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Family members of the victims in Sunday-bomb explosion be consoled by their relatives outside Bit hospital. Exact details of the incident and casualties are still awaited. (Report on page 2)

B.P Koirala dumped

G P Koirala makes his brother irrelevant in new Nepal

■ nf correspondent

Twenty five years after his death, and almost 31 years after his return to Nepal to pursue politics of national reconciliation, the most charismatic and visionary leader of the Nepali Congress, BP Koirala has now been relegated to a non-entity. And the credit for this goes to his brother, G P Koirala. The fatal blow to BP's legacy of Nepali nationalism and policy of national reconciliation came from G P Koirala when he announced that congress should go republic.

"We must go for republic now and you draft the party manifesto accordingly," he instructed Chakra Bastola, a senior working committee member of the Nepali Congress on August 31. Congress going republic marks the end of an era, and ideological demise of G P

Koirala who returned to Kathmandu on Dec 31, 1976 ending eight year long exile in India with a policy of national reconciliation which said that Nepal's sovereignty would be in danger if king and democratic forces did not work together.

G P Koirala's instruction has already sent a political tremor within the party with some suspecting that he is a helpless prisoner of a strong 'coterie' that dictates him. Koirala's sudden instruction followed intense discussion in the Prime Minister's house about the unconfirmed meeting that Indian Ambassador Shiv

Shankar Mukherjee had with King Gyanendra on August 24. The PM was advised that it was an ominous sign as the two were 'plotting' against him, and it would be wise to target the king, to "nap the conspiracy at bud."

"Out of blue, Koirala suggested that we must go republic. We have a history and legacy of the party and we cannot desert BP's philosophy just to blindly follow Prachanda republic theory," a CWC member told newsfront claiming that the party as well as the manifesto committee were divided over the issue now. According to the report, even Koirala family is divided on the issue

with Shekhar Koirala advocating a pro-republic line and Sujata favouring a measured study of the pros and cons of the issue.

The manifesto committee headed by

Bastola met on 1st September which broadly discussed the issues that the manifesto should be covering to, "meet the challenges that a Nepal in transition demands," a member said.

BP Koirala and Ganesh Man Singh, the co-author of the national reconciliation policy had been arrested and tried for treason on their arrival at Kathmandu, but the party pursued the policy afterwards. The only surviving founder member of the party K P Bhattarai has clearly told G P Koirala that he would not be supporting a pro-republic line. ■

G P Koirala's instruction has already sent a political tremor within the party.

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Bhaskar Ojha

Nepal under-19 cricket team has won the ACC under-19 Elite Cup for the fourth consecutive time. Nepal defeated Afghanistan in Malaysia last week.

Serial blasts

■ nf correspondent

At least three people are dead and 25 wounded out of which seven of them are in a serious condition; when a series of explosions rocked different parts of the capital on Sunday. The incident took place late afternoon in several parts of the capital. The injured included two school children. The incidents were reported from Sundhara, Tripureshwar, Kirtipur and Balaju. Somebody who identified himself as Mr. John of Terai Army has owned the responsibility but there has been no independent varification.

Preliminary reports suggested that maximum damage was caused in Balaju where the explosion took place inside a micro-bus. Police sources said, at least one person lost his arm as a result of the explosion at Sundhara. The person who is yet to be identified has been suspected of carrying explosive fitted mobile phone. "But we cannot confirm it at the moment that he was responsible for it," police sources said. He is undergoing treatment in Bir hospital under police custody. The Maoists had taken out a rally near the spot a couple of hours before the incident took place.

An exercise towards new constitution

■ nf correspondent

The countdown for the constituent assembly polls has begun and international initiative to advise what could be a better constitution model for Nepal has been stepped up. Leading the initiative now is India with a team of legal and constitutional experts descending here from Delhi to share their experiences on federalism, pluralism, secularism and affirmative actions on the invitation of the B P Koirala India-Nepal Foundation.

The findings of the three-day interaction programme which began on Sunday will be submitted to PM G P Koirala, by Indian ambassador Shiv Shankar Mukherjee in his capacity as the co-chairperson of the foundation, as a reference material when Nepal goes into the process of making a

new constitution following election to the constituent assembly in November.

"Nepalis have taken their destiny in their hands.... an inclusive, prosperous Nepal at peace with itself and the world, is something people are looking for," ambassador Mukherjee said. He added that a new constitution which reflects aspiration of all Nepalis and giving space to those who have been denied that in the past is a major challenge; and that a frank, meaningful and a vibrant debate may provide rich input in the process. He said as Nepal is unique in the world, it deserved a unique constitution which Nepal itself has to prepare.

Prof Karthy Govender shared his South African experience suggesting that a constitutional democracy based on the supremacy of the constitution



Dr. Abishek M. Singhvi

protected by an independent judiciary, a democratic system of governance founded on openness, accountability and equality with universal suffrage, regular elections and a separation of powers between legislature, executive and judiciary and one sovereign state structured at national, provincial and

local levels were something that could be equally relevant to Nepal's constitution making process.

In his well-appreciated paper, 'Federalism', India's parliamentarian and constitutional expert, Dr Abishek M Singhvi said federalism was all about sharing of power, devolution of power and sharing of decision making authority. It also meant accommodating diversities, pluralities and multiplicities. He said while he was not well versed with Nepal's ethnic, demographic and geographical complexities, the criteria of the devolution or federal pattern is something Nepalis themselves had to decide. And the core issue to ensure is to make them viable and self-sustainable.

"Adapted Indian federalism, minus its several drawbacks and vitiating elements, may be a valuable starting

point for future models of Nepalese federalism." He also suggested that independent judiciary, especially at the apex or federal level, has made its single most vital contribution towards upholding federal principle. He also felt that the new federal Nepal should not only be secular in the sense of being ethnically, culturally and territorially neutral, but it is also necessary for ensuring future balanced growth of Nepal at the regional level which would create a level playing field, with each unit as a contributor and competitor in individual and collective prosperity.

Dr Subhash Kashyap, former Secretary General of the Lok Sabha, and a constitutional expert, dwelt on the technical process of framing the constitution with rich experiences drawn from the debates in India's constituent assembly.

Turning South

GP keen to bring Man Mohan Singh even for a day soon

■ nf correspondent

Dejected, and fast losing his grip, G P Koirala has now turned towards South. He is keen to have Indian Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh here in Nepal, even for a day before the proposed election to the constituent assembly.

According to the informed sources, Koirala has sent feelers through official channel, but Singh's visit to Nepal when the election process is on, is very unlikely, informed sources said. Koirala is believed to have conveyed that a visit will make

election process much easier.

During his visit to Delhi last year, soon after he rode to power at the height of the success of the people's movement and his popularity, Singh had accepted Koirala's invitation to visit Nepal at 'a convenient time'. That was the time when Singh, breaking normal protocol, had come to receive Koirala at the Indira Gandhi International Airport, had called him the 'legendary statesman'. But the magic of the legendary figure seems to be on the wane as Singh's visit to Nepal at least till before the election is unlikely.

Taxing endurance



■ nf correspondent

Chief Election Commissioner, Bhoj Raj Pokharel, who is in a hurry to enforce the model code of conduct, may have to wait for some time more. He had given enough time for the government to promote secretaries, appoint ambassadors and Chief Justice as well as members and heads of the constitutional bodies.

Once the model code of conduct is enforced, all these appointments will come to a halt. While the government has more or less finished the task of appointing Chief Justice, members and head of the National Human Rights Commission, new government secretaries and ambassadors, it is yet to find suitable candidate to head the Commission for Investigation into abuse of Authority (CIAA).

While the Prime Minister has proposed Sri Kant Regmi, a retired Home Secretary as its head, UML are lobbying for Uday Nepali. The appointment may still take some time as the Maoists and the Congress-D have not spelt out their mind. Secondly, Sahana Pradhan, senior-most UML minister in the cabinet and a member of the constitutional council which is to recommend the candidate is away in Sri Lanka.

An election commission source told newsfront that it was taking a

lenient view on the matter as the election to the CA was not so much of a partisan issue, but the EC cannot wait indefinitely.

Still the far more Herculean task for the commission is to ensure law and order situation as fresh reports and complaints have been lodged with it about the Young Communist League (YCL) attack on UML leaders in Ramechhap and their attempt to attack armed Police force in Kalikot.

YCL has also threatened Nepali Congress leaders in Ramechhap saying they would not allow any election meeting if they did not conduct round table conference on proportional representation system and declare Nepal a republic before the election date. "CEC Pokharel will be talking to the Maoist chief Prachanda soon about it," EC sources said. The YCL is under direct command of Prachanda as per the decision of the recent plenum of the party.

Newsbrief

New Chief Justice

Breaking seniority in the appointment of a new Chief Justice was an idea that the government had been toying with for some time. Some senior leaders in the Congress party including a working committee member and a minister were lobbying with the Prime Minister against the elevation of Kedar Prasad Giri, the senior most judge, in the line of succession to Dilip Kumar Poudel, due to retire on September 7.



But the move fell after the CJ Poudel and Speaker Subhash Nembwang put their foot down. They insisted that having a junior judge superceding the senior one would set a bad precedence besides bringing the apex court into controversy. And that was it. The back-room exercise against the seniority ended there.

This sets a hard task in front of the new Chief Justice. Of late, Supreme Court is being seen as an institution under the influence of the executive, especially as cases against the present regime are getting unjustifiably deferred or delayed.

Quiet home secretary

Is it a sign of demoralisation or tactics? Home Secretary Umesh Mainali maintained total silence when a delegate from Madhesh recently threatened to abduct the Chief District Officer (CDO) of



Siraha if their demand to install a toll collection center on the highway was not conceded to. Mainali's silence betrayed nothing more than his helplessness. May be he was scared of two honourable members of the parliament who were leading the delegation.

All this apparently triggered rage in Baman Neupane, a joint secretary in the home ministry. An eye-witness said he was visibly appalled over the silence of his boss, Mainali. Neupane shouted at the delegate and said, "I will have you arrested right here and now. How dare you threaten to abduct my colleague, a CDO!"

The shout did the magic. Both the MPs maintained total silence and the delegate who threatened to kidnap the CDO knelt on the floor and apologised. Bureaucrats may have been demoralised, but their authority has not collapsed totally.

Biased government

Quitting nearly three decade old job on grounds of principle is not easy. But that is what Jamuna Krishna Shrestha, a joint secretary in the forest ministry, has done. Shrestha put in his papers on September 1 requesting that it be retrospectively accepted from August 30, the day cabinet headed by GP Koirala denied him permission.

Shrestha said, it was indeed a humiliation to be denied promotion on the ground that he did not belong to one or the other political party as a bureaucrat. Koirala government has come under severe criticism for having politicised the bureaucracy. In the promotion of secretaries, the main three parties - Congress, UML and the Maoists, were given fixed quota on the understanding that more than merit, their recommendation would be the most decisive factor.

And Jamuna Krishna did not figure in the list of any party triggering a reaction that is not so common in Nepali bureaucracy.

Modern Arjun?

GP Koirala is now trying to be a hero of Nepali politics. Like Arjuna, the disciple of the great archer, Guru Dronacharya in epic Mahabharata; Koirala is now aiming solely at timely conduct of election to the Constituent Assembly.

"I see nothing except election to the constituent assembly," he said during a customary reception hosted by Speaker Subhash Nebwang at the closure of the House session on 1st Sept. Koirala said he is only concentrating on the CA polls.



Koirala's close aides say he is absolutely confident about holding the polls on November 22. But skeptics are not quiet. After all, he was equally confident about holding elections in June, the earlier time frame for CA polls as stipulated in the interim constitution.



Govt - MJF accord valid

Poudel overrules Prachanda's objections

■ nf correspondent

Minister for Peace and Reconstruction, Ram Chandra Poudel, who signed the agreement with Madheshi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) leader, Upendra Yadav; recently justified what he did saying it was in the national interest. "Prachanda's objections have no meaning," he said, leading to speculations that overruling Prachanda will not be without a political price.

Minister Poudel's response during a reception hosted by Speaker Subhash Nembwang at the parliament building came a day after Prachanda called the accord a 'conspiracy' and disowned it. "The accord was in the interest of the country and the people and in pursuit of government policy to create a conducive policy for holding election to the constituent assembly," Poudel asserted.

It came as a morale booster as well as a political score for the government since Speaker Nembwang also endorsed the accord. Speaking at an interaction programme hosted by the BP Koirala India-Nepal foundation on issues for Nepal's new constitution on Sunday, the speaker said accords signed with the MJF and earlier with the National Federation of indigenous Nationalities (NFIN) earlier were major breakthroughs and they should be sincerely implemented.

Prachanda, apparently isolated on the subject, has expressed deep suspicions that some of the provisions in the 22-point accord are directed against the Maoists. Curt and angry over this, he said Maoists no more wanted to be seen as part of the eight party alliance. "We are not the eight party alliance. We are seven plus one party," he said. He further said that what made Maoists different from the rest in the government was that it had its own army; and its integration in the national army alone will help the political process to move forward smoothly.

In a statement issued within 24 hours of the accord being signed, Prachanda said that such an isolated accord with Yadav, someone controversial within his own group, and without going through the Maoist proposed round table conference on issues of different nationalities was not at all acceptable for the Maoists. He called it an outcome of 'conspiracy' and asked the government not to honour it.

As Maoists disown the accord, Upendra Yadav, a co-signatory to the accord went a step forward than Minister Poudel in chiding Prachanda. "He is upset because we are going to participate in the election and because people from Madhesh have got something which they had so far been deprived of." "This also proves that Maoists never wanted election to the constituent assembly," added Yadav.



आवश्यकता !

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- के तपाईं आफ्नो दक्षता देखाउने क्षेत्रको खोजीमा हुनुहुन्छ ?

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विस्तृत जानकारीको लागि
फोन : २११२०९४ वा ४४४३८८८, फ्याक्स : ४४११९१२, ईमेल : dshrestha@bhrikuti.com

**पारिश्रमिक ?
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 Tel : 4443888, Fax : 4421147 (Edt.), 4411912 (Mkt.)
 Email: newsfront@bhrikuti.com, marketing@bhrikuti.com (Mkt.)
 Printed by: Express Color Press, Buddhanagar, Tel.: 4781810, Distribution: Kasthamandap, Tel.: 2010821

Point to Ponder

A man can't ride your back unless it's bent.
 - Martin Luther King, Jr.

Politics of deceit

The 22-point accord signed between the government and the Madheshi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) is all set to be consigned to the dustbin of Nepal's political laboratory. But the whole exercise smacks of immaturity, deceit, dishonesty and distrust among the political players in the country.

Less than 24 hours after Peace and Reconstruction Minister Ram Chandra Poudel signed the accord with MJF leader Upendra Yadav, with the latter announcing suspension of all agitation in Terai and full-cooperation and participation during the Constituent Assembly election, Maoist chief Prachanda called it a conspiracy and disowned it.

Maoist disowning the accord certainly brings into question the legitimacy, credibility and substance of the accord. And on the other hand, it exposes how artificial and ill coordinated the so called eight party unity is. This also exposes politics of one upmanship and rampant groupism within the coalition. Why did Prachanda have to wait for accord to be signed to say that any understanding with Yadav, someone who deserted them few years ago, was not acceptable to them?

It is true that G P Koirala, the head of the present government, either does not have vision, or deliberately does not want ethnic, Dalit and regional aspirations for their rightful share in politics and power addressed. All along, he has been making piece-meal and half-hearted efforts to address it instead of appointing a high-powered commission or giving it a platform to evolve into a larger policy in a comprehensive manner.

Koirala wants to pursue the politics of one upmanship. Prachanda deserves all support if he is categorically in favour of a comprehensive solution to the ethnic nationalities related issues. But his inconsistency so far on the issue only shows that his limited purpose behind disowning the accord is to discredit MJF and the government.

While G P Koirala lacks vision, Prachanda is guided solely by partisan interests. Instead of pressurising the government long ago for a comprehensive, accommodative and constructive approach towards these problems, he always tried to project Madhesh agitation, especially MJF as a creation of India and the palace. He used some of the Congress leaders in the past to sabotage dialogue with the MJF right at the beginning, with no success.

By disowning the accord and terming the deal once it has been signed as a conspiracy, Prachanda has exhibited that his deep-rooted hatred towards MJF persists. But more than Upendra Yadav, he has inflicted a heavy blow on G P Koirala, both in terms of his moral authority as well as his status as a coalition leader. GP proposing and Prachanda decisively disposing the accord will only make Koirala servile to the Maoist chief, and the spirit of coalition will be substantially weakened.



Letters

Tame Maoists

Following the Maoists' recent plenum, a lot of letters, articles and editorials have been written criticising the Maoists for their contradictory stance on CA elections. At such a critical juncture regarding the future of the nation, the other political parties, media, and civil society appear content lambasting the Maoists and seem to be building the case to place all the blame of a possible failure of the 'peace process' on the Maoists' shoulders.

However, these groups should also remember that it was they who promised to the people that the Maoists could be brought into the mainstream and the insurgency resolved peacefully. It is up to them to deliver on their promises now, no matter what.

Throughout the past year we have watched parties only talk when Maoists reneged on many agreements in the CPA. The press that was incredibly active against the royal regime emits, comparatively speaking, a whimper in front of Maoist atrocities (except when they are themselves attacked). Civil society has all but disappeared.

Why can't these groups organise and rally together to tame the Maoists the way they organised to tame the king? If the peace process fails these groups cannot escape simply by blaming the Maoists. The people rallied against the king under their leadership. They cannot now run away from the promises of peace they made to the people. They better deliver, and deliver a just peace not something simply to appease the Maoists!

Satyajeet Nepali
Kathmandu

Justify sacrifice

Thanks to newsfront for giving caste wise break-up of the Maoists important bureaus. It was interesting that four out of five central bureaus have Bahuns as leaders. Similarly, in 11 state bureaus, all but three have either Bahuns or Chhetris as

the heads.

When Maoists and communists have been regularly preaching that in Nepal's context caste and class are inter-related, I have a simple question to ask - then what was the basis of Maoists leading this so called class struggle during the past 11 years in which more than 13,000 lives perished?

After all, G P Koirala, Prachanda and Madhav Nepal, the leaders of the top three political parties belong to one single class or caste called Bahun. In the past 15 months, we have also seen remarkable understanding between them that has led them to strike many deals in PM Koirala's residence. It is because their caste interests merge.

Are not these Maoist leaders, especially the duo - Prachanda and Baburam answerable to the family members of thousands of Dalits and Janajatis who sacrificed their lives in the past one decade?

Shanta Pun
Sat Dobato, Lalitpur

Why solicit?

Newsfront has been giving space to the role of the UN agencies as well as the international community on the peace process in Nepal. It is a very important aspect in the peace process as well as in Nepal's transition. UNMIN has come here as a part of a very clear mandate in the form of letter of invitation it has received, both from the government and the Maoists.

But Ian Martin's statement that UNMIN will take up a new role on Terai if approached goes against the letter and spirit of the mandate it has got. UNMIN cannot solicit more invitation to expand its role and job. Nepal government must clarify on this and act instantly.

Amar Subba
Hattigauda, Kathmandu



Spiritual Corner

I am free

Shankaracharya was one of India's foremost philosophers. His exact birth date is uncertain but he was thought to have lived during the 8th century AD. He interpreted Vedanta philosophy in a strictly Advaita (non dual, monistic) spirit. In essence this philosophy involves attaining the supreme transcendental consciousness (Brahman) by detaching oneself from the material plane (also known as Maya or illusion).

Despite teachings about the essential unreality of the world, Shankaracharya lived a life of great energy and action. In his short life span of 32 years he travelled to every corner of India spreading his philosophy. He also re-

organised the ancient monastic Swami order, which still continues to this day. When only 32 years, he embarked on his last journey to the Himalayas. His last resting place was Kedarnath where he is said to have merged into Mahasamadhi.

Shankaracharya's poems:

Mind, nor intellect, nor ego, feeling,
 Sky nor earth nor metals am I.
 I am he, I am he, blessed spirit, I am he!



table,
 But if to the Guru's feet thy heart

Thy body may be beautiful and glow with flawless health,
 Thy fame colossal and thou mayest have won fabulous wealth,
 But if to the Guru's feet thy heart untethered still remain.
 Then all thou hast achieved on earth is vain, is vain.
 Thou mayest be deep-versed in all that scripture have to tell
 A beacon of light, a master of prose and verse delect-

untethered still remain.
 Then all thou hast achieved on earth is vain, is vain, is vain.

Mind, nor intellect, nor ego, feeling;
 Sky nor earth nor metals am I.
 I am he, I am he, blessed spirit, I am he!
 No birth, no death, no caste have I;
 Father, mother, have I none.
 I am he, I am he, blessed spirit, I am he!
 Beyond the flights of fancy, formless am I,
 Permeating the limbs of all life;
 Bondage I do not fear; I am free, ever free.
 I am he, I am he, blessed spirit, I am he!
 Thy Guru's feet



For successful media industry



■ Binod P. Bista

It is true that the security of employees, particularly financial security, plays a big role in the success of most enterprises.

The modern world seems to be doing business in a different fashion such as outsourcing, virtual networking and the like, causing massive in-house retrenchment and restructuring of many of its organisations. Today, most successful companies in the developed world have less employees, almost skeleton, but excellent automation to make up for the reduced level of employees.

Further, as opposed to the traditional cradle-to-grave employment, many countries have flexible recruitment policies allowed by the states under privatisation. It is very rare to find a long term employment today with a multinational entity. Most generous ones offer a two-three year renewable contracts. Notwithstanding these current developments, Nepal seems to have moved in the opposite direction by aiming to provide a job guarantee to the working journalists.

Acting on a bill prepared by a taskforce of the Parliamentary Committee for Environment, Communication and Technology, on working journalist act, the Nepali parliament approved the same recently. This action, now a law, obliges the media houses to follow a number of requirements for working journalists. The Act limits hiring of 15% of working journalists on contract basis yet entitles provident fund and all other facilities given to

permanent journalists. Besides, the media houses would be responsible for covering medical treatment and compensation to working journalists in case of accidents and deaths on duty.

Media houses are mandated to spend a minimum of 1% of their annual income for capacity building of the journalists failing which they will be deprived of government support including import facilities. A 13-member committee composed of government departments and journalists association will determine minimum salary of working journalists.

It is true that the security of employees, particularly financial security, plays a big role in the success of most enterprises. Only satisfied employees with motivation contribute to productivity and growth of an enterprise. Others simply waste their time and that of their companies as they lack the necessary commitment and hard work as a result of failing to meet their basic level of satisfaction. How does the current act of the government help in a healthy growth of media and journalism for a new Nepal?

Although some of the provisions such as the accidental insurance and perhaps the limit on contractual employment can be accepted as the necessary reform required for the healthy

development and growth of media industry in Nepal, there are certain other provisions that require closer scrutiny. The provision such as the contractual employees enjoying full facilities as permanent employees and the mandatory requirement for capacity building (minimum 1% of income) needs to be rationally explained. If there be no difference between contractual and permanent employees, then the bill could have simply restricted hiring of contractual employees.

Successful companies are known to have programs of career development for their employees so that both benefit in the long run, why cannot they be left to do what is also good for them? Why is there a need to determine minimum salary level for working journalists by the government when almost all media houses of Nepal, except the government owned, are in the hands of private sector? What might have been the problem of the Nepali market determining the minimum salary level of journalists? Or, could it be an action of the government to support the ever increasing number of private media houses at the cost of journalists?

Presuming that this is the first action taken by the parliament in its bid to provide essential security to the workers and daily wage earners in all sectors, the overall policy needs

to be defined clearly for the benefit of all. Imposing certain conditions on private sector through law could do more harm than good now, and in future. There are so many workers who are in need of government support. The need to provide economic security to construction and transportation workers being as necessary as the journalists, it can be expected that the parliament with the help of government would enact appropriate laws soon.

Whatever the parliament does, certain decisions that interfere or obstruct the functioning of a free market based on liberal economic policies would not be sustainable. Nepal has agreed to abide by its international agreements signed with various institutions including the World Trade Organisation, and thus it needs to fulfill all its obligations. Moreover, how could the government create an environment for investment in the country by the foreign, non-resident Nepalis and private sector, as per the declared policy made public at the 2007/08 budget, if it were to impose conditions after conditions in the management of private sector? Or, does that fall under the public policy of workers safety and security?

(Bista is a development economist, works with Boao Forum for Asia in China.)

Ready to die or kill for dignity

It is not that we are naked but it is the state which is naked.



■ Sabita Gyawali

"We have come to Kathmandu to express our anger and to demand our rights from the state," said the leader and activist Uma Devi Badi. Groups of Badi women activists, around 350 in number, have come to Kathmandu to express their anger against the government. Their anger and rage seen is as the consequence of lifelong oppression, domination, exploitation and discrimination by the state, society, people and local communities. The entire community now is in a quest of dignity.

Badi community, a small Dalit community is considered to be an untouchable minority and is the most disadvantaged community. They mainly inhabit scattered settlements of Salyan, Rukum, Rolpa, Dailekh, Jajarkot, Dang, Banke and Bardia districts of western Nepal. In the past Badi community used to work as dancers and singers at kings' palaces and rich people's houses during ceremonies, events from where they used to get money and food. Badi women were the prime bread earner in their community.

Gradually, the women began to be sexually exploited and ultimately they were compelled to adopt prostitution as their livelihood, since they did not have any property or land. The women were thus systematically trapped within a vicious circle of poverty and patriarchal norms. However, these days most of the Badi women have become aware of their rights and many of them have already left their traditional professions and are engaged in other livelihood alternatives. However, their human

rights and socio-political and economic rights are grossly neglected by the state agency and as a result they face social discrimination.

According to Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDS) network, which has been facilitating different interactions for Badi women in Kathmandu, Badi women are in Kathmandu, for their Kathmandu centered social movement, as the government did not pay any attention to their peaceful rally programmes in district and regional levels. They have been fighting against sexual exploitation, social injustice and discrimination.

"We submitted a memorandum to CDO offices in five different districts - Kailali, Kanchanpur, Banke, Bardia and Dang and gave seven days' ultimatum. We also called for a Bandh but the government did not listen to our demands. A month ago a few committee members came to Kathmandu to lobbying for the demands to be heard. But still the state did not heed them. Thus we formed groups, collected money and came to Kathmandu for our protest program" said Uma Devi Badi.

She added, "Our main demands are access to land for our livelihoods, provision of alternative jobs and rehabilitation of women who are still engaged in this occupation; representation of at least one male and one female candidate in the constituent assembly, legal identity to our children who are deprived of citizenship certificate, scholarship programs and free education to our children. We have submitted the 12 point memorandum to the government."

Badi women have been protesting in the roads of Kathmandu since the past few days. Many Badi women



A woman protesting for Badi's right.

were seen half naked in front of different important government offices. Their style of protest has drawn attention of many people in Kathmandu and attracted mixed reactions. According to Uma, "This so called people's government did not bother to work for Badi women's rights and justice. Our style of half naked protest is a symbolic message to the government that - it is not that we are naked but it is the state which is naked, the state which has failed to respect our rights."

The current protest of Badi women shows a rise in the awareness level of the women. Ironically, instead of listening to their voices the government is using force to suppress their voices. Maya Singh, the first journalist from Badi community said, "State is being insensitive towards our protest because we are protesting in a silent way. If we had used violent means, then it would have been serious."

During the protests, many Badi women have been injured and many were sent to jails. The women complained that police forces hit them in their sensitive organs. Ganga Das said that many women were bleeding since they were hit with sticks in the lower abdomen area. "Many of them are injured severely, some have broken their hands and even our leader is injured," she added.

The protesting Badi women have been living in Bankali, Dharmashala, in pitiful conditions. They do not have a proper place to sleep, they lack enough and risk starvation. In spite of it all, they are ready to fight against injustice and discrimination. Manju Nepali says, "If our demands are not fulfilled, we are ready to die and to kill too - if the situation demands it." ■



■ Bhim Prasad Bhurtel

Debate federalism

Without proper assessment of economic and fiscal basis, federalism cannot be materialised.

After the April 2006 democratic upsurge Nepal's political developments marked a substantive transformation in the relationship between the state and its citizens. A centralised Nepali state formed over the last two and a half century lost its identity built on unitary Hindu state, Hindu religion, Nepali language, monarchy and various cultural and religious symbols. The institution of monarchy has now been suspended until the first meeting of Constituent Assembly (CA). The state has been declared secular. The interim constitution has recognised the multi-religious, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-cultural character of Nepali society.

The unitary character of Nepali state will not survive in the future since the second amendment of the interim constitution provisioned for federalism due to pressure from various sections of society. Interim constitution stipulates to build an inclusive, secular and modern federal state through CA.

Nepali modern political history began with the process of unification. Before unification, it was fragmented into many petty principalities. Each and every principality had their own state authority, political leadership, from

of government, right and duties of member of nation state on the basis of tribal practices. There was no dynamism and determining factor for the realisation of the western concepts of citizens and state. Formation of Nepal state was unique and assumed multifaceted dimension. Now Nepal is at a point where it departs towards the federal form dismantling its unitary structure. Making Nepal a more inclusive through the restructuring to the federal form from its extremely monolithic and centralised state mechanism is a central problem.

Some of the political activists are demanding caste or ethnicity as a base of federalism and other political stakeholders are demanding language as the base. All interest groups and stakeholders are demanding federal structure on their subjective value judgment and worldview. These are some bases for federalism but not the decisive one. The fiscal base is only the decisive one.

The real problem of the public discourse is revolving around the basis, viability, feasibility and possibility of federalism in the light of public economics in present context. Virtually no effort has been made so far to conceptualise, theorise and formulate the agenda about all these issues

for public discourse. Without proper assessment of the economic and fiscal basis, federalism cannot be materialised.

Hence the central theme is fiscal federalism, the economic counterpart of the political federalism. Similarly, federal monetary authority and monetary policy enactment are other important aspects of debate. The realisation of political federalism depends upon its fiscal counterpart, the political economic resources.

Public discourses should centrally focus to capture the processes of transformation of the two and half century long unitary structure to the meaningful, sustainable and foreseeable federal structure, with fiscal or public economics perspective. The excluded, marginalised and peripheralised communities only can be brought in the national development mainstream if the federal structure is compatible with the available resources, and permanent sovereignty of peoples over these resources is ensured.

More specifically, the proposed federalism is expected to answer these questions: What may be the fiscal or public economic basis of the federalisation in Nepal? What are the ground realities of spatial conditions such as resources endowment, development potentials? What is

the human development situation? What is the current situation of domestic/international trade and business activities? What are the current gateways to market centre and future potentials for it? How much of physical infrastructure or social overhead capital is available?

Other important aspects that must be kept in mind are the public revenue, regional contribution to GDP and per capita tax contribution on the regional/district level. What are their roles in political federal structure? What type of federal structure such as competitive, quasi-competitive or cooperative is appropriate for rapid economic and human development?

What will be the form of fiscal federalism? What would be the union list, state list, and concurrent list of the fiscal autonomy (both revenue and expenditure)? What kind of federal structure of the state can be designed in order to incorporate the marginal voices and minority aspirations in the federal form of the government? These are few key agendas that should be publicly debated. Then only can federalisation ensure the developmental aspiration of the people. ■



'Maoists want to sabotage polls'

This is certainly unfortunate. At a time when we were looking forward to going to our areas to concentrate on election, this unnecessary confusion has arisen.

Upendra Yadav, Chief of the Madheshi Janadhikar Forum (MJF) was buoyant and looking forward to visit Terai as a hero after he signed the 22-point accord with Peace and Reconstruction Minister, Ram Chandra Poudel, on August 31. But that joy was short lived as not only a faction of the forum backed out of the accord, but Maoist Chief Prachanda who wields enormous clout on the government, called it a 'conspiracy' and disowned it. What does this mean? Upendra Yadav spoke to **Yubaraj Ghimire** about the accord and uncertainties. Excerpts:

Where does the accord stand now after Prachanda's announcement to disown it?

Prachanda has the experience of having signed the peace agreement, and I am sure he understands the meaning of signing it, although he did not implement what he signed. His party has not returned the property they captured. His joining the democratic process and the government should at least teach him one thing that Maoists' conduct and behaviour has to be dictated by norms, rules and agreement.

As far as the status of the accord between the MJF and government is concerned, it is a full fledged accord and the onus to implement it lies with the government. If the government fails to implement it, its credibility and honesty would come under severe question.

What are the immediate steps you expect from the government?

Certainly, all the 22 points have to be implemented. But to begin with, I will expect that the government honours martyrs' families and gives them a token of compensation; the wounded are given medical treatment at government's expense and the people from Madhesh are accommodated in political appointments immediately. If these steps are not taken soon, the government will suffer a loss of credibility.

In order to assure Madheshis and address the sentiments, government also need to send officials there so that the vacuum does not create more uncertainties and misunderstanding.

But with election process already so near, is it possible for the government to do all that?

I understand that. The interim government may have its own limitations. But it must start sending positive messages now.

How do you react to Prachanda's statement that the accord was a conspiracy and should be scrapped?

Let the government react to it. Maoists have indulged in activities that clearly violate

the norms and ethics befitting a ruling party. I still expect that Prachanda will bear his two responsibilities: to honour by words and deeds each and every provision of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) he has signed with the government and to behave responsibly like a constituent of the ruling coalition.

Have you had any dialogues or meetings with Prachanda? It appears that some diplomats have taken this initiative.

I have had no meeting with him so far, after we parted ways. Yes, some friends are suggesting that we meet but it has not materialised.

Your own colleague, Kishor Biswas from the MJF, has also disowned the government-MJF accord?

There are some forces who do not want the constituent assembly election to take place. They are supporting and instigating the anti-democratic and regressive forces in different parties. They may have done it in the MJF as well. What Biswas has done is not at all a pragmatic thing. May be he has done it at the spur of the moment. I hope he will realise it sooner than later that this is a historic accord. The government has promised federalism with autonomy besides representation in all the wings of the state. This is a major step forward towards building a new Nepal.

Are you sure election will take place on time?

Not having election will be catastrophic for the country. It could lead to social and ethnic divides and discords. Yes, those who thought that the MJF would continue with the agitation and stall elections are disappointed. That is why they are opposing the accord. They are the ones who are actually trying to sabotage the poll. We want

to defeat those sentiments with the support of the people.

Are you sure the confusion and conflict within the ruling party will not come in way of implementing the accord?

This is certainly unfortunate. At a time when we were looking forward to going to our areas to concentrate on election, this unnecessary confusion has arisen. But again, I repeat that it is for the government to respond to the situation and dispel any negative impressions over the status of the accord.

May be there are some people and factions within the Congress and the ruling coalition who do not want Madhesh issue sorted out. But not to listen to Madhesh is not possible if we are going to write a future history.

Since the MJF is going to contest elections, do you envisage any understanding or alliance with other political parties?

I am in favour of a broader democratic alliance which will take the country along democracy and republic. I will certainly work for such an alliance so that it gets comfortable

majority in the constituent assembly since only then can we give proper direction to the yet to be written constitution.

You will have no problem having to work together with the Maoists?

I do not see its possibility in near future. But I will have no reservations in being part of a broader democratic alliance on the basis of common objectives and programmes even if Maoists join in. I will have no objection to work that way.

Don't you think that the Gaur Massacre in which more than 30 Maoist cadres were killed still casts its shadow on that possibility?

I am more pained than the Maoists over Gaur tragedy. That was not our intent. I sincerely wish that, now that Maoists are in the government, let it be thoroughly investigated. Our plan was just to hold the meeting. I am still at a loss to understand how it happened. And we regret it. The truth about it has not yet come to the public, and it must. At the same time, it is also time we move forward in writing a new history. Prejudiced views and stands will not take us to the desired goal. Understanding and consensus will determine the emerging future. ■





Dilli Raman Regmi

The first NCC president

... "Shri Bisweshwar Prasad Koirala at present is not even a common office holder of our party...."

■ Avantika Regmi

Politics has often been synonymous with dishonesty and it is now unfortunately the cornerstone of a Nepali politician's character.

Some original documents show that this malady in Nepali politics started right from the inception of Nepali party politics way back in the 1940s and is the subject of this article. This was perhaps the first dishonest act committed in the modern political history of Nepal.

The incident involves Dilli Raman Regmi whom many have termed as the reference point of failure in Nepali politics and Bisweshwar Prasad Koirala considered by many as the "greatest democratic leader" Nepal has ever produced.

The late Werner Levi, a professor at the University of Minnesota, published many journal articles on the inception and the evolution of the Nepali democratic process. In one of his articles (Government and Politics in Nepal, 1952) Levi writes, "In 1947 the Congress started a Satyagraha in Biratnagar which brought the arrest of B.P....D. R. Regmi was made acting President. When Koirala was released from prison six months later, Regmi refused to hand back his office."

Now for the historical tracking of incidents based on the documents and made available from (www.dilliramanregmi.org) for everyone to view and judge: The Nepali Rastriya Congress was inaugurated in January 1947 in Bhawanipur, Calcutta. At that time the Indian Penal Code 144 had been promulgated which meant that a gathering of more than four people was illegal.

Due to this the inauguration could not take the form of a political function but was more like a meeting to exchange ideas. Moreover, as this meeting was called in hurry, less than 50 people attended the first day's program.

A smaller meeting took place on the second day in some "member's rented room" and it was decided that as the inauguration was done in a big hurry and the party was without a constitution a big political meeting would take place in April-May (inauguration brochure, 1947).

In the meantime the following people were appointed to the working committee of the party: Tanka Prasad Acharya (President), B. P. Koirala (Working President), Krishna Prasad Upadhyaya (Secretary), Bal Chandra Sharma (Secretary), Dilli Raman Regmi (Head of the Publication Department).

Two months after the inauguration B. P. Koirala was jailed. The first political conference of the Nepali National Congress was held in July 1947 and D. R. Regmi was elected as the first president of the party. The constitution of the party was unveiled at that time and the party president Regmi formed his own working committee.

Now around November 1947, B. P. Koirala was released from prison and he reclaimed the post of the working president. In a letter addressed to the office secretary Koirala writes on November 12, 1947:

"As I am restored to health, I am resuming the charge of the working president from today. Please issue notice to this effect to different units. A meeting of the working committee is

also overdue. Please call a meeting of the WC on 25th of Nov at Jaynagar."

The question that now arises is how two heads - a working president and president could exist at the same time; and considering the fact that the temporary working committee was dissolved and a party president was already elected the whole issue of Koirala's claim to the post appears highly unethical and immoral and undemocratic.

Around a week after B. P. Koirala's letter on November 18th 1947, Pushpa Lal Shrestha the party's working secretary sent a letter out from the Nepali National Congress Party's head office, which proves the fallacy of Koirala's claim and gives a clear picture of this mess. Below is the translation of the letter from Nepali:

"You must have listened to the announcement made in Nepali by Bisweshwar Prasad Koirala last Friday on Calcutta Radio that he had taken over the charge of the working president. I am writing this letter to contradict that news.

Shri Bisweshwar Prasad Koirala at present is not even a common office holder of our party. Nobody has appointed him to the post of the working president. Last January Nepali Rastriya Congress had formed its temporary committee and B. P. Koirala was chosen as the working president of that committee. In his absence the same committee had chosen Shri Matrika Prasad Koirala in his place.

In January during the temporary committee's meeting it was already decided that after three-four months we would surely hold election and, moreover, our party was becoming larger, so keeping these in mind the temporary committee was dissolved and Nepali National Congress' representatives' conference was held in July, which unanimously elected the present president Shri Dilli Raman Regmi as the party's president. In accordance to the constitution that was ratified by the conference Shri Regmi named his working committee.

According to the constitution of the party the election of the working president can only occur when the party president resigns, however the working committee has not received the resignation of the party president and it has not elected any working president. At this stage the way Shri Bisweshwar Prasad Koirala has been proclaiming himself as the party's working president is absolutely unrightful, unscrupulous and at the same time an attempt to violate the fundamental principles of democracy.

Until we send another letter we do not want Nepali Rastriya Congress' any branch to have any type of relation with Shri Bisweshwar Prasad Koirala. And, also not cooperate with any activities he does. All the telegram-letter sent by him should be forwarded to the following address of the head office."

The reader can now decide for himself/herself whether B. P. Koirala was really the first elected president of Nepali National Congress. This article disputes this and sets the historical events in the correct perspective. D. R. Regmi was unquestionably the first elected president of Nepali National Congress.

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Myanmar steps up manhunt for activists

YANGON— Myanmar's junta has stepped up a manhunt for pro-democracy activists after a rare string of protests, raiding homes and subjecting citizens to arbitrary searches, campaigners and residents say.

More than 10 plainclothes policemen have surrounded the home of 34-year-old labour rights campaigner Su Su Nway, who went into hiding after leading a brief demonstration last week in Yangon over soaring fuel costs.

Dozens of protesters were detained after that march, one of a series of anti-junta rallies that began here two weeks ago after the generals doubled key fuel prices, and later spread to other parts of the country.

The price hike has left many workers unable to even afford bus fare in the impoverished nation formerly known as Burma, which has been under military rule since 1962.

Su Su Nway, who managed to evade arrest by jumping into a taxi, told AFP by telephone on Sunday that she was ready to stand up to the generals, who tolerate little public dissent.

"I will not hide forever. I have to stand up for our people," said the activist, who is a member of Myanmar's opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), headed by detained leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Amnesty International said Friday that more than 150 people have been detained since the



protests broke out on August 19. Apart from Su Su Nway, the regime has targeted key activists including Htay Kywe, who also went into hiding after the first rally in Yangon which drew about 500 people -- the biggest anti-junta march here in at least nine years.

Authorities have sent Htay Kywe's picture to every police station in the country and raided his

home in Yangon, along with the homes of other protest leaders, confiscating computers, mobile phones and documents, activists say.

Since the protests broke out, passengers on highway buses have been required to get off at each checkpoint, show their ID cards and submit to checks and searches by armed policemen.

"I had to get off my bus three times during my

trip from Yangon to Bago," some 80 kilometers (50 miles) north of the country's commercial capital, said one businessman in his 30s.

"Also I had to walk in front of policemen three times. It annoys me because every time I get on a highway bus, I have to get off at checkpoints," said the businessman, who declined to be named. A housewife in her 50s said she had to get off her bus 10 times for police checks during a bus trip last week from the eastern Karen state to Yangon.

"Police thoroughly searched the bus and each passenger," she said. In Yangon, small teams of plainclothes security officers are now roaming "every corner" of the city, residents say. They can stop residents for identification checks and arrest any suspicious people on the spot, they said.

"This never happened before" August 19, said one Yangon resident, who declined to be named.

While the junta has banned citizens from riding motorcycles in Yangon, it allows security forces and police to do so, and residents here said they were seeing more "motorcycle riders" now than ever before. Analysts say the intensified manhunt and search procedures are no surprise. "The junta is very uncompromising," said Aung Thu Nyein, a Thailand-based Myanmar analyst.

"The government does not tolerate any form of public dissent, and is always ready to crush demonstrations. This is the nature of this regime," he said. ■

Sonia comes to PM's defence on Nuke deal

NEW DELHI: Congress President Sonia Gandhi has come to the defence of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh saying that the 123 agreement does not "undermine" India's nuclear defence programme and "is in the long term interest of India."

"We congratulate Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his team of able negotiators who have hammered a treaty that satisfies all the conditions laid out before Parliament and brought home an agreement that is in the long term in the interest of India," she said in a "Letter to Congress Workers".

Her comments on the deal assume significance in the present standoff with the Left and signals total backing for Mr Singh and the Indo-US civilian nuclear deal. Mrs Gandhi also denied



allegations that the Left and BJP was kept out of the loop and said that Parliament, UPA allies, the Left parties and the opposition were "kept informed" about the negotiations with the US.

In a bid to counter criticism that national strategic interest will be jeopardised through the deal, she said, "We have negotiated with America keeping our national interests in the forefront and India's nuclear defence programme has been in no way undermined." The Congress President further said in the letter that the 123 agreement "satisfies all the conditions" laid out in

Parliament by Mr Singh and is a recognition of India's nuclear scientists who have contributed to keeping the indigenous nuclear programme alive.

In a bid to hard sell the nuclear deal to different sections of society, the Congress president even claimed that the agreement will put an end to power shortages and will help increase power for the agriculture sector. "... India and the US have signed a historic 123 agreement that lifts the decades-old embargo against nuclear trade with India. This will allow India to expand its energy sector to meet the growing demands of our economic growth and put an end to the power shortages that we are all familiar with,"

she said in the letter that was published in the latest issue of party journal 'Congress Sandesh'. The Congress president's letter is another pointer to the



Freed Taliban captives return to SKorea

Nineteen South Koreans freed by Taliban insurgents after six weeks in captivity returned home to tearful embraces from loved ones Sunday, expressing sorrow for two in their group who were killed in Afghanistan and apologizing to the nation.

The former hostages, let go in stages last week under a deal between the insurgents and the South Korean government, arrived on a flight from Dubai. Before undergoing medical checks at a hospital in Anyang, just south of Seoul, they were reunited with their family members. After the hugs and tears, some family members were gently critical, questioning why the group went to Afghanistan in the first place.

"I thought you would be killed," Cheon Kwang-sil, 77, told her

granddaughter Lee Young-kyung, who at 22 was the youngest of the hostages. "I told you not to go there." Lee, who looked thin and pale with hands marked by insect bites, said she spent 20 days of captivity in a cellar. "I was really scared the whole time," she said, adding she wasn't able to eat well. "I drank water from a stream."

Earlier, they spoke briefly with reporters, apologizing to the South Korean people and the government for causing them to be concerned. "We appreciate the Korean people for helping us to return to our families. We owe a big debt to the nation and people," said one of the former hostages, Yoo Kyung-shik. Yoo, fighting back tears, also expressed condolences to the families of the two Koreans who were killed.

(Abcnews)

Nawaz chickened out, I didn't: Bhutto

London: Pakistan's former prime minister Benazir Bhutto has set September 14 as her deadline for announcing when will she return to Islamabad.

Speaking to CNN IBN's Sanjay Suri, she blamed members of the ruling party in Pakistan for putting her talks with President Musharraf to a "standstill".

Is there a possibility that Benazir might have lost all talks with Musharraf and all credibility to deal with him? She said, "No matter what the pressure, the PPP will never give in on the issue of democracy and people's rights. But that's not true of other political parties. The MMA signed a legal framework enabling general Musharraf to continue as president and Prime Minister—they made a mistake. Imran Khan supported General Musharraf in the referendum when he was wearing a uniform—he made a mistake."

"Nawaz Sharif negotiated his way out of Pakistani prison



to a palace in Saudi Arabia. He came under pressure but my husband stayed behind bars and I was dragged to Swiss courts," Bhutto added.

(CNN-IBN)

Marshland Flowers

Samatha and Vipassana of one form or the other have been taught and practiced in Tibet, China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Mongolia, Central Asia and the Cis – Himalayan belts for centuries.

■ Acharya Mahayogi Sridhar Rana Rinpoche

In the Sravakayana systems, the emphasis is on the Shila and Theravada being a Sravakayana system; it is natural that the emphasis is on the Shila. Although there are Samatha (Samadhi) and Vipassana (Pragya) practices within the Theravadin system, the emphasis on Vipassana is a new dimension within Theravada which began approximately 150 years ago from Jetavana Sayadaw of Burma.

Before that, Vipassana was limited within Theravada to only special Bhikkhus, whereas in Tibet Vipassana (Tibetan: Lhag Thong) in the form of Mahamudra practices and Dzogchen practices were commonly given even to cow herders. In the Chinese systems and their satellite systems which flourished in Korea, Japan, Vietnam etc. too, Vipassana was well known in various forms. The Chinese for Vipassana / Vipassana is 'Kuan' and for Samatha is 'chi'. There seems to be a kind of misconception that Vipassana is taught only in the Theravadin system and that too only in Burma. This is based completely on lack of knowledge.

As I said earlier, all the Tri Shikchya are in full form in all forms of Buddhism i.e. in Paramitayana and Vajrayana of Mahayana. This misconception began in Nepal because a form of Theravadin Vipassana arrived in Nepal in the

late seventies and because it was presented in Nepali and Newari it became very popular very quickly; and the Acharyas etc. of this particular system went around claiming that only their method is Vipassana and especially Mahayana does not have any Vipassana.

But Samatha and Vipassana of one form or the other have been taught and practiced in Tibet, China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Mongolia, Central Asia and the Cis – Himalayan belts for centuries. Samatha – Vipassana is called Shiney – Lhagthong in Tibetan and Chi – Kuan in Chinese. And all the forms of meditation found within the Tibetan or Chinese Buddhism are one or the other forms of Samatha – Vipassana.

Perhaps we need to go more into detail about what Samatha / Vipassana means to really fully understand how this confusion, mentioned above is not correct. As we said before, Samatha is intimately related to Samadhi and Vipassana to Pragya. Without following Shila properly the Kleshas will not be weakened. Without weakening the Kleshas or cooling the mind from the fire of Kleshas (emotional defilements), there is no possibility that the mind will attain Samadhi.

And without some degree of Samadhi, Pragya just becomes an intellectual game



(Buddhi-vilash). However without Pragya, Shila can become a source of neurosis, a means of making people self – righteous and puritanical. Shila must always be peppered with some Samadhi and some Pragya. Samadhi without Pragya is Mithya Samadhi.

Most people of the Indian subcontinent think that once a Yogavachara (yogi) attains Samadhi he has reached his goal. This may be true for non – Buddhist systems; but in Buddhism the Shasta (Master) himself has said very clearly that there are many types of Mithya Samadhis [Samadhis which propagate the continuity of ignorance (falsity / avidya)]. So Samadhi without proper Pragya is a trap into which many unwary Yogavacharas fall.

Now let us go into Samatha – Vipassana. Samatha in Sanskrit means remaining in

equipoise/ level/quiet place. 'Sama' means equipoise, level, quiet, tranquil, equanimous, peaceful etc. and 'Tha' would mean place and abiding, dwelling. It is translated most accurately in Tibetan as Shine. Shi is the exact counterpart of Sama and Ne is the exact counterpart of 'Tha'. The word Samadhi also has a similar meaning with 'Sama'.

This part of the training begins after the wild whirlwind of a mind has cooled down by following Shila to the best of ones ability. Then the mind is slowly but steadily trained to abide (Stha) quietly (Sama) on an object if it is a focused meditation or to remain objectless – remaining aware without focusing on anything – if it is a non-focused meditation.

(To be continued.)

(Sridhar Rinpoche is a Vajrayana Master)

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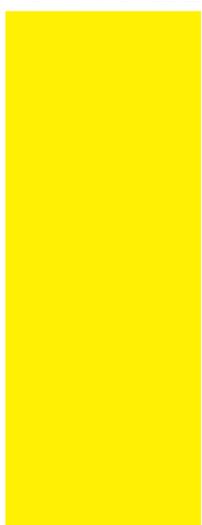
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Nature watches

Nothing escapes her, nothing breaks her.



■ Sanchita Sinha Roy



This is another experiment in line and colour; this three panelled artwork is done on handmade paper using inks. The greens and blues represent plants, water and sky. The reds and purples represent earth, minerals and the weather. The symbols represent the natural elements of the universe. The eyes at the top and bottom represent nature's ever watchful eyes.

These pieces are dedicated to

nature and to caution those who continuously exploit, waste, desecrate and vandalise her natural elements, bounties and blessings. Nature watches! Nothing escapes her,

nothing breaks her. She watches and when it gets too much, she retaliates, unleashes her wrath. She unleashes her fury to say enough is enough. She watches and with time, she heals herself. Perhaps we all should be as vigilant as she is!

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Hidden truths



■ Yuyutsu RD Sharma

O unlucky, illustrious scapegoats, who lost their lives without a cause in lands foreign, like a partridge, a quail or a bull provoked by others, to spurt into a murderous motion cheered by claps, triggered not from within, drowsed by wines gifted to quell qualms of conscience, leaped into battlefield shrieking, Ayo Gorkhali...

- Bhupi Sherchan

Nepali poet Bhupi Sherchan's reading of Nepali society and polity seems to hold validity even today. His poems reveal the fact that poets' reading and analysis of the cotemporary life remains more authentic than ostensible political commentators and civil servants apparently eloquent and shrill, like our countryside roosters.

A poet of a nation speaks for his people and their problem in a more realistic and at the same time in a prophetic way. Always above and distrustful of the lure of the fast changing political happenings, he refuses to be hooked in the spider webs of bare visible facts. Instead of concentrating on the factual

Bhupi touched the forbidden borders of Nepali consciousness and attacked the false, vainglorious notions of heroism of the Gurkha gallantry.

accounts of events that seem to shape the contemporary history, a poet goes for the hidden life energy that defines the future and fate of his nation.

Bhupi's power lay in this truth about a true artist, his depiction of his people as vainglorious louts and fools leaping into frenzy at some one else's calling. How could we be brave without being dumb, he asks. Who would leap into fire at someone else's provocation? He calls Nepali soldiers fighting in foreign lands as children of partridges, quails and sacrificial bulls; and Nepal a nation of rumors only.

Bhupi, a true successor of Rimal, wrote stunning poems. He saw what his contemporary commenta-

tors failed to see. For the first time in the history of Nepali literature, he dared to touch the delicate issues that had remained hidden in the shared memory of its people. In the tradition of his master, Rimal, he wrote on the agony of Nepalis in an unjust, autocratic system.

Bhupi touched the forbidden borders of Nepali consciousness and attacked the false, vainglorious notions of heroism of the Gurkha gallantry. He evoked the geopolitical compulsion of Nepal to remain a nonentity and raised the delicate questions of nationalism, sovereignty and a liberated prosperous Nepal.

He also foresaw the current instability of Nepali polity and described the ruler of his times as a blind man in a revolving chair. His poems set the mood for the rest of the century and there is hardly a poet, right or left in Nepal who would refuse the debt to this epoch making figure. Like all Nepali poets, Bhupi had that ego that sees the hypocrisy of the politicians and lashes mercilessly at them, holding them responsible for the crushing an innocent nation under the ruthless trucks of their hypocrisy and greed.

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Bhupi touched the forbidden borders of Nepali consciousness and attacked the false, vainglorious notions of heroism of the Gurkha gallantry.

Insight

Show living love

What really matters is how we treat people, today and now, not after they are dead.



■ Sushma Amatya

What is it that prevents most of us from cherishing people around us, showing them respect and letting them know how much we care while they are still alive? Why do we take people around us for granted; only to sing praises of them once they are dead? Why cannot live people be shown love and appreciation that they deserve? What could be the reason behind so many negativities that prevent people from co-existing in peace and harmony?

Is it deep social conditioning? Does watching one's parents unable to have cordial relationships with their relatives, friends and other members of society drill a pattern in one's minds that ultimately renders one incapable of cultivating harmonious relationships? Or are negative stories handed down through generations enough to create a sense of distrust rendering one incapable of viewing others in positive light?

Standing on a higher ground and watching with a broad perspective how most members of Kathmandu society function is like watching a mega-series that can outdo any Indian or western television saga. It can be hilarious, heart-wrenching, outrageous, the adjectives abound. Examples are aplenty of how grown up children give heartaches and headaches to their parents while they are alive only to make a dramatic display of grief once they pass away. If only one percent of the show of love displayed for the deceased was shown to the person while still alive!

Why assume that the dead hover around after their death to see how much their children or relatives love them? What matters is now, how we treat our family members with genuine love, pure intentions and clear communication, today. How do I care if who I think is being nasty or unfair to me today, sings praises of me after I am dead? I would rather the person makes peace with me while still alive. Scriptures say that the dead can read the true intentions of the living, so it is really no use pretending in any way.

Elaborate displays of rituals are often attempts to purge the guilt of not having treated the person right while alive. In many instances such a show are put up simply to exhibit one's effort for the deceased to impress one's relatives and neighbours. In some cases, it could be just that those who indulge in showing off so simply have nothing better to do than try to earn approval from others through grandiose display of wealth acquired, without one's effort or through unfair means.

It is also common to see people spending more for the rituals for the dead expecting benefits for oneself; while the dead were ignored, forsaken or ill treated while alive. It appears the dead are feared more. It is well and good to pay respect to the dead but my point here is that we all deserve as much respect and more while alive.

Treating the dead with respect out of fear of the unknown repercussions while taking the living for granted is a prevalent attitude in this poverty ridden society; where there are many suffering from extreme impoverishment of hearts. This disease drives people to act irrationally, pushing them to commit shocking acts just so that they benefit materially. A visit to the old people's home or the silent walls of many homes tells many such stories.

The fact remains that no matter how one tries to justify one's greed driven actions, or tries to brainwash self as well as others, the truth of having deceived or cheated gets rooted in ones' subconscious mind. This root one day does sprout and comes back to haunt one's conscience or it boomerangs with increased intensity. There are innumerable examples of such incidents in our minds, around us as well as in recent history.

In this situation as in any other life context, negativities abound where the wisdom of impermanence, awareness and acceptance of change and death is lacking. When one mistakes oneself to be indestructible, oversteps one's boundaries and tries to dominate and control, one is well on way to increasing the devil nature in oneself; devil that acts like a chameleon, an imposter or a tyrant. How many such examples do we see around us?

Such people need help. They need to be told what they are doing is wrong. They are so lost caught up by envy, jealousy, greed, obsessions that they risk drowning themselves in the murky waters they have created in their own minds. They need sympathy, and need to be shown the eternal truth of love to regain their sanity. The spineless need the courage, the right views to regain their lost selves that are essentially pure. ■

DANIEL LANOIS lounged on an ivory leather sofa in his loft studio in Toronto, dressed all in black, with eight silk-covered buttons marching up his sleeve. A few feet away, in a soft pool of light, stood an enormous mixing board, just arrived from England. Lanois, who has often manned such a board for Bob Dylan, U2 and many others, spoke of his new acquisition with pleasure, but

room. The sounds and how you build the thing are only ever a canvas, or an invitation for the soul to jump out."

Invite the soul to jump out. That's a pretty concise description of what a good music producer does, but how does it happen in the real world, with actual musicians trying to find the right shape for something that maybe didn't exist before they entered the room?

The short answer is that it probably

He sees the music

also with a sense that anything he could tell me about it would be beside the point. He can talk audio gear with more authority than most, but in the end the circuits that really matter to him are the balky, surprising conduits that lead to the heart.

"The application is just the vehicle for dragging something out of somebody," he said. "What you want is the heart and soul of the people in the

happens in a different way every time, depending on the personalities and the moment and a million other variables. The 90-minute answer is *Here Is What Is*, Lanois's debut film about music and the art of making records, coming soon to the Toronto International Film Festival.

It's a highly personal film, focused on Lanois and people he has worked with ever since he began trying to



coax interesting sounds from cheap equipment in his mother's basement in Hamilton. Brian Eno, Garth Hudson, U2 and Sinéad O'Connor all appear, speaking or performing or just groping their way toward that soul-jumping moment.

Lanois appears in every scene, as the poser of questions and the person who enables partial answers. Sitting in a medina in Morocco, he

tells Eno he's making a film "about the source of the art, instead of everything that surrounds the art."

That means no concert footage, no shots of screaming crowds, no clips from million-dollar music videos. Lanois's subjects sit in functional rooms, strum guitars with headphones clamped to their ears, or try to figure out how to enlarge what has already been recorded.

Hudson's hands, as the Band's pianist plays an improvised introduction to Lanois's song *Lovechild*. The camera gets even closer to Lanois's hands as they glide over the pedal steel guitar a few minutes later.

These sequences are shot in beautiful black and white by the young Ontario photographer Adam Vollick, whose portrait orientation, vivid angles and rich textures feel

It's a highly personal film, focused on Lanois and people he has worked with ever since he began trying to coax interesting sounds from cheap equipment.

The constant theme is that these denuded spaces contain everything that's needed, as a matter of principle. You never see more players being called in, or extra filters and gizmos being ordered, because Lanois doesn't work that way and never has.

"My heroes were always the people in the room," he told me after we'd watched the film together. "Maybe that's why I managed to pull it off on records. At the moment, I believe in the magic of the people around me. I never doubt them, and that's maybe where the power of belief becomes contagious, because people feel that."

In one vivid scene, Lanois asks Brian Blade, a gifted jazz drummer with whom he has worked on several projects, to play on top of a track by New Orleans drummer Willie Green. Lanois explains that doubling the drums will help him take the song to a different place harmonically. You can see Blade trying to absorb the concept and get past the audacity of the request, and then he dives in, laughing. It's a touching display of trust, and of a willingness to follow the power of belief in a totally unexpected direction.

Later in the film, Lanois gives Blade a verbal sketch of a new song, acting out with his voice and body the way he wants the arrangement to feel. The scene is intercut with bits of the song as it eventually came out in the studio. For another song, Lanois sits at a board doing a live mix, telling us what he's doing with those faders and why. His torso bends and weaves as he makes subtle but telling changes, riding the board as if it were a wave on a sea of sound.

The opening of the film gets close to the source in another way, through a long keyboard-level shot of Garth

analogous to the way Lanois approaches music. The graphic style of Vollick's video processing gives the impression we're seeing an X-ray of the performers and their music, and when he uses colour it feels like flares of emotional energy.

These effects don't ultimately tell us much about what Lanois says he's up to, just as a musician's hands moving in close-up are not "the source of the art," however engrossing they may be to watch. But like most serious investigations into mysterious subjects, *Here Is What Is* succeeds mainly by raising the questions in a compelling way. The mystery remains, powerfully resisting a solution. It's no digression when Blade, a preacher's son, says that everything he plays is a form of praise, or when Lanois refers to his pedal steel as a "church in a suitcase."

Blade also says he can't separate the sacred from the secular, and that comment seems doubly apt in a film whose unstated second theme is seduction. The gorgeous sound and imagery are custom-made to win you over, as Lanois muses on the details that make a listener revisit a song. A few red-hot sequences with salsa dancer Carolina Cerisola state the theme loud and clear.

Here Is What Is will be useful as a promotional vehicle for Lanois's next solo album, due next spring, which he coyly says "might" have the same title. By then he'll have done a fourth session with Eno on the next U2 album, which he said is turning out to be "very exotic" and eastern-sounding, though not derivative of any particular tradition.

But first, the film needs to be sold, which is one big reason it has been entered at TIFF.

(Globe and Mail)



She sings about being a survivor, an independent woman, a naughty girl and a beautiful liar, but for an early evening appearance at Ultra Supper Club in Toronto recently, Beyoncé Knowles took the spotlight as a fashion designer.