne som ble overlevert.

Tibetanerne som hver og en bar en sekk på skulderen, ble tvunget til å gå etter hverandre i en rekke. De ble jevnlig sparket og var sporadisk slått og mishandlet.

Ifølge en separat melding ble nonnene og munkene arrestert ved den nepalske byen Barabisa, 20 kilometer sør for den tibetansk-nepalske grensen.

Ingen informasjon har vært tilgjengelig for å kunne stadfeste hvorvidt tibetanerne hadde søkt om politisk asyl i Nepal. De nepalske myndighetene er likevel bundet av internasjonal lov og rett til ikke å sende tibetanere tilbake, før det er fastslått med sikkerhet at de ikke risikerer forfølgelse fra kinesisk hold.

I tillegg er det nylig kommet frem enda en hindring for tibetanere som vil prøve å nå Nepal på offisiell måte. Det nepalske konsulat i Lhasa har nylig saknet farten på tildeling av visa til de få tibetanere som har et pass.

Kilden har informert "Tibet information network" med detaljer som inkluderer navn og passnummer til en tibetaner som er blitt fortalt at hans søknad om visa vil ha en behandlingstid på ca. fire måneder.

Tibetaneren, beskrevet av kilden som et typisk eksempel, søkte det nepalske konsulat om innreisevisa 15. november 1991. Han fikk beskjed fra konsulatet at hvis tildelingen fant sted, ville det ikke være mulig å hente papirene før 7. mars 1992.

Ifølge spekulasjoner i Lhasa er dette et forsøk på å begrense feiringen av det tibetanske opprøret i 1959, som skal markeres i India 10. mars 1992.

Kilden føyer til at Kina donerte 100 diseldrevne lastebiler til Nepal i november 1991.



## Den norske TIBET-komit 



- Tibetaner drept ved grenscovergang av nepalsk politi -

"Politiet  pnet ild mot en gruppe voldelige inntrengere som hadde krysset inn i Nepal fra Tibet over det 19,685 fot h ye Manpala Pass" Dette fortalte en talsmann for det nepalske innenriksministeriet til en journalist fra UPI 7. januar 1992, i Kathmandu.

Uttalelsen gjorde det ogs  klart at en d ende tibetaner ble liggende natten over uten medisinsk behandling etter hendelsen. Tibetaneren ble funnet d d morgenen etter.

Talsmann R. M. Vaidya sa videre at "Tibetaneren ikke var en flyktning" men han ga ingen indikasjon p  hvordan politiet viste at tibetaneren, som ble funnet kun etter han var d d, ikke flyktet fra forf lgelse fra kinesisk hold.

"Noen av dem kan v re flyktninger mens andre er  konomisk kriminelle" uttalte R. M. Vaidya i et fors k p    rettferdiggj re politiets beslutning om    pne ild mot resten av gruppen. Han unnl t   fortelle hvordan han kunne vite at noen var " konomisk kriminelle".

Utallige rapporter har indikert at Tibetanske flyktninger som blir tatt av politiet i Nepal blir grundig sl tt og/eller levert tilbake til kineserne. Beslaglegging av store mengder penger og verdigeaster er rutine hvis tibetanske flyktninger blir oppdaget av grensepolitiet.

Det ble hentydet fra UPIs side at tibetaneerne prøvde   krysse nepalsk territorium i et fors k p    n  India da politiet  pnet ild.

Tibet fakta nr. 1 / 21 januar 1992

Redigert av: Den norske Tibet komit 

Kilde: Tibet information network  
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