



**हाम्रो पत्रिका**

**HAMRO PATRIKA VÅR AVIS**

**ORGAN FOR NORGE-NEPAL FORENINGEN**

NUMMER 2

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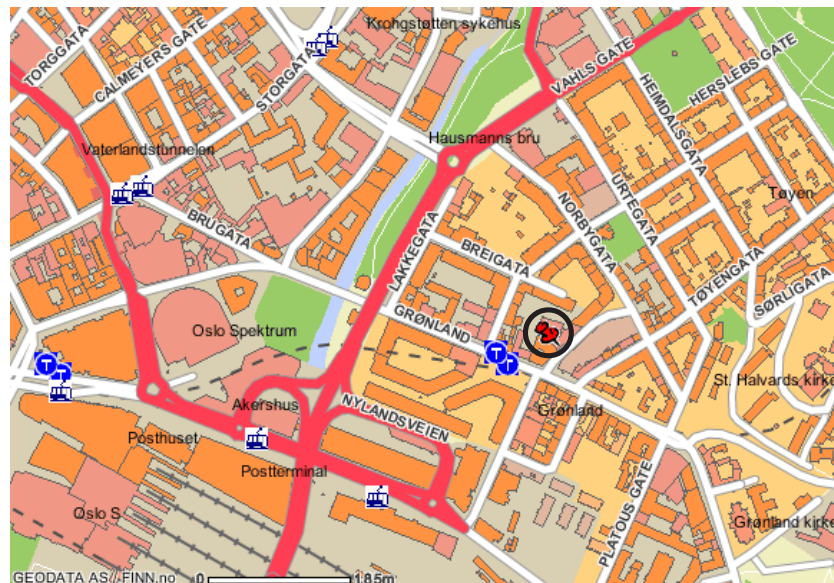
**Fellesmøte med Tibetkomiteen holdes 23. november 2006 kl. 18.30.  
Internasjonalt Kultursenter og Museum (IKM), Tøyenbekken 5.**

Stian Skaalbones, leder av Operasjon Dagsverk, viser film fra Nepal.

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### Internasjonalt Kultursenter og Museum, Tøyenbekken 5

Front page picture by Manohar Pradhan:  
Statue of martyrs in Hetauda park, Makawanpur in Terai.

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**Hamro Patrika** er Norge- Nepal foreningens medlemsavis som utkommer fire-fem ganger i året. Forespørsler angående avisen, foreningen og Nepal kan rettes til styremedlemmene.

Norge- Nepal foreningens e-post adresse: **post@norge-nepal.no**

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## Nation loses Senior Conservationists

It was with great sorrow that the Norway-Nepal Association received the news about the helicopter crash in the north-eastern Taplejung district on September 23rd. The headline is taken from *Kantipur.com* to show that this was not just a personal tragedy with 24 people killed, but also a heavy blow to Nepal's nature conservation movement. Among those killed were top experts in the country's biodiversity and culture: dr. Binjan Acharya (USAID), Dr. Harka Gurung, Chandra Gurung (WWF Nepal), Yeshe Lama (WWF Nepal), dr. Tirtha Man Maskey (Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation), and Mingma Norbu Sherpa (Asia Pacific Program, WWF-US). Two government representatives were killed, Damodar Parajuli and Gopal Rai from the State Ministry for Forest and Soil Conservation, and Narayan Poudel from the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation. The director of program in WWF-UK, Jill Bowling Schaefer, was also aboard the helicopter, and so was Pauli Mustonen, Charge d' Affaires of Finland. Hem Bhandari (TV journalist) and Sunil Singh (camera man) were also killed in the crash.

Dr. Harka Gurung was the veteran conservationist in Nepal. He will be remembered for his achievements during 30 years of working for decentralizing politics and development, and for reducing ethnic/caste inequalities in Nepal. He was the first Nepali Minister of Tourism, and as such he argued for responsible tourism with respect to environment and conservation.

In May 2006, Chandra Gurung visited Norway. The members who attended the Norway-Nepal Association's meeting on May 9th had the pleasure of hearing Chandra Gurung share his impressions of the political situation in Nepal. We were impressed by his gentle personality and great concern for his country.

The Norway-Nepal Association wants to express condolences to Nepali friends in Norway and to the conservation movement in Nepal for having lost all these valuable people.

*Marit Bakke*

## **Impact of Conflict on Conservation and Livelihood in Bardiya**

Dette var tittelen på Sushila Nepal's kåseri på foreningens møte torsdag 21. september. For noen år siden tok Sushila en Master på Ås, og nå er hun tilbake for å ta kurs i forbindelse med sin Ph.D utdanning i Phokara. Hun skal skrive om hvordan bevaring av naturen og dyrelivet kan forenes med at menneskene kan dyrke jorda og bevare kulturen, og hvordan konflikten har påvirket dette.

Sushila har gjort feltarbeide i Bardiya området og blant annet intervjuet folk i mange landsbyer. Hun fortalte at konserveringsarbeidet står overfor mange utfordringer: Ulovlig skoghugging og plukking av urter ødelegger naturen, og krypskyting truer bestanden av flodhester. Planleggingen av naturforvaltningen hemmes av at de ansvarlig personene har dårlig utdanning, at de har dårlig utstyr og at mye av infrastrukturen (veier, broer, hus) er ødelagt av maoistene. Folks hverdag er preget av mistillit slik at de ikke samles offentlig like mye som før, selv ikke i forbindelse med religiøse festivaler. På den positive siden kunne Sushila fortelle at bevaringsprosjektene hadde økt folks bevissthet om 'good governance', om betydningen av deltakelse i politiske prosesser, og om kvinners likestilling. Også maoistene deltar i arbeidet for å hindre krypskyting.

Dette var første gang Norge-Nepal foreningens møte ble holdt på Internasjonalt kultursenter og Museum. Det nye stedet forklarer kanskje hvorfor så få møtte frem, men vi som var der fikk i hvert fall en interessant orientering om det arbeidet som gjøres under vanskelige forhold.

*Marit Bakke*

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### **Medlemsmøte torsdag 23. november kl. 18.30**

Norge-Nepal foreningen og Den norske Tibetkomiteen inviterer til fellesmøte den 23. november. Leder av Operasjon Dagsverk, Stian Skaalbones, viser en dokumentarfilm fra Nepal. Filmen er laget i forbindelse med Operasjon Dagsverk i år. Pengene som kommer inn fra kampanjen går til Redd Barna i Nepal som i 2003 startet prosjektet "Skoler som fredssoner".

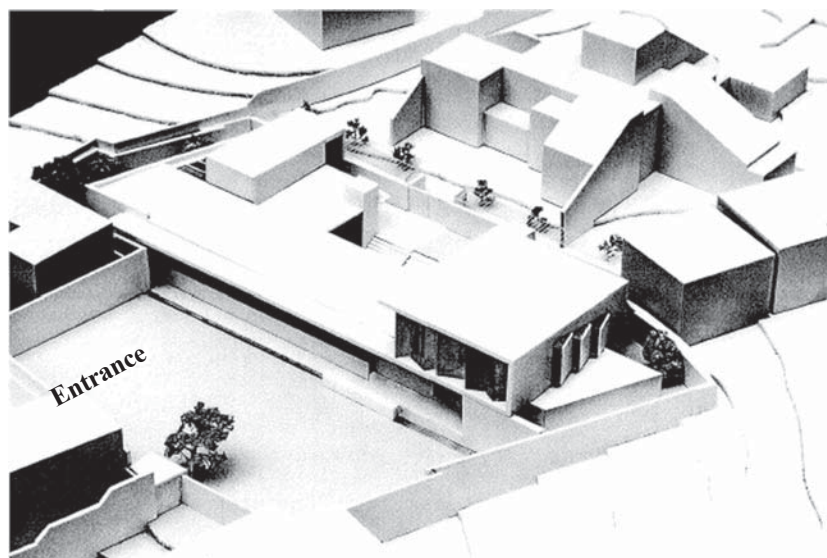
**NB! Møtet holdes i øverste etasje i Internasjonalt Kultursenter og Museum (IKM), Tøyenbekken 5 på Grønland (se kartet på side 2).**

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## The most beautiful Building in Kathmandu

These were the words Rigmor Leirvik used when she, during a lunch break in September, told me about the plans for the construction of the new Norwegian Embassy in Kathmandu. Rigmor is working at Statsbygg. Once the decision had been made to build a new embassy building in Kathmandu the Ministry of Foreign Affairs commissioned Statsbygg to do the job. During fall 2005, Rigmor was asked to become project manager, and she felt it was impossible to say no.

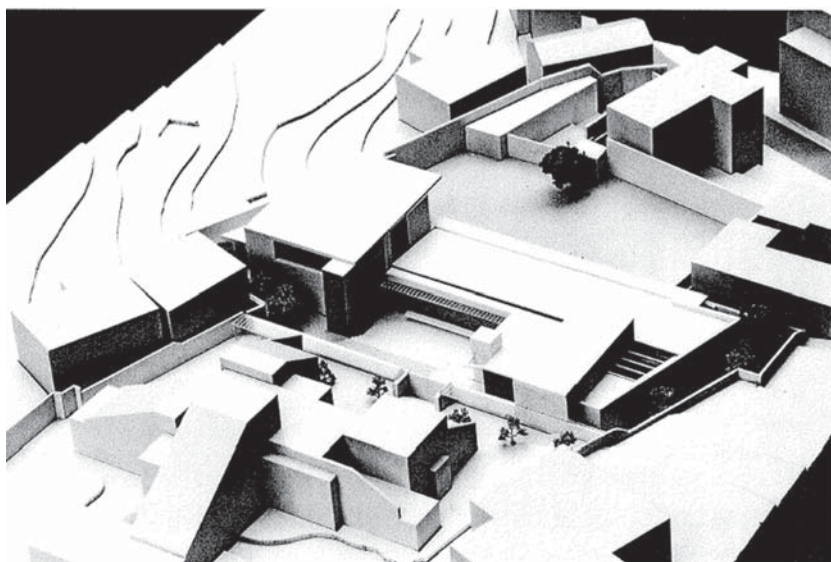
In 1999, the diplomatic station in Kathmandu changed status from being a Consulate to becoming an Embassy. The offices moved from Lalitpur to a large house in Kopundol, not far from Hotel Summit. Statsbygg also bought the lot next door and this will be the site for the new embassy building while the present embassy will become the ambassador's residency. The design for the new embassy complex has been made by Kristin Jarmund Architects in Norway, and the contract with Statsbygg was signed in December 2005. Rigmor enthusiastically told me about the plans.



*The new Norwegian Embassy in Kathmandu. Entrance from the north.  
Model by Kristin Jarmund Architects*



The embassy building will be constructed behind the present house with the entrance from the northern end of the complex. The building will not be a conspicuous one, but constructed so as to fit into the hill. Different types of stones will be the most used material both in the entrance court and in the building. Once into the court the visitor will be met by a low stone wall. Visitors can also look up at a big glass windows through which there will be a magnificent view toward the Himalayas.



*The new embassy complex with the old embassy in the foreground.  
Model by Kristin Jarmund Architects.*

In the back of the building there will be an atrium which can be used by the staff during lunch. This space can be expanded into the room next door and it will become a nice place for special occasions for 50-60 people. Rain water will be gathered in special containers. I asked Rigmor about solar panels. Yes, there are plans for having solar panels, but to place them on the roof would destroy the aesthetics of the building so they will probably be put in the back yard.

What about the contact with Nepalese authorities and workers? An application for the building permit was sent to the authorities in September 2006. Rigmor Leirvik does not expect any difficulties with the permit because the authorities

want new buildings to be solid and nice, and the diplomatic status is definitely an asset. A local contract manager has been appointed to take care of all daily practical matters. He is originally Danish, but has worked in Nepal during the last twenty years. Part of his job will be to select 3-5 local entrepreneur companies that will be asked to submit a tender. Statsbygg has also established contacts with local architects and engineers who can offer advice during the project, for instance regarding the work with stones.

Statsbygg, represented by Rigmor Leirvik, will be responsible for overlooking the whole project. This means that she will be responsible for the budget, quality of the work, and that the construction moves ahead according to plan. Her partners will be the architect, the local entrepreneur and engineers, and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Rigmor and the Norwegian architect plan to visit Kathmandu every third month. She told me that it will be a special challenge to make sure that the workers' family do not live on the construction site, and that there is no child labour.

Rigmor and the architect are already excited about the project, and they are now prepared to enter the construction period which begins January 2007. Rigmor is ready for taking trips to various parts of Nepal during her site visits. It is expected that the new embassy will be finished during spring 2008. Then Hamro Patrika will bring pictures of the most beautiful building in Kathmandu.

*Marit Bakke*



**“What if there is no doctor in the village health post !!!  
We have to resort to something”**



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## Intellectual Roots of a University Teacher

Madhusudan Subedi is a Lecturer at the Central Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Tribhuvan University, Nepal. Born in a middle class rural family, he has been concerned with democracy, human rights, and public policy in Nepal. He has been especially concerned with developing the relationship between health, society and politics.

In April 2006, I visited Madhu and his family at their home in the outskirts of Kirtipur. His wife Mina Subedi is a graduate from Tribhuvan University. She began as a part-time teacher in college but could not continue because the college was far away from home. Mina and Madhu have two children. The boy Pratik is four years old and eager to learn, while the girl, Prativa, is eleven and loves going to school. I was very impressed by her knowledge of English. For instance, when I looked at the list of content in a text book in medical anthropology I asked if she knew the difference between “cure” and “care”. After pondering this for a few minutes she said: “Care is when someone looks after you, and cure is when you get well.”



*The Subedi family: Madhu, Pratik, Prativa, and Mina.  
Photo: Marit Bakke*

I have known Madhu since I met him at the Bergen House in Lalitpur in 1999. Since then we have worked together about health communication issues. When I visited Kathmandu in April 2006 I had just been elected as editor of Hamro Patrika, and I asked Madhu to write about his social background and how he had become a university teacher. The following is an edited version of the draft article he sent me. Madhu has read and accepted this version.

### **Madhu's own story**

I was born in 1966 in a remote village in the Pyuthan district in the Midwestern hill of Nepal. My parents were farmers who did not have any opportunity to go to school. In 1977, my family migrated to Dang, one of the inner Terai districts in Nepal. Both my parents are still living in the same village.

I started my schooling in the Dang district. During class one and two in primary school my teachers were very happy about my performance and they advised my parents that I should skip class three and move directly to class four. The primary school was about 25 minutes walking distance from my house, while the lower secondary school (class four to seven) was about one and half hours walking distance from my house. Therefore, my family decided that I should not jump up to class four.

During the fourth to the seventh class I scored from the fourth to the second position among 47 students. When I had finished seventh grade I continued at a High School which was about one hour and forty five minutes walking distance from my house. The trail was dusty during the summer and muddy in winter. We did not have electricity so kerosene light was the only option to read and write in the evening. This was expensive for my family and we were discouraged to read and write in the evenings.

English, math, science, history, geography, and Nepali were compulsory subjects, and poultry, agronomy and shorthand typing were optional subjects in my school. I wanted to choose shorthand typing but the books were not available in the local market. So I had to select poultry as my optional subjects. In 1982, I obtained the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) as the third best of 996 students in Dang district.

After SLC my dream was to study engineering in Kathmandu. One of my friends was going to Kathmandu for further study and I asked him to bring my certificate

and turn in an application to the Engineering Campus. Due to financial problems I could not pursue my study in Kathmandu and instead I went to Nepalganj, the district next to Dang, to study Intermediate in Science. It was really difficult to study science without having studied mathematics in high school, but in the end I managed quite well. For one year I taught at Ganesh High School in Pyuthan. In 1988, I got a BA degree in Dang with Mathematics and Economics as the major subjects. Then I was ready for studies in Kathmandu, and in 1989 I got a MA degree in Sociology from the Central Department of Sociology and Anthropology (CDSA), Tribhuvan University. I started to teach medical sociology, medical anthropology at the Institute of Medicine, and research methods, and population studies at the CDSA, Tribhuvan University.

During the late 1980s, the University of Bergen (UiB) had provided several scholarships to Nepali Sociologists and Anthropologists to study in Norway. Eventually this program developed into the Tribhuvan-Bergen Human Ecology Program, and to the creation in 1998 of a Human Ecology oriented Master of Philosophy (M. Phil.) in Social Anthropology at UiB. It is fair to say that the success of both initiatives was secured by the UiB professor Gunnar Haaland's diligent coordination. This program enabled many young Norwegian researchers and students in anthropology and archeology to come to Nepal, and Nepalese students and faculty to go to Norway.

With a NORAD fellowship during 1998-2000 I was fortunate to be among the first group of international students in Social Anthropology at UiB. During these years I was given a golden opportunity to take courses in general anthropology and human ecology with Prof. Fredrik Barth, Prof. Bruce Kapferer, and Prof. Andrew P. Vayda. At the University of Bergen's Center for International Health lectures by professor Heggenhougen, who visited from Harvard Medical School, enabled me to widen my knowledge about medical anthropology and social medicine.

I completed my M. Phil. degree in Social Anthropology in July 2000. I returned to Nepal and joined the Central Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Tribhuvan University to teach research methods, theories in sociology and anthropology, and environmental conservation in Nepal. I am affiliated part time with Purbanchal University where I teach sociology of health and illness, communication and development, and caste, ethnicity and national integration. The MA courses at Purbanchal starts at 6:20 am during the summer, and at 6:40

during the winter. Most of the students have middle class background, and they come from different parts of Nepal. Some of them have to work during the day and therefore there is little time to study. As undergraduates they have taken sociology and anthropology courses, while others have attended courses in natural sciences, management, law, and other social sciences. They are very interactive, creative, sincere, and hardworking. Most of them have secured good grades at the first year final examination. They are interested in further studies in sociology and anthropology, and are looking for scholarships to be able to study in USA or Europe.



*Entrance to the Sagarmatha Multiple College,  
Kathmandu branch of Purbanchal University. Photo: Marit Bakke*

Most recently my academic work has been focusing on the relationships between health, society and politics. My plan for the near future is to prepare a course in Medical Anthropology at Tribhuvan University. Currently, I have been asked to work on a part-time basis in Martin Chautari, a NGO that is working for enhancing the quality of public discourse in Nepal, partly by facilitating research about media, environmental justice, human security, politics, and public health in Nepal. The University of Edinburgh has joined the Martin Chautari program “Health, Society and Politics” to do research about the regulation, distribution,

and consumption of pharmaceuticals in South Asia. The program has not started yet, but I have agreed to coordinate the research activities in Nepal.

All of these plans have been influenced by my heterogeneous training as well as by regular meetings, in Norway and in Nepal, with professor Gunnar Haaland and professor emeritus Marit Bakke (she was affiliated with the Department of



*Students at Sagarmatha Multiple College*

*Photo: Marit Bakke*

Information Science and Media Studies, University of Bergen). Marit has assisted in developing teaching material for MA courses at Purbanchal University, one element being a joint article with me about communication aspects in health care work in Nepal. We plan to continue our academic cooperation in the future.

I have been interested in politics since high school. It made an impression on me when the students were fighting for Multi Party Democracy in Nepal during the 1980s. My studies abroad enabled me to compare social and political conditions in Norway and Nepal. For instance, the role of the King is quite different in our two countries. In Nepal, there is a high wall around the King's palace, and there also are very tight security posts. Almost all Nepali have negative attitudes towards the present King whereas almost all Norwegians praise their king with such words as 'constitutional, liberal, and progressive'. It is my



impression that Norwegians to a higher degree than Nepalis respect traffic regulations, the strict restriction against drinking and driving, etc. Can we develop this culture in Nepal to minimize the road accidents? Social security policy, nationalism, gender empowerment, peace building, health and education policy are some of the issues that Nepal can learn from Norway if we are really committed to bringing peace and prosperity to our country.

It was natural for me to be involved in the formation of the Nepal-Norway Alumni Association (NNAA) whose main goal was to initiate mutual understanding and close relations among all the Nepali graduates from different universities in Norway. The members of NNAA genuinely feel committed to work for linking the NORAD fellows who are living in different parts of the world. We want to join hands in a platform where our professional experiences and innovative ideas can be shared to develop ourselves and make our nation a better place to live.



*Just imagine what this plate with Nepali food looks like in colour.*

*Photo: Manohar Pradhan*



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## Acquiring Medical Competence in Norway

Most of the articles in Hamro Patrika have been about events and conditions *in* Nepal. This is to be expected given the fact that Hamro Patrika is the newsletter for the Norway-Nepal Association where most of the members are Norwegian. However, an important aspect of the Nepalese society during the last twenty years is the high number of young men and women who study abroad, particularly in the United States.

Also Norway has many students from Nepal. They study or do research at colleges and universities in Ås, Trondheim, Bergen, and Oslo. This article tells about three Nepali men who came to Norway to study and do research within the medical field. They are Suraj Bahadur Thapa, Hari Prasad Dhakal, and Manohar Pradhan.



*From left: Manohar, Hari, and Suraj Photo: Marit Bakke*

All three had obtained their medical degree before they came to Norway. Suraj studied at the Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital, while both Hari and Manohar got their degree in Bangladesh. So why did they decide to come to Norway?

**Suraj** comes from Kathmandu. Suraj's brother is an engineer and during the late 1990s he worked for hydropower projects in Nepal and he wished to pursue

master degree in his field in Norway. In 1999, both brothers applied for a NORAD grant, and Suraj was the lucky one while his brother had to wait for another 3 years. In 1995, Suraj spent one month in Sweden so Scandinavia was not totally unfamiliar to him. Before he got the grant he had considered going to the United States. Instead he began his postgraduate work at the Department of International Health, University of Oslo, where he first took a M. Phil. degree in 2001, and then a Ph. D. in 2006 with the dissertation "Population based studies of mental health among migrants in Nepal and Norway." He has previously worked in different hospitals, and in national and international organizations. During the Ph. D project, Suraj also worked for 18 months as an intern doctor in Norway. It has been a great experience for him to have his internship in Skien, and then in Gaular in Sogn on the west coast of Norway. He particularly enjoyed working in the sparsely populated community Gaular where he felt very welcome by the people, and sometimes received gifts such as fish. Since August Suraj has been working at Ullevål University Hospital in Oslo to become a specialist in psychiatry. This will take four years. His family has been living in Norway these last six years: his wife Shailendri, and the children Sahara (five years old) and Shuvasa who is two years old. Both children are born in Norway.

**Hari** has lived two years in Norway. He originally comes from Gorkha, but moved to Chitwan in 1972. After finishing his medical degree (MBBS) in Bangladesh and becoming a specialist (MD) in pathology in India, Hari got a job at the B. P. Koirala Memorial Cancer Hospital, the national cancer institute in Nepal. He visited Switzerland as a fellow in Institute of Pathology, Basel for 5 weeks in 1997. He also got a Spanish government fellowship for one year in 1998-99 in the Department of Pathology, Granada. In 2002, he got UICC fellowship in MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, USA for one month. He worked in BPKMCH as a specialist and consultant from 1996 to 2004 before he came to Norway. However, this was not the first visit to Norway. In 2003 he spent five weeks at Radiumhospitalet with a fellowship, and the next year he was invited back as a researcher in the pathology department to do research in breast cancer. After a while he entered a Ph.D. program as part of a large research project. He hopes to finish during 2008.

Hari's contact with Scandinavia dates back to his childhood. The primary school he attended in Ghorka was run by the United Mission to Nepal, and there were teachers from Finland, Sweden, and Norway. After he had finished his premedical degree from Institute of Medicine he worked as doctors' assistant (H.A.) at

Patan Hospital where he met friendly people from Sweden before joining medical college in Bangladesh with a Nepalese government scholarship. Hari lives with his wife Pawanita Shrotriya and the younger daughter Aditi (five years old) here in Norway, and his elder daughter Aastha (nine years old) studies in Kathmandu.

**Manohar** comes from Kathmandu. He has his medical degree from Bangladesh, and got his specialization in Pathology from Tribhuvan University in 2000. For four years he worked at B. P. Koirala Memorial Cancer Hospital in Chitwan, as a pathologist. Manohar got UICC fellowship to do training at the Norwegian Radiumhospitalet during summer 2003, and was invited back in December 2005 as a researcher in the Department of Pathology. He is doing research in endometrial carcinoma. He had been to several European countries before and now he is happy to work in the internationally renowned research institute. His wife Annie Amatya Pradhan, and son Srimon (two years old) are with him here in Norway.

So what are the challenges that they, and their families, face here in Norway? For Hari and Manohar it is a real problem that they cannot practice as doctors in Norway. Their only option for staying in Norway is to work as researchers, and as such they find the conditions very good.

It was a big surprise for all family members to experience the long summer days, and the long nights during winter. On the other hand, many Norwegians have been amazed when their Nepali friends tell that they had not seen snow until they came to Norway. On the social front, Suraj, Hari, and Manohar confirm what also other foreigners say: It takes a long time to establish contact with Norwegians. However, once that is done, the relationships continue for ever.

What about the future? When Hari and Manohar have finished their Ph.D, and Suraj has become a psychiatry specialist, all of them plan to return to their home country. Their primary wish is to contribute to improving public health programs in Nepal. One option is to work within the context of the new, public health oriented medical education that currently is being planned by a group of doctors at Patan Hospital. Such an education cannot be developed without foreign assistance, and Suraj's, Hari's, and Manohar's vision is to take advantage of their years in Norway to create a network with Norwegian partners to promote health services, research, teaching, and preventive health programs.

*Marit Bakke*

## Books in Nepal

Nepal is most famous for its mountains and cultural heritage. We should, however, also know that Nepal is an amazing country in the book field, and not only with respect to tourist guides and maps. In Pilgrims, Mandala Book Point, Ekta Educational Palace, Vajra Book Shop, and other book stores in Kathmandu you can indulge yourself in stacks with academic books, fiction as well as guide and picture books for tourists. And, at least for visitors from Western countries, everything is very cheap. This is very good for your money purse, but it can be devastating for your baggage weight.

The excellent condition that we see today is the result of the work done by several dedicated people. We find them in the publishing business, book shops and libraries.

Already in 1974 a booklet described the problems, achievements and strategies to be taken in the future to promote the publication of books in Nepal (Madhav Lal Karmacharya, *Some Hints on Printing & Publishing in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Suresh B. Malla. 1974). However, until the late 1990s the government apparently did not oversee the book industry as much as newspapers and magazines. *Book Publishing Industry in Nepal: Problems and Prospects*. (National Booksellers and Publishers Association of Nepal 2000, page 14) refers to a report that was published in 1967 about daily newspapers, weeklies, monthly, and less frequent newspapers and magazines (Grishma Bahadur Devkota, *Nepalko Chapakhana ra patrapatrikako Itihas*. Kathmandu: Keshav P. Lamsal). According to the report (footnote on page 14 in *Book Publishing Industry*): "The background to the actions taken against every paper and magazine is invariably political in nature. The long list of papers and magazines does not show the nature of censorship on books and their sales. So the booksellers did not directly encounter the government and face closures of their shops, though some publications were closed under the panchayati raj policies."

The above mentioned *Book Publishing Industry in Nepal* describes how this situation changed in 1998. The book includes reports from two conferences in Kathmandu in 1998 and 1999. The first conference focused on the book industry, and the second conference discussed the role of books in the education system in Nepal. It is very interesting to note that the first conference was organized in response to a tax dispute with the government. In its 1998 annual fiscal report the government announced that a 10 per cent tax would be charged on every

book coming to Nepal from outside (*Book Publishing Industry in Nepal*, page 14). Until then only newspapers, weeklies, and journals had been subject to government regulations (including censorship) so the prospect of this tax created great alarm: "The booksellers and publishers came together and moved earth and heaven for its abrogation." These efforts were not wasted because in the end the minister of finance withdrew the proposal. It must be noted that today there is a 6.5 percent tax on book sales in Nepal.

The incident had, however, made the industry aware of the need to make the booksellers' and publishers' organization strong. Not only with respect to government regulations, but also to cope with the (page 15): "[...] disclosure of the copyright racketing allegedly perpetrated by the writers themselves." Some writers did not obtain copyright benefits. For instance, one poet became aware of the fact that one of his poems had been included in a university textbook that had been sold to more than hundred thousand consumers - eighty thousand students were enrolled at Tribhuvan University alone. The private booksellers also discovered that: "[...] Nepal has been the haven of foreign language, especially English language books for the foreign visitors." This sounds familiar for many of us Norwegians who have been delighted by the cheap prices of English language books in Nepal.

Thus, the conference in 1998 stated that the book industry (finally) had become acutely aware that books had become a commodity on a market, and that there was a great need for developing a national book policy. This should be done jointly by the book industry's organizations and the government. In addition to the copyright issue it was necessary to face the challenge which the import of books from India represented: "Booksellers have felt that they have become India locked, as they have to sell books which make inroads into the Nepali book market after overtly or covertly being scrutinized in India." (*Book Publishing Industry in Nepal*, page 17). The road ahead should be to facilitate more books, in Nepali as well as in English, to being published in Nepal. This would contribute to making education a strong factor for developing the Nepalese society. It also would secure that Nepal benefits from the tourists' book shopping. In his welcome speech to the second conference reported on in *Book Publishing Industry in Nepal* (page 100) Madhab L. Maharjan said: "It is not only the hotel, travel trade and carpet business that bring foreign currency into Nepal, it is also the book industry that helps flow the hard currency for development in the country. Tourists are very fond of reading books."

Actually, one of the significant persons in the business of publishing and selling books in Nepal is Madhab L. Maharjan. For more than thirty years he has been a familiar face in this field. When he entered college in 1968 to study business he planned to get a job in a bank. However, destiny or whatever we may call it, intervened when the owner of Nepali Book Sellers died and Madhab was asked to work in the shop. This was a natural choice for the family because Madhab had stayed in their house for six years and learned most aspects of the book trade. He had also worked for two years as research assistant at the semi-governmental Industrial Service Center.



*Madhab surrounded by books in his office. Photo: Marit Bakke*

Thus Madhab was well prepared when he in 1977 rented a space close to the mosque in the center of Kathmandu and opened Himalayan Book Sellers. The site was not an accidental choice. Right outside the book shop there was a traffic light and Madhab knew that when the cars stopped people had to see the shop. Madhab's strategy was that he would close if the income was less than 2 rupees (!) per day. His parents supported him with 10.000 rupees, and he went to New Dehli and bought books for two laxi. Within six months the business improved, and after two years it was time to expand the shop. Hard work had been worth while and Madhab was ready for a successful career in Nepalese book business. In April 2006, Madhab gave me a nice personal touch to his story about these first years when he told me that he serviced the present King Gyanendra, partly by providing current comic books.



In 1982, Madhab moved to Thamel and by 1985 the Himalayan Book Sellers was big business with 32 persons employed, among them were seven brothers. Already in 1977, Madhab had decided to focus on the academic community and to be associated with professional people. Eventually he created a great network of professors and university people who asked for course literature and who also recommended books to be imported. In 1988, the brothers decided to move in different directions and two of them joined Madhab when he opened Mandala Book Point on Kanthipat in 1988.

The revolution in 1990 was an important year also for the book business. With the new political situation the number of educational institutions increased, thus also the number of students who demanded books. The Mandala Book Point is still there and the staff will always give you good advice. If you are looking for books about a specific topic you may be invited for a talk with Madhab in his office in the back yard. This room actually serves as an office, storeroom as well as a meeting place for scholars and intellectuals. It is indeed quite an experience to take part in one of Madhab's "seminars" about current affairs.



*Marit Kleppa's T-shirt "Mother of ISBN". Gift from Norwegian librarians in Nepal in 2005. Photo: Peter Johan Lie*

Until 1999 Nepal had not been part of the international ISBN system. This drawback was stressed by Mr. Hallvard Kåre Kuløy in his opening remarks at the book publishing industry conference in 1998. During several years he worked for improving the conditions for books and libraries in Nepal, including introducing the ISBN system. Kuløy asked Marit Kleppa, Deputy Librarian of the Norwegian Parliament Library (also member, and former chair person of the Norway-Nepal Association), to participate in the process to decide where the ISBN office should be located. In 1999, she attended a workshop that discussed this issue. It was not an easy decision because

both the National Library and the Tribhuvan University wanted the ISBN office at their place. An important actor in this process was the International ISBN office in Berlin that said that the main partners in Nepal – the Association of Librarians, and the National Booksellers and Publishers Association of Nepal – had to agree. In the end, based on Marit Kleppa's recommendation, it was decided that the ISBN office should be located at the Tribhuvan University Central Library. Her main argument was that site visits gave her the impression that the university library was the most active one.

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**Khajuri (a type of sweets) cooking in Nepal**  
*Photo: Marit Bakke*

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## The Road towards Democracy in Nepal

One significant element in the people's movement during April 2006 was the role played by the civil society. On the Internet, in newspapers and magazines we have read about initiatives by people in neighbourhoods, by professional organizations, and academic institutions.

In June 2006, the research institution Fafo in Oslo hosted an international conference in connection with the launching of *The Reality of Aid Report 2006 - An Independent Review of Poverty Reduction and Development Assistance - Focus on Conflict, Security and Development Cooperation*. (BON Books, Quezon City, Philippines and Zed Books, London. Web site: [www.realityofaid.org](http://www.realityofaid.org)). Gopal Siwakoti 'Chintan', with his colleague Neeru Shrestha, has contributed to this Report (see pp.117-127). 'Chintan' was one of the RoA participants at the Fafo conference. He is currently a Tribhuvan University Law Faculty Lecturer and Co-Director of Nepal Policy Institute based in Kathmandu. At the conference he spoke about "The Role of Civil Society in Providing Lasting Peace in Nepal." During a lunch break, the editor of *Hamro Patrika* spoke with 'Chintan' and asked him to write about the latest events in Nepal towards transforming Nepal into a democratic society. Below is the short version of what 'Chintan' and Shrestha have written for the RoA 2006 report. *The views expressed in this article are those of the authors, and not necessarily of Hamro Patrika.*

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The political situation in Nepal has drastically changed after the popular April Revolution in 2006. It was the result of a joint alliance of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) and the Seven Party Parliamentary Allianc (SPA). Nepal now is moving towards an all-party government, and the election of the first ever Constituent Assembly that will write a new Constitution. The popular demand now in Nepal is the abolition of the notorious and repressive monarchy.

The SPA/Government and the CPN have taken several steps to secure a final peace agreement. In November 2005, the 12-Point Memorandum of Understanding paved the way for a formal peace process. On June 16th, the eight-point SPA-Maoist Agreement was signed. These two agreements expressed

a commitment to a competitive multi-party system. Another important point is the agreement to dissolve the controversial Parliament after establishing an interim legislature as well as dissolving the Maoist-led People's Governments of CPN-Maoists, and to work towards a free and fair election of a Constituent Assembly.

Another important step was the Five-Point Agreement of August 9th, 2006 in which the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Nepal was asked to monitor human rights, and to manage the arms situation of both the government and the Maoists. Equally important was the 25-Point Code of Conduct in which the Maoists agreed to an effective ceasefire. The Code also said that the Maoist forces should be confined within designated cantonment areas, and the Nepal Army in their original barracks.

During the April Revolution, the US and India played a clandestine role to save King Gyanendra, and to sideline the Maoists by restoring the dead Parliament and opposing the demand of the vast masses for an all party national conference for the formation of an interim government and for preparing the election of a Constituent Assembly. Now it appears that the US and India have resumed their former position to maintain the monarchy and sideline the forces that support a republic of Nepal. They have offered new arms supply, and military advisors in Kathmandu are offering 'any help' needed to defeat the Maoists if the peace process breaks up. Unfortunately, the SPA, mainly sections of the Nepali Congress and the CPN-UML, has already fallen into the US-led trap to regain their lost credibility and maintain their supremacy at the Constituent Assembly election.

Parliament, which was dissolved four years ago, has now become the instrument to prevent the Maoists from joining the transitional government. The Parliament and the Government have started saying that the Maoists will not be let into the government until the management of arms has been solved. However, the Maoists argue that the arms issue can only be dealt with after a new constitution has been drafted by an elected Constituent Assembly. Sections of the two main parties are suggesting that Parliament will not be dissolved, that Maoists will be prevented from joining the government and even that the election of the Constituent Assembly may never be held.

If the SPA government fails to comply with the previously signed agreements the ultimate result is that the Maoists will be forced to resume the People's War. But this is what the people of Nepal never want to happen. Besides, the Maoists have said that they would rather launch a peaceful people's struggle to put pressure on the SPA to comply with the previous agreements. The vast masses of the people, including the indigenous-ethnic communities, *Dalits* (the so called 'untouchables'), the *Madhesis* (the people of Terai region), and the other marginalised communities are clear about the need for a republic and a comprehensive restructuring of the state.

There is, however, a danger that pro-monarchical and anti-republican forces are planning a military coup against the Maoists if they succeed to enter the Constituent Assembly. People are worried because the SPA government has failed in suspending key army personnel who were involved in committing serious human rights violations and war crimes during the past ten years of insurgency.

Therefore, it is urgent that Nepal's neighbours, friendly countries, and 'donors' do not interfere in the internal affairs of Nepal. The US is directly threatening Nepal with the suspension of aid if the Maoists are allowed to join the government before giving up arms and until they are de-listed from the US list of terrorist groups. The US is behaving as if Nepal is its colony and thus bound by the US laws and regulations. It is important for the US, India, and other foreign governments to understand that the demand for a republic does not come from the Maoists only, but from the vast majority of the Nepalese people. They have been suffering for centuries under the feudal monarchical, upper class dominated regime, and now they will not tolerate it anymore. History has given them the first chance to overcome all social, political, and cultural obstacles to change. The spirit and hope they have now is that they can fight back the SPA government, the Nepal Army, and even external interventions peacefully.

Therefore, the only constructive role that the donors can play is to give Nepal unconditional political support and untied aid in support of democracy, human rights, and poverty eradication. The issue now is how to reduce the size of the army and to seek a zone of peace status for Nepal through non-aggression treaties with India and China.

## Spørreundersøkelsen

Vinteren 2005/06 gjennomførte Norge-Nepal foreningen en spørreundersøkelse i foreningen. Spørre-skjemaet ble sendt til 108 husstander hvorav 29 (28 %) svarte.

### Møter

Hele 68 % går på møtene en eller flere ganger i året, men de fleste nøyer seg med ett eller to møter årlig. Av de 32 % som aldri går på møtene, har mange opplyst som årsak at de bor langt unna. Folk setter generelt pris på foredragene, de trives med å treffe Nepal-kjente og få faglig påfyll om Nepal. Tettere møtестruktur, presis start, klart definerte "skravlestunder", mikrofon og mindre akademiske temaer etterlyses. Det er også ønske om flere inkluderende og kontaktskapende aktiviteter som får nepalesere og nykommere til å bli kjent med andre. Blant de mange gode forslagene til foredragstemaer, ble den politiske utviklingen og bistand, samt etniske, kulturelle og økonomiske forhold, nevnt flest ganger.

### Hamro Patrika

Det kom inn mye ros for Hamro Patrika (HP) som verdsettes høyt og leses flittig (52 % leser mye og 31 % leser en god del). Mange har svart at de leser alt/det meste av stoffet. Politikk scorer høyest av de mer konkrete interessefeltene, der også kultur, Norge-Nepal relasjoner og personlige beretninger/intervjuer nevnes hyppig. Det er ønske om mer kritisk analyse, humoristiske innslag og artikler skrevet spesielt for HP. En tredjedel svarer at HP kan erstattes av artikler og informasjon på e-post og web fordi det er raskt, billig og øker tilgjengeligheten. En annen tredjedel mener HP bør fortsette i papirformat; den er "personlig", de setter pris på å ha en trykksak i hånden, noen samler på HP og bladet er "mobilt" – lett å ta med seg som sengelektyre, på toget eller andre steder. En siste tredjedel har svart både ja og nei til å endre HP fra papir til e-post/web og noen har nevnt en kompromissløsning der man kan ha smakebiter og informasjon om møter og hendelser på e-post/web, mens resten bør være på trykk.

### Medlemsregister og utsendinger

De aller fleste (97 %) mottar HP og møteinnkallinger til riktig postadresse, men noen har slitt med å få igjennom adresseforandringer. Litt færre (86 %) mener



de får sendinger god nok tid i forveien av møter. Flere nevner imidlertid at innkallingene kommer for tett på møtene og at de dermed ikke får deltatt.

### Generelt

**Aktiviteter/tilbud:** Hamro Patrika og møter med gode foredrag (og spesielt møte med daal bhaat og sang/dans) står helt klart høyest på folks prioriteringsliste. Det er også ønske om møter med nepalesiske personligheter som besøker Norge og flere mener utvikling av web-siden bør prioriteres høyt. Blant de mange andre gode forslagene er e-post varsel om hendelser, oppdatert informasjon om Nepal, ny versjon av heftet "Til Nepal?", feiring av nepalesiske høytider, sang og musikk, faste kafémøter og aktiviteter som kan inkludere nepalesere i større grad.

**Oppfatning av foreningen:** De aller fleste har en positiv oppfatning av foreningen; 78 % betegner den som *kontaktskapende* og 67 % forbinder den med ordet *kunnskapsrik*. Nesten halvparten føler at *spennende* og *koselig* er beskrivende ord, mens noen færre (22 %) mener *initiativrik*, *frisk* og *akademisk* er passende. På den andre siden oppfattes foreningen sjelden som *profesjonell* (11%) og nesten aldri som *effektiv* (4 %).

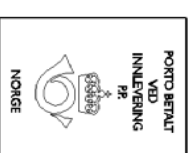
**Besøk i Nepal:** Hele 33 % av de som svarte har vært i Nepal mer enn 10 ganger og 45% har besøkt landet 2-10 ganger. De aller fleste drar til Nepal på privat basis (turisme og besøke familie/kjente). Jobbrelaterte reiser kommer som en god nummer to. En tredjedel har vært i Nepal i perioden 2004-2006, mens enda flere (41 %) var der i 2000-2004.

**Medlemmene:** Foreningens medlemmer bor stort sett i Oslo/Akershus (59 %). Resten er jevnt fordelt på Østlandet utenom Oslo/Akershus og i resten av landet. De fleste har vært medlemmer i foreningen lenge: 24% i mer enn 10 år, 21 % i 6-9 år og 17 % i 2-5 år. Ingen av de som svarte på undersøkelsen er under 30 år, mange er 30-49 år (31 %), de fleste er 50-69 år (52 %) og en del er 70 år eller eldre (17%).

En fullstendig oversikt over resultatene fra spørreundersøkelsen – med tilhørende analyse og forsøksvise konklusjoner – vil legges ut på foreningens hjemmeside.

*K. I. Greiner*

# B



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Norge-Nepal foreningen  
c/o Solveig Holmedal Ottesen  
Schweigaardsgate 52 A  
0656 Oslo

**MEDLEMSKONTINGENT:**  
Enkeltmedlem      kr 125,-  
Familie              kr 175,-  
Organisasjon      kr 300,-  
Kontonummer: 6219 05 79358

Norge- Nepal foreningen vil gjerne gi medlemmene informasjon om møter og arrangementer så raskt som mulig. Dette kan bl.a. skje gjennom e-post. Vi oppfordrer alle til å send sin e-post adresse til: [nayamalla@hotmail.com](mailto:nayamalla@hotmail.com)

Norge - Nepal foreningen



[www.norge-nepal.no](http://www.norge-nepal.no)